

QUESTION FORMATION IN EFUTU

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that except for references to works which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is a result of my original research has neither in whole nor in part been submitted for another degree elsewhere.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,

Daniel Paa Wusu Cobbina and Agnes Adwoa Pokua Cobbina

Parents who strive for their children to see further than they have,

Who sacrifice their dreams so that their children can have one.



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To God be the glory for His loving kindness and tender mercies.

If I have seen further, it is by standing on ye shoulders of giants - Isaac Newton.

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Unless it grows out of yourself, no knowledge is really yours, it is only a borrowed plumage, - D. T. Suzuki, An introduction to Zen Buddhism.

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ABSTRACT

This study is couched within the framework of Basic Linguistic Theory. It takes a descriptive approach to the study of the typology of questions and their responses in the Efutu dialect of the Awutu-Efutu language (Guan, Kwa). It is further aimed at establishing the relevance of focus in questions and to find out how question intonation and questions particles interact. The typology of questions was based on the kind of responses the questions solicit. Three types of questions were identified, namely; polar, alternative and content questions. Polar questions are formed through the use of question intonation or with the question particles áà and ńtóó. It was established that question intonation is the obligatory element that differentiate a declarative from its corresponding polar question. It was also found that question intonation is present even when a question particle is used in the construction of a polar question. Efutu is classified among languages that confirm the utterance over the reality in answering a negative polar question when the state express by the negative question is true. The question intonation is also the only element that leads to the identification of alternative questions as unlike a conjoined declarative with the disjunctive ńtóó question particle. Two strategies were identified in the formation of content questions, namely; in-situ and focused content questions which ends with the aa utterance final clitic. Focus is a common strategy in questions in Efutu and it is associated with saliency and emphasis. This study serves as a reference for future research in Efutu and in question formation.

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1. Interrogative Words and Phrases in Efutu

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	-	First Person
2	-	Second Person
3	-	Third Person
[´]	-	High Tone
[`]	-	Low Tone
~	-	Nasalised
COMPL	-	Completive
DEF	-	Definite
DEG	-	Degree
DET	-	Determiner
FOC	-	Focus
INANIM	-	Inanimate
LOC	-	Locative
MOD	-	Modal
NEG	-	Negative
PRES	-	Present
PRF	-	Perfect

Pro	-	Pronoun
PROG	-	Progressive
PL	-	Plural
SG	-	Singular
SIL	-	Summer Institute of Linguistics
STAT		Stative

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The study of syntax does not only investigate universal tendencies but also, those tendencies that are language specific. Three basic types of sentences: namely declaratives, imperatives and questions are identifiable across languages but these may have peculiar manifestations in various languages. This study focuses on questions (interrogative sentences). This type of sentence is used to elicit information that may or may not be known and to seek for clarification of what has already been uttered. This emphasizes König and Siemund's (2007:291) assertion that "interrogative sentences are conventionally associated with the speech act of requesting information". An utterance may be interrogative in structure; however, it may function pragmatically as a command with or without non-verbal cues such a smile, Dixon (2012). Thus such a construction is 'not' a true question but only one in form because it does not solicit for an answer rather it directs the addressee to perform an action.

Questions may be classified using a number of criteria and according to Collins (2006:184), "the most widely known is that based on the different types of possible answers: between what are commonly called Yes/No questions, alternative questions and wh-questions", (see also Dzameshie 2001, Quirk and Greenbaum 2000, Saah 1998, Baker 1989).

It is attested that different languages use various strategies in question formation, English uses a number of question words in content questions while Ewe may use the question word ka ‘what/which’ after an NP to question the NP and mark construction as a content question, Dixon (2012); with Efutu being no exception. Questions in Efutu can equally be grouped on the basis of Collins’ (2006) classification. This current work takes a look at how questions are formed in Efutu; the types of questions, strategies involved in their formation and how these questions are responded to. The current work does not consider ‘indirect questions’ as true questions and will not discuss them since they do not require answers. Dixon (2012) affirms this and states that “...the label is misleading. They are not any kind of question, but rather statements *about* questions”, (Dixon 2012:406).

1.1 The Socio-linguistics of Efutu

Efutu is a dialect of the Efutu–Awutu language. In the literature, this language is sometimes referred to simply as Efutu (or Afutu) or Awutu (Forson and Gingiss 1976). Dolphyne and Kropp-Dakubu (1988:77) identify Winneba, Senya Beraku, Awutu Beraku (Obutu) and their surrounding villages as places where the language is originally spoken. This work however identifies the language as Awutu-Efutu, as it is identified in the “Map of Ghanaian Languages” published by the Language Centre of University of Ghana.

Awutu-Efutu has three dialects: Efutu, Awutu and Senya. The Efutu dialect, spoken in the Efutu Municipality with Winneba as the capital, is closer to the

Senya dialect spoken at Senya Beraku and its surrounding villages (on the coast) and the in-land dialect. Awutu is spoken at Awutu Beraku, Bawjiase and their surrounding villages. The Awutu dialect is the most widely spoken; however, the Efutu dialect is the most prominent due to the location of its speakers, in the capital of the Winneba Municipality, where there is a number of educational institutions including a university, the University of Education, Winneba. The municipality lies on latitudes 5020 north and longitudes 0025 and 0037 west of south eastern part of Central Region of Ghana with an area of 417.3 square kilometre (km²) (www.ghanadistrict.com/districts). Winneba is the corrupted form of the English phrase 'windy bay', but natives call the place Simpa.

Forson and Gingiss (1976) classify Awutu-Efutu as a Guan language under the Volta-Comoe branch of the Kwa sub-family. It belongs to the southern coastal Guan of Kwa language group of Niger-Congo language family.

Efutu is minimally documented; most aspects such as the syntax, morphology and phonology of the dialect are not adequately described. Obeng (2008) gives a grammatical sketch of Efutu; this happens to be the most comprehensive work on its grammar. Unlike most coastal languages in Ghana such as Fante, Ewe and Ga, it is not written. In areas where the language thrives, schoolchildren are taught using Fante (Akan) and English. This, (Fante in education) and the presence of the speakers of other languages have created a triglossic situation in Winneba; Efutu is used in personal, domestic and traditional activities. According to Boafo et al (2002) and Obeng (2008), Efutu is used in activities such as pouring libation and

along the beaches of Winneba by fisherfolks while Fante and English are used elsewhere especially in schools and churches. This situation indicates that, multilingualism in Winneba is the norm rather than the exception. It is worthy to note that despite the fact that Fante is the most prominent language in the Efutu-speaking area, “there is no indication of imminent language shift in the Awutu-Efutu area” (Boafo et al 2002:32). This is because of the continuous use of the language in some settings such as the domestic setting and the positive attitude of the natives towards the language and the peoples’ willingness to take up literary lessons with the reasons that: “(a) it would preserve the language, (b) written communication in it will promote education in the area and (c) development of the language will preserve the Awutu-Efutu culture and identity”, Boafo et al (2002:30).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Two types of questions, polar and constituent questions have been identified in the literature on Efutu, (Obeng 2008). However, my preliminary study brings out alternative questions in addition to polar and constituent questions. Also, Akrofi-Ansah (2010), working on Larteh; a related Guan language, establishes that focused constituent interrogatives are more emphatic and are constrained by age and social rank. These reasons indicate the necessity of studying questions in Efutu to contribute to the understanding of the grammatical structure of the Efutu language and questions in general.

1.3 Aims

A number of Guan languages have become extinct; such languages include Nterato, which used to be spoken north of Salaga, Mpre and Mpur on the west and east banks of the White Volta respectively (Dolphyne and Kropp-Dakubu 1988). Every language contributes to the study of Language and its extinction also means those contributions it would have given would be lost. The main aim of this thesis is to describe the formation of questions in the Efutu dialect of the Awutu-Efutu language. The specific objectives are;

1. To establish the various types of interrogatives in Efutu and how these are responded to.
2. To investigate whether there is a relationship between focus and content questions.
3. To find out whether intonation is obligatory even in the presence of the ‘ńtóó’ word in polar and alternative questions.
4. To relate questions in Efutu to other related languages, especially Guan languages.

1.4 Relevance

This work is relevant for the following reason;

- a. It will be the major work on questions in Efutu
- b. It will also contribute to the knowledge on questions especially on questions on the Guan language family
- c. It will serve as the basis for future research

1.5 Methodology and Data Collection

Data for this work would be drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data is elicited from native speakers through the use of Lingua descriptive study questionnaire (Comrie and Smith 1977) and also through the recordings of paired picture reading with the use of Topological Picture Relation Series (Max Planck Institute (MPI) tools). The conversations of language consultants were recorded, transcribed and translated with an interlineal glossing. The orthography used is consistent with the language and tones are marked when their presence is necessary to the understanding of the language.

I used six native speakers of Efutu, three female and three males to rule out any gender differences that may exist. These language consultants have ages ranging from twenty-five (25) to sixty-nine (69) and are drawn from Winneba, the language's main geographical location and mainly from along the coast where the language is actively in use.

The sample for the study was generated with the Snow-ball method of sampling. The first language consultant was selected because of my relationship with her, her knowledge of the dialect and her residency in Winneba; this was a Purposive sampling method which is selecting a sample based on a set of given variables. The Snow-ball sampling method is a chain referral method where one language consultant refers the researcher to other potential consultants and these consultants in turn introduce other consultants to the researcher based on their (new consultants) knowledge on the language under investigation. Data was also taken from the recordings of an Efutu programme from Radio Peace on 88.9 megahertz, a community radio in Winneba that holds 10% of its programme in Efutu.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This thesis is descriptive in its approach and it is set within the framework of Basic Linguistic Theory, a term coined by Dixon (1997) to cover “language description and the postulation of general properties of human language” (Dixon 2010:128). The theory as it is expounded on here is adapted from Dixon (1997, 2010a & b and 2012).

The Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) originates out of traditional grammar; it is a theory that has emerged and has been shaped by years of grammar writing. BLT is a theory postulated for grammar writing. The theory is “explicitly aimed at grammar writers, particularly those who are new to the endeavor and about to embark on fieldwork”, Genetti (2011:900). The theory defines grammar as “an integrated system” where a whole has different parts that relate and work together

in unison (Dixon 2010a:24). This definition is based on the fundamental principle of language description which states that linguists must study the comprehensive grammars of languages. This work looks at the interrogative clause because of limited time and space. This fundamental principle originates from “Antoine Meillet (1926:16)’s [sic] aphorism that “une langue constitue un système complexe de moyens d’expression, système ou tout se teint”; (a language makes up a complete system of means of expression, a system in which everything hold together” Dixon (2010a:25).

The theory postulates that in writing the grammar of a language, alternative analyses must be compared based on their strengths and weaknesses, and then the more appropriate one selected. The theory underlies the importance of argumentation; here, every analysis must be justified. In the same way, the theory does not ignore any feature in the language but treats a feature as equally important as the next feature. This brings out the features that are both universal and those that make the language unique and different from other languages. The linguist must justify his arguments with evidence from the internal grammatical structures of the language under study. Moreover, the term ‘analysis’ in Basic Linguistic theory implies “recognising the operative elements of meaning, their underlying forms, and their combination and coding to produce a stream of speech” (Dixon 2010a:133).

The major strength of the theory is the documentation of languages for lasting usage. Linguistics is described as a science and Dixon (2010a:1) states that “the

task of linguists is to explain the nature of human language, through active involvement in the description each viewed as an integrated system – together with explanation of why each language is the way it is, allied to the further scientific pursuits of prediction and evaluation”. This shows an analysis must go through the scientific stages of description, explanation, prediction and evaluation to ensure that the structures in a language are appropriately documented for the unique story that is inherent in the language to be portrayed in a grammar for a lasting usage.

The theory expounds that any grammatical description ought to be woven around ‘word’ and ‘clause’. The ‘word’ is seen as the meeting point of syntax and morphology. How one language identifies what constitutes a ‘word’ vary from how another arrives at the same conclusion. The language specific criteria for a ‘word’ are phonological and grammatical. The difference between two (2) words may be realised from the different tones on their similar sounds or where the stressed is placed on the group of similar sounds as in (1). The grammatical word is a conventionalized association of meaning to structure as observed in (2).

1. a. d̀ ‘deep’
b. d́ ‘like’
2. a. enum ‘five’
b. kukye ‘give birth’

In the example in (1), both words have similar sounds arranged in the same order therefore they have the same structure. However, their differences stem out of the difference in the tones they carry, the low tone in (a) and the high tone in (b). In

(2), the meanings of the words cannot be known just by looking at the words, their meaning have been given by the speakers arbitrarily. The words enum 'five' and kukye 'give birth' have the same meaning as their English counterparts but structurally and phonologically they have no common ground. This is because the speakers of Efutu and English decide to associate the same meaning to different structures arbitrarily. Languages pick the lexicon and associate meaning to them arbitrarily. This and the difference in the arrangements results in the differences in the grammars of languages.

A clause is an activity, state of property that has been described. The theory looks at a 'sentence' as a 'clause'; so a simple sentence is seen to be made up of a single clause. A clause has both syntactic and pragmatic functions. The syntactic function looks at the structures of the utterance and the ordering in the clause as well as clause combination in the utterance. The pragmatic function looks at the type of speech act or mood of the clause. Three (3) types are identified; a statement with a declarative mood, a command with an imperative mood and a question with an interrogative mood. Clauses have internal structure which is made up of the predicate and a number of arguments of which some must be stated or understood from context.

Two (2) main types of clause structures have been identified; the transitive and intransitive clause types. The verb in the predicate solicits for the number and type of arguments needed. The intransitive clause has only a core argument thus the intransitive subject (S) and an intransitive verb. The transitive clause has two (2)

core arguments: a transitive subject in the (A) function and transitive object(s) in its (O) function. In BLT, transitivity is associated with the clause construction and by extension to the subjects, objects and the verb and not only to the verb. Aside from the core arguments, peripheral arguments or adjuncts can also be found in a clause construction of any kind. Adjuncts are arguments which add extra information but are not necessary to the grammaticality of the clause.

The theory presents a number of guidelines in the description of languages. Dixon (2010a) advocates for writers to recheck secondary sources and to quote from original sources (where possible). This is to reduce and eliminate errors, in order to arrive at accurate information from the writer as he wrote it. This is very difficult for most African scholars (especially graduate students) because of the financial difficulties involved in gaining access to most written grammars. The golden rule of rechecking one's sources by Churchill's (1951:616) quote, "verify your quotations" is strongly advocated.

Data collection and presentation are very essential in grammar writing. Elicitations from translations from a lingua franca is eschewed as this language may have influence on the language consultants' language. BLT encourages the observation of the language in its natural environment from situations such as conversations, storytelling and text. The data must be recorded, transcribed and translated into the meta-language with interlineal glossing. The orthography adopted for the documentation must be one that is consistent with the language and not one that has been accepted without any bearing on the actual state or structure of the

language under study. Phenomena such as tone and stress must be represented if it is necessary to the understanding of the true state of the language. The accurate phonological transcriptions are advocated.

Dryer (2001: Home page) distinguishes BLT from formal theories like Generative Grammar and Optimality theories. He states:

“Basic Linguistic theory differs from many other theoretical frameworks in that; it is not a formal theory but an Informal theory. That is, many grammatical phenomena can be generally be characterized with sufficient precision in English (or some natural language) without the use of formalism”.

1.7 Literature Review

As indicated earlier, the literature on Efutu is very limited. Most of the literature report on the classification of Efutu. For instance, Forson and Gingiss (1976) and Dolphyne and Kropp-Dakubu (1988) classify Efutu as a language (not just a dialect) of the Guan family; sometimes call it Awutu, however this current study classifies it as a dialect of the Awutu-Efutu language. Forson and Gingiss (1976) also give a word list on the dialect.

The most descriptive piece on the dialect is Obeng (2008), a grammatical sketch. There is a section on questions in this work and he states that questions in Efutu can be grouped into content questions and polar questions. He emphasized that the question particle ‘*a*’ tends to go together with constituent question words and it is

placed at sentence final and limits the scope of the question word. However, he does not include alternative questions in his analysis of questions in Efutu neither does he discuss how these questions are responded to. The data presented in the work shows that the question words can be both in-situ and ex-situ in the sentence. This thesis establishes that the question word at the ex-situ position is focused because of the presence of the focus marker na after the wh-word. Obeng (2008) establishes na as a focus marker in Efutu. Consider the following examples:

1 a. In(n)ε na asu a?

How -much FM is-it-sold Q

‘how much will it cost?’ (Obeng 2008:91)

b. TV. e-nwa ine?

television NON-HUMAN.Pro-switch how

‘how do we switch a television on?’

In example (1) the question word ine ‘how’ is both at the ex-situ (a) and in-situ (b) positions; in (1a) it is marked for focus with the focus marker na. The position of the focus marker after the question word projects it (question word), emphasizes and shows it is important as it is the constituent being questioned.

Akrofi-Ansah (2010) also observes that, in Late, a related Guan language, when a question word occurs sentence initially, it is marked for focus. This feature is not peculiar to Late but is also found in Efutu (as shown above) and other Kwa languages such as Akan (Saah 1998) and Ga (Kotey 2001). Akrofi-Ansah

establishes that there are three types of constituent interrogatives in Late. These are focused constituents, in-situ interrogatives and discontinuous question word interrogative. Efutu seems to exhibit focused constituents but further investigation is needed to identify other possible types. This work attempts to fill this gap.

According to Saah (1998), in Akan, questions with focused question words are not as a result of syntactic wh-movement for they lack gaps and islands constraints which are the minimum evidence for wh-movement. He further argues that they show similarity in their derivations with focused constituents, relative clauses, cleft and topicalised constructions in relation to the presence of resumptive pronouns. This study purposes to show the trend in Efutu.

The types of questions range from language to language; Kotey (2001) identifies three types of questions in Ga namely: polar, alternative and content questions. She described how direct, indirect and also how elliptical questions are formed in Ga. She explained that the intonation is the most important means of forming polar question because the question particle is optional in polar questions.

Dorvlo (2008:160) posits that, in Logba (Ikpana) a Ghana Togo Mountain language, polar questions are not only answered with 'yes' or 'no' but also with elaborate answers or sentence like 'perhaps' or 'I do not know'. He also identifies three strategies used in the formation of questions in Logba,; these strategies are i) prosodic pitch rising of final syllable ii) the use of a question word iii) the use of special tags. This rising tone on the last syllable is contrary to the lowering tone on the final syllable in Akan (Saah 1998), Ewe (Dzameshie 2001) and it would be

shown that Efutu also exhibits this lowering phenomenon. This rising intonation in Logba is consistent with König and Siemund's (2007:292) assertion that "while it is typical of declaratives to show falling intonation, the great majority of languages use rising intonation in conjunction with interrogatives. Exceptions are very rare indeed". Efutu also exhibits intonation in the formation of polar questions; the current study would delve into this phenomenon and relates it to languages like Logba, Ga, Akan and Ewe. The argument surrounding question intonation has been whether rising intonation is the norm and lowering as a deviation.

Rialland (2007) argues against the assertion that there is nearly always a high pitch somewhere in the sentence which later shows up as a rising intonation in polar questions; linguists such as König and Siemund (2007) who hold such a view believe rising intonation in polar questions is a near universal phenomenon. Rialland draws data from 78 African languages from the four (4) major language families: Niger-Congo (fifty-six (56) languages), Afroasiatic (eight (8) languages), Nilo-Saharan (six (6) languages) and Khoisan (with a single language); all in the Saharan region.

Rialland proposes a "lax African intonation marker" as a result of the common feature of falling intonation (low and lax tones) among most of the languages in the study and of which she proposes as coming from a common ancestry. She shows that the common origin gives rise to the diverse strategies involved in question intonation marking without any evidence of high pitch, namely falling intonation, open vowel, polar tones, lengthening, breathy termination and the

cancellation of penultimate lengthening. She proposes a further investigation into this phenomenon of ‘lax prosody’ which would need a much expansive data.

Rialland comments on the weakness of the work; she states the work cannot be used for statistical studies. This is as a consequence of disproportionate ratio between the number of languages in a family and the number of languages in a family represented in the study. For instance, Bantu with a larger geographical area, a higher number of languages and speakers, has only fourteen (14) languages in the study while Gur with a relatively smaller geographical location and lesser number of speakers and languages, has seventeen languages represented in the study. Rialland explains that this disparity is brought about as a result of the need to work with reliable data. This raises the question of whether or not Efutu has a rising intonation or the proposed ‘lax African prosody’.

Dakubu (forthcoming) is placed in the field of linguistic typology with a cross-linguistic work on question intonation and some utterance final markers in polar and content questions in some Kwa and Gur languages. The paper sets out to establish the ‘lax African prosody’ argued by Rialland (2007) and relies more on Kwa languages (10 languages) than Gur (6 languages) to balance Rialland’s work which used more Gur languages (17) than Kwa (7). The work relies heavily on data from published works.

On the question of a ‘lax African prosody’ and a single etymological source, Dakubu states that they cannot be ruled out; however, the difference goes beyond

the quality of pitch and she posits the distinction must not be between rising and falling intonation rather between “intonational marking and utterance final marking”. It is explained that the utterance final marking might be realised as a morpheme even though it might be in the shape of a tone.

It is established in the work that a language may exhibit register either raising or a distributed high to low intonation contour but not both. This assertion is made based on the data which shows that Gur languages display a high to low contour spread over a number of syllables beside the Kwa languages which do not show this high to low contour rather displays register raising which characterizes polar question; Lelemi and Okri (both Kwa) do not indicate register raising.

The types of intonation prosodies identified leads to the conclusion that the high pitch associated with questions also apply to Kwa and Gur languages “but differently” (Dakubu forthcoming: 19). The types identified include downdrift cancellation, which results when a high tone is not lowered; register expansion, raising tones higher than their normal pitch and high to low contour, rising to a high tone before a glide to a low tone. There is the depiction of rising because of the involvement of at least a high tone. Dakubu proposes further research in register rising and question final high tone in order to establish their status in relation to either interrogation or affect.

The paper gives a systematic analysis of language by language; where a language is studied for its features before another is considered, beginning with Kwa and

then Gur. Since data was mainly from secondary sources, grey areas in these reference works were pointed out, for instance Dakubu states that “the final mid tone posited for Ga (based on Kotey) is wrong” (p12). This work mainly builds on Rialland (2007) and adds the intonation of some content questions which Rialland did not. The paper sheds light on how question intonation in Efutu may be looked at; whether it has rising intonation or utterance final morpheme or both.

Kimper (2006), working on the Karonga dialect of Tumbuka; a Bantu language spoken in Malawi, noted that in Karonga, “wh-movement does not occur when the wh-word is an object or adjunct”, (2006:76). Rather it remains in-situ which makes it similar to polar questions and that wh-movement only occurs with subjects and the landing site can be either before or after the clause. He further on maintains that, the dialect constraints multiple question words within a single clause (Kimper 2006). Kimper depicts that question words in Karonga undergo wh-movement; a concept found in Chomsky’s Transformational Grammar, a formalism that posits that there is a deep structure which is transformed by movements to arrive at a surface structure. However, Kimper does not show the deep structures of the sentences that the surface structures were derived from after the wh-movement. This current work will seek to find out if Efutu shows evidence of wh-movement of question words.

Haegeman (2006) explains that, an answer to a question is a constituent that fills in the missing information that is represented in the question by words such as what, who and which. This indicates that the answers are supposed to give a piece of

information as required by the question. This work does not only investigate how questions are formed but also how they are responded to; this would include both their syntactic structures and semantics.

Asatiani (2004) claims there are different strategies involved in the answering of Polar questions to avoid ambiguity. He states that in confirming or denying a positive Polar question, there is no ambiguity between the utterance and the fact. For example in saying 'yes' or 'no' to the question "is it raining?", there is no ambiguity. However, in answering 'yes' to the negative question "isn't it raining?", it is ambiguous because it can mean 'yes, it is not raining' to confirm the utterance or 'yes, it is raining' to confirm the fact or reality. Languages avoid this ambiguity by choosing one over the other. English ignores the utterance and upholds the fact, so it answers the negative question above as; 'yes' if it is raining and 'no' if it is not raining. Saah (1998) affirms that Akan favours the utterance over the reality and will answer 'yes' if it is not raining and 'no' if it is raining to the negative question above. This work will establish how Efutu answers a negative polar question and identify the strategy used.

1.8 Organisation of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter; the background of the study is discussed in addition to the ethno-linguistic description of Efutu as a dialect. The statement of the problem, aims and relevance of the study are reported on. The chapter furthermore includes the data collection,

methodology, theoretical framework, literature review and concludes on the organisation of chapters of the thesis. The rest of the thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter two is titled polar questions in Efutu and it begins with an introduction to polar questions. The strategies used in asking polar questions; namely intonation and the ńtóó and àá question particles. It discusses how polar questions are responded to and ends on the summary of the chapter.

Chapter three focuses on alternative questions in Efutu. It also discusses how the ńtóó question particle is used in alternative questions, reports on how alternative questions are answered and the chapter is summed up in a summary.

Chapter four sheds more light on constituent questions and question words in the dialect. Moreover, the chapter would investigate focus in Efutu, its interaction with constituent questions and how this type of question is responded to. The chapter ends with a summary.

Chapter five as the final chapter of the work summaries the whole work, make some recommendations for future research and concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

POLAR QUESTIONS

2.0 Introduction

The main thrust of this chapter is to describe how polar questions are formed in Efutu. Languages vary in how they form polar questions. It will be shown that speakers of Efutu use pitch and question particles in the formation of Polar questions.

In this chapter, the features and strategies used to form Polar questions in Efutu would be explored. The different types of focus found in this type of questions in Efutu would also be discussed. Also, the strategies used in answering Polar questions will be outlined.

2.1 Polar Questions

Polar Questions are defined as “questions enquiring whether or not a proffered statement is correct” Dixon (2012:474). Polar Questions are questions that look at responses from the perspective of a polar continuum with the opposite ends being ‘yes’ or ‘no’. therefore, polar questions are question types that require the confirmation or the denial of a proposition using a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. Geluykens (1988:469) posits that, polarity lies in the positive or negative evaluation of the “state of affairs expressed in the question” and adds that there are three possibilities in answering a polar question, namely: confirmation i.e. using Yes, rejection i.e. using No and statement to the effect that confirmation or rejection cannot be provided (e.g. Perhaps, I don’t know). Dixon (2012:377) refers to a polar question as “a question seeking confirmation”. This shows that the

speaker has some pieces of information that s/he would want the addressee to confirm, or deny but which may result in the addressee expressing his doubt. Dixon further explains that the term ‘Yes/No’ question is inappropriate because some languages lack the terms ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and therefore defines this type of question as “question enquiring whether or not a proffered statement is correct”. An example of such a language is the Australian language called Yidin; which requires “a full clause, with predicate and appropriate core arguments” as a response to polar questions, (Dixon 2012:425).

Givón (2001a:312) states that polar questions have strong connection with irrealis because of their low epistemic certainty. This may be because irrealis is not factual for it has not been realised in the real world. Irrealis modality is used for propositions that are yet to be realised in the actual world and on the other hand, epistemic modality is associated with a speaker’s sureness or certainty about his proposition, Crystal (1985). Polar questions are used as requests because requests are not factual. Requests can be refused which will prevent the request from coming into reality. This therefore indicates a low epistemic certainty for polar questions. Consider the following example:

1. Mu-hu wo laesfnsi?

1SG-see 2POSS license

‘May I see your license?’

In (1), the request to see the license shows that the suggested action of giving the license is not yet performed in the real world and as a result, it is not factual.

One feature of a question that distinguishes it from a statement is the fact that it cannot be evaluated as being true or false. Givón (2001b:289) explains that questions cannot have truth value because a question cannot be argued against or challenged for not being true. In the case of polar questions, it is felicitous to rather challenge it in terms of its ‘implicit presuppositions’. This is exemplified in (2).

2. Sukuu n – tɔbi naane ama- kaa mo bɔ Efutu tɔ ńtóó?
 School PL-child DEF.PL HAB- show 3PL LOC E. LOC QuP
 ‘Are schoolchildren taught in Efutu?’

The example in (2) as a question cannot be argued against as being false however, its presuppositions or premises can be challenged. The questions in (3) below challenge the presuppositions of (2).

- 3a. Should there be school children in Efutu?
 b. Are Ghanaian languages used as media of instruction?
 c. Am I supposed to know the answer?
 d. Must I answer and do I gain anything by answering?

The questions in (3) bring into mind certain assumptions and presuppositions and it is these presuppositions that the questions seek to challenge.

The question in (3a) challenges the presupposition that there are children in the Efutu speaking areas. This is because the speaker assumes that there are children

in the area and that there are also schools where the children could attend. Likewise (3b) challenges the presupposition of Ghanaian languages as media of instruction in schools. (3c) challenges the assumption that the addressee knows the answer to the question and (3d) also challenges the presupposition of the addressee's responsibility to answer.

2.2 Strategies in Polar Questions

Polar Questions are language universal tendencies that languages in the world exhibit. However, the strategies used by languages in the formation of Polar questions vary, (Dixon 2012). These strategies are numerous and can be broadly grouped into intonation, introduction of a question particle, word order and a combination of these strategies. English can form polar questions by all three strategies: (rising) intonation, placing a tensed auxiliary before the subject (subject auxiliary inversion) and the use of a question particle; Hebrew uses (rising) intonation; Swahili uses intonation and use of a question word, (cf. Dixon 2005:58, Givón 2001b: 294); Akan uses (falling) intonation on the last phonological segment and question particle (Saah 1994, Amfo 2001). Efutu makes use of intonation and question particles in the formation of polar question (cf. Obeng 2008) and this is achieved with the non-verbal communicative cue of the raising of the eyebrows as a sign of expecting an answer from the addressee. However, speakers of Yélí[^] Dnye (Papuan) use none of the strategies above but form polar questions from an information mismatch between the speaker and the addressee: so if the addressee has more knowledge on a subject, the utterance from

the addressee would be perceived as a polar question for there is no syntactic difference between declaratives and polar questions, Levinson (2010:2743). Dryer (2008:470) also identifies Chalcatongo Mixtec (Oto-Manguean; Mexico) as one example of those languages that make no distinction between declaratives and Polar questions. The term ‘polar’ is adopted rather than ‘yes or no’ in this work because the answers solicited by this type of question in Efutu goes beyond a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

In the following sections, I will discuss the strategies used to form Polar questions in Efutu.

2.2.1 Question Intonation

The argument that surrounds intonation, (question intonation), in the literature is centered on whether polar questions end on rising or falling intonation. O’Connor and Arnold (1973:55) working on the British English dialect, generalize and emphasize that, “this [the low bounce i.e. a contour ending in a low rise] is by far the most common way of asking such questions, it should be regarded as the normal way (...)” (cited in Geluykens (1988)). This assertion is contrary to the view of Fries (1964:250) who, working on the American English dialect maintains that “the quantitative information does not support the much repeated assertion that yes/no questions ‘regularly’, ‘usually’, ‘characteristically’ have a rising intonation pattern”. According to Dixon (2012:394), the nature of question

intonation vary among languages considerably. However, “the constant is that there is *always a rise*, somewhere towards the end of the sentence”.

Rialland (2006) argues that falling intonation is characteristic of Polar questions and posits for a single low tone origin for Polar questions in African languages. Dakubu (forthcoming) counters this assertion that there is rising intonation in Polar questions in African languages but the argument must be on intonational marking and utterance final marking.

Intonation is the use of pitch to achieve a grammatical function and this is attained through the vibration of the vocal cords. Dixon (2010a:279) defines intonation as “a type of prosody realised by pitch generally applying over clause or sentence”. Fromkin and Rodman (1978) cited in Bodomo (1997:13) explain that “languages that use pitch syntactically...in which the changing pitch of the whole sentence is otherwise important to the meaning are called intonation languages”.

Efutu is a tone language. Tone is used to distinguish between two otherwise similar words, Obeng (2008). Dediu and Ladd (2007:10944) state that “in tone languages, pitch is organized into tone phonemes that are functionally comparable with consonants and vowel phonemes”.

Efutu has two level tones namely high and low. Tone in Efutu is phonemic and Efutu only makes use of intonation in polar questions. The difference between the examples in (4a, 5a, 6a) and (4b, 5b, 6b), are the tones they bear. The sounds and their sequences in both those in (a) and (b) are the same, however the differences among them are the tones they bear: the high (´) and low (`) tones.

4a. **dò** deep

b. **dó** like

5a. **dí** follow

b. **dì** eat

6a. **sò** receive

b. **só** buy.

The Akan language like Efutu is a tone language and tone is used to distinguish otherwise similar words. Tone in Akan is also phonemic and intonation is the only distinguishing feature in polar question, (see Dolphyne 1988). In the examples in (7-10) (from Dolphyne 1988:66), the difference in meaning is as a result of the dissimilar tones they bear.

7a. **dá** - sleep, day

b. **dà** - never

8a. **pápá** - good

b. **pàpá** - father

c. pàpà - fan

9a. kó!kó - hill

b. kòkò – chest

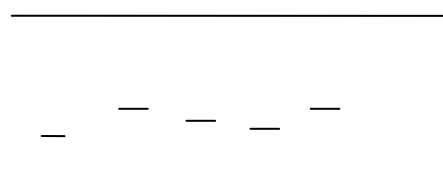
A polar question formed with the intonational strategy in Efutu is realised with an extra low tone on the final phonological segment and this contrasts it from declaratives. A declarative sentence terminates with a high tone on its final syllable or phonological segment in Efutu. Consider the examples below:

10a. Kòfí' mǒ'-bà yé'.

Kofi 3SG-come here

‘Kofi came here.’

i.

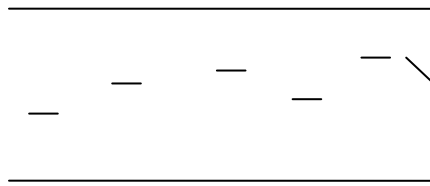


b. Kòfí' mǒ'-bà yê?

Kofi 3SG-come here.Q

‘did Kofi come here?’

ii.



I adopt Dolphyne's (1988) analysis of representing tones and their height with dashes between two parallel lines where the top lines represent high tones and the down ones represent low tones and Saah's (1998) analysis of representing the tonal pattern as a High-Low-High in the examples in (10). The sentence types in (10a. and b.) are declaratives and questions respectively: the declarative in (10a.) has a high tone on the final syllable with a tonal pattern in (10i); LOW-HIGH-HIGH-LOW-HIGH while the question in (10b.) terminates with a low tone with the pattern in (10ii): LOW-HIGH-HIGH-LOW-FALLING. The pitch on the entire question, in (10b.), rises a 'little' higher and is faster than that on the statement in (10a). This phenomenon is mentioned by Obeng (2008: 98) as a "fast tempo".

11a. ɔ-sɔ́.

2SG-buy.FACT

'You bought it'

b. ɔ-sɔ́ʔ

2SG - buy.FACT.Q

‘Did you buy it?’

12. a. Àné-báá-dà áné-wó.

3PL-PROG-COP 3PL-go.STAT

‘We are leaving’.

b. A`né-báá-dà áné-wó`?

3PL.SUBJ-PROG-COP 3PL.SUBJ-go.STAT

‘Can we leave?’

13. Onyi-n mu-wo ma-bɔ asisɔ koraa

Man-DEF 3POSS-SELF 3SG.SUBJ-COP interesting at all

‘Is the man interesting at all?’

A similar trend is seen in (11, 12, and 13). In (11) the difference between the statement in (a) and the question in (b) lies on the tones on their final syllables. (11) is the type of structure in which the object is inferred. This is because the verb sɔ ‘buy’ can both be used transitively and intransitively. It is used intransitively in (11).

A serial verb construction is seen in (12), where two (2) verbs are in succession. The verbs involved, da the copula and wɔ ‘go’ both carry the first person plural subject pronoun ane. The copula carries a progressive aspect while the second verb wɔ ‘go’ is stative. In Efutu, the bare form of the verb can either be past or stative.

(13) is an example of a copula construction with an adjective asisɔ ‘interesting’ filling the copula complement slot. The adjunct *koraa* ‘at all’ used here expresses the doubt of the speaker as to whether the said man is one who is interesting.

A similar rising pitch on polar questions is seen in Akan (Dolphyne 1988:55), and some Kwa languages such as Siya and Buem unlike some Gur languages such as Farefari (Dakubu forthcoming). Thomas (1974) cited in Omoreyi (1988:20) observes that in Engenin (Edoid), “polar question sentences not marked by any question morpheme, the pitch of the whole sentence is raised and the final tone, if H, falls to L”, a situation similar to what pertains in Efutu. Efutu exhibits the process of downdrift; a process whereby the pitches of high tones get reduced or downstepped when they occur after low tones. Efutu shows register raising in Polar questions and this occurs as a result of the downdrift cancellation which prevents high tones from being lowered after low tones. These features of downdrift cancellation and register raising in Efutu strengthens Dakubu’s (forthcoming: 18) assertion that register raising occurs in downdrift languages such as Kwa languages like Akan, Ga and Dangme.

This final low tone that characterizes intonational polar questions in Efutu is also evident in Akan (Saah 1998): however, this is contrary to König and Sigmund’s (2007:292) assertion that “while it is typical of declaratives to show falling intonation, the great majority of languages use rising intonation in conjunctions

with interrogatives. Exceptions are very rare”. They further give Akan as an example of this rarity. Efutu shows falling intonation on the final syllable of polar questions. This is an exception to König and Sigmund’s exposition. Rising intonation as explained by König and Sigmund, I think is in relation to the pitch on the final syllable and not on the entire utterance. I perceive this distinction because of his example using Akan; Akan has rising intonation on the entire utterance (polar question) and falling intonation on the final syllable.

There is an utterance final clitic in the form of a low tone attached to the final phonological segment of Polar questions in Efutu. This final clitic is in accordance with Dakubu’s (forthcoming) suggestion of some languages having utterance final clitics as Polar question markers. The final low tone is an extra tone that docks on the final syllable and turns a statement into a question. The (extra) low tone creates the perception of a question than a statement: there is a perception of falling tone (H-L contour) when the final syllable terminates with a low tone. Schacter and Fromkin (1968) were the first to mention an extra low tone in Polar questions in Akan as a question particle and this current work makes a similar claim with regards to Polar questions in Efutu.

In Late, a related Guan, tone is used to distinguish between a polar question and a corresponding declarative sentence when the verb is in the perfect or the future forms. However, unlike in Efutu, polar questions in Late terminates on a high tone. The examples in (14) illustrate the phenomenon in Late.

Examination-DEF PERF-NEG-announced

‘Haven’t the examination results been announced?’

17. Mu-ni mu-n-sɔ mpua-n ná m`?

3.SG.POSS-mother 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-buy banana-DEF for 3SG.OBJ

‘Didn’t her mother buy the banana for her?’

The examples in (15, 16 and 17) have verbs that are negated through nasalization of their initial sounds. In (15), both verbs occurring are negated through nasalisation, the copula da, undergoes homorganic nasalisation and turns into na. It is seen in the above examples that the negative markers are closer to the verbs.

2.2.2 Question Particles

Trask (1993:20) defines a particle as “traditionally any lexical item which exhibits no inflectional morphology”. He adds that the assertion is valid for languages whose open classes do inflect. Nouns in Efutu inflect for number; verbs inflect for tense, aspect, number, person and negation while adjectives do not bear any inflection. A particle in Efutu must not belong to any of the open classes in the language. Consider the examples below with the adjectives in bold:

Adjectives :

18a. atobi **kyikyibi**

Child small

b. n-tobi **kyikyibi**

PL-child small

‘small child’

‘small children’

19a. mi nyimbi onyi **pa**

1SG.POSS sibling man old

‘My elder brother’

b. mi nyimbi e-nyi **pa**

1SG.POSS sibling PL-man old

‘My elder brothers’

In the examples in (18 and 19), the semantic type of adjective involved is size, kyikyibi ‘small’ and pa ‘old’. The examples in (18a and 19a) are adjectives that qualify nouns that are in their singular forms and these adjectives bear no inflection. However, those in (18b and 19b) qualify plural nouns and they also bear no inflection. This indicates that adjectives in Efutu do not mark number.

In addition, Fraser (1996) cited in Amfo (2001:4) describes particles as “linguistically encoded cues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intention”. The particles used in polar questions must therefore give the signal of the utterance being interrogative. Based on Fraser and Trask’s definitions, and Saah’s (1998) test for question particles in Akan, I suggest a similar test for Polar question particles to validate their occurrence in Efutu:

- I. It must not belong to any lexical/functional category, if it belongs to any such category, it must trigger the question intonation associated with Polar questions.
- II. It must not have inflectional morphology.
- III. If it occurs in content questions, it must occur with a question word.

The question particle must trigger the falling intonation on the sentence final syllable to form polar questions without which the construction becomes a declarative and not a polar question. The final low tone that is characteristic of polar questions in Efutu does not dock on the question particle; rather it docks on the final syllable of the ultimate lexical item. The question particles are never used without the question intonation. The major role of the question particles is to syntactically categorize a construction as a polar question. The subsequent sections discuss the questions particles found in the Efutu dialect.

2.2.2.1 The Ńtóó Question Particle

The use of ńtóó question is the commonest strategy in the formation of polar questions in Efutu: speakers use it most of the time. It obligatorily occurs sentence finally in the formation of a polar question, together with the final falling contour associated with this type of questions. The Ńtóó particle plays the syntactic role of marking a sentence as a polar question.

This particle has three (3) syllables; /n/ with a high tone, /to/ with a high tone and /o/ another high. The high tones on the particle is not unique to Efutu but can be found in other languages such as the Akan polar question particle “aná” to strengthen Dakubu’s (forthcoming) assertion that in some languages the particle denoting the polar question and also used in alternative questions acquires High tone specifically in such functions.

This particle is established as a Polar question particle in Efutu. This is because, using the test for question particles mentioned earlier, ‘ńtóó’ belongs to the category of conjunctions but at the sentence final, it triggers the question intonation associated with Polar questions. This means it does not change the falling tone on the last lexical syllable in Polar questions. This particle cannot be used in a declarative when it occurs sentence finally. It does not exhibit any form of inflectional morphology nor occurs in content questions. These are seen in the examples in (20-22);

20a. Onyi-n mu-wo ma-bɔ asisɔ̂ ńtóó?

Man-DEF 3POSS- SELF 3SG.SUBJ-COP interesting QuP

‘Is the man interesting?’

b. *Onyi-n mu-wo ma-bɔ asisó ńtóó.

Man-DEF 3POSS-SELF 3SG.SUBJ-COP interesting QuP

‘Is it raining?’

24. * Ñtóó yimpo - n mii - tow?

QuP rain - DEF PROG – fall

‘Is it raining?’

In (23), ntóó occurs at sentence final position together with the final falling intonation on the final syllable of the last lexical item tow ‘fall’. The movement of the question particle from its sentence final position renders the construction ungrammatical as shown in (24). The particle triggers the question intonation associated with polar questions in Efutu only at the sentence final position and no other position. This particle can also be used in a noun phrase (NP) as depicted in (26).

25. Kofi mu - fi- i Nkran mba ñtóó?

Kofi 3SG.SUBJ –come.from - PERF Accra come QuP

‘Has Kofi returned from Accra?’

26. Kumaa ñtóó?

Kumaa QuP

‘Is it Kumaa?’

The difference between (25) and (26) lies in their syntactic structures. (25) is an example of a serial verb construction. The verbs in the construction, fi ‘come from’ and mba ‘come’ both share a subject Kofi and perform the same action of *returning* from Accra, which is occupying the object position. However, (26) is a type of construction with only a NP and the question particle. Here, the NP is a proper noun Kumaa and it is the element being questioned.

The ‘ńtóó’ particle can also be used in negative polar questions. Negation in Efutu is inflected on the verb. The negative affix is closer to the verb among the affixes that get attached to the verb and these include the pronoun, tense and aspect. In examples (27, 28 and 29), the verbs are negated with the N- negative marker.

27. Onyi-n mbra kyε asuto-n iso mu-n-ni ńtóó?

Man-DEF law that land-DEF LOC 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-know QuP

‘Doesn’t the man know the laws of the land?’

28. Mu-n-wɔ ntenkyin ńtóó ?

3SG.SUBJ-NEG-go abroad QuP

‘Has he gone abroad?’

29. Atɔbi-n mu-m-fale ńtóó?

Child-DEF 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-hurt QuP

‘Won’t the child get hurt?’

Ŋtɔ́ɔ́ is similar to the Ga polar question particles to/ anto /nto. However, their positions in the sentence differ. The Ga particles can only occur sentence initial position and not at the final position where the Efutu particle occurs. This makes them similar in their usage yet different in where they can occur. The Ga particles are exemplified below;

30. a To/anto/nto loo lɛ fɛɛ ɛfite?

QP fish DEF all spoil

‘All the fish have gone bad, is that not so?’

b.* O-nu sane lɛ he momo to/anto/nto?

2SG-hear case DEF self already QP

‘Is the fish in the bowl?’

(Kotey 2001: 30-31)

Besides polar question marking, Ŋtɔ́ɔ́ is also used in Alternative questions as a disjunctive marker (see chapter 3 and Obeng 2008).

2.2.2.2 The àá Question Particle

The àá particle is the least used in the formation of polar questions in Efutu. This particle identifies with polar questions because when attached to a declarative, it triggers the question intonation associated with a polar question and turns the

example of the use of the particle in Fante is taken from (Saah 1998) and shown in (33).

33. Wo-be-ma me bi à ?

2sg-FUT-give 1sg some QuP

“Will you give me some (of it)?” (Saah 1998:12)

In (31), the negation comes before the pronoun which is attached to the copula. The copula is realised as de through assimilation instead of da, the copula get assimilated because of the unrounded nature of the last sound of the pronoun. Efutu has vowel harmony; there must be advanced tongue root (ATR) harmony and roundness in a stem and its affixes.

A similar question particle a is used in the formation of polar questions in Buli (Gur). This particle is the distinguishing feature of polar questions from similar declarative sentences. An example from Buli is seen below;

	<u>Declarative</u>		<u>Polar Question</u>
34.	<p> ñ kùlí yéí 1SG go-Past home (I went home) </p>		<p> ñ kùlí yéí â 1SG go-Past home QP (I went home) Did I go home? </p>

(Akanlig-Pare 2005:92)

2.3 Focused Polar Questions

A focused construction “ denotes a type of sentence that serves to promote a specific constituent, its focus, to a position of particular prominence by setting it off from the rest of the sentence in one way or another” (Drubig and Schaffer 2001). Halliday (1967) cited in Amfo (2010:4) states that focus is a kind of emphasis that identifies information as “new” and “nonderivable”. There are different strategies that languages use in focusing a constituent. Ameka (1992) establishes that, the Ewe language uses a change in word order and the use of a special morpheme in achieving focus; Akan like Ewe uses a similar strategy of word order and a morpheme as a focus maker, (Amfo 2010).

Dixon (2012:395) establishes that, “the focus technique is likely to be found in a language where a polar question is shown by a particle or an interrogative affix”. This assertion is apt for what happens in Efutu, for Efutu uses an interrogative affix (the final low tone) and question particles in the formation of questions. Dixon (2012) adds that in polar questions, a specific lexical constituent may be focused and that in English, this (focus) is achieved by pitch; stressing the focused constituent.

Efutu marks focus by fronting what is to be focused (word or constituent) to the initial position of the sentence followed by the na focus particle. Obeng (2008:74) states that “emphasis is a major reason for focusing in Efutu” and establishes that the focus marker is na.

Dzameshie (2001) argues that the focus of the question in Polar questions is the entire utterance and not just part of it. Contrary to Dzameshie's assertion, the Efutu dialect uses focus marking in projecting the prominence of a constituent in the formation of polar questions.

Efutu distinguishes between four types of focus in polar questions. These types come out as a result of the constituent that is focused or that is projected. A focused polar question is used to show presupposition and uncertainty, when an speaker seeks for confirmation or denial from the addressee.

The presupposition has to do with the unfocused constituent or part of the polar question and the uncertainty is related to the focused constituent that is to be affirmed or denied.

Givon (2001b) suggests that there are different types of focus in Polar questions depending on the constituent that is focused. In the subsequent sections, I discuss the types of focus found in Polar questions in Efutu.

2.3.1 Neutral Focus

Neutral focus is the type of focus whereby the prominence falls on the entire utterance and not just one of its constituents. This is in accordance with Dzameshie's (2001) assertion of the focus of the polar question being on the entire

utterance; as a result, the focus marker na is not used. The question in (33) has no focus marking so prominence falls on the whole utterance and not just on one of its constituents.

35. Kofi mo - wɔ Kumasi ntóó ?

Kofi 3SG.SUBJ -go Kumasi QuP

‘Has Kofi gone to Kumasi?’

In (35), the focus does not fall on neither the transitive verb nor the transitive subject (A) in the A function nor on the object in the O function. This means the whole utterance is being questioned and not just a constituent contained in it. For a confirmation to be given, the whole proposition must be valid and a denial can be given if any of the components is untrue.

2.3.2 Subject Focus

In this type of polar question, the subject of the sentence occurs in its canonical position followed immediately by the focus marker na. In the utterance in (34), there is a presupposition that someone has gone to Kumasi, the speaker asks for confirmation from the addressee on whether it is indeed Kofi who has gone to Kumasi. The focus therefore falls on the subject (in the case of (36) Kofi) and it becomes what is questioned.

36. Kofi na mo-wɔ Kumasi ntóó?

Kofi FOC 3SG.SUBJ-go Kumasi QuP

‘Is it Kofi who has gone to Kumasi?’

In (36), the speaker is certain that someone has been to Kumasi but he is not certain of the identity of that individual. He therefore seeks for confirmation by focusing the subject in doubt.

2.3.3 Object Focus

In object focused polar questions, the element in the object position of the sentence is projected and questioned for its truth value. In example (37), the destination ‘Kumasi’ is focused by fronting and followed by the focus marker; the speaker seeks to confirm if Kumasi is Kofi’s destination and not any other. However, if (Kumasi) is not fronted to the sentence initial position rather; it is preceded by the modal ayékwááfá.

37. Ayékwááfá Kumasi na Kofi mo -wɔ́ nítóó?

MOD Kumasi FOC Kofi 3SG.SUBJ-go QuP

‘Is it Kumasi that Kofi has gone to?’

38. Simpa na ɔ-wɔ́ sukuu bɔ́?

Winneba FOC 2.SG.SUBJ-go school LOC

‘Is it Winneba you attended school?’

(38) is another example of object focus. Here, the object is fronted to the sentence initial position and followed with the na focus maker. By focusing Winneba, the speaker seeks to ascertain if it is in Winneba that the addressee attended school and not any other place.

2.3.4 Adjunct Focus

An adjunct is a grammatical element that is not specified by the verb in a sentence and as such, it is not needed in forming a grammatical sentence; it only adds more information to the sentence. In (39), the adjunct ɔkyi ‘tomorrow’ is an adverb of time and it is not needed for the sentence to be grammatical for it is not a complement of the verb wɔ ‘go’. However, it can be focused and questioned by fronting it and following it with the focus marker. The adjunct is therefore projected into prominence and questioned for confirmation.

39. ɔkyi na Kofi mo-baa-wɔ Kumasi`?

Tomorrow FOC Kofi 3SG.SUBJ-FUT-go Kumasi

‘Is it tomorrow that Kofi will go to Kumasi?’

2.3.5 Verb Focus

Verb focus involves the focusing of the verb in the sentence. In this type of focus, the na focus maker follows the verb which is being focused. In Efutu, the verbs carry the subject pronoun and this pronoun comes immediately before the verb.

Dorvlo (2008) identifies this phenomenon in Logba as a subject marker (SM). As a result, in focusing the verb, the pronoun is also affected.

40. Ayékwááfá mu-wɔ na sisĩ mi-báʼ?

MOD 1SG.SUBJ-go FOC back 1SG.OBJ-come

‘Should I go and come back later?’

In (40) the verb is focused together with the subject pronoun. However, they are not fronted to the initial position of the sentence. This is because the sentence initial position is being occupied by the modal ayékwááfá as it is seen in (40).

To conclude, the focus marking is not without the rising intonation followed by a falling tone on the last syllable of on the last lexical item, to identify it as a polar question and not a statement.

2.4 Answering Polar Questions

Dixon (2012:390) observes that a “true” question “expects an answer” and that the “appropriate response may be vocal, or it may consist simply of a culturally-appropriate gesture”. Efutu speakers sometimes use ‘culturally appropriate gestures’ in the answering of polar questions. This is done by the nodding of the head to mean ‘yes’ and the shaking of the head to mean ‘no’. A shrug (the rising and falling of the shoulders) connotes neither ‘yes’ nor ‘no’ i.e. indifference (may be or I don’t know).

Rooy (2003) argues that though both positive and negative polar questions can be completely answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’, “they cannot always be used interchangeably without a change of meaning” (p.293). This is explained further by Asatiani (2004) that the interchange causes an ambiguity and this ambiguity only exists in answering negative polar questions. A straight forward correlation exists in answering positive polar questions: ‘no’ means a denial of the utterance and a ‘yes’ connotes a confirmation of the proposition expressed in the utterance. In Efutu, like in English, in answering a positive polar question, the addressee confirms the proposition expressed by answering with $\tilde{\varepsilon}$ ‘yes’ and denies it (proposition) with a ó!ó ‘no’ and a maasɔdi ‘I don’t know’ ‘maybe’ or ‘perhaps’ when the addressee lacks appropriate information to answer the question correctly.

In (41) the Efutu positive polar question and answers are seen, in (i), $\tilde{\varepsilon}$ like the English ‘yes’ confirms the proposition expressed by the question, in (ii) the o!o like the English ‘no’ denies the proposition expressed and maasɔdi ‘I don’t know’ in (a.iii.) depicts the addressee’s lack of knowledge on the proposition to answer correctly.

41. Question:

Mo-wɔ sukuu bɔ Simpá?

3SG.SUBJ-go school LOC Winneba

‘Did she attend school in Winneba?’

Answers:

- i. Ĕ - Yes
- ii. Ò!ò - No
- iii. Maasɔdi - I don’t (where whether did or not).

As already observed, Asatiani (2004) explains that languages avoid the ambiguity in answering negative polar questions by choosing the fact or reality over the utterance. Efutu chooses confirming the utterance to confirming the reality (as it pertains in the real world). English on the contrary confirms the reality over the utterance. Levinson (2010:2745) posits that Yéí’ (like Efutu) is a truth- affirming type of language and it is unlike English for it answers yes to a negative polar question when the negative question holds true; the Efutu example illustrates this in (42).

42 a. Question

Kumaa mo – m – ba ye ítóó?

Kumaa 3SG.SUBJ- NEG – come here QuP

‘Hasn’t Kumaa been here?’

b. Answers:

- i. Ĕ ‘Yes’
- ii. Ò!ò ‘No’

- iii. Maasɔdi ‘I don’t know’ (I don’t know whether she has been here or not)

In (40.a.) the nasal sound /m/ negates the verb ba ‘come’ thereby making the utterance a negative polar question; this is achieved together with the question intonation and the ńtóó question particle. In answering the negative polar question in (40), the addressee responds Ǽ ‘yes’ in (i) to confirm the utterance and to mean ‘Kumaa has not been here’ and Ò!ò ‘no’ in (ii.) to deny the utterance and to mean that ‘Kumaa has been here’; answering with Maasɔdi ‘I don’t know’ in (iii.) will portray an uncertainty, and it conveys the idea ‘ I don’t know if Kumaa have been here or not’.

On the contrary, English as already observed, favours the reality to the utterance; in (43), English answers ‘yes’ in (i) to confirm the reality to mean ‘Kumaa has been here’ and ‘no’ to mean ‘Kumaa has not been here’.

43 a. Question:

Hasn’t Kumaa been here?

b. Answers:

i. Yes

ii. No

Rooy (2003:293) says, “...negative polar questions can be used if the speaker expects a *negative* answer”. This is so because a negative polar question presupposes the speaker’s knowledge is in the negative thus s/he believes the negative proposition holds true and seeks a confirmation of it by asking the negative question. This statement in Efutu is true in the light that, agreeing to the utterance produces a negative answer as seen in (43 and 44).

The scope of negation in Efutu is limited because negation is only realised on the verb by nasalization of the first sound of the verb. This situation does not help in creating any syntactic/semantic ambiguity in the expected answer as suggested by Ladd (1981 cited in Rooy and Šafářová 2003:293). Rather, the presence of the negative and not the scope creates ambiguity in Efutu that results in differences on the strategies languages adopt in answering negative polar questions.

Also, there can be an explanation of the answer after the ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The example in (15) is repeated in (44) for emphasis.

44a. Question

○ - n- na n- tworow Efutu’?

b. Answer

ɛ̃, mi - n- na n- tworow Efutu

Yes 1SG.SUBJ - NEG- COP NEG - write.STAT Efutu

‘Yes I don’t write Efutu.’

In (44), the answer starts with a ‘yes’ because it is answering a polar question. However, there is a whole clause as an expansion of the answer to explain the confirmation. This explanation includes the pronoun shift from the second person singular subject pronoun in the question to the first person singular subject pronoun in the answer. This shift is as a result of the turn taking that occurs in question and answer situations. The answer also includes the serialized verbs, da, the copula and tworɔw ‘write’. The copula da has undergone homorganic nasalization to be na as a result of the negation it carries. The verbs in the answer are negated because the answer is in the negative. As has already been discussed, the confirmation of a negative answer is realised with a ‘yes’ as is seen again in example (44b).

2.5 Summary

This chapter discusses the nature of polar questions in Efutu. The term ‘polar’ is used instead of the popular term ‘yes-no’. Two strategies are identified in the formation of polar questions in Efutu, namely; question intonation and question particles.

This work establishes that polar questions differ from their equivalent statement on mainly their pitch. The pitch on the polar question is a ‘notch’ higher than on the statement (rising intonation) and with an extra Low tone realised on the last phonological element. The presence of the question intonation is obligatory in the formation of polar questions.

Two question particles are identified; **ńtóó** and **a’à**; with **ńtóó** being the one being frequently used. It is possible to use the question intonation alone without the question particles. The function of the question particles is to mark an utterance as a polar question. The question particle does not change the tone of the final syllable before it.

It is established that positive and negative polar questions differ on the negation that the verb carries through nasal assimilation of its (verb) first sound in negative polar questions; positive questions do not include negation on the verb.

Focus is used as a strategy of projecting a constituent into prominence and four types are identified in polar questions; neutral, subject, object and adjunct focus. In Efutu a morpheme **na** is used in marking focus after fronting the focused constituent. The neutral focus makes no use of the focus marker and in this type, the focus fall on the entire utterance and not on a constituent. Contrarily, in

subject, object and adjunct focus, the focus falls on the focused constituent, thus the subject, object and adjunct respectively.

The speakers of Efutu in answering a negative polar question, confirms the utterance over the reality unlike English which confirms the reality over the utterance.

The answers of polar questions are not only ξ 'yes' and \u00f0!o 'no' which are at the opposite ends but also maas\u00f3di 'I don't know'. Non-verbal communicative cues such as nodding, shaking of the head and shrugging can also be used as responses to polar question.

CHAPTER THREE

ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores what alternative questions are, how they are formed in Efutu, their features and their responses. The argument whether polar and alternative questions are the same or one as a part of the other is explored (see Omoruyi 1988, Bolinger 1978 and Kotey 2001). The situation as it pertains in Efutu is discussed. The chapter concludes that alternative questions and polar questions are syntactically and semantically different and not the same in Efutu. It is also established that pitch (intonation) is the difference between alternative questions and their structurally similar declaratives with the disjunctive conjunction.

The chapter is divided into four major sections; the first section looks at the phenomenon of alternative questions, the second discusses alternative questions and how they are realised in the Efutu dialect. The third section explores the argument of alternative and polar questions being the same and it studies how Efutu rejects this assertion. The fourth section summarises the chapter.

3.1 Alternative Questions

Alternative questions are “used to ask the addressee to decide which of two or more alternative holds, i.e. is it true or no”, König and Sigmund (2007:291). Alternative questions are therefore questions that give the option of choosing from two alternatives, a set or range of possibilities. As a question, it solicits information by asking if a situation or the other holds true. An Alternative question expresses opposing ideas as alternatives. This type of question is not a language universal feature because not all languages of the world exhibit it, Dixon (2012:398). Karttunen (1977:3) terms it as ‘choice questions’ because of the contrastive choices given to choose from in alternative propositions. Another name given to alternative questions in the literature and which is now becoming extinct is ‘nexus-questions’, Jespersen (1924) cited in Karttunen (1977:3).

The next section looks at how the speakers of Efutu form alternative questions.

3.1.1 The Formation of Alternative Questions

The strategies applied by languages of the world to form alternative questions are varied. These varied strategies fuel the diverse perspectives on the similarities and dissimilarities of polar and alternative questions.

According to Saah (1998), the speakers of Akan use the particle anaa ‘or’ in the formation of alternative questions. In Ewe, the particle alo/loo ‘or’ is used in the formation of alternative Questions, Dzameshie (2001). In Ga, aloo/loo ‘or’ is a

particle used in both declaratives and questions (polar and alternative) depending on the intonation of the construction, Kotey (2001). These particles in Akan, Ewe and Ga correspond to the English disjunctive marker 'or'.

Disjunctive conjunction is a process of joining words or clauses of the same syntactic category in a sentence. This is achieved with a disjunctive particle such as the English 'or', the Akan anaa, the Ewe alo/loo, the Ga aloo/loo and the Efutu ńtóó.

3.2 Alternative Questions in Efutu

In this section, the strategies used in forming alternative questions are discussed. The features of the alternative questions and how they differ from disjunctive declaratives are also explored.

3.2.1 ńtóó Question Particle

Alternative questions in Efutu are formed with the disjunctive question particle ńtóó 'or' which joins the alternatives expressed in the alternative question. There are different strategies employed in expressing alternatives in alternative questions in Efutu. The first of the strategies to be discussed is that, there can be two independent clauses joined by the disjunctive marker ńtóó. With this strategy,

ńtóó is used to join elements of the same syntactic structure. This is illustrated with the examples in (1-5).

1. ɔ-ɔ-dɔ emo ńtóó ɔ-ɔ-dɔ ɔde?

2SG.SUBJ-HAB-like rice or 2SG.SUBJ-HAB-like kenkey

‘Do you like rice or do you like kenkey?’

2. Yaw mu-u-wɔ sukuu ńtóó mu-u-ɔ sukuu?

Yaw 3SG.SUBJ-HAB-go school or 3SG.SUBJ-HAB-go school

‘Does Yaw go to school or she/*he goes to school?’

3. Yaw mu-wɔ sukuu ńtóó Nyaneba mu-sua ato-pam?

Yaw 3SG.SUBJ-go.STAT school or Nyaneb 3SG.SUBJ-learn.STAT thing-sew

‘Does Yaw go to school or Nyaneba learns dressmaking?’

4. Maa Foa mu-ba ye ńtóó Kuukua mu-ba ye?

Maa Foa 3SG.SUBJ-come here or Kuukua 3SG.SUBJ-come here

‘Did Maa Foa come here or did Kuukua come here?’

5. Fimba ne Efe amu-ntoa sukuu-n so ńtóó

Fimba CONJ Efe 3PL.SUBJ-continue school-DEF on or

amu-sua ato-pam?

3PL.SUBJ-learn thing-sew

‘Did Fimba and Efe go to school or did they learn dressmaking?’

In the example in (1), there are two (2) independent clauses conjoined with the disjunctive marker ńtóó. The first clause has a subject in the form of the ɔ- second person singular clitic pronoun in the A function because he performs the action described by the transitive verb. The transitive verb dɔ 'like' bears the habitual aspect which is realised as the lengthening of the subject pronoun ɔ- and it has an object emo 'rice' in the O function because it is affected by the action of the subject. The object is present because the verb dɔ 'like' is a transitive verb and thus requires an object in the O function to form a grammatical sentence. The second clause has its own transitive subject realised as the subject pronoun clitic ɔ- . Its verb dɔ 'like' like that of the first clause has a habitual aspect marking and is a transitive verb which requires a transitive object. This object is ɔde 'kenkey'. Both clauses in (1) have subjects, main verbs and objects with their independent meanings.

The example in (2) can have two different interpretations depending on who the intransitive subject personal pronoun mu in the second clause refers to. If this pronoun co-refers to the subject of the first clause *Yaw*, it results in ungrammaticality. This is because the same proposition would be expressed by both clauses resulting in tautology. The use of the disjunctive conjunction ńtóó requires a contrast because it expresses alternatives or gives options. The utterance would only be grammatical if the pronoun mu in the second clause refers to an individual outside the sentence, irrespective of the gender. A speaker may seek for information on whether it is *Yaw* who goes to school and then point to another

person and enquires if it is rather this person is the individual who goes to school. The verb wɔ ‘go’ in both clauses is a transitive verb requiring only a transitive subject (A) and an object, sukuu ‘school’ (location) to form a grammatical interrogative clause construction.

The ungrammaticality of the example in (3) results from the fact that the two clauses do not share any common point of reference upon which a contrast may be drawn from. A contrast may be drawn only when there is a common ground on which inferences may be drawn from. Although both clauses must have different meanings, there must be shared features either in the form of the subjects or the predicate. The options being questioned in (3) are not clear because the propositions are absolutely different.

An alternative question with two independent clauses may also have a proper noun as a subject in each clause and an example is seen in (4). In the example in (4), the intransitive subject of the first clause is a proper noun ‘*Maa Foa*’. In Efutu, the verbs bear the non-gendered third person pronoun that co-refers to the subject when the subject is a proper noun. A singular subject takes the third person singular pronoun mu. A plural subject takes the plural pronoun amu. The intransitive subject in the second clause is also a proper noun ‘*Kuukua*’ with a pronoun on the verb co-referring to it. In the example in (4), the subjects of both clauses are contrastive and refer to different entities in the world. Here, the

subjects are entities that are being questioned. Both clauses have independent verbs marked as past thus both verbs share the same tense. In Efutu, the bare form of the verb denotes the past tense or the stative form. The first clause has the adjunct ye 'here' which is repeated in the second clause. There are no objects in the clauses because the verb ba 'come' that is being used is an intransitive verb. This question in (4) makes a contrast between two subjects and shares similar verbs and adjuncts. As two independent clauses, they have their independent meanings.

A coordinating conjunction is used to join the entities found in the (A) function in the example in (5). The co-referential pronoun amu attached to the verb is plural because there is a plural subject in the O function of the question. The ítóó particle draws a contrast and questions the predicates in the two (2) clauses, that is the verb plus object.

The aloo disjunctive marker is used in the formation of alternative questions in Ga. The option can be expressed between two independent clauses as seen in the Ga example in (6);

6. Kwei e-yaaa skul aloo e-baaa-ya
 Kwei IMPERF-NEG-go school or 3SG-FUT-go
 'Isn't Kwei going to school or he will go?'

(Kotey 2001:61)

The second strategy involves the disjunction of two (2) independent clauses in which the second clause is a negation of the first clause. This strategy is illustrated in examples in (7-9).

7. ɔ-baa-da tworɔw bɔ Efutu tɔ ńtóó

2SG.SUBJ-FUT-COP write do Efutu LOC or

ɔ-m-maa-da tworɔw bɔ Efutu tɔ?

2SG.SUBJ-NEG-FUT-COP write do Efutu in

‘Can you write in Efutu or you cannot?’

8. Kitoe mu-baa-wɔ ipo ńtóó mu-m-maa-wɔ?

Kitoe 3SG.SUBJ-FUT-go sea or 3SG.SUBJ-NEG-FUT-go

‘Will Kitoe go or he will not go?’

9. *Fiifi mu-u-wɔ asɔr ńtóó Kwamina

Fiifi 3SG.SUBJ-HAB-go church or Kwamina

mu-u-m-wɔ asɔr?

3SG.SUBJ-HAB-NEG-go church

‘Is Kofi going to church or Kwame won’t go to church?’

The example in (7) is an example of an alternative question in which the disjunctive marker ńtóó joins a positive proposition and its negated form in the second clause. The two clauses are both independent with difference in meaning. In this example, the different forms of the verb are being questioned, that is

‘Is Ama’s child a boy or girl?’

In the example in (10), the difference lies mainly between the transitive objects in the O function, mu ‘mother’ and se ‘father’. The clause has a subject, verb and an object and the second clause has only an object. This indicates that the phrase had a similar subject and verb like that of the clause which has been deleted through ellipsis. The ellipsis resulted because the phrase shares the subject and verb with the clause. The ellipsis results in the questioning of the objects in the alternative question.

The example in (11) is an example of a verbless or copula less construction, here the copula is omitted showing that Efutu belongs to the type of languages in which the copula could be omitted. Ama here is a verbless clause subject (VCS) argument and both onyi ‘son’ and ose ‘daughter’ are verbless clause complements (VCC) arguments. The verbless clause complements arguments are questioned and the respondent directed to choose from.

The third strategy used in the formation of alternative questions in Efutu involves a polar question and a content question conjoined with the ńtóó particle. In this type, one of the clauses in the question has a content question word in the object position or the subject position. The examples in (12-14) illustrate the use of content question words in the formation of alternative questions.

12. Gyɔn mu-da ɔsɔw ńtóó mu-da **maata?**

John 3SG.SUBJ-COP pastor or 3SG.SUBJ-COP what

‘Is John a pastor or who is he?’

13. Anapa tutuutu ɔ-lee-be u-wo,

Morning early.DEG 2.SG.SUBJ-PROG-bath 2POSS-self

ɔ-laa-wɔ **ahiapa**, ayefor ńtóó ɔ-laa-wɔ edi?

2SG.SUBJ-PROG-go where wedding or 2SG.SUBJ-PROG-go funeral

‘Taking your bath this early in the morning, where are you going to, a wedding or funeral?’

14. ɔ-baa-wɔ Simpa kwasida ńtóó **amankyi** na

2SG.SUBJ-PROG-go Winneba Sunday or when FOC

ɔ-baa-wɔ?

2SG.SUBJ-PROG-go

‘Will you go to Winneba on Sunday or when will you go (there)?’

In (12), the subject of the first clause is pronominalised in the second clause and the copula da is repeated in both clauses. The constituents that are questioned are the objects ɔsɔw ‘pastor’ and maata ‘what’. Here, the content question word is in-situ. The respondent is asked to choose any of the alternatives given, in choosing

maata ‘what’, he names who John is, such as a deacon and not the word maata per se.

In (13), the question word occurs in the first clause. Here, the speaker asks the respondent where he is going and then proceeds to give options. The first option ayefor ‘wedding’ occurs in the same clause as the question word. The second clause has a pronominal subject, a verb and the object which serves as an option in the alternative question. The second clause begins with an intransitive pronominal subject with a verb and an adjunct. This example is made up of a content question and an alternative question.

In the example in (14), the content question word in the second clause is fronted and it is followed by the focus marker na which indicates the focusing of the question word. The questioning is between the adjuncts indicating time kwasida ‘Sunday’ and amankyi ‘when’. In choosing the question word as an option, the respondent rather answers with any day apart from Sunday which is the alternative expressed in the first clause, so the answer could be yawda ‘Thursday’ or binada ‘Tuesday’. The subject and the verb of the first clause are repeated in the second clause; however the object indicating location is deleted in the second.

c. Efe mu-wɔ iguaso ńtóó ?

Efe 3SG.SUBJ-go.PAST market or

‘Has Efe gone to the market (or)?’

In (14a) the choice between the alternatives is explicitly expressed and that a choice can only be made from the given alternatives, market and Swedur. Another explicitly expressed example is seen in (14b), here the choice is between whether she went to the market or not. The example in (14c) is implicitly stated, it can be derived from either (14a) or (14b) by the Conjunction Reduction process. It is similar to a polar question in structure but it does not require a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ but the naming of the destination of the subject *Efe*. The answer could be the market or the beach.

The disjunctive particle ńtóó is used in both conjoined declaratives and alternative questions. In the next section, the difference between conjoined declaratives and alternative questions is explored.

3.2.2 Intonation in Alternative Questions

The ńtóó particle is used as a disjunctive conjunction in both conjoined declaratives and alternative questions. Conjoined declaratives are statements or sentences that express facts or thoughts and which uses a conjunction and of our

interest are those that use the disjunctive ‘or’. The example in (15a) is repeated in (16) for illustration.

16 a. Efe mu-wɔ iguaso ńtóó Swedur.

‘Efe has gone to market or to Swedur.’

b. Efe mu - wɔ iguaso ńtóó Swedur?

‘Has Efe gone to market or to Swedur?’

The statement in (16a) is an example of a conjoined declarative. It does not ask for information or for the confirmation of an information, rather, it expresses the thought of the speaker. Conversely, the example in (16 b) asks a respondent to choose between given alternatives and this makes it an alternative question.

Syntactically, both conjoined declaratives and alternative questions are the same because they reveal similar structures. However, they are semantically different; this is due to the reactions they generate from addressees. While the alternative questions require answers, conjoined declaratives do not. The semantic difference is realised from the tones they bear.

Declarative sentences conclude on a high tone in Efutu; however alternative questions like polar questions terminate on a low tone. This low tone is realised on the last syllable of the question. This illustrates that intonation is the main element that classifies a sentence as an alternative question and not a conjoined declarative.

This assertion is similar to what happens in Ga. Kotey (2001; 58) states that the difference between a conjoined declarative, with the disjunctive markers alo/ aloo and an alternative question lies in “differences of tones on the last syllables” on the two clause types. The declarative terminates on a low tone while the alternative question does so on a high tone.

17 a Declarative

Kwei aloo Aku baa-ya Ga wò.

Kwei or Aku FUT-go Accra tomorrow

‘Kwei or Aku will go to Accra tomorrow.’

b Alternative Question

Kwei aloo Aku baa-ya Ga wó?

Kwei or Aku FUT-go Accra tomorrow

‘Will Kwei or Aku go to Accra tomorrow?’

(Kotey 2001:57)

Therefore the difference between alternative questions in Efutu and Ga is the final tone of the question; a low tone in Efutu and a high tone in Ga.

3.2.3 Focused Alternative Questions

The constituents in an alternative question can be focused in either or both clauses of the question. As it has already been stated, focus is achieved in Efutu by

fronting the focused element and tagging on with the focus marker na, (c.f Obeng 2008). Focus is used to achieve prominence and emphasis. The use of focus in alternative questions is illustrated in the examples in (18 – 20).

18 ɔ-ɔ-dɔ emo ńtóó ɔde na ɔ-ɔ-dɔ?

2SG.SUBJ-HAB-like rice or kenkey FOC 2SG.SUBJ-HAB-like

‘Do you like rice or it is kenkey you like?’

19 Ato na mu-sɔ saafe-n ńtóó Esi na

Ato FOC 3SG.SUBJ-collect key- DEF or Esi FOC

mu-sɔ saafe-n ?

3.SG.SUBJECT-collect key- DEF

‘Did Ato go for the key or it is Esi who went for the key?’

20 Atobi-n mu-we nu-n ńtóó agyamo-a n
na

Child-DEF 3.SG.SUBJ-chew.PAST fish-DEF or cat-DEF FOC

i-we nu-n?

INANIM.SUBJ-chew.PAST fish-DEF

‘Did the child eat the fish or the cat ate the fish?’

In the example in (18), the object in the O function in the second clause is fronted and followed with the focus marker. This means although two (2) options are

given, the speaker has a suspicion of the respondent's preference for the second option and believes it to be prominent, which is why ɔde 'kenkey' is focused. In responding to the question, if respondent chooses the second alternative, then there must be focusing and an appropriate shift in the subject pronoun. The answer may either be me-e-dɔ emo 'I like rice' or ɔde na me- e- dɔ 'it is kenkey I like'.

The example in (19) involves double focus which means both alternatives being questioned are focused. The questioned constituents are the subjects of both clauses which are focused. In focusing both alternatives, the speaker is definitely sure that it is only either of these subjects *Ato* and *Esi* who went for the key not any other person and so wants to know which of them went for the key.

In (20), the inanimate subject of the second clause is focused. The focusing of the inanimate object shows that the speaker's interest lies mainly on whether the cat ate the fish than whether the child ate the fish. So in responding that the cat ate the fish, there must be focusing of the inanimate object to get, agyamoa-n na i-we nu-n 'it is the cat that ate the fish'. However, answering that the child ate the fish would not be focused as in atobi-n mu-we nu-n 'the child ate the fish'.

Saah (1987) on the other hand claims alternative questions are different from polar questions syntactically and semantically in Akan. He explains that the semantic difference lies in the expected responses; alternative questions cannot be responded to with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and it also asks one to choose between alternatives. Using an Efutu data to illustrate Saah’s assertion; in response to the example in (21), the respondent must choose the answer in (22).

- 22 a. mu-hu mu-ni
 1SG.SUBJ-see.PAST 1SG.POSS-mother
 ‘I saw my mother’
- b. mu-hu mu-se
 1SG.SUBJ-see.PAST 1SG.POSS-father
 ‘I saw my father’

Dzameshie (2001) states that in Ewe, alternative questions are similar to Polar questions, structurally: “alternative questions may optionally take the clause-final question particle *-à* at the end of both the first and the last clause when the disjunctive *alo* ‘or’ is used”. This is demonstrated in (23);

23. Axe fe (-a) alo ayi mɔ (-a)?
 FUT-pay fine (-Q) or FUT-go prison (-Q)
 ‘will you pay or you want to go to jail?’

(Dzameshie 2001:25)

Kotey (2001) argues that Polar and alternative questions are syntactically and semantically different. Syntactically, Polar questions in Ga are formed with the optional question particles such as ani, lo and bɛ while with the formation of alternative questions uses an obligatory conjunction between the alternatives. This conjunction only appears sentence finally in elided questions. Semantically, alternative questions are responded to with one of the alternates expressed in the question and not a simple 'yes' or 'no' as required to answer polar questions.

Both polar and alternative questions can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no', however, they cannot be interchangeable for the reason that they have different functions, (Bolinger (1978), Biezma (n.d.:37)). Bolinger (1978) cited in Biezma (n.d.:37) gives five (5) instances in which the usage of polar questions are appropriate than the usage of alternative questions. These instances are requests, drawing inferences rhetorical questions, invitations and conversation starters.

In Efutu, alternative questions are realised as two conjoined declaratives or a conjoined declarative and content question with a final falling tone, in which the respondent must choose from the alternatives expressed. A Polar question on the other hand, is realised structurally like a declarative; except on falling intonation and the question particles that may occur in polar questions. So structurally, both polar and alternative questions involve the ńtóó particle. Although it occurs as a conjunction in alternative questions and as utterance final question particle in polar

questions, it creates different syntactic structures. This makes alternative questions in Efutu syntactically and semantically different from polar questions. The semantic distinction is as a result of the response they solicit; alternative questions require the respondent to choose from the given options while polar questions require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This is illustrated with the examples in (24 & 25).

24. i. Alternative Question

Ato na mu-sɔ saafe-n ńtóó Esi na

Ato FOC 3SG.SUBJ-collect.PAST key-DEF or Esi FOC

mu-sɔ saafe-n ?

3SG.SUBJ-collect.PAST key-DEF

‘Is it Ato who went for the key or it is Esi who went for the key?’

ii. Answers

a. Ato na mu - sɔ saafe-n

‘Ato went for the key.’

b. Esi na mu - sɔ saafe-n

‘Esi went for the key.’

25. i. Polar Question

Ato na mu-sɔ saafe-n ńtóó ?

‘Is it Ato who went for the key?’

ii. Answers

a. $\tilde{\xi}$ (Ato na mu-sɔ saafe-n)

Yes (Ato went for the key)

b. O!o (Ato mu- n-sɔ saafe-n)

No (Ato did not go for the key)

In the alternative question in (24), the ńtóó particle joins the two alternatives being expressed however with the polar question in (25), the sentence terminates on the ńtóó particle and this brings out the syntactic difference among them.

Semantically, the difference is realised by the answers they require. Alternative question are answered with one of the alternatives that is being suggested as seen in (25) whiles polar questions are typically answered with $\tilde{\xi}$ ‘yes’ or O!O ‘no’.

3.4 Summary

This chapter explores the phenomenon of alternative questions in Efutu. Alternative questions are described as the subset of questions that gives alternatives for the respondent to choose from as a response to the questions. It is established here that speakers of Efutu use the ńtóó particle which is equated to the English disjunctive ‘or’ in the formation of alternative questions.

The ńtóó particle is used in alternative questions as well as in declaratives. Syntactically, both constructions are the same but their final tones differ and this

brings about semantic differences. Semantically, alternative questions require responses while conjoined declaratives do not.

It is further shown that the ńtóó particle is used in different strategies in the formation of alternative questions. The particle is used to join both independent clauses and an independent and a phrase.

Focus is used to express prominence in alternative questions as shown. It is used furthermore to express an option and separates it from the other options. This indicates that focus is used to show a speaker's bias towards an alternative.

The chapter also looked at whether alternative and polar questions are the same and established that based on their structure and responses, they are dissimilar.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTENT QUESTIONS

4.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to investigate the formation of content questions by describing the features and strategies in their formation in Efutu. It will be proven that the speakers of Efutu, in using question words, use two (2) strategies in forming content questions.

This chapter looks at the interaction between focus and interrogative words, at how multiple questions are formed and at how Content questions are responded to.

4.1 Content Questions

Content questions are the type of questions that do not just seek confirmation. Rather, they seek a piece of information from the addressee which will fill a gap in communication. Dixon (2012:37) defines it as “a question seeking information”. This question type seeks a specific piece of information. Furthermore, Boadi (2005:25) describes it as “Pronominal Questions to which the answer yes or no would be inappropriate in a discourse”. In the literature, content questions are also referred to as constituent questions, direct phrasal questions, question word questions or Wh- questions. They are sometimes referred to as constituent questions because they require a missing constituent of a proposition as their answers. They make use of question words in their formation which has resulted in

the name, question word questions. The basic criteria in identifying content questions are the answers they solicit and their use of interrogative words. This work uses ‘question word’ and ‘interrogative word’ interchangeably.

Obeng (2008:91) states that the use of the question word “delimits the scope of the question sentence”. Therefore, the answer to a content question is explicit. Saah (1998:22) establishes that “these sentences demand ‘full answers’ such as a phrase, a clause or sentence not just ‘yes’ or ‘no’...”.

Dixon (2012:400) asserts that “a content question includes an interrogative word” and that “this is its defining feature”. The situation, as Dixon asserts, is apt for the situation in Efutu. Efutu also uses a number of interrogative words in forming content questions.

4.1.1 Formation of Content questions

Dixon argues that a content question is structurally dissimilar to statements because “an interrogative word replaces a regular constituent in a particular functional slot” (2012:405). An interrogative word therefore questions, to solicit for the word it substitutes.

The strategies in the formation of content questions vary among languages: Dixon (2012) identifies various strategies. He states that some languages retain the interrogative word in a slot appropriate to its function in the clause: these include Swahili, Amharic and Chinese. Another group moves the question word to the

initial position of the clause and these include English, Hausa and Romanian. The strategy is exemplified with an English example in (1):

- 1) a. How did you get the picture?
 b. You got the picture how?

The two structures in (1) both make use of the same interrogative word. However, they differ both syntactically and semantically, the question in (1a) is a true content question with regards to the syntax of English. In (1a), the interrogative word is in the clause initial position and it seeks for information on how the picture in question was gained. The question in (1b) is an example of the type of questions Tallerman (1998:120) identifies as ‘echo questions’. The interrogative word occurs in-situ thus in the clause final position. (1b) is produced when one wants to seek a clarification or a repetition of what has been said.

Another strategy employed is to either retain the interrogative word in the clause final position or to front it; the languages that use this strategy include Kana (Dixon 2012). Others either retain the interrogative words in their expected positions or move them to the clause initial position and these include Huallaga Quechua, Akan and Kaakye (c.f Saah and Dundaa (2012), Ga (Kotey 2001) and Yélí Dnye (Papuan), (Levinson 2010). This is illustrated with an Akan example in (2):

- 2) a. Wo-hyia-a Efua **bere bɛn**?
 2sg.meet-PST Efua time what
 ‘When did you meet Efua?’
 b. **Bere bɛn** na wo-hyia-a Efua?

Time what FM 2sg.meet-PST Efua

‘**When** did you meet Efua?’ (Saah 1998:24, example 29)

Saah (1998) identifies both questions in (2) as genuine content questions that speakers of Akan use in soliciting elaborate answers. The locative adjunct being questioned occurs in different syntactic positions in (2). In (2a), the adjunct occurs in the clause final position after the direct object which is the position for the unknown constituent. However, in (2b), the adjunct is fronted through focusing. Semantically, this makes the adjunct in (2b) more prominent and emphatic than that in (2a), Saah (1998). It will be shown that a similar situation happens in Efutu.

The subsequent sections explore the formation of content question in Efutu.

4.2 Content Questions in Efutu

The speakers of Efutu use a number of question words to seek information in a speech situation. Two (2) strategies are employed in Efutu in the construction of content questions. These are based on the positioning of the question words in the structure of the question. The strategies are the positioning of the question word in in-situ and at the sentence initial positions. The in-situ questions words unlike those found in English are not echo question with an echoic intonation. Rather, the interrogative words and phrases serve as substitutes for the constituent they question and this assertion is similar to what occurs in Akan, as shown by Marfo and Bodomo (2005). The strategy of placing question word in the clause initial position will be discussed in section (4.4).

4.3 Interrogative Words

In Efutu, as already mentioned, interrogative words are used in place of the missing constituent. Although question marks (?) are used at the end of the clause constructions, it is the use of the interrogative words that marks the construction as a content question.

The interrogative words used in Efutu are simplified in the table below.

Table 1: Interrogative Words and Phrases in Efutu

Interrogative Words in Efutu	Gloss
Ame	What / Which
Ena	Who
Ahi / Anyẽ	Where
Inɛ	How
Ame nkyi	When
Ame atɔ nyikyɪ	Why

4.3.1 Ame ‘What/Which’

Ame ‘what/which’ is a question word that is used to question a number of elements. The general meaning is translated as the English ‘what or which’ but can have other meanings depending on the words it co-occurs with. It comes before the

to make a choice. In (7), the interrogative word and the noun it modifies both occur in a conjoined phrase as the subject of the clause before the verb. The ungrammaticality of (8) results from the position of the interrogative and the noun it modifies at the final position of the clause construction. The interrogative phrase must be focused in this circumstance, to form a grammatical construction. Therefore the clause final position of the interrogative phrase makes the construction ungrammatical.

In the examples (4, 5, 6 and 8) above, the interrogative words combine with nouns to form interrogative phrases. They occur in-situ and direct the respondent to choose a specific type of the nouns the interrogative words modify. The meaning of amɛ realised in these examples is ‘which’ because the meanings are specific. The respondent is directed to choose from a limited subset. Unlike that of the example in (3) which gives the meaning of ‘what’. This is because the interrogative word indicates a choice from an unlimited set. In Efutu, when amɛ modifies atɔ ‘thing’, it is glossed as ‘what’ because it indicates a choice from an unlimited set which can range from animate to inanimate entities. This asymmetry of ‘what’ and ‘which’ is established by Dixon (2012:411) and he asserts that ‘what’ denotes an unlimited set while ‘which’ denotes a limited set. In speech, when amɛ ‘which or what’ modifies atɔ ‘thing’, it is realised phonologically as amaata ‘what thing’ in speech. This is because the process of vowel mutation takes place and so the /ɛ/ takes the form of the following /a/ sound to have the long /a:/ vowel and also the final /ɔ/ changes to /a/.

However, it can occur without qualifying a nominal in the in-situ position. In this situation, its allomorph me ‘which/what’ is used. I term it as an allomorph because it is barred from occurring as a quantifier in a phrase and in a focused interrogative construction where amɛ ‘which/what’ occurs. Nonetheless, Obeng (2008) argues that me is another word which also means ‘what/which’ and which is used to question non-concrete nouns like one’s name. I believe it (me) is simply a variant of amɛ ‘which/what’.

9. Efe mu-aa-bɔ me
 Efe 2SG.SUBJ-PROG-do what
 ‘What is Efe doing?’
10. A-kyer m̩ me
 3SG.SUBJ- call 3SG.OBJ what
 ‘What is her/his name?’

In (9), the verb is questioned in the in-situ, because the action depicted by the verb is not known, therefore, it is replaced by the verb bɔ ‘do’. The interrogative word me directly follows the progressive marked verb bɔ ‘do’ in the clause. The example in (10) asks for the name of an individual or the identity of the individual in the question. The enquiry of a person’s name can only be made with the interrogative word in-situ in Efutu. The focusing of the interrogative word in asking for one’s name results in an ungrammatically. Saah (1994:132) explains that, in Akan, this is because focus is required when a contrastive reading is

4.3.1.2 Amɛ nkyi / ebie ‘When’

In Efutu, the expression of ‘when’ is based on ‘what’ and a noun depicting time. The noun depicting time could be nkyi ‘day’, ebie ‘time’ afe ‘year’ and nnawɔtwe ‘week’ and these are used in a question phrase with amɛ. The speakers use a question phrase involving amɛ ‘what/which’ and mostly nkyi ‘day’ to form amɛ nkyi ‘when’ to ask for time in general. However, the use of amɛ ebie ‘what time’, amɛ afe ‘what year’ and amɛ nnawɔtwe ‘what week’ are more specific in meaning but the latter two (2) are rarely used. The interrogative word questioning time replaces the nominal it seeks in the adjunct position of the clause it occurs in.

12. Mu-u-wɔ Nkrae amɛ-nkyi

3SG.SUBJ-HAB- go Accra what-day

‘When does he go to Accra?’

13. A-bee-di Aboabikyere amɛ-nkyi

3PL- FUT- eat Aboakyir what-day

‘When will we celebrate the Aboakyir festival?’

14. Mu -aa-ba Winneba amɛ-nkyi

3SG.SUBJ-FUT-come Winneba what-day

‘When will he come to Winneba?’

In the examples in (12, 13 and 14), the interrogative words occur in-situ at the clause final positions. In (12), the transitive verb wɔ ‘go’ takes an object, the goal Accra and the temporal adjunct in the shape of the question phrase. The question

phrase is seen as a temporal adjunct because it occurs in the slot of the temporal adjunct in questions. In (13), amɛ – nkyi ‘what day’ occurs after the transitive object Aboakyir as an adjunct. Here, the question phrase seeks the time of the festival. (14) also has no object but has two (2) adjuncts a locative, Winneba and a temporal adjunct that is being filled by the question phrase.

The amɛ interrogative word is also used with ebie ‘time’ in asking for a specific time of the day or specific number of hours.

15. ɔ-baa-ba amɛ-ebie

2SG-FUT-come what time

‘When will you come?’

16. Mu-wɔ amɛ-ebie

3SG.SUBJ.go.PAST what-time

‘When did he leave?’

17. Mu-aa-kyerɛ ne amɛ-ebie

3SG.SUBJ – FUT- call 3PL.OBJ what- time

‘When will he call us?’

In (15 and 16), even though the question phrase amɛ – ebie ‘which time’ comes after the verb ba ‘come’ and wɔ ‘go’, it cannot be analysed as an object because the verbs are intransitive and so they do not take an object. In both examples, the question phrases are adjuncts and they come after the verbs. In (17), the question

phase is an adjunct and comes after the third person plural object pronoun ne which in turn comes after the transitive verb kyerε ‘call’. In this example, there are no adjuncts.

Other nominals used in showing specific periods in time can also be used with amε in Efutu to ask for time.

18. Yaa mu-wɔ Winnisec amε-afe
 Yaa 3SG.SUBJ-go.PAST Winneba-High-School what-year
 ‘Which year did Yaa attend Winneba High School?’

The unit of time (year), is modified by amε ‘which/what’ to form amε afe ‘which year’ question phrase in (18). The question phrase occurs at the clause final position after the transitive object. The verb wɔ ‘go’ is used transitively in (18) unlike its intransitive usage in (16). This shows that a verb can be used both transitively and intransitively in Efutu. The use of amε afe means the respondent is asked to choose only the year Yaa attended the school and not any other information such as month or day.

The use of amε nkyi ‘what day’ indicates that the respondent must answer with any of the time units. For example, the answer could be the naming of a month, a day, a week, a year or a full date including day, month and year. This question phrase seems to use the inherent ‘non- limited’ meaning of ‘what’. Whiles the use

of amɛ ebie ‘which time’ and the other units of time are more specific and use the ‘limited’ meaning associated with ‘which’.

The question phrases used in seeking information about time do not occur only in-situ as seen in the examples above but can also occur at the ex-situ. When it occurs in the clause initial position, it is a result of focusing. The focused interrogatives will be discussed in section (4.4).

4.3.1.3 Amɛ atɔ nyikyɪ ‘Why’

The speakers of Efutu ask for a reason, purpose or motive of an event or an action with the use of a question phrase. The amɛ interrogative word is used to qualify the nominals and it comes before; atɔ ‘thing’ and nyikyɪ ‘reason’ in that order. The resulting phrase will be amɛ atɔ nyikyɪ ‘why’ which is used to ask for the motive or reason for some event or action. This phrase can be literally translated as ‘what reason’.

19. Onyi-mbi mu-aa-gura amɛ-atɔ-nyikyɪ
 Man-young 3SG.SUBJ-PROG-cry what-thing-reason
 ‘Why is the young man crying?’

20. Okyerɛkyerɛfo mu-ba ye-n amɛ-atɔ-nyikyɪ
 Teacher 3SG.SUBJ-come.STAT here-DEF what-thing-reason
 ‘Why is the teacher here?’

4.3.4 Inɛ ‘How’

Inɛ is an interrogative word used in seeking information on the quantity, the price of an entity or the duration of an action. It is realised as a quantifier when it comes after an NP. The interrogative word inɛ ‘how’ can occur in in-situ as both a quantifier in a phrase and as a single question word.

23. Nsu -n a-hwɛ m inɛ
 Water-DEF 3PL.SUBJ-sell.STAT INANIM.OBJ how-much
 ‘How much does the water (sachet) cost?’
24. Amu-sɔ n-tumpã inɛ
 3PL-buy PL- bottle how-many
 ‘How many bottles did we buy?’
25. Ibie inɛ na ɔ-bee-di bɔ pebi aa
 Time how-much FOC 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-eat LOC way Q
 ‘How long will he be the way?’

The interrogative word inɛ ‘how’ is in in-situ in (23) and is glossed as ‘how-much’. It is used to inquire of the price of the sachet of water. Inɛ is used after a nominal to refer to number or amount (how much or how many). This is seen in (24), where the interrogative word inɛ ‘how’ modifies the noun n-tumpã ‘bottles’. The use of the interrogative word as a modifier enquires about the quantity of the noun. The noun must be plural and this is seen by the plural marker /n/ on the noun. However, the noun ibie ‘time’ in the example in (25) bears no plural marker.

B: Ahi-apa

Where-which.part

‘Where?’

28. Efe mu-bɔ esumi ahi -pa

Efe 3SG.SUBJ-do work where

‘Where does Efe work?’

The example in (27b) involves the use of only the question phrase. In (27), the first speaker (A) makes a statement of the departure of the subject and then the second speaker (B) enquires with the question phrase ahi- apa ‘where’ to seek the destination of the subject. The second speaker does not enquire with a clause because he does not produce both the subject and the verb. Rather, he articulates just the question phrase ahi- apa ‘where’ to ask for the destination of the subject. The full import of the question in (27a) is only achieved based on context. The ahi ‘where’ can rightly be substituted with anyɛ̃ ‘where’ without a change in meaning. In (28), the location of Efe is being questioned. Ahi ‘where’ is modified by apa ‘which part’ in-situ. In speech, ahi and apa when they come together, the resulting word is realised as ahaapa ‘where’; the final /i/ of ahi mutates into /a/ as the initial /a/ of apa.

32. Kwamena mu-bɔ anyẽ –pa

Kwamena 3SG.SUBJ-COP where

‘Where is Kwamena?’

The interrogative words in the examples in (31 and 32) are modified by apa ‘which part’ and they occur in in-situ. Both examples are copula construction with the interrogative words questioning the copula complements. In Efutu, when bɔ does not occur with a pronoun or a subject marker, it is realised as a locative but it becomes a copula or the verb ‘do’ when it bears a dependent pronoun; verbs in Efutu carry independent pronouns as subject markers. The copula in both examples covers location and this confirms Dixon’s (2012) assertion that in some languages, copulas are associated with location.

4.3.6 ɛnɛ ‘Who’

ɛnɛ ‘who’ is used to question a human referent. It is the head of an NP and a modifier only in possessive construction. This question word questions a core argument and can occur both in-situ and at clause initial positions. The examples below illustrate the various syntactic positions ɛnɛ ‘who’ occurs.

33. ɔ-hu nɛ

2SG.SUBJ-saw.PAST who

‘Whom did you see?’

scenario is seen in (38) but here, the interrogative word is in a possessive construction.

As it is seen in (38), the ɛnɛ ‘who’ interrogative word can also be used in a possessive construction. When it is used to question a possessor, it comes before the third person possessive pronoun which links it (ɛnɛ ‘who’) to the possessed.

39. ɛnɛ mu- nyɛma na i - kɔw ipu-n so aa
 Who 3SG.POSS – boat FOC INANIM.SUBJ- hover.STAT sea-DEF LOC Q
 ‘Whose boat is on the sea?’

Another example of the use of ɛnɛ ‘who’ in a possessive construction is seen in (39), however, in (39), the interrogative word together with the possessive noun phrase is focused at the sentence initial position of a clause as the subject.

4.4 Focused Content Questions

Amfo (2010:198) describes focus as “the highlighting of salient non-derivable information linked to an ongoing discourse.” Also, Herring and Paolillo (1995: 163) defines focus as the “information to which the speaker/writer wishes to accord particular salience”. In sum, focus is the main strategy a speaker uses to communicate what is salient to his audience. Focusing of a constituent makes that constituent the most important in the clause. The English language typically uses

intonation to mark focus in speech (Roach 2009), however, most African languages such as Efutu (Obeng 2008), Akan (Saah 1994,1998; Boadi 2005, Amfo 2010) mark focus through the use of a morpheme.

Focus marking in content questions is not unique to Efutu; it is also a prominent feature of interrogatives especially, of content questions in Lete (Akrofi-Ansah 2010), Akan (Saah 1998, Marfo and Bodomo 2005) and Ga (Kotey 2001). In Efutu, interrogative words can both be in-situ or be fronted through focusing.

Focused content questions are characterized in Efutu by the features: the fronting of a constituent, introduction of the na focus marker after the fronted constituent and the utterance final interrogative clitic aa.

In focused content questions in Efutu, the long / a:/ represented in the orthography as aa must occur at the clause final position. The position of the aa particle at the clause final position is obligatory. However, it cannot occur with unfocused interrogative words thus interrogative words in-situ. The question word remains in-situ when there is no focus marker, thus when the question word is not focused. The aa interrogative utterance final clitic only occurs in focused content questions unlike Lete which has utterance final clitic in focused declaratives and not in focused content questions, (see Akrofi-Ansah 2010). The examples below illustrate. The question words in the metalanguage are in bold to indicate that they are focused. This is adapted from Saah (1998).

40. Amɛ-nkyi na mu-u-wɔ Nkrae aa

What-day FOC 3SG.SUBJ-HAB-go Accra Q

‘**When** does he go to Accra?’

41. Amɛ-ebie na mu-wɔ aa

What- time FOC 3SG.SUBJ-go.PAST Q

‘**When** did he leave?’

42. ɛnɛ na o-hu aa

Who FOC 2SG.SUBJ- see.PAST Q

‘**Who** did you see?’

43. Ebie inɛ na ɔ-bee-di bɔ pebi aa

Time how- much FOC 2SG.SUBJ- FUT- eat LOC way Q

‘**How long** will he be the way?’

In the examples in (40-43), the interrogative word are focused by fronting them to the clause initial position and coupled with the clause final interrogative clitic aa.

In Efutu, the interrogative word or phrase cannot be focused in-situ. It must be fronted to the sentence initial position or this, results in ungrammaticality. This is because focus is associated with prominence, emphasis and new or contrastive information in Efutu.

at the clause initial position. Efutu restricts the occurrence of an unfocused question word at the clause initial position. In (45 and 46), the subject remains in in-situ but the object and the adjunct of reason are fronted to the clause initial positions respectively.

This assertion also holds true in Zulu (Nguni, Bantu), (Sabel and Zeller 2006). In Zulu, question words (even those substituting subjects) at the sentence initial position must bear focus; otherwise they result in ungrammaticality.

47. a. ***Nde** jiše umunhu?

Who killed man

‘Who killed the man?’

b. Ni-**nde** u-iše umunhu?

FOC-who SP-killed man

‘Who killed the man?’

(Zulu; Sabel and Zeller 2006: 273, 274; examples (8a) and (9a)).

In (47), the question word nde ‘who’ appears in-situ substituting the subject of the clause. However, it results in ungrammaticality in (47a) because it does not bear focus which (47b) does.

However, in Ewe, a question phrase can be fronted without necessarily focusing it. Focus in content questions in Ewe is optional, (c.f Dzameshie 2001). This is seen in the example below;

48. Afi ka (-e) agbale -a le?

Place Q FOC book the be

‘where is the book?’

(Dzameshie 2001: 26)

Boadi (1974:7) (cited in Marfo and Bodomo (2005)), states that the focus marker has a semantic function of narrowing the referential range of the focused constituent; this assertion is right in the Efutu scenario where there is a semantic contrast between a constituent in-situ position and its corresponding focused constituent.

In Efutu the focused content questions are more specific or emphatic in reference. This is because the focus marker na creates an exclusive focus on the selected constituent.

49. Anyẽ-pa na a-kukyew bo aa

Where FOC 2PL-born.PAST LOC Q

‘**Where** were you born?’

50. Amẽ pebi na mu- na so nà mu- nya bi aa

What way FOC 3SG.SUBJ- give LOC COMPL 3SG.SUBJ-get.PAST child Q

‘**How** did she get a child?’

51. Amẽ-nkyi na a-bee-di Aboabikyere aa

What-day FOC 2PL-FUT-eat Aboakyir Q

‘**When** will you celebrate the Aboakyir festival?’

The focusing of anyẽ-pa ‘where’ in (49) makes it more emphatic because now the speaker does not just want to know where the respondent was born; rather he is indeed interested and eager to know. This emphasis on filling the information gap between the speaker and the addressee is also seen in (50 and 51). In (50), the emphasis is on how the addressee got a child and the questioning is about the adjunct of manner. On the other hand, the emphasis is on the adjunct depicting time in (51).

The focused amɛ interrogative word can never occur alone, it must qualify a nominal in the focused position. It can only be used as a modifier when focused. When a speaker wants to ask for general information and he uses amɛ ‘which/what’, it can occur in-situ without a modifier as it has already been seen, however it cannot in a focused position. As a result, it is attached to ato ‘thing’ to literally mean ‘what thing’ but it is understood as ‘what’ to be used to refer to both non-human animate and inanimate referents. In (52), amɛ-ato ‘what-thing’ can substitute the argument akura ‘mouse’.

52. Amɛ-ato na Esi mu-hu bo adaka-bi-n nuto aa

What thing FOC Esi 3.SG-see LOC box-small-DEF LOC Q

‘**What** did Esi see in the small box?’

53. Amɛ ose na Aba mu-ni ne-laa-tar n aa

What woman FOC Aba 3.SG.SUBJ-with 3SG.OBJ-HAB-talk 3SG.SUBJ Q

‘**What woman/ who** is Aba talking with?’

54. Amɛ nu na ɔ-dɔ aa

What fish FOC 2Sg.SUBJ-like.STAT Q

‘What kind of fish do you like’

In (53) the interrogative word amɛ ‘what/which’ modifies the human referent ɔse ‘woman’. This shows that amɛ ‘what/which’ can have a human referent when it quantifies a human nominal. This is similar to the Akan interrogative word ben ‘what/ which’ which can refer to both human and non-human referents, Saah (1998). Akrofi-Ansah (2012:101) asserts that mente ‘what’ is used to refer to non-human referent in Lete which is contrary to what happens in Efutu. On the other hand, amɛ ‘what/which’ is used to question a non-human referent in (54). It questions the kind of fish the respondent likes and it is translated as ‘what’ because there are a number of possibilities when it comes to the types of fish available to eat.

The speakers of Efutu tends to be more specific when asking content questions because they tend to use more of focused content questions than those in-situ.

4.5. Multiple Content Questions

Multiple content questions have been explored in Akan, Saah (1998); Ga, Kotey (2001) and Kitharaka (Bantu), Muriungi (2005). They are possible but rarely used in Efutu. Furthermore, Muriungi (2005) states that the formation of multiple

content questions in Kitharaka is very restrictive. In Efutu, multiple content questions are constrained to two (2) and rarely three (3) interrogative words or phrases. There are three restrictions on multiple content questions in Efutu and these are:

- A. A moved interrogative word must bear focus.
- B. Only one interrogative word can occur in the sentence initial position.
- C. An interrogative word cannot follow another immediately.

Multiple content questions are usually used when one seeks for clarification, especially when he is surprised about what has been said or he is not sure of what he has heard.

55. ɛnɛ na mu-na sika-n i-na ɛnɛ aa

Who FOC 3SG.SUBJ-give.PAST money-DEF INANIM.PRO-give.PAST who Q

‘Who did who gave the money to?’

56. Amɛ-atɔ-nkyi na ɛnɛ mu-wɔ ahi-apa aa

What-thing-reason FOC who 3SG.SUBJ-go.PAST where Q

‘Why did who go where?’

57. ɛnɛ na mu-we amɛ-atɔ

Who FOC 3SG.SUBJ-chew.PAST what-thing

‘Who chewed what?’

Two interrogative words are used in (55), the interrogative word that is used in both instances is ɛnɛ ‘who’ which is used to question both the subject and the indirect object. The subject acts as an agent whiles the indirect object acts as a recipient. This example is grammatical because it does not violate any of the

restrictions in (A-C). The interrogative word substituting the subject is focused because it is the only one that occurs at the sentence initial position and none immediately follows it. The second enɛ ‘who’ remains in-situ at the indirect object position and it does not violate any of the restrictions which makes the clause in (55) grammatical.

(56) is an example of the rare cases in which a clause has three (3) interrogative words: amɛ - atɔ nkyi ‘why’ which is used to ask the reason for action or event, enɛ ‘who’ the human referent and ahi-apa ‘where’ which used to ask for a location. In this clause, the enɛ ‘who’ which is used to question the subject occurs in-situ but the word for reason is fronted to the sentence initial position. The clause does not violate the restrictions (A-C) because the fronted word is focus and the focus marker intervenes between the words for reason and that of the human referent.

In (57), the interrogative word that questions the subject does not occur in in-situ, rather, it is focused to the sentence initial position or to the specifier position of the clause. The object is also questioned in in-situ which does not violate any of the restrictions.

4.6 Answering Content Questions

Dzameshie (2001:26) states that content questions are those kinds of questions which “demand answers involving a statement of the required information”. Mycock (2007:193) emphasizes that content questions “satisfy an important communicative need: they are used to request the information which is required to

fill an information gap or gaps”. Dryer (2005) states that content questions “elicit a specific answer other than ‘yes’ or ‘no’”.

In sum, content questions demand elaborate account of information on the constituent being questioned. However, the production of the constituent that is being questioned or substituted by the respondent as a response to a content question is acceptable. Besides, the syntactic category of an answer is dependent on the type of interrogative word and what it questions. These assertions are illustrated with the question and answer adjacency pairs in the examples in (58 and 59).

58. a. Question

Ame mpaboa na mu-wuro aa

What footwear FOC 3SG.SUBJ – wear.PAST Q

‘What footwear was he/she wearing?’

b. Answer

i. Mu-wuro kurokyiã.

3SG.SUBJ – wear.PAST high.heeled.shoes.IDIO

‘She was wearing a high heeled shoes’.

ii. Kurokyiã ‘high heeled shoes’

59. a. Question

Ama mu-hu ene

Ama 3SG.SUBJ-see.PAST who

‘Who did Ama see?’

b. Answers

i. Ama mu-hu Fiifi

Ama 3SG.SUBJ-see.PAST Fiifi

‘Ama saw Fiifi’.

ii. Fiifi

In both examples in (58 and 59), there are questions with two (2) sets of answers. The answers in (58bi and 59bi) are what Dzameshie calls ‘elaborate’. They are full clauses with subjects and predicates.

In (58), the constituent being question by the interrogative word is the object of the clause which has the semantic role of a theme. The interrogative word amε ‘which/what’ in (58a) modifies the generic term mpaboa ‘footwear’ and this interrogative word can be appropriately glossed as ‘what’ in the sense that the set of footwear is unlimited. As has already been discussed, ‘what’ denotes an expansive set and the set of footwear is an expansive one because there are a lot of different types of footwear. The question phrase requires the respondent to give a type of footwear as an answer. In answering, (58bi) gives the required information within a full clause while in (58bii), only the missing information, kurokyiã ‘high heeled shoes’ is given in the form of the head of a simple noun phrase and it is a core argument that is substituted by amε ‘what’. The answer belongs to the noun category because the interrogative phrase questions and requires a noun as an answer.

Likewise with the example in (59) requires the naming of a proper noun (the name of an individual), the answers are a full clause in (59bi) and a proper noun, *Fiifi* which is the core argument substituted by ene ‘who’ in (59bii). In this example in (59a), the interrogative word is in-situ at the object position of the clause. The transitive object is questioned; therefore the answer required must provide information on the theme.

Amfo (2010:198) states that the answers to content questions bear a completive focus. She defines completive focus as “when the focus information fills a gap in the pragmatic information of the addressee” and further states that this type of focus is associated with a presupposition.

A focused content question requires a focused constituent in a focus construction as its answer. This is because a focused interrogative word or phrase substitutes a focused constituent when questioning. Consider the following examples.

60. a. Question

Amɛ-ebie na mu-aa-kyerɛ ne aa

What-time FOC 3SG.SUBJ-FUT-call 3PL Q

‘When will he call us?’

b. Answers

i. Okyi na mu-aa-kyerɛ ne

Tomorrow FOC 3SG.SUBJ-FUT-call 3PL

‘It is tomorrow he will call us.’

ii. Okyi ‘Tomorrow’

iii. *Okyi na 'It is tomorrow'

61. a. Question

Anyẽ-pa na o-fi aa

Where FOC 2SG.SUBJ-come.from.STAT Q

'Where do you come from?' (Place of origin)

b. Answers

i. Senya na mi-fi

Senya FOC 2SG.SUBJ-come.from.STAT

'I come from Senya'.

ii. Senya

In (60), the speaker has a presupposition that he will receive a call but the time of the call is what is not known and (61) presupposes that the respondent has a home-town but does not show that he (speaker) knows the home-town. This presupposition is in accordance with Amfo's (2010) assertion of the association of focus and the answers of content question. The examples in (60 and 61) illustrate how answers to focused content questions bear focus. In (60a), the interrogative word is fronted to the sentence initial position and it carries the focus marker na. As a result, the clause in (60bi) that responds to it must also carry a focused constituent and this constituent must be the missing constituent that the interrogative word questions and substitute in the question in (60a). However, it is ungrammatical to focus answer when it is just a word as seen in (60biii). (60biii) is

ungrammatical because ɔkyi ‘tomorrow’ has no other information to contrast it with; therefore focusing it, is redundant and ungrammatical. In speech, (60biii) maybe acceptable because it will sound like the borrowed Akan word ɔkyena ‘tomorrow’ but in orthography, it is ungrammatical. A similar situation is seen in example (61) where the answer can either be a focused construction with the substituted constituent focused or unfocused phrase.

To conclude, content questions require a piece or pieces of information to fill an information gap. The kind of syntactic category needed is dependent on the type of element the interrogative word substitutes or questions.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, Content questions are described as the type of questions which use interrogative words to elicit information and require more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers. Two (2) strategies are identified in the formation of content questions: these are focused content questions and those in in-situ.

A number of interrogative words are identified in Efutu. These are amɛ ‘what/which’, ɛnɛ ‘who’, inɛ ‘how’ and ahi/ anyɛ̃ ‘where’; however amɛ can modify other words to get different question phrases, amɛ-nkyi/ebie ‘when’ and amɛ-atɔ-nkyi ‘why’ which are used to elicit for time and reason respectively. The interrogative words ɛnɛ ‘who’ and amɛ ‘what/which’ are used to question and substitute the core arguments in the interrogative clause.

This work establishes that the difference between focused and in-situ content questions is both pragmatic and syntactic. Focused content questions are emphatic and common among the speakers of Efutu.

The answers to content questions in Efutu can either be a full clause that contains the constituent that fill the information gap the interrogative words seek to bridge or a simple phrase made up of the constituent questioned. In Efutu, clause which answers a focused content question must bear focus.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This dissertation was aimed at establishing the various types of interrogatives in Efutu, their features, the strategies used in their formation and their corresponding responses.

The study is descriptive and used the Basic Linguistic theory as its theoretical framework. The theory advocates for the description of languages as their features are realised in the language under study without attempting to force it (language under study) to fit a designed formalization. The data was collected during several weeks of field work which required my constant presence in the Efutu speaking area along the Winneba beach.

This concluding chapter of the dissertation takes an overview of the entire study. The summary of findings, recommendation for future research and the conclusion are discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The presentation of the overview of issues to be discussed in the thesis were explored in chapter one. This chapter established that Efutu is a dialect, of the Awutu-Efutu language of Coastal Guan, instead of a language. Three types of questions were identified; polar, alternative and content questions. Indirect questions were not discussed because they do not require answers. The typology of questions that were discussed was based on the answers they generated.

The second chapter took a look at the formation of polar questions in Efutu. Two strategies are associated with polar questions; question intonation and questions particles. It was realised that intonation is the obligatory feature in polar questions in Efutu even when the ńtóó or áà question particles are used in the formation of polar questions. It was also shown that the question particles do not change or affect the final tone of polar questions. Also, it is established that intonation is the primary difference between declaratives and polar questions. The intonation of polar questions is realised as a rising pitch over the whole utterance by a ‘notch’ and a final low tone on the final lexical syllable of the question. It was also identified that in Efutu, a speaker in answering negative polar questions, confirms the utterance over the reality and that when the negative proposition is true, the answer must confirm it.

In the third chapter, the formation of alternative questions, their strategies, features and their responses were discussed. Explicit alternative questions are more restrictive because they give alternatives from which the respondent is expected to choose. Structurally, alternative questions and declaratives conjoined with the disjunctive marker ńtóó are similar except on the utterance final low tone on the question. This final tone leads to their semantic difference; alternative questions require answers while the declaratives do not. It is also shown that focus is used to indicate the speaker's bias towards an alternative. This is because the focused constituent is projected into prominence; focus is associated with importance.

In chapter four, the discussion was centered on the formation of content questions. Two strategies used in the construction of content questions were identified in Efutu; question words in-situ and focused question words. Focused question words are more emphatic and their preference, is very common among Efutu speakers.

The interrogative words and phrases used in forming content questions include amɛ 'what/which', ɛnɛ 'who', inɛ 'how', ahi/ anyɛ̃ 'where', amɛ-nkyi/ebie 'when' and amɛ-atɔ-nkyi 'why'. Of these, amɛ 'what/which' and ɛnɛ 'who' are used to question the core arguments in the interrogative clause. It is also established that when the verb is questioned thus is not known, a dummy verb bɔ 'do' is inserted into its position. It is also established that, a subject cannot be questioned in-situ; rather the question word must be focused.

5.2 Recommendations

This work serves as a stepping stone for further future research on the syntax of the Efutu dialect in particular and the Awutu-Efutu language as a whole. Obeng (2008) gives a broader grammatical sketch of Efutu. This work however goes a step further by paying particular attention to an aspect of what would be needed in an in-depth study of the dialect. It has opened up an opportunity for a detailed description of the grammar of Efutu.

The Awutu-Efutu has three dialects of which Efutu is included. As a consequence, there must also be the description of the other two (2) dialects of Awutu-Efutu; Senya and Awutu. These dialects must be described and their differences and similarities established for their academic contribution to the study of Language. This would pave way for an exhaustive description of the grammar of the Awutu-Efutu language as a whole.

Agreement markers or subject marking on verbs were identified but could not be adequately expounded due to time and space constraints. This phenomenon could be explored in a grammatical description.

In this work, it became apparent how tone features in Efutu. As a tone language, Efutu has a lot to contribute to tone studies. Owing to the above observation, I recommend a study of the phonology of Efutu and Awutu-Efutu as a whole.

Serial verb construction is a characteristic of Efutu which should be described as seen in the examples discussed. This seems to be a common phenomenon in Efutu.

Questions in other languages could be described for cross-linguistic studies into the phenomenon of questions and their corresponding answers.

5.3 Conclusion

Question formation is an inherent feature of human language. Indeed it provides an avenue for studying and understanding the syntactic structure of any given language, Efutu being no exception. However, how languages realise this phenomenon varies from one language to another. This was clearly seen in the case of Efutu where different strategies are used to realise the various interrogative patterns i.e. polar questions, alternative questions and content questions. The thesis has described these interrogative clauses as a way of facilitating our understanding of Efutu among its cluster of languages and the phenomenon of questions as an object of linguistic enquiry. Also, this study has created an opportunity to enhance the documentation of the Efutu dialect for further future research.

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