SYNTACTIC BEHAVIOUR OF IGBO INTERROGATIVE WORDS.

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Grammarians and linguists of Igbo Language have often casually talked about the Igbo interrogative words and their functions. Few though, have really taken the pains to carry out an in-depth study of their individual syntactic behaviours in contextualized, pragmatic usage. In this study, we adopt a new strategy to classify the interrogatives under study according to their semantic affinity, in order to facilitate the study of their specific, individual syntactic behaviours in non-verbal and QW-verbal question constructions. This will help to systematize the study of this aspect of Igbo grammar. It is important to indicate that 75% of the interrogative words we intend to study here are those widely used in the Olụ dialect of Igbo.

Abbreviations
2s – 2nd Person Singular; 3s – 3rd Person Singular; 3sS – 3rd Person Singular Proclitic; CP – Complement; FOC – Focus marker; FT – Factative; NC – Null Category; NP – Noun Phrase; Pr.N – Personal Name; Q – Question marker; QW – Question Word; Rs – Resumptive Pronoun.

Tonal Notations
Contrasting tones are marked.
Computer unable to insert tones on syllabic nasals so that the nasal 'n' in 'nkéōle' and similar words are unmarked.
Computer unable to simultaneously insert diacritic and tonal mark on the same letter. As such, a word can only appear either as 'hùrù' or 'hụrụ' but not with a combination of both grammatical markings on the letter 'u'. This applies to other vowels in other words.

0.1 Introduction

The Igbo interrogative words belong in a closed class of words used in asking some types of questions in the language. Such a phenomenon is not unique to the Igbo language. Many languages of the world including African languages each have a limited number of lexical items identifiable as interrogative words and their nature and syntactic behaviour may differ from language to language.

In English language, such words as 'which', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'how', 'who', 'whom', 'whose', etc belong in a closed set of words known as interrogative words. In French language, the interrogative words are identifiable in simple and complex forms such as 'qui', 'quoi', 'que', 'lequēl', 'lesquels', 'laqūelle',

'lesquelles', 'duquel', 'desquels', 'de laquelle', 'desquelles', 'auquel', 'auxquels', 'à laquelle', 'auxquelles', etc.

In a recent study on "Wh-Parameter", Ndimele (2003:839-857) reviews the functioning of interrogative words in a select manner of African, European, and Asiatic languages. The African languages concerned are Yoruba, Hausa, Verdean, Akan, Kikuyu, Malagasy, Zulu, Izon, Swahili, Egyptian Arabic, Igbo, Urhobo, in that order. The European and Asiatic languages include English, Chinese, and Japanese. From Ndimele's study, it appears that the existence of interrogative words is a universal characteristic of languages.

0.2.1 Igbo Question Types

Uwalaka (1997:90) posits that languages including Igbo exhibit two question types: 'Yes/No Questions and Wh-Questions'. Ikekeọnwụ (1987:20) identifies three categories of interrogative constructions in Igbo, namely the Definitive-Answer Questions (DAQ), the Nominal-Answer Questions (NAQ), and the Tag Questions (TQ). Ikekeọnwụ's Definite-Answer Questions (DAQ) and Nominal-Answer Questions (NAQ) correspond to Uwalaka's Yes/No Questions and Wh-Questions, respectively. Uwalaka (1987) does not treat Ikekeọnwụ's Tag Questions. Tag Questions are not productive in Igbo and will *not* be treated in this study. On the other hand, the Yes/No Questions or DAQ and the Wh-Questions or NAQ have a high frequency of usage in Igbo. They form our core subject matter in this study.

0.2.1.1 Yes/No Questions or Definitive-Answer Questions (DAQ)

Uwalaka (1997) states that 'Yes/No Questions are so called because in response to these questions, the addressee can simply say 'yes' or 'no'. In Igbo, this type of question is usually realized with verbal constructions in which morpho-tonal and structural changes in the constituent elements of the sentence are apt to initiate a question. In Igbo, some dialects such as Ọhụhụ and Ọlụ initiate the question with a subject pronoun on a low tone and if the subject NP is a noun, a corresponding ***resumptive*** pronoun on a low tone (or low tones) is necessarily introduced after the NP, in the sentence. A few examples will be illustrative:

1.	Ézè	o	riri	ji?
	Pr,N	3sRsp	eat-FT	yam
	Did Eze eat yam?			

2. Ọ riri jị?
   3sS eat-FT yam
   Did he eat yam?

3. Ùbá nà Ézè ha riri jị?
   Pr.N and Pr.N 3pl.Rsp eat-FT yam
   Did Uba and Eze eat yam?

4. Mú nà gị ànyị riri jị?
   1sS and 2sS 1pl.Rsp eat-FT yam
   I and you we ate yam
   Did two of us (both of us, you and I) eat yam?

The answer to any of the above questions may be èéé (or éè) 'yes' or mbà (or ótò) 'no', etc. These may vary from dialect to dialect. From the given examples (1-4), we observe as follows:

(i) In (1,3,4,), there is an agreement in number between the NP noun subjects and their corresponding *resumptive* pronouns with low tones. Hence
Ézè (sing.) ⟶ 'o' (3rd person sing. pronoun)
Ùbá and Ézè (pl.) ⟶ 'ha' (3rd person pl. pronoun) and
Mú na gị (pl.) ⟶ 'anyị' (1st person pl. pronoun)

(ii) In (2), the third person subject pronoun which has a lexical high tone is realized with a grammatical low tone. These examples confirm that it is the grammatical low tone on the subject and resumptive pronouns that initiate the question in the above question structures.

However, Ikekeọnwụ (1987:22) indicates that the above pattern of question construction does not apply to all Igbo dialects. Citing Emenanjo (1979), Ikekeọnwụ argues that in some other Igbo dialects, especially those of Aguata and Njikoka areas, it is possible to have '...a low tone harmonizing with elements occurring all through irrespective of what the NP(s) is'. For further detail, see Ikekeọnwụ (1987:22-24).

0.2.1.2 Wh-Questions

Uwalaka (1997:91) states that Wh-Questions are questions that necessarily involve the use of interrogative words. In such questions, the addressee replies with a statement rather than 'Yes' or 'No' which would have sufficed as an answer if the question were of the Yes/No-type. Uwalaka further states that *'in modern grammatical analysis, such questions are referred to as Wh-questions because in English, the relevant question words all start with Wh- (who, what,*

where, when).' Ikekeọnwụ refers to Wh-Questions as Nominal-Answer Questions (NAQ).

In Igbo, as in other languages, the interrogative words do not necessarily begin with Wh- as in English. In this paper, we shall limit our study to the syntactic behaviour of Igbo interrogative words in modern Igbo usage.

1.1 Igbo Interrogative Words (Or Interrogatives)

Emenanjo (1978:67) made an inventory of 'recognized' interrogative words in Igbo language, as well as their 'dialectical equivalents which he listed in brackets as follow:

I. Àñáā (àghàā; àghá; àgá; àghīī; àghí) 'How?'
II. Chúmo (chúmò; chùmà) 'Which?' 'Who?' 'Which'
III. Ébéē (Nnéē; Ròléī; Òléī; Éyē) 'Where?'
IV. Gínī (Ngínī; ngenī; gúnū, kínī, nínī) 'What?'
V. Kèdù (Kèdù; Kèdí) 'How (about)?'
VI. Kóōne (Kóōle) 'How (about)?' 'Where?'
VII. Ndīī (Ndáā; Ndéē; Ndúū; Ndúghù) 'Which?' 'Where?' 'What?' 'How'
VIII. Òlé (Òné; Òné) 'How much?' 'How many?' "When?'
IX. Òléē (Eléé) 'Where?' 'Which?' 'How?' 'When?'
X. Òlià 'How (about)?'
XI. Ònyé (Ònye) 'Who?'

Uwalaka (1997:63) retains ten of the first members of Emenanjo's eleven groups of interrogatives (although she has two items each for *ànáālághaā* 'How?' and *cúmòlchúmò* 'which'). She however omits Emenanjo's *Kóōne/Kóōle* from her own list. Neither Emenanjo nor Uwalaka includes *òlénkèlòléēkèlòlé* 'which one?' Emenanjo reflects *Kóōle* but interprets it as 'where?' He omits its variant *nkéole*. Yet these interrogative words are widely used in the Ọlụ dialect of Igbo. Ikekeọnwụ (1987:25) identifies four types of interrogatives (see ahead). In this paper therefore, we shall add them to those of Emenanjo (1978:67) and Uwalaka (1997:63) which we consider appropriate and current for the purposes of this discourse. We shall classify the interrogatives according to their semantic affinity before proceeding to analyze their syntactic behaviours.

1.2 Inventory And Semantic Classification Of Igbo Interrogatives

Ikekeọnwụ (1987:25) discusses Igbo interrogatives under 'four main types' under the Nominal-Answer Questions as follow:

(i) Kèdú? 'How?'/'Where?'
(ii) Òléē? 'What?'/'Where?'
(iii) Ònyé? 'Who?'

(iv) Gini 'What?'

We notice that each of Ikekeọnwụ's four groups contains one interrogative word.

Without prejudice to Ikekeọnwụ's grouping, we shall classify Igbo interrogatives into six groups with respect to their semantic affinity taking into account not only those prevalent in Ọlụ dialect but also other dialect variants. They are as follows:

I. a) òléē?
b) èbéē?
c) ndíī + NP?
} 'Where?'

II. a) àgháā?
b) àñáā?
c) kèdú?
d) ndáà? (or ndaā?)
e) òlià?
} 'How?'

III. a) òléē nkè?
b) nkéōle?
c) kóōle?
d) òlékè
} 'Which?' 'Which one?'

IV. a) òlé?
b) òné?
} 'How many?' 'How much?'

V. Gínī?.. 'What?'

VI. Ònyé? 'Who?' 'Whom?'

A glance at the six groups of Igbo interrogatives shows that they do not have equal number of words in all the groups. Our inventory is by no means exhaustive but it takes into consideration most of the interrogatives with high frequency of usage among contemporary Ọlụ Igbo speakers and which non-native speakers and learners of the dialect will likely encounter all too often. It is pertinent to note that Ikekeọnwụ's classification is identical to ours except that our classification has additional two groups (III and IV).

1.3 Characteristics of Igbo Interrogatives

From a tonal viewpoint, all the Igbo interrogatives enumerated in our inventory start with initial low tone except *gịnī*. Syntactically, they can be used alone or combined with other words to construct some types of questions in Igbo as we shall see in this study.

Ndimele (2003:850) identifies three types of Wh-questions (i.e. questions using interrogative words) in Igbo as 'in-situ Wh-questions, topicalized Wh-questions and Kèdụ cleft questions'.

In in-situ Wh-questions, the interrogative word occurs in object position while a subject proclitic attached to the verb root bears a low tone usually associated with questions in Igbo.

Ex: 5. Ézè ò gburu onyé?
Pr.N 3scl-Q- kill-FT QW
Who did he/she kill?

In topicalized Wh-question, the interrogative word generated in object position as in (5) above can be optionally moved to the left-most edge (or the sentence initial position) of the clause, followed by the focus marker *kà* but the subject proclitic is deleted. Example:

6. Ónyé kà Ézè gburu? (Focus)
QW FOC Pr.N kill-FT
Who did Eze kill? (=Who is it that Eze killed?)

In *kèdú* cleft question, *kèdú* can be used to introduce a generic head nominal it co-occurs with as the ***focus*** and both of them are moved to the left-most edge of the sentence. Example:

7. Kèdú onye Ezè gburu? (Focus)
QW person Pr.N kill-FT
Which person did Eze kill?

In this example, *kèdú* functions as question word and focus marker while *ónyé*, functions as a generic head nominal. (see ahead).

2.1 Analysis Of The Interrogative Words Of The Groups According To Their Syntactic Behaviour

In this section, we shall systematically examine the syntactic and semantic behaviours of individual members of the six groups of Igbo interrogatives in interactive usage.

2.1.1 Group 1

Òléē?
Èbéē? } 'Where?'
Ndíī + NP

These interrogatives can feature in a number of syntactic structures in Igbo as follow:

a. Under certain communicative contexts, *òléē* and *èbéē* can stand alone as questions completely making sense to and eliciting appropriate responses from the addressee. For example, consider a situation where a subject A meets another, B, on B's way out and wants to know where B is going to. A can simply say

8. '*Òléē?*' or '*Èbéē?*'

meaning 'Where (are you going)?'. *Ndíī* cannot be used in this context.

b. The juxtaposition of an interrogative with a noun phrase has the value of asking locative questions. Only *òléē* and *ndíī* are suitable for this structure. *Èbéē* cannot be used in such structures. Example:

9. Òléē Ibè?
QW Pr.N
Where is Ibe?

10. Ndíī Ibè?
Where is Ibe?

*11. Èbéē Ibe?
This is ungrammmatical.

In this type of question, the addresser interrogates the addressee on the whereabouts of a third party.

c. In a verbal construction, the interrogatives *Òlée̱* and *èbée̱* can be placed after the verb as locative complement as shown below:

12. Hà gara ebée̱/olée̱?
2ss go-FT QW/QW
Where did they go?

Ndīī is not apt for this structure.

In the example, we observe that the second person subject plural, *hà* (they), is on a low tone which initiates the question.

d. In a topicalized verbal question structure, the interrogatives can be moved to sentence initial position followed by the focus marker *kà*; only *èbée̱* and *òlée̱* are appropriate for this usage while *ndīī* is not. Example:

13. Òlée̱ kà Ézè gara? (Focus)
QW FOC Eze go-FT
Where did Eze go?

14. Èbée̱ kà Ézè gara? (Focus)
QW FOC Eze go-FT
Where did Eze go?

*15. Ndīī kà Ézè gara? (Focus)
QW FOC Eze go-FT
This is ungrammatical.

In conclusion, we can observe that though *òlée̱*, *èbée̱*, and *ndīī* belong to the same group of interrogatives, they are quite selective in the syntactic structures they can feature in.

2.1.2 Group 2

Àghàā?
Àñàā?
Kèdú?
Ndáà/Ndáā?
Òlíà?
} 'How?'

These interrogatives can be used in the following syntactic structures:

a. As in the case of Group 1 interrogatives, in appropriate communicative contexts such as when two familiar persons meet anywhere, the use of any member of the group 2 interrogatives can stand as a sentence of its own and can thus be used to inquire for instance about the addressee's general welfare - health, family, profession, etc. They can also stand for salutation in a ritualistic context.

b. The interrogatives can commute with the first NP in a serial verb construction asking the question 'how'. Examples:

16.	Ò	shiri	Abá	gaa	Ọnịcha?
	3sS	come from	1st NP	go	Onitsha
	Did he/she go from Aba to Onitsha?				

17.	Ò	shiri	ághāā	gaa	Ọnịcha?
	3sS	come from	QW	go	Onitsha
	How did he/she go to Onitsha?				

In the above examples, (16) is a question construction without interrogatives while (17) is a question construction with an interrogative word. We observe that *àghāā* in (17) can commute with *Àbá* in (17) as the first NP in the sentence. The other interrogatives – *òlíà* and *ndáà* can commute with *àghāā* in example (17) without change in meaning, but *kèdú* cannot.

c. In a focalized serial verb structure, the interrogatives can be moved to the left-most edge of the sentence followed by the focus marker *kà*. Examples:

18.	Àghāā	kà	Ézè	shiri	gāa	Ọnịcha?
	QW	FOC	Eze	come from	go	Onitsha
	How did Eze go to Onitsha?					

The other interrogatives of the group – *òlíā*, *ndáàlndaā* and *kèdú* can commute with *àghāā* in (18) without change in meaning. It is pertinent to state that *ólée* in group 1 is frequently used in this environment to convey the same meaning in Ọlụ dialect.

2.1.3 Group 3

Ọlénke?
Oléēkè?/Ọlékè?
Nkèōle?/Kóōle?

'Which?'

These interrogative words can be used in the following question syntactic structures.

a. As in the case of Groups 1 and 2 above, the interrogatives of the group can constitute questions in some communicative contexts as shown in the examples that follow:

19. **[Locutor]:** Éfére àwáala.
plate break-perf.
A plate has broken

20. **Interlocutor** [– whoever wants to know the identity of the plate] can ask: òlékè (or nkéōlè?/òlénkè?/òléēke?/kóōle?) to mean 'which one?'

The locutor can then give a description or an identity of the broken plate so that the interlocutor can understand.

b. In a verbal construction, *òlékè* and its equivalents can occur in-situ, i.e. in object position to realize a kind of question. If a subject noun NP is used, its resultant resumptive pronoun carries a low tone while the noun NP reserves its lexical tones, as seen already in similar structures. This type of question is context dependent...Its purpose is to seek clarification. For example; to the statement:

21. Ézè kụwara éfére.
Eze break-FT plate
Eze broke a plate

an interlocutor who wants to know whose plate or which plate was broken may simply ask:

22. Ézè ọ kụwara olékè?
Pr.N 3sRsp break-FT QW
Which one did Eze break?

23. Ò kụwara kóōle?
3sS break-FT QW
24. Ò kụwara nkéōle?
3sS break-FT QW
} 'Which one did he break?'

25. Ò kụwara òlénke/òléē nke?
3sS break-FT QW

It is important to state that whereas *òlékè* and *kóōle* are often used in rapid utterances, *òléē nke* and *nkéōle* are much more noticeable in slow utterances.

c. The interrogatives of the group can also be moved to sentence initial positions in verbal question constructions followed by the focus marker *kà*, then the subject NP (noun or pronoun) and the verbal form. Example:

26. Òlékè kà Ìwe hùrụ?
QW FOC Pr.N see-FT
Which one did Iwe see?

27. Kóōle kà ó hùrụ?
QW FOC 3s see-FT
Which one did he/she see?

28. Nkéōle kà ì hùrụ?
QW FOC 2s see-FT
Which one did you see?

An important exception occurs in the use of *òléē nke* in which case the focus marker is often omitted. Example:

29. Òléēnke ó hùrụ?
QW 3sS see-FT
Which one did he/she see?

We observe that in the examples above (24-26), the NP (noun or personal pronoun) retains its inherent tones. Similarly, in examples (27-29), the subject pronouns embedded in the emphatic sentences retain their lexical tones.

2.1.4 **Group 4**

Òlé?
Òné? } 'How many?' 'How much?'

These two interrogatives are widely used as free variations, but whereas *òné* is typical of Ọnịcha dialect, *òlé* is characteristic of Ọlụ Igbo dialect. They may signify 'How much?' or 'How many?' depending on the context of usage. They can feature in a number of syntactic structures as follow:

a. In a non-verbal question construction, *ólé* or *óné* can be used alone to ask for the price of a commodity in a shop or marketplace. For example, a buyer points to a dress put up for sale in a shop and asks:

30. Òlé / Òné?
How much?

The seller will no doubt start negotiating with the buyer until a compromise is reached. It is crucial to note the important role of body language in explaining the unspoken yet understood parts of the question in these situations.

b. In a non-verbal construction, *ólé* or *óné* can be placed in apposition with a suitable NP (noun or pronoun) to ask for how many or how much. The structure is usually context dependent. Examples:

31. Jí ōle?
Yams QW
How many yams?

32. Égbè olé?
Guns QW
How many guns?

33. Égo ōne?
Money QW
How much (money)?

34. Égo ōle?
Money QW
How much (money)?

In the above nominal phrases, we notice that the tonal changes between the interrogatives and the NPs are akin to those of associative constructions.

Example:

35. (Associative construction): Jí + Ùbà → Jí Ūba
yam Pr.N Uba's yam(s)

36. (Interrogative): Jí + òlé → Jí ōle?
How many yams?

In each of the preceding examples - (35) and (36) - , the low tone of the 2nd term is raised to downstep. However, the tonal modifications depend on the tonal morphology of the two terms. For example, see (32) where *Égbè* + *ólé* *Égbè ólé*?

c. The interrogatives *ólé* and *óné* can occur in-situ in object position in a verbal syntactic question construction. If the subject NP is a noun, it generates a resumptive pronoun on a low tone as seen in similar cases. This construction is implicit and context dependent. Example:

37. Ézè o chọrọ ólé/óné?
Pr.N 3s want-FT QW
How many does Eze want?

38. Ó chọrọ ólé/óné?
3s want-FT QW
How many does he/she want?

d. This is a situation akin in some ways to [c] above. Here though, the verbal syntactic question construction is explicit wherein the questioned constituent and the question word (*ólé* or *óné*) form a separate unit. Example:

39. Ó gburu éhi ōle?
3s kill-FT cow QW
How many cows did he kill?

40. Ó gburu éhi ōne?
3s kill-FT cow QW
How many cows did he kill?

*41. Ó gburu éhi ólé?
This is ungrammatical.

In the above examples, (41) is ungrammatical because *ólé* (QW) is left with its lexical tone, LH.

e. In focalizations, the interrogatives – *ólé/óné* – can be moved to sentence initial position followed by the focus marker *kà* and the other constituents of the sentence. In this case, the noun NP does not generate a resumptive pronoun. Example:

42.	Òlé	kà	Ụbá	zùrụ?	
	QW	FOC	Pr.N	buy-FT	
	How many did Uba buy?				
*43.	Òlé	kà	Ubá	ọ	zùrù?
	QW	FOC	Uba	3sRs	buy-FT
44.	Òlé	kà	ó	zùrụ?	
	QW	FOC	3s	buy-FT	
	How many did he/she buy?				
45.	Éhi	ōle	kà	ó	zùrụ?
	Cow	QW	FOC	3s	buy-FT
	How many cows did he buy?				

We notice that whereas examples (42) and (44) are implicit, (45) is explicit because the questioned element *éhí* is stated. (43) is ungrammatical as indicated.

2.1.5 Group 5

Gịnī? ——► 'What?'

This group consists of only one interrogative word, *ginī*, with a distinctive morphological structure – low-downstep-high. Whereas all other interrogatives start with initial low tone, *ginī* starts with initial high. Quoting Goldman (1981), Uwalaka (1997:72) postulates that either *ginī* could have been a borrowed and corrupted form of the Yoruba question word, *Kínī*, which also means 'what?', or that both of them could have originated from a common source – the Kwa group – to which Igbo and Yoruba belong in the New Benue Congo family. *Gínī*, like the interrogatives studied so far, has its own syntactic peculiarities.

a. *Gínī* can be used as an exclamation or interjection to express a strong feeling such as shock, surprise, or pain. For example, someone who suddenly learns that his close friend or relative has died or that he has failed an examination he was hoping to pass may likely exclaim:

46. Gínī!
What!

b. *Gínī* can occur in-situ in object position and if NP noun subject is used, it generates a resumptive pronoun on a low tone. Example:

47.	Ézè	o	riri	gínī?
	Pr.N	3sRs	eat-FT	QW
	What did Eze eat?			

c. *Gínī* can occupy initial sentence position without focus marker followed by the verb and its NP. Examples:

48.	Gínī	gbùru	Ézè?
	QW	kill-FT	Pr.NCP
	What killed Eze?		

49.	Gínī	mère	yá?
	QW	do-FT	3sCP
	What happened to him?		

d. In focalization, *gínī* can be moved to the left-most edge of the sentence plus the focus marker *kà*, then the subject NP, and lastly the verb. If the subject NP is a noun, it does not generate a resumptive pronoun. Example:

50.	Gínī	kà	Ubá	rìri?
	QW	FOC	Pr.N	ear-FT
	What did Uba eat?			

51.	Gínī	kà	ó	rìri?
	QW	FOC	3s	eat-FT
	What did he eat?			

In the above examples, the NPs retain their lexical tones.

2.1.6 Group 6

Ònyé? 'Who?'

This interrogative is uniquely used with human referents. Etymologically, *ònyé* appears to have been derived from the lexical item, *ónye* 'person' with high-high inherent tones. The initial low tone on the interrogative word, *ònyé* is according to Uwalaka (1997:92) 'similar to the low tone on Igbo pronouns used to signal Yes/No questions.' *Ònyé* contrasts with the interrogative *gínī* in the sense that

the latter is only applicable to non-humans, inanimate objects and abstract ideas. However, *ònyé* can be used in the following syntactic non-verbal and verbal question constructions.

a. In appropriate communicative contexts, the juxtaposition of *ònyé* with a noun NP in the order *ònyé* plus noun NP can stand for a type of question, used for instance to clarify a doubt about something. The following short dialogue will exemplify:

52. **[Locutor]:** Mótò gburu éghu ùnyaáhù.
Car kill-FT goat yesterday
A car killed a goat yesterday.

53. **[Interlocutor-***anxious to know whose goat***]:** Éghu ōnye?
Whose goat?

In the preceding examples, (52) is a declarative implicit statement in which the identity of owner of the dead goat is left undeclared while in (53), the interlocutor seeks to know whose goat it was that was killed by asking the question 'Whose goat?'

b. *Ònyé* can occur in sentence initial position in a verbal syntactic question construction similar to that of *gínī* (see 48-49). Examples:

54. Ònyé bìara?
QW come-FT
Who came?

55. Ònyé hùrụ Ézè?
QW see-FT Pr.N
Who saw Eze?

56. Ònyé kpòrọ gí?
QW call-FT 2s
Who called you?

c. Like *gínī* [see (47)], *ònyé* can occur in-situ in object position and if a noun NP is used, it generates a resumptive pronoun on a low tone. Example:

57.	Ézè	o	gburu	onyé?
	Pr.N	3s	kill-FT	QW
	Who did Eze kill?			

58.	Ò	hụrụ	onyé?	
	3s	see-FT	QW	
	Who did he see?			

d. As in *gìnī* [see (50)-(51)], *ònyé* can be moved to the left-most edge of the sentence plus the focus marker *kà*, followed by the subject NP and the verb; the subject NP does not generate a resumptive pronoun. Example:

59.	Ònyé	kà	Ézè	gburu?
	QW	FOC	Eze	kill-FT
	Who did Eze kill?			

60.	Ònyé	kà	ó	gbùru?
	QW	FOC	3s	kill-FT
	Who did he kill?			

e. Co-occurrence of *ònyé* and *kèdú*

In the foregoing, we have seen that *ònyé* and *kèdú* to a large extent occur in similar syntactic environments though they belong to different semantic groups. In what follows, it will be seen that both of them can occur in the same interrogative construction in the order *kèdú + ònyé*, the reverse order being so inapplicable that it is quite ungrammatical. In such a combination, Ndimele (2003) opines that *kèdú*, though an interrogative word, can also on occasion play the role of a focus marker to *ònyé* which in turn no longer functions as an interrogative word but as a generic head nominal, *ónye* (person); when this occurs, *kèdú* and the generic head nominal are moved to the left-most edge of the sentence. Then, the use of the focus marker *kà* is no longer applicable since *kèdú* here functions as a focus marker, 'permitting only generic head nominals to co-occur with it.' To illustrate, we borrow the following examples from Ndimele (2003:850):

61.	Kèdú	onye	Ézè		gburu	-? (Focus)
	QW	person		Eze	kill-FT	NC
	Which person did Eze kill (sic)?					

*62.	Kèdú	ònyé	Ézè	gburu	-? (Focus)

	QW	who	Eze	kill-FT	NC
'63.	Kèdú	ónye	kà	Ézè	gburu - ?
(Focus)	QW	who	FOC	Eze	kill-FT NC

In the preceding examples, we notice that in (61), *ónye* as a generic head nominal bears the same tones -HH- as the lexical item *ónye* 'person' instead of those of the interrogative word *ònyé* -LH-. *Kèdú* performs the dual function of interrogative and focus marker.

(62) is ungrammatical because *ònyé* is used as an interrogative word 'who' instead of a generic head nominal, '*ónye*'.

In (63), the use of the focus marker *kà* is redundant and renders the sentence ungrammatical since *kèdú* supersedes it as interrogative and focus marker. Ndimele (2003:851) adds that one reason (63) is ungrammatical may be that "*ónye* 'person' and *kà* occupy the same position, i.e., both serve as the head of the maximal project CP, while *kèdú*, as an interrogative word, occurs as the specifier of CP".

Conclusion

In this study, we have tried to systematize the syntactic behaviour of some Igbo interrogative words, especially those frequently used in the Ọlụ dialect. For pedagogical and practical reasons, we classify the interrogatives into six semantic groups in order to facilitate the study of their individual syntactic behaviours.

Our study reveals that members of the same semantic group do not always feature in identical syntactic environments. The work also shows clearly how Igbo interrogative words can, in non-verbal constructions plus appropriate communicative contexts be used alone or juxtaposed with NP in question forms. It is also evident that from the various verb-QW syntactic constructions that Wh-questions occur in-situ in Igbo and can be voluntarily moved to sentence initial position with structural changes in the constituent elements of the sentence. The head position of QW is characteristic of focalization or emphatic construction in the language. We also see a case where a few of the interrogatives, precisely Group 2 (except *kèdú*) are found to figure in serial verb construction [cf. examples (17) and (18)]

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