

INTERROGATIVES IN DAGARA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Faustina Marius Naapane, declare that except for references to works that I have duly cited, this thesis is the result of my original research under the supervision of Professor Kofi K. Saah and Dr. Mercy Bobuafor, and that it has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree elsewhere.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving husband: Mr. Simon Aabenir and my sweet daughter Jessica Zunuo who have sacrificed so much for me and have been a source of encouragement during this course of study.



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If the **LORD** had not been on our side, let Israel say Psalm124:1. God has been faithful to me in this course of study and HE is the pillar in every endeavor of mine. Gratitude fills my heart and words cannot express it. All I have to say is **THANK YOU LORD.**

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ABSTRACT

Interrogative structures exist in all languages of the world and the use of interrogatives is a central activity in human communication. This dissertation seeks to explore the phenomenon of interrogatives as it obtains in Dagara, a dialect of Dagaare spoken in the Upper West Region of Ghana within the framework of the Basic Linguistic Theory as contained in Dixon (2012). The focus of this thesis is to identify and describe the typology of the interrogative clauses in Dagara and the strategies used in forming the various question types as well as the kinds of responses that are given as answers. It also discusses the interaction between focus and questions as well as the functions of polar interrogatives. I show from the data that three types of interrogatives exist in Dagara, namely: polar interrogative, alternative interrogative and content interrogative. Two main strategies are used in forming polar questions; the use of question particles and lengthening of final syllable vowel with a falling pitch. Alternative questions are formed by placing the coordinating conjunction *bi* 'or' between two declarative structures. It is shown in the work that Dagara uses the *ex situ* strategy in forming content interrogatives thus Dagara prefers sentence initial position for its question words. Data for this research are sourced from both primary and secondary sources and my knowledge of the language as a native speaker.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	-	First Person
2	-	Second Person
3	-	Third Person
[`]	-	High Tone
[´]	-	Low Tone
~	-	Nasalised
AFFIRM	-	Affirmative
CONJ	-	Conjunction
DET	-	Determiner
EMPH	-	Emphatic
FACT	-	Factitive
FOC	-	Focus
FUT	-	Future
HAB	-	Habitual
IMPERF	-	Imperfective
NOM	-	nominal
NEG	-	Negative
PERF	-	Perfective
PL	-	Plural
PRE	-	Present Tense
QP	-	Question Particle
QT	-	Question
SG	-	Singular

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

According to Payne (1997) languages have different morphological and syntactic means through which they express the type of speech act that is performed and different sentence types are used to perform various acts. Konig and Siemund (2007) identified three basic sentence types that exist across the languages of the world on the basis of their use and they include declarative, interrogative and imperative. Declaratives are used in asserting, claiming, stating, accusing, criticizing, promising and guaranteeing while imperatives are employed in issuing commands for the addressee to do something such as orders, requests, suggestions, and appeal.

Interrogative, which is the focus of this research, is a type of sentence which is used for eliciting information, asking questions, and introducing deliberations. Payne (1997) adds that interrogative structures are grammaticalized means of showing that a sentence seeks information and not just an assertion. Interrogatives, according to Konig and Siemund (2007:291) are “conventionally associated with the speech act of requesting information” and in many languages are formed from declaratives by adding a particle or a tag and this affirms Downing and Locke (2006) assertion that interrogatives typically occur in interpersonal situations and are used to seek for information. Even though there is a difference between interrogatives and questions with the interrogative being a grammatical, syntactic label while questions refer to a pragmatic functional label, the two terms are

mostly used interchangeably and will be used as such in the current work for convenience.

The interrogative clause is found in all languages of the world and its use is a central activity in almost all human communication, but the structure of interrogatives and their associated meaning is language specific. The Dagaaba (people) of northern Ghana make use of interrogative structures so much that, it is even evident in most of their names. For example, ‘*Aabagbio*’ which means ‘who knows tomorrow?’, ‘*Aa-beɛmir*’ meaning ‘who is not a human being?’, and ‘*Buunaaim*’ meaning ‘what can happen to me?’ as glossed in (1) below.

- (1) a. Aa bag bio?
 who know tomorrow
 ‘Who knows tomorrow?’
- b. Aa be i nir?
 who NEG be human
 ‘who is not a human being?’
- c. Buu naa i-m
 what will do-1SG
 ‘What can happen to me?’

The above are all names of persons in the form of questions because each contains a question word and I refer to them as *rhetorical questions* as they do not demand answers but expect the hearer to reflect on the meaning of the name so that it affects his/her behavior.

Generally, questions are formed by the use of question particles, some lexical intonation, and change in the word order. Various types of interrogatives exist and this depends on the criteria used. On the bases of their syntactic and semantic properties, Konig and Siemund (2007) grouped interrogatives into two main classes: polar interrogatives and constituent interrogatives or information questions. They observed that another type of interrogative exists which is alternatives interrogative and it is similar to polar interrogatives but the responses set for alternative questions are different from that of polar questions. Collins (2006:184) also argues that questions are classified using a number of criteria and “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”. Yes/no questions are interrogatives where the expected answer is either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or a confirmation. Alternative questions are questions in which the speaker provides the addressee with possible options to choose from, and Wh-questions are those that seek information or require a more elaborate response.

This work seeks to describe the types of questions in Dagara based on (Collins 2006) classification. However, the terms ‘yes/no’ questions and ‘wh-questions’ will not be used in the present work as already argued by (Dixon 2012c) that the terms are not appropriate since some languages lack the exact words ‘yes/no’ and that most languages apart from English do not have their question words beginning with Wh and Dagara is not an exception to this. Dagara is a typical example of a language with none of its question words beginning with ‘Wh’. Thus polar and content questions or question word questions shall be used in this study.

This thesis will focus on the structure of polar questions, content questions, and alternative questions, taking into consideration the various types for each interrogative type and the strategies that are used in forming them. The work will also consider the kind of responses for each of the question types, the relation between focus and interrogatives and the functions of polar questions.

1.1 Dagaare and its speakers

Dagaare belongs to the Western Oti-Volta group of the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo family Naden (1989). The language is closely related to other languages of the Gur group of the Niger-Congo family such as Safaliba, Moore, Gurune, Mampruli, Dagbani, Buli and Kusaal. Bodomo (2000) refers to these languages as Mabilia which could be translated literally as mother's child. Dagaare is distantly related to Sisaala, Vagla, and Chakali which belong to the Grusi branch of Central Gur languages. The language is spoken in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. There are about one million Dagaare speakers in Ghana and 500,000 speakers in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, (Ganaah 2008). According to Bodomo (1997:1) "the language occupies the area between latitude 9⁰ North and 11⁰ North and longitude 2⁰ West and 3⁰ West covering a larger portion of the Upper West Region and parts of the Northern Region in Ghana".

In Ghana, Dagaare is the major language spoken in the Upper West Region of Ghana and the major towns where Dagaare is spoken are Nandom, Jirapa, Wa, Lawra, Nadowli, Hamile, Daffiama, Kaleo, and Tuna. Sisaali is also spoken by a small population of the natives of the region. There are also some Dagaare

speakers in some parts of Northern Region, one of the ten regions of Ghana. However, due to migration for occupational reasons and the search for greener pastures, Dagaare has spread to other parts of the country and Dagaare communities can be found in towns such as Accra, Sunyani, Obuasi, Kintampo, Kumasi, and Bolgatanga and in some other parts of the country. The Dagaaba (people) are unique in their use of the xylophone and '*Bawa dance*' during traditional occasions, and they can be said to be very loyal to their language and culture which they showcase wherever they find themselves.

According to Bodomo (1997), Dagaare comes after Dagbani as the fourth largest indigenous language spoken in Ghana with Akan and Ewe being first and second largest respectively. It is one of the nine Ghanaian languages that is being written and studied in our basic schools, colleges of education and offered as a course for degree in the country's tertiary institutions such as the University of Education in Winneba and the University of Ghana in Accra. It is hoped that courses in Dagaare will be started in the University for Development Studies in the Northern part of the country in the near future. Various names exist for the language and the people, but the native speakers of the language call the language Dagaare and the people as Dagaaba for plural and Dagao for singular. The homeland of the Dagaaba is also called Dagarateng, Dagao or Dagapaalong or Dagawie (Bodomo 1997).

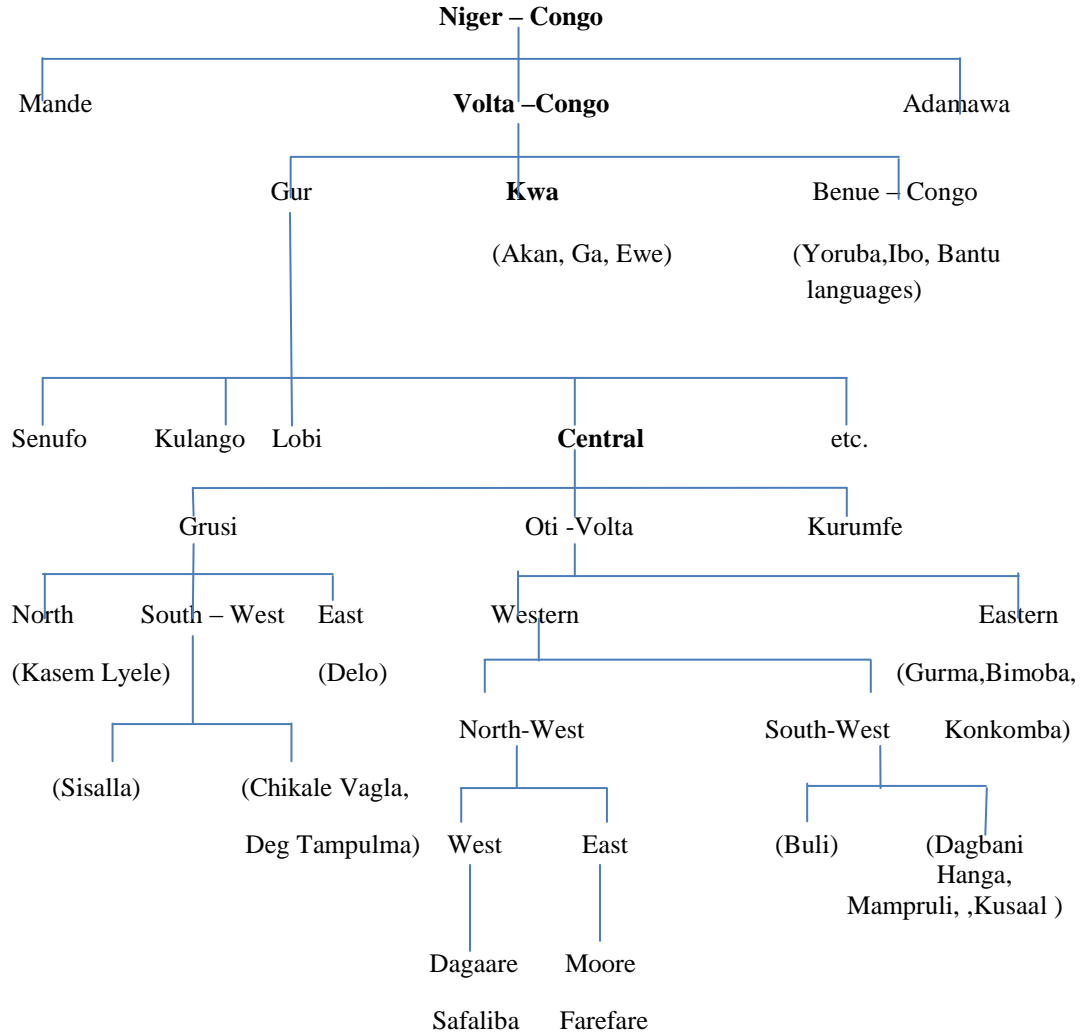
Economically, the Dagaaba are known to be subsistence farmers and some of the major crops that they cultivate are millet, corn, guineacorn, and beans. They also rear livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats and fowls. Farming is so central to

the Dagaao economy that one finds a lot of Dagaaba migrating to the southern part of the country in search of better lands to farm. The staple food of the Dagaaba is 'Saab' (or Tuo zaafi) and their local alcoholic beverage is 'daazie' (pito).

There are four dialects of Dagaare; namely Northern Dagaare, Central Dagaare, Southern Dagaare and Western Dagaare. These groupings are based on the geographical location of the dialects in the region. The dialects shade into each other into what is called a "dialect continuum". The northern dialect is called Dagara. The people and land of the Northern dialect are also called Dagara. The main towns where Dagara is spoken are Nandom in communities (such as Ketuo, Kogle, Betaalu, Naapal, Gengenkpɛ, Bu) Lawra, Hamile, Fielmuo and other neighboring communities. A large number of Dagara speakers are found in Burkina Faso, in towns such as Dissin, Dano, Diebougou, and Gaoua (Bodomo 1997). The central Dagaare is what is traditionally referred to as Dagaare and it is spoken in and around Jirapa, Nadowli, Bussie, Daffiama, Serekpere, Goli, Sankana, and Sombo. The central dialect is the dialect that was used by early missionary linguists who worked on the language in Ghana. This dialect is also the dialect that is used for publishing church literature, and educational material. It is the dialect that is taught in the basic and senior high schools and in other educational institutions such as the Universities and Colleges of Education. The southern dialect is spoken in Wa and Kaleo. Western Dagaare is also called Birifo and it is spoken in Tuna, Lassia-Tuolu and its environs, Kalba, and in some parts of Northern Region (that is one of the ten regions of Ghana). There are also some Birifo speakers across the Black Volta and in Cote d'Ivoire. All these four dialects

differ in terms of their lexicon, phonology and in grammar. However, there is also some level of mutual intelligibility and common linguistic features among these dialects. The southern and central dialects are very close, and the western and northern Dagaare are also closer to each other. This research focuses on interrogatives in Dagara, the northern dialect of Dagaare and as such data will be mainly from Dagara. Below is a diagram showing the genetic-linguistic relationships of Dagaare.

Fig. 1: The Genetic – Linguistic Relationships of Dagaare (Adopted from Dakubu 2005:4)



1.2 Problem Statement

There have been various researches on African languages including Ghanaian languages over the years by linguists and one of the major reasons for these researches is to document and preserve these languages for posterity. Various aspects of Dagaare have been researched by linguists. It is observed that almost all these works are on the general grammar of the language, thus touching a bit of everything but not providing an elaborate discussion. Secondly, it has been observed from the existing literature that even though Dagaare has four dialects much of the work in Dagaare is done in the central dialect. The other three dialects to the best of my knowledge have been neglected with very little work on them especially Dagara, and Bodom (1997) affirms this lack of research, and indicated that though there are some works on Dagara, it is done by Francophone and Burkina Faso linguists but not on question formation. Unfortunately, there is no existing work currently on the interrogative clause in the Dagara dialect in Ghana. But since there are variations among these dialects there is the need for each of them to be researched for the differences to be made clear. Dakubu (2005:5) attests to this difference among the dialects and indicated that “there are variations at the phonological, lexical and grammatical level”.

Besides the above, the absence of a detailed description of interrogatives in Dagaare and for that matter Dagara has necessitated this research. Though Bodom (1997) mentions question formation in his work, he was very brief and only mentioned two question types in the language: polar and content questions but was quiet on alternative questions which also exist in Dagara and which the

present study seeks to describe. Even though Konig and Siemund (2007) distinguished alternative and polar questions, Bodomo appears to have merged polar and alternative questions as one, which I think are different as will be shown in this work. He was also silent on the occurrence of question words in main and embedded clauses and the interaction between focus and content questions. All these call for investigation so as to provide extensive, detailed and comprehensive description of interrogatives in Dagara in terms of the types, structure, strategies, their responses, and their interaction with other grammatical phenomena like focus for typological purposes.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This thesis seeks to describe interrogatives in Dagara, a Northern dialect of Dagaare with the following specific objectives:

1. To identify and describe the syntax of the interrogative forms in Dagara.
2. To describe the strategies used in marking the interrogative types in Dagara and the expected responses to each type.
3. To find out the interaction of interrogatives with focus in Dagara.
4. To find out the role of tone and intonation in Dagara interrogatives.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The absence of a comprehensive description of interrogatives in Dagara has necessitated this research. This research is therefore relevant for the following reasons;

1. The work will serve as the first most comprehensive descriptive work on interrogatives in the language.
2. It will also be a reference material for future work in Dagara and for that matter Dagaare.
3. It will add to the existing literature on interrogatives.
4. It will serve as a motivation for speakers of Dagara to research into the other aspects of the language.

1.5 Research questions

This work is modeled within the framework of Basic Linguistics Theory by Dixon (2012) and it attempts to answer the following questions

1. What are the interrogative types in Dagara?
2. What are the strategies in the formation of the interrogative types in Dagara and their responses?
3. What is the interaction of interrogatives with focus?
4. What is the role of tone and intonation in Dagara interrogatives?

1.6 Organization of Thesis

The thesis is organized in six chapters as follows. Chapter one opens with a general introduction to the study touching on the linguistic background of the language and its speakers, the problem statement, aims, the relevance of the study and research questions.

Chapter two contains a review of relevant and related literature on the interrogative clause which serves as a point of reference for the present work. It also provides a description of the theoretical framework used, its advantages over other frameworks and its suitability for the study. The chapter also contains a section on the type of data used and the methodology used in collecting the data and concludes with a summary.

Chapter three is a major chapter on polar interrogatives. It opens with an introduction and discusses some views on polar interrogatives. The chapter discusses polar interrogatives, and how they are marked in Dagara. It also discusses the types of polar questions and how they are responded to in the language. It will further elaborate on focus in polar questions and their types based on the elements that are focused. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the functions of polar interrogatives and ends with a summary.

Alternative question is the focus of chapter four. The chapter gives an elaborate discussion of alternative questions and the strategies used in forming them. The types of alternative questions found in the language and their responses would also be discussed in this chapter. The difference between polar and alternative questions is discussed. A report on focus and how it is realized in alternative questions will be discussed in this chapter. The chapter ends with a summary.

In chapter five, content interrogatives are extensively addressed. The chapter begins with an introduction on what these interrogatives are, and the

different names that have been used to refer to content interrogatives. It highlights the various strategies in forming content interrogatives in both the main clause and the embedded clause, and their responses. Furthermore, the chapter discusses focus and its connection with content questions. The chapter ends with a summary on the chapter.

Chapter six is the final and concluding chapter and contains basically a general summary of the whole thesis, the findings, conclusion, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND
METHODOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of some relevant and related literature on the interrogative clause in various languages of the world. The review opens with general issues on the interrogative clause, and it is followed immediately with works on some distant languages bringing to bare the similarities and differences in terms of the typology and the strategies used in forming interrogatives. The review ends with literature on the interrogative in some Ghanaian languages in the order of Kwa family and finally Gur family where Dagara belongs. It brings to bare language specific tendencies and those that are language universals. This section aims at deepening our knowledge and understanding of the interrogative clause and pointing out issues that have been controversial in discussing the interrogative clause in the languages of the world. It also highlights the relevance of the reviewed literature to the current study. This chapter also contains an elaborate description of the theoretical framework used in this study and its relevance and suitability to the current work. Finally, in this chapter I discuss the data types that were collected, the methodology used in collecting the data, and how they were managed. Issues regarding the selection of language consultants have been addressed as well as ethical issues on data collection.

2.1 Literature Review

Payne (1997) provides a guide for field linguists writing a description of the morphology and syntax of a less documented language. He brings to light the broad knowledge of linguistic structures that are found in the literature on issues that are confusing and difficult to understand in describing a language. Some of the aspects of this study of which he was very informative include constituent word order in the main clause, typology, negation, question particles, serial verbs, and question words. Some of these shall be considered in this work. His ideas on the above will help me shape mine and properly provide a better description of interrogatives in Dagara.

Konig and Siemund (2007) identified six strategies that are used in expressing interrogatives cross-linguistically. They are: intonation patterns, interrogative particles, verbal inflections, relative change in the order of constituents, disjunctive negative structures and the use of special tags. Among the above strategies, the first four are also used in forming constituent interrogatives. This work is relevant to the discussion of interrogatives in Dagara as it throws light on the the strategies in forming polar interrogatives and the strategies outlined will be investigated to find out which of them is /are used in marking the interrogative types in Dagara.

Apart from the above, there are also works on interrogatives in some distant languages which I think are beneficial to the present study as they will serve as building blocks and as points of reference for comparison in bringing out

the similarities and differences among languages. The types of interrogatives differ from language to language. Gazali (2012) on the typology of questions in Kanuri indicated that only two types of questions exist in the language: yes/no questions and wh-questions. Yes/no questions in Kanuri are formed by adding the suffixed particle *-wa* to a declarative sentence. He explains that the suffixed particle cannot occur at the end of a simple past declarative sentence but can only occur at the end of a negative declarative which is in the present perfect or simple past. He added that the question particle can be suffixed to the subject complement, object complement and verb complement and verbs are moved when negated and suffixed by the question particle *-wa*. The present work will consider the types of interrogatives and the how they are formed in Dagara.

On polar questions in Seri, Marlett and Moser (2000) also argue that polar questions are formed from their corresponding declaratives not by a mere change in intonation but by the use of morphology and that there are no sentences in the language that lack interrogative morphology. This I find very interesting. They added that answers to polar questions are in the form of full sentences and not just yes/no as was also stated by Dorvlo (2008) in Logba. They added that negative polar questions are common in Seri. Constituent interrogatives seem to have received a lot of attention with some considerable works on it in the various languages of the world some of which I wish to consider. Mukaro (2012) on wh-questions in Shona, a Bantu language, shows in his work that the language displays both Wh-in situ and Wh-ex situ. Observe the following examples:

- (1) a. Nda - on - a John
 1singpst see TV 1a John
 ‘I saw John’
- b. Wa - on - a ani?
 2sing pst see TV who
 ‘Who did you see?’

(Mukaro 2012: 226, ex. 29)

In the above examples, the underlined part in (1a) shows the place of what is being asked by the question word in the interrogative (b).

- (2) Ndi - ani wa - wa - on - a?
 Cop who pst 2sing see TV
 ‘Who did you see?’
- (3) Chii cha - wa - on - a?
 What Am 2singpst see TV
 ‘What did you see?’

(Mukaro 2012: 225)

In examples (2 & 3), the question words have been moved from their canonical position in the declarative to occupy a designated structural position for question words. The above examples thus show that the language uses both the in-situ and ex-situ strategies.

Mukaro explains that all Wh-words in the language can be placed ex-situ except the Wh-word ‘*how*’, which can only occur in situ. In Nguni, a South Bantu language, Sabel and Zeller (2006) also explain that in Nguni, the question words occur optionally in sentence final position and that objects can occur both

at the beginning or end of the clause. The position of question words in Dagara interrogatives is one of the objectives of this work and it seeks to find out the preferred positions of the question words in Dagara.

Kimper (2006) on question formation in Tumbuka, a Bantu dialect spoken in Malawi, identified three things that are used in forming polar questions: the use of a question particle to the beginning of a sentence, a final syllable stress, and a rise in pitch. He emphasized that the question particle, which is a complementizer, must be put at the initial position of all questions in Tumbuka. This he illustrated in the following statement and corresponding yes/no question below in (4).

(Kimper 2006: 75)

(4) a. Iye a- ku- gon- a
 3S SM- pre -sleep -fv
 'He is sleeping.'

b. Kasi iye a- ku- gon- a
 Q 3S SM- pres- sleep- fv
 'Is he sleeping?'

Kimper further shows in his work that Wh-subjects in Tumbuka can occur in the left and right edges of the clause but objects and adjuncts cannot be moved and therefore remain in-situ. He made clear that the dialect limits the occurrence of multiple Wh-words in a single sentence. Wh-subjects in embedded clauses can undergo long distance extraction, and extracted Wh-subject can move to the beginning or end of the clause requiring the question particle in clause initial position. The present study seeks to investigate the occurrence of multiple Wh-

words in a single clause thus it will benefit from Kimber's work for possible similarities and differences.

Muriungi (2005) worked on Wh-Questions in Kitharaka (a central Bantu language spoken in Kenya) and identified four strategies that Kitharaka employs to form questions in the language; Wh-ex situ, Wh-in situ, partial Wh-movement, and intermediate strategy. The language also allows Wh-insitu in embedded questions chosen by the main verb. He noticed that with the exception of ex-situ strategy, the rest of the strategies outlined above usually have the subject and the Wh-phrase occurring after complementizers. Muriungi (ibid) explains that every sentence in Kitharaka always contains a focus marker and that the focus marker cannot remain in situ when there is a post-verbal focus (WH, or non-wh). He added that when there is wh-extraction in the main clause, there is no focus marker in the pre-verbal position and that wh-movement is triggered by a strong focus feature and in situ occurs when there is no focus marker. The language has two forms of negation; 'ti' and 'na' which normally occur with the present and past tense but not with the future tense. Also, affirmative verbs that do not have focus markers occur both in situ and ex-situ while the negative forces wh-extraction. He indicated that time and place adjuncts also occur in-situ but manner and reason wh-adjuncts cannot and must be moved.

Still on question formation strategies, Muriungi et al. (2014), also identified four strategies used in forming questions in Gichuku (a Bantu language): ex-situ strategy where the wh-phrase is fronted to the initial position of the sentence and then followed by a focus marker *ni*, the intermediate strategy

which involves movement of the wh-phrase to the medial position of the sentence and post modified by the focus marker without which the sentence is ungrammatical, partial wh-movement and wh-insitu strategy where the wh-phrase remains at the final position. Here, no focus marker is added and its addition renders the sentence ungrammatical. These strategies are not different from those Muriungi (2005) identified in Kitharaka also a Bantu language. It was also evident that just as in Kitharaka, Wh-in situ does not take a focus marker in Gichuku and its addition renders the sentence ungrammatical.

With regard to forming subject and object wh-questions, they argue that while the object can be questioned using all the four strategies: which are full wh-movement, intermediate wh-movement, partial wh-movement and wh-in situ, the subject cannot be questioned when the Wh-phrase is in situ. They further looked at the questioning of adjuncts and observed that only the adjunct 'why' does not take a focus marker when moved and therefore remains in its original position, but the rest of the adjuncts: when, where, and how, can be questioned using the four strategies identified above in both simple and complex sentences and when movement is involved, the focus marker is added. They concluded that the adjunct 'why' is special. This work intends to find out about the occurrence of adjuncts in Dagara questions and how similar or different they are from other languages. However, from the literature reviewed so far, it seems to me that focus marking cannot be separated from content questions. This is because the initial position of a sentence is the focus position and the interrogative words there take the focus marker.

Ndimele (1994) discusses the nature of wh-questions in Echie using the minimalist program and categorizes wh-questions into three broad classes; predicate in situ, subject insitu, and '*ndii*' questions. He claims that the predicate in situ is the best position for question words and '*ndii*', probably because it is a focus marker and only occurs in sentence initial position. He also shows that among the question words, only *onye* 'who', *nini* 'what', and *lle* 'how many' can occur in subject initial position and show no left movement. He further discusses the uses of the question words and stated that they can be used in questioning location and direction, time action, action, human and non-human referents, quantity/ frequency, purpose/reason, choice, and manner. A description of the question words in Dagara will be covered in this work.

Omoruyi (1989) also discusses questions and focus in Edo and argues that subject focus is optionally marked by a focus marker *e* or *re* after it has been moved to the initial position and its trace is filled by a third person singular pronoun. He also added that when the focus marker is absent the presence of third person pronouns indicates subject focus and that gender is not considered in the choice of the pronoun. On object focus, the object of a mono-transitive verb is moved to the initial position follow by an optional focus marker and the space created is left unfilled. But when the pronoun is focalized it changes to its subject pronoun counterpart. On verb focus, a nominal is derived from the verb and it is then moved to the sentence initial position. This strategy of verb focus does not only occur in Edo but also obtains in Dagara. Thus, the interaction between verbs and focus will be discussed in this study. Omoruyi (1989) further identified the

strategies of forming polar questions in Edo; raised pitched, and the use of the question marker *yi* at the end of a sentence and asserted that focusing is optional in polar questions. He also discusses six strategies in forming non-polar questions .and stated that the choice of a particular strategy depends on the question word that appears in them.

Ojwang (2008) also studies polar questions in Dholuo (a Western Nilotic language spoken in Kenya). The work shows that the use of particles and affixation (lengthening of the final vowel of the last syllable and the use of the politeness marker *e*) are the strategies used in forming polar questions in Dholuo. He identified eight question particles and added that the choice of each type is dependent on the function it performs in the sentence. The strategies used in forming polar questions in Dholuo are also manifested in Dagara as will be illustrated later in this work.

Zerbian (2006) reported that in Northern Sotho, polar questions are marked by the use of the particles '*na*' and '*naa*' and there exists asymmetry in the use of these question particles. He added that it is possible to have two question particles occurring in a sentence. On prosodic marking of polar questions, he argues that even though it is generally known that most languages of the world mark polar questions by a raised pitch, there is a difference in the part of the sentence where it occurs and that in Northern Sotho, the pitch is neither at the beginning or end of the utterance but extends over the whole sentence. On constituent questions, he stated that in the main clause, non-subject objects and adverbials are questioned in situ and that subject WH cannot be questioned in situ

and only occurs in multiple questions with echo reading. He also found that subjects of transitive verbs are questioned by means of a cleft construction and in the case of intransitive verbs, they are questioned post verbally. This study will consider question particles and the syntax and semantics of these question particles.

Abangma (2002) discusses the forms and functions of questions in Denya, and posits that yes/no questions are marked by a change in tone and that content questions have the interrogative word either at the beginning or at the final position in the sentence. He also demonstrates in the work that, when the question word is put at the initial position, it marks focus or topic but when the question word occurs at the final position, it marks topic only. He shows that the functions of yes/no questions in Denya are not different from those in English. They are used to solicit information, to request an action, for rhetorical effect, to confirm information already possessed by the speaker and for emphasis. He concluded that interrogative clauses perform the main function of the speech act of questioning. These functions of questions seem the same in Dagara and shall be investigated further in this study. Interrogatives have also received some attention from linguists in some Ghanaian languages which I seek to review.

In her discussion of how focused constituent interrogatives are formed in Lɛtɛ a South Guan language, Akrofi-Ansah (2010) discussed how contrastive focus is marked in the language and indicated that in Lɛtɛ, focus is expressed through a change in the word order and by the use of special morphemes. She tabulated five focused constituent interrogatives words/phrases and explained

their meaning differences. They are *ene* sg/*emaade* pl ‘who’, *mente* ‘what’, *enɔfa* ‘where’, *bere fene te/manke* ‘which time/which day’, *fene* ‘how much/how many’, and these do not make gender/noun class distinction. She added that with the exception of the person interrogative word which makes a distinction between singular and plural forms, all the other interrogative words are invariant in number. On the formation of focus constituent interrogative, she maintains that it is formed by placing the interrogative word in a focus position which is clause-initial, followed by the focus marker *ne* as shown in (5):

- (5) *Ene* *ne* *bè-gyí* *adube?*
 Who SG FOC FUT-eat pawpaw
 ‘Who will eat the pawpaw?’

(Akrofi-Ansah 2010:102)

She explains that in a non-interrogative expression, the constituent that has to be focused is fronted, followed by the focus marker ‘*ne*’ and terminates with the particle ‘*a*’ as in (6)

- (6) *A-yirebi* *a* *ne* *bè-gyí* *adobe a.*
 SG-child DEF FOC FUT-eat pawpaw TP
 ‘It is the child who will eat pawpaw.’

(Akrofi-Ansah 2010:102)

She also added that focus constituent interrogatives in Lete are more emphatic than other types of constituent interrogatives. She emphasized that focusing plays an important role in the formation of Constituent interrogatives. This was also observed in Dagbani where Isaah (2013) emphasized that focus is obligatory

when forming Constituent questions in Dagbani. This same observation was made in Akan (Saah 1988) and in Ga (Kotey 2001). Akrofi (ibid) indicated that the use of focused interrogatives is the preserve of adults and people of higher social status. Apart from these, one may use focused interrogatives for the sake of emphasis. This does not seem to be the case in Dagara as the use of focused interrogative is not the prerogative of any class or group of people. Three types of constituent interrogatives were identified in Larteh which include focused constituent interrogatives, in-situ interrogative and discontinuous question word interrogative. It seems to me that focused constituent interrogatives and in-situ interrogatives exist in Dagara but this work shall investigate further to ascertain this and to also find out whether Dagara exhibits discontinuous question word interrogatives. Akrofi's work on focus interrogative is therefore relevant to the present study as the issues raised in her work will also be explored in Dagara.

Cobbina (2013) is an M.Phil thesis on question formation in Efutu and she identifies three types of questions in the language based on the answers they generate: polar questions, content questions and alternative questions. She examines the strategies that are used in the formation of the various question types and the responses that are given for each question type. For example, she showed that polar questions in Efutu are formed by the use of question intonation and question particles. She stated that a particle in Efutu must not belong to any of the open classes in the language. Also, question particles are never used without intonation. Alternatives questions in Efutu are formed by the use of disjunctive question particle '*ntoo*' 'or' which joins the choices expressed in the alternative

question. She indicated that structurally, alternative questions and declaratives conjoined with the disjunctive marker ‘*ntoo*’ are similar except that in an alternative question, the final tone is low. She added that in the formation of content questions, the language employs both the in situ and ex situ strategies. Focus in Efutu does not occur on the interrogative word or phrase in situ and must therefore be fronted in sentence initial and focus is associated with prominence, emphasis and for new information.

Boadi (2005) also discusses interrogative sentences in Akan and identified three question types that traditionally exist: polar or categorical questions, question word or pronominal questions and ‘Echo’ questions. He identified the use of pitch and question particles as strategies that are employed in forming polar questions in Akan and made clear that in this type of question, the pitch glides down and the difference between a declarative and a polar question is a fall in pitch. This fall in pitch in polar questions also occur in Buli where (Akanlig-pare 2004) shows that polar questions are marked by a falling pitch intonation on the sentence final particle *-ja*. Boadi added that question words or question word phrases occur in three positions in the sentence and these are initial position, object position and adverbial –adjunct position.

Saah (1988) identified two types of Wh-questions in Akan. There are those in which the Wh-word occupies the same syntactic position as the questioned constituent, and those that have the Wh-word in sentence initial position. Saah (ibid) indicated that in Akan, Wh-questions are introduced by Wh-words or interrogative pronouns. He argues that sentences with the Wh-word in

sentence initial position are more emphatic than the ones that have the Wh-word in final position and shows that even though it is possible to change a Wh-word in question to get a corresponding Wh-word in sentence initial position (Wh-word *na-x* question) it is not always the case. He also demonstrates that sentences which have Wh –word or phrases in clause initial position have the focus morpheme ‘*na*’ attached to the right of the wh-word or phrase. This morpheme is called ‘exclusive focus marker’ (Boadi 1974 cited in Saah 1988).

In Kaakyi, Torrence and Kandybowicz (2014) discuss Wh-Question formation and found that the language displays three strategies in forming questions; Wh-ex-situ focus, Wh-in-situ, and partial Wh-ex-situ focus. They found that non-subject interrogative in main clauses may occur both in situ and ex situ positions without any semantic difference. This however looks peculiar to Kaakyi and does not occur in all Tano languages as Saah (1988) asserts that in Akan, Wh-ex-situ are more emphatic than their in-situ counterpart. Their work also shows that Wh-subjects occur either in-situ or in focus. Kaakyi again differs from other Tano languages like Akan where Saah (ibid) reports that Wh-subjects do not occur in-situ. This was also recorded in Bono and Wasa (Torrence & Kandybowicz 2012, 2013), Kitharaka (Muriungi 2005), Zulu (Sabel & Zeller 2006), Dzamba (Bokamba 1976). They further found that only ‘why’ among all the wh interrogative words restricts its occurrence in both main and embedded clauses to the left edge of the clause but that it undergoes wh partial movement in embedded clauses just like all other wh items do in the language. Some constrains

on the strategies were that wh-objects cannot be moved out from adjunct clauses and movement will generate ungrammatical sentences in Kaakyi.

Marfo and Bodomo (2005) on information structuring and focus constructions in Akan brought to bear that the question word can occur in situ in a 'canonical clause', or occurs ex-situ and it is replaced by 'ye' when the verb is questioned. They show that the question word can also be placed at initial position and followed by the focus marker 'na'. They argue against Saah (1988), assertion that question words related to greetings only occur in-situ because they do occur in Asante-twi and that there is no semantic difference when a question word is fronted or at in situ position. This is because question words are "inherently focus marked". On focus construction in Akan, they argue that contrastive focus is done by: fronting the constituent followed by the focus marker, the use of intonation, and the use of focus marked words like 'only'. They added that a common feature between Q-word fronting and focus constructions "is the presence of a resumptive pronoun in the canonical position of a front constituent" which must agree in number and in person with the specifier focus phrase constituent.

Dorvlo (2008) on Logba identified four types of questions in the language which are polar questions, content questions, alternative questions and coordinate questions. He also outlined three strategies used in forming questions in Logba: prosodic pitch raising of the final syllable, the use of a question word and the use of special tags. This rise in tone on the last syllable differs from Akan (Saah 1998), Ewe (Dzameshie 2001) and Efutu (Cobbina 2013) which have low tone on the final syllable. Dorvlo (ibid) made clear that polar questions are formed from

declaratives by adding a raised pitch to the final syllable and that the rise varies from person to person. However, the particle ‘*anaa*’ can be added to make emphasis and it suggests an angry mood of the speaker. The final vowel of the particle can also be lengthened to show how impatient the speaker is toward the addressee. He stated that polar questions seek specific positive or negative answers from the addressee and that responses to polar questions can be more elaborate or a sentence as in ‘I do not know’, ‘perhaps’, apart from yes/no answers.

Kotey (2001) in Ga identifies three types of questions in Ga which are polar questions, alternative questions and content questions. She indicates that polar questions in the language are formed by the use of intonation and /or question particles and that there is alternation of tone in the last syllable. She emphasized that the use of question particles is the most common means of forming polar questions in Ga. She further demonstrates that content questions are formed by focusing the question word or by allowing the question word to remain in situ. This is not different from what happens in Efutu as indicated by (Cobbina 2013).

Literature on interrogatives in Dagaare (Gur) and for that matter Dagara is very minimal and to the best of my knowledge occurs only in Bodomo (1997) on the general grammar of the Dagaare where he identified two types of questions in Dagaare: yes/no questions which he named in Dagaare as ‘bee’ questions and wh-questions which he also calls ‘bong’ questions. He was silent about alternative questions which also exist in the language and which this work seeks to consider.

I however differ in thoughts with the choice of his terms since ‘*bong*’ means ‘why’ and its meaning does not tally with the names of the question words in Dagaare because only two of the interrogative words begin with ‘*bong*’. Bodomo identifies the strategies used in forming polar questions: the use of *bee* at clause final, *bee* in between two independent clauses and lengthening of the vowels of the factive markers *la* and *na* respectively with a final low tone. However, it was realized from the data that the use of *bii* between two independent clauses cannot be answered with a yes/no (confirming or denying the utterance) or even a sentence but by choosing one of the alternatives provided. This makes such a question an alternative question and not a polar interrogative. Consider the Dagara example below

(7) Fv na di na bii fv kv di?
 2SG FUT eat EMPH or 2SG NEG eat

‘Will you eat or you will not eat?’ (Will you eat or not?)

The above question cannot be answered by confirming or denying but by choosing one of the options provided by the speaker. This means that alternative question is another type of question in Dagara which shall be discussed in this work.

Issah (2013) on constituent interrogatives in Dagbani, (a Gur language) indicates that Dagbani prefers interrogative words at clause initial position with mainly subjects, objects and adjuncts functions. He shows that in forming constituent interrogatives in the language, focusing is obligatory and the focus marker immediately follows the interrogative word. He adds that there are

situations where the interrogative word is preceded by a noun phrase resulting in ‘pied-piping’. He however concludes that, there are situations such as greetings and echo questions where the interrogative word occurs in situ. This observation was also made in Saah (1988).

Cahill (2012), on question intonation in Kɔnni argues against the assertion that the use of rising pitch to indicate polar question is a near universal in all languages of the world. He shows that Polar questions in kɔnni lengthen the final vowel or nasal with a variety of falling final pitch and added that the pitch of polar questions is higher than in the corresponding statement. Content questions in Kɔnni are formed by the use of an interrogative marker without the addition of tone.

Having reviewed some existing literature on interrogatives, I found that while there are differences among the languages of the world on how interrogatives are formed and answered, there are also similarities. I also found that not much research has been done on the interrogative clause in Gur languages, especially Dagara. Thus there is the need for research on the interrogative clause in Dagara. I therefore seek to describe how interrogatives are formed and answered in Dagara, the question particles in the language and where they occur in the sentence. The work shall also identify the interrogative words in Dagara, their position/positions of occurrence and the constituents that they question. Finally, the work will discuss how focusing interact with interrogatives in the language. This work will serve as a base for comparative study among the

other dialects of Dagaare in the near future and add to the literature on the interrogative clause.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is basically descriptive and it is modeled within the framework of ‘Basic Linguistic Theory’ (here after BLT) as developed by (Dixon 2012a). It originates from the pioneering work of Sanskrit and Greek Grammarians about 3000 and 2000 years ago and continues to be enhanced as new languages are described. The theory focuses on grammar writing and describes grammar as the central part of every language. It provides a guide for linguists working on natural languages and shows that each language should be treated as unique. According to Dryer (2006:201),

Basic linguistic theory differs sharply from other contemporary theoretical frameworks in what might be described as its conservativeness: unlike many theoretical frameworks that assume previous ideas only to a limited extent and freely assume many novel concepts, basic linguistic theory takes as much as possible from earlier traditions and only as much as necessary from new traditions. It can thus be described as traditional grammar, minus its bad features (such as a tendency to describe all languages in terms of concepts motivated for European languages), plus necessary concepts from traditional grammar. It has supplemented traditional grammar with a variety of ideas from structuralism, generative grammar, and typology.

Thus BLT benefits from other theories directly and indirectly.

In using BLT to describe a language, the focus should be on how the language is organized and why languages are the way they are. Dixon (2012a) explains that the grammar of any language is a network of collaborating structures and types, and calls for comparison of similar phenomena between languages before predictions are made. This means that each language is studied before it is related to what obtains across the languages of the world. Dixon (ibid) treats linguistics as a natural science and explains that being a science, linguistic analysis of a language must go through the scientific processes of describing, explaining, predicting, and evaluating. This is however not peculiar to BLT but occurs in other theories.

The theory further gives a guide for grammar writers and explains that when commencing work, the linguist must record, transcribe and analyze texts so as to unearth the regular and irregular features in the language and these should be written in clear style ‘avoiding obscure prose’ and the terminology used must also be clear and unambiguous. Dixon admonishes linguists never to depend on secondary sources but to go back to the primary sources for verification. This is to prevent misquoting scholars and avoiding errors. The standard orthography of the language must be adhered to and attention given to stress and intonation since these can bring about meaning differences.

No two languages are the same (Dixon 2012a: 92) thus unlike other formal theories that have a framework that is used to match the elements of the theory to a language, BLT does not make universal claims but provide basic linguistic ‘features and parameters’ that are common to be drawn on as correct in writing a

language's grammar. Dixon (2012c) elaborated on the various aspects of grammar including the interrogative sentence and how they should be investigated in a language and specifically discussed the types of interrogatives: content and polar questions (Dixon 2012a.) Data analysis in BLT is done by looking at similarities in structures through comparison. Because the theory views every language as a system that is unique and every part relates to the whole, the use of the theory provides a feedback to the theory so that it can be refined and extended.

Dixon added that any grammatical description must be grouped into 'words' and clause. The word refers to "the interaction of syntax and morphology" and the Clause refers to the description of some activity, state, or property and it is contained in a sentence. Thus, a simple sentence is made of a single clause. Structurally, there are two main clauses found in the languages of the world. These are intransitive and transitive clause.

The clause has two functions which are syntactic and pragmatic. The syntactic function deals with the structure, word ordering and clause combination while the pragmatic function is done by indicating the type of speech act that an utterance is. That is its mood. They include a statement that has a declarative mood, a command with an imperative mood, and a question with an interrogative mood. Clauses have internal structure made up of a predicate and a number of arguments which should be stated or understood from context. The predicate is the nucleus of the clause and determines the type and number of arguments that the clause takes and the meaning of the predicate determines the kinds of nouns which can fill a core argument slot. In using this theory, the typology of questions

will be used to identify the question types in Dagara. Secondly, the notion of word order is employed in describing how the arguments in the clause are encoded. Thus the choice of the theory is meant to guide in providing an accurate description of the interrogative clause in Dagara, instead of trying to describe it in terms of concepts which are motivated for European languages.

2.3 Methodology and Data Collection

The research is modeled within the framework of Basic Linguistic Theory and it seeks to describe interrogatives in Dagara. Since very little work has been done in the language, relying on secondary data solely for this research will not yield accurate result. Therefore, data for this work is sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The research site for my primary data is Nandom. Nandom was selected as the research site because it is one of the towns in the Upper West Region with many surrounding communities where standard Dagara is spoken. Thus their sentence structures can be used for analysis of the interrogative clause. I collected the primary data during my field work around the Christmas break in December 2014. I spent about three weeks eliciting data from the 21st of December, 2014 to the 8th of January, 2015. Data was specifically sourced at Nandom-Ketuo where I spent my Christmas break. For my primary data, I selected four native speakers from the community as my language consultants made up of both male and female ranging from the ages of forty-five and above. The background of my first consultant, Mr Liberio Aapagr a 76 year old man is a

farmer and an illiterate who speaks only Dagara. I chose him because he showed interest in my work and was ready to assist me with data. My second consultant, Mr Marius Naapane is a 77 year elderly man and a retired educationist. He speaks Dagara and English. The third consultant, Mrs. Aabenir Cecelia, a 77 year old woman is an illiterate and a pito brewer and speaks only Dagara. My last consultant is Modesta Sundem. She is 72 years and a semi-literate who speaks Dagara and some English. These are native speakers who are born and bred in Nandom and were chosen because these adult native speakers are expected to know the grammar of the language and be able to speak it fluently and appropriately.

My choice of both female and male is to avoid any gender bias and the age range is due to the belief that the elderly conserve and preserve the language and they speak it correctly. These informants were put into two groups of two. One group comprised literate speakers. This group helped me to get the correct English equivalent of the structures. The second group is made of illiterate speakers, since the literate group might be influenced by the English language. This helped me to check for grammaticality and identify some changes in the language. The consent of the consultants was sought after I explained to them what the purpose of the study was. This was to take care of any ethical issues.

In the collection of the field data, I used an audio recorder to audio-record naturally spontaneous spoken texts of various types which included narratives, conversations at homes, and in pito bars where a lot of interaction take place. I also had a session with members of my family in Nandom where I made them

narrate stories which were recorded. These recordings contained naturally occurring data which were relied on to get the typology of interrogatives and the position of question words in content questions. I also elicited data using Comrie and Smith's (1977) *lingua* descriptive studies questionnaire. The recorded data was then transcribed and translated with interlineal glossing for analysis which helped answer the research questions for this study. My secondary data was sourced from previous literature in the language that contains interrogative structures and one of such work I relied on is a book by Bangnikon (1999) on Dagara proverbs. In this book, many of the proverbs are in the form of interrogatives especially the question word interrogatives. These I selected for analysis. My knowledge of the language as a native speaker aided in eliciting data and in the analysis of the data. I also constructed some interrogative structures and sought their appropriateness from my second consultant.

CHAPTER THREE

POLAR INTERROGATIVES

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to discuss polar interrogatives and how they are formed in Dagara. The chapter begins with a discussion of how polar interrogatives are marked generally in the languages of the world and uses that as a building block in discussing how polar interrogatives are marked in Dagara. It will be shown in this work that Dagara employs two main strategies in encoding polar interrogatives: the use of question particles and final vowel lengthening with a falling pitch. Unlike English where polar interrogatives are formed by the rule of subject/verb inversion, it will be shown in this work that Dagara is an SVO language and in its use of the two strategies in the formation of polar interrogatives, its word order does not change. The different types of polar interrogatives and their responses are also discussed. There is also a section on how polar interrogatives interact with other grammatical structures like focus, and negation. The chapter ends with a discussion of the functions of polar questions and concludes with a summary.

3.1 Encoding Polar Interrogatives

Polar interrogatives are also known as yes/no questions in the literature. According to Payne (1997), polar interrogatives refer to interrogative clauses where the expected answer is either yes/no. Dryer (2005b) also explains that polar

interrogatives are ones to which the expected answer is the equivalent of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and that they are sometimes called ‘yes-no’ questions. In Dixon (2012c: 377) “these question types seek confirmation”. He criticised the name ‘yes/no questions’ as inappropriate and proposed the name ‘polar questions’ which will be used in this work. Dixon (2012c) again explains that these types of questions enquire whether or not a proffered statement is correct or not as (Konig & Siemund 2007: 11) put it “polar interrogatives are typically used to enquire about the truth or falsity of the proposition they express”. The response to a polar question may require something more than a simple yes/no. Dixon gave Yidi, an Australian language, as a language which requires a whole sentence with a predicate and appropriate core argument as a response to a polar interrogative.

Languages differ in the strategies used in marking polar questions. (Dryer 2005b, Dixon 2012c, Konig & Siemund 2007, and Payne 1997), discuss these strategies as the use of question particle. This strategy is said to be the most common strategy used to mark polar questions across the languages of the world. The question particle is usually added to a declarative to change it into an interrogative. In Dryer (2005b) data, 520 languages use this strategy out of 842. The position of the question particle varies from one language to the other. In some languages, the question particle may occur at the end of the sentence. An example is taken from Dryer (2005b) to illustrate this.

Russian (Payne 1997:295, Boadi 1990:72). Dagara employs this strategy in marking polar questions as shall be discussed soon in this work. Some languages use intonation pattern as the only means of indicating questions. In Dryer's data, 138 out of a total of 842 languages use only intonation in marking polar questions. An example is colloquial Italian. Even though the use of intonation is said to be universal across the languages of the world, there are variations in its usage. While some languages employ rising intonation pattern in polar questions, others use a falling intonation. For instance English has a rising intonation in polar questions while Russian has a falling intonation. Dryer asserts that there is always a rise toward the end of the sentence and Dixon (2004:410, 530) also indicates that "[a] polar question has rising intonation on the penultimate syllable, followed by a fall". An example is Jarwara. However Zerbian (2006) argues against Dryer's claim and indicated that in Northern Sotho, the pitch is not found at the end nor beginning, but extends over the whole sentence. Also, according to Saah (1994), Akan display a falling intonation on the last phonological segment and this is not different from what happens in Efutu (Cobbina 2013).

Polar interrogatives are also said to be marked by a change in the constituent order. This is however rare as was observed in Dryer (2005b), only 12 languages in his data, out of 842 use this strategy in forming polar questions with nine of them being European languages including English.

Some languages also mark polar interrogatives morphologically (Dryer 2005b). This may be a suffix that is used to show that an utterance is a question. Examples of such languages are Tunica and Hunzib. Apart from the above types,

Dryer *ibid* added that there are languages that use both question particles and interrogative verb morphology which can either be used as two separate constructions or they can be used together in a single construction. An example is Piraha. In Dryer (2005b), 12 languages out of 842 mark polar questions by the use of question particles and verbal morphology.

Furthermore, polar interrogatives may also be marked in some languages by the absence of morphemes present in the declarative sentence. An example is in Zayse (Omotic, Afro-Asiatic Ethiopia) where the form of the verb that is used in the declarative sentence has a morpheme –tt (t) which is not present in the interrogative form. 4 out of 842 languages employ the absence of declarative morphemes to mark polar questions as was observed in Dryer (2005b). Still to add, some languages also employ the use of disjunctive constructions where the predicate is followed by its negation. Thus, this type of construction has the label ‘A-not-A’. The A-not-A type of marking polar interrogative is well known in Mandarin.

Finally, there are languages that do not have any formal marking of Polar interrogatives and therefore one cannot tell any structural differences between polar interrogatives and declaratives. An example is Chalcatongo Mixtec in Dryer (2005b) where this occurs as illustrated below in (10). In his data, only 1 language out of a total of 842 languages does not show any segmental or supra-segmental differences between a declarative and an interrogative.

Chalcatango Mixtec (Macaulay 1996:126 cited in Dryer 2005b:471))

- (3) XAKU =RO
LAUGH =2
'You are laughing/Are you laughing?'

Other ways of marking polar interrogatives are the use of interrogative auxiliary verbs which is found in a few languages, the use of tags, mood or a combination of these Dixon (2012c:391). Having discussed how polar interrogatives are marked in the languages of the world, I now proceed to discuss the strategies that Dagara employs to mark polar questions based on the data I collected.

3.2 Marking Polar Questions in Dagara

Dagara has two major ways of differentiating between a declarative and a polar interrogative. These are: the use of intonation with final vowel lengthening and the use of question particles. Each of these shall be discussed in the subsequent section below.

3.2.1 Intonation

The use of intonation or pitch with final vowel lengthening is one of the strategies employed to mark polar questions in Dagara and this differentiates a declarative from an interrogative. Pitch according to Bodomo (1997) relates to the rate at which the vocal cords vibrate. Tone languages use pitch to bring about a difference in meaning between identical words. But when the pitch relates to a larger grammatical sentence and not syllables or words, and brings out meaning difference, it is called intonation. Languages that use this strategy are said to be

intonation languages (Bodomo 1997). Dagara is a tone language because tone brings about difference in meaning between identical words and intonation is used in marking polar questions in the language. There are two tonal levels in Dagara: low (`) and high tone (´) and a downstepped high unit (Kennedy J. 1966 cited in Bodomo 1997). Tone is used lexically in Dagara to create lexical differences. This means that two lexical items could be identical in structure or form but a difference in tone creates meaning difference. This is illustrated in the pairs of words below.

(4) dúru ‘urine’	dùru ‘right hand’
núu ‘hand’	nuu ‘five’
páw ‘to get’	pàw ‘to cover’
ka´ ‘here’	kà ‘break’

It can be observed from the above pairs of words that they are the same in form and structure but differ in tone and this difference in tone is what brings the difference in meaning.

There are different views on the type of pitch that is commonly found in polar questions in the languages of the world. While some scholars argue that the pitch in polar questions is usually rising, others also assert that the pitch is falling. According to Dixon (2004:410), “a polar question has rising intonation on the penultimate syllable followed by a fall” and there is always a rise somewhere towards the end of the sentence and Payne (1997) also asserts that intonation

patterns in yes/no questions is usually rising or falling. This is in agreement with Konig and Siemund (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 rare”. He further argues that a higher pitch towards the end of the contour is the most prominent one with a few languages having the higher pitch towards the beginning of the utterance.

Still on prosodic marking of polar questions, Zerbian (2006) argues that even with the higher pitch, in some languages, the higher pitch is neither at the beginning or end of the sentence but extends over the whole utterance. An example of a language that uses this strategy is Northern Sotho, (Zerbian 2006). Also, Railland (2009) in his study of 78 African languages on question prosody identified five high pitched yes/no question markers and six non-high pitched yes/no question markers. The markers of high pitch yes/no questions include: register expansion and reduction, raising of last high(s), reduction and cancellation of final lowering, final high tones and rising intonations, and final high-low tones, while falling intonations, polar tones or mid-tones, final lengthening, breathy termination, cancellation of penultimate lengthening, and [open] vowels mark non-high-pitched yes/no questions. Some languages combine these markers in each group to mark polar interrogatives. For example, in Moore, question prosody is indicated by falling intonation, large lengthening of the last vowel and breathy termination (Railland 2009). He found that languages with falling question intonation patterns or final low tone are quite common. Railland (ibid) thus found that out of the total of 78 African languages, 36 of them

exhibited this feature. According to Akanlig-pare (1994), yes/no questions in Buli are marked by a falling pitch intonation on the sentence final particle –ja and there is also the lengthening of the vowel of the particle which takes care of the pitch glide. Dagara is not an exception from the expected intonation patterns in polar interrogatives discussed above. Polar interrogative in Dagara is marked by falling pitch and lengthening of the final syllable vowel of the declarative sentence. This is illustrated below;

(5) a. A bie gã na.
 DET child lie down/sleep EMPH
 ‘The child is sleeping’.

 b. A bie gã na-a?
 DET child lie/sleep EMPH-QT
 ‘Is the child sleeping?’

(6) a. Fv ma ben be.
 2SG mother be there
 ‘Your mother is there’.

 b. Fv ma ben be-e?
 2SG mother be there-QT
 ‘Is your mother there?’

(7) a. Fv na ɔbi a sense ne
 2SG FUT chew DET Koose/cakes CONJ
 a Zεvaar.
 DET Leaves
 ‘You will eat the cakes and the leaves’

 b. Fv na ɔbi a sense ne a
 2SG FUT chew DET Koose/cakes CONJ DET
 zεvaari-i?
 leaves-QT
 ‘Will you eat the cakes (koose) with the leaves?’

From the sentences above, it can be observed that each pair of sentence has the same words which are arranged structurally in the same order but the only difference that marks one as a polar interrogative and the other as a declarative lies in the presence of the lengthened final syllable vowel of the interrogative with a falling pitch. Thus, all the (a) sentences are declaratives while their (b) counterparts are polar interrogatives. As it was argued earlier, unlike English that marks polar questions by subject-auxiliary inversion; it can be observed from the above polar questions in (5b, 6b, & 7b) that, there is no change in the word order in the polar questions, for instance subject-auxiliary inversion and the SVO structure of the language is also maintained. This does not only occur in Dagara but also obtains in Akan (Saah 1998) and Krachi (Saah & Dundaa 2012) where the SVO structure is maintained in forming polar questions.

In sentence (5a), the speaker is asserting or giving the information to the addressee that the child is sleeping or lying down. In example (5b), the speaker enquires whether the child is sleeping or not. In doing so the the falling pitch of the declarative is maintained and the final syllable vowel has been lengthened which changes it into a polar question and no more a declarative. This strategy of forming polar interrogatives in Dagara confirms the assertion made by Railland (2008) that, when final syllable lengthening is used to mark question prosody, it is combined with other markers like falling intonation, breathy termination or both. In example six (6a), the speaker makes the statement with a falling pitch that the addressee's mother is present but its polar counterpart in (6b), eventhough it also has the same structure, its final vowel is lengthened which changes the declarative

to a polar interrogative and enquires about the where-about of the addressee's mother. This final low pitch also occurs in Akan and Efutu which have final low tone on the last syllable as indicated in (Saah 1988, and Cobbina 2013) respectively. Cobbina (2013) further indicates that intonation in polar questions in Efutu is realized with an extra low tone on the final syllable while a declarative has a high tone on the final syllable. Cahill (2012) also observed that in Kɔnni (Gur), polar questions are formed by lengthening the final vowel or nasal and have some variety of falling final pitch and that most polar questions exhibit a small but consistent phonetic 'upflip' at the end. He added that in surprise questions in Kɔnni, the entire register is higher than in neutral questions. This is illustrated in the examples taken from (Cahill 2012:91) below.

(8) a. ʊ ɲɛm`ia' gu`u`m bu'
 (He/she is rolling the rope)

b. `U ɲɛm`ia' gu`u`m bu`u`
 (Is he/she rolling the stone?)

The above sentences are similar except for the tone and the final syllable vowel lengthening which brings about a difference between the declarative in (8a) and a polar interrogative in (8b). This is similar to what occurs in Dagara. In Dagara, when the declarative ends with the emphatic or affirmative marker *na*, its interrogative counterpart is formed by lengthening the final vowel *a* of the emphatic or affirmative marker *na* with a final falling pitch as shown in example (9) but if the sentence doesn't end with the emphatic marker, but it is made of just a subject and a verb as in example (10), the final syllable vowel of the verb is

lengthened. The verb could either be perfective or imperfective. This is illustrated below:

- (9) a. Fv di na.
2SG eat-PERF EMPH
'You have eaten'
- b. Fv di na-a?
2SG eat-PERF EMPH-QT
'Have you eaten?'
- (10) a. v di-rɛ.
3SG eat-IMPERF
'H/she should eat'
- b. v di-rɛ-ɛ?
3SG eat-IMPERF-QT
'Should he/she eat?'

Tone is not marked in the above examples because that is not the focus but the focus is on final vowel lengthening which changes a declarative into a polar interrogative.

Still on lengthening of the final vowel, when the declarative ends with the emphatic marker *na*, its interrogative can also be formed not by lengthening the final vowel of the emphatic marker, but by dropping the emphatic marker and lengthening the final vowel of the verb with a falling pitch as shown in example (11 & 12). It seems to me that polar interrogatives formed this way usually seek permission. See below

- (11) a. I di-rɛ na
1SG eat-IMPERF EMPH.
'I am eating.'

- b. I di-rɛ-ɛ?
1SG eat-IMPERF-QT
'Should I eat?'
- (12) a. Bɛ zu na.
3PL steal EMPH
'They stole'.
- b. Bɛ zu-u?
3PL steal-IMPERF-QT.
'Should they steal?'

In sentence (11a), for instance, it is time for meals, but the addressee seems not ready to eat or is still seen busy doing some other things. Thus the speaker wanting to eat seeks the consent of the addressee to start eating and thus ask if he/she could eat. This he did by lengthening the final vowel of the verb. The final vowel of both the verb and the emphatic marker cannot be lengthened in the same sentence to mark polar interrogative in Dagara, and this generates ungrammatical structures. Using sentence (11), there cannot be lengthening of final syllable vowels of both the verb and the emphatic marker as seen in the ungrammatical sentences below in (13&14).

- (13) *I dirɛɛ naa?
(14) *Bɛ zuu naa?

It has also been observed from the data that the emphatic marker *na* does not occur in negative polar interrogative. Therefore, negative polar interrogatives are formed by lengthening the final vowel of the verb with a rising tone.

- (15) a. Nye bɛ di-ɛ.
2PL NEG eat-PERF
'You have not eaten'

- b. Nye be di-ε-ε?
 2PL NEG eat-PERF QT
 ‘Have you not eaten?’

3.2.2 The Use of Question Particles as Markers of Polar Interrogatives in Dagara

The second strategy that Dagara employs in marking polar questions is the use of particles. According to Radford (1997: 267), particles are constituents that “are invariable in form and which do not fit easily into traditional system of grammatical categories”. Frazer (1996) cited in Amfo (2010: 4) also explains that particles are “linguistically coded cues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intention”. Thus the presence of a question particle in an utterance indicates that it is not a statement or a declarative but an interrogative. The use of question particles in marking polar questions is most common in OV languages, but it does occur in SVO languages as well (Payne 1997). Dagara being an SVO language also makes use of question particles in the formation of polar interrogatives. This confirms the claim that SVO languages make use of particles in forming polar questions (Payne 1997).

As indicated earlier in the work, even though question particles are employed in many languages to mark polar questions, their positions of occurrence in the sentence vary from language to language. In Akan, polar questions are formed by the use of various question particles which occur either at initial or final position and marks a sentence as an interrogative (Saah 1998). Saah (ibid) added that these question particles may be optional and can be omitted and replaced by question intonation. Efutu for instance has two interrogative particles

both of which can only occur at the end of a declarative and changes it to a polar question (Cobbina 2013). Kotey (2001) also observes that Ga, also makes use of question particles but unlike Efutu, some question particles in Ga can occur at sentence initial position and others at sentence final. Dagara on the other hand has two question particles *bɪɪ* and *ya* of which one is restricted to final position while the other can occur in both initial and final positions as will be shown in this work. These particles and their places of occurrence as well as the meaning differences regarding where they occur are discussed below.

3.2.2.1 The Particle 'bɪ' or 'bɪɪ'

The particle 'bɪɪ' is one of the particles used to mark polar questions in Dagara. It has the variant 'bɪ'. It can occur either in initial or final position of an interrogative clause. Both variants can be used interchangeably in final position but 'bɪ' is restricted to the final position. Also, when the speaker wants to show emphasis or stress on what is being questioned, *bɪɪ* is used. The role of this particle is to change a declarative into a polar interrogative. This is exemplified in the sentences below;

- (16) a. Fv bɪɛɛ na.
 2SG sick EMPH
 'You are sick'.
- b. Fv bɪɛɛ na bɪɪ?
 2SG sick EMPH QP
 'Are you sick?'

- c. *Bii* *fɔ* *biɛɛ* *na?*
 QP 2SG sick EMPH
 ‘Are you sick?’
- d. *Zaato* *kule* *na.*
 Zaato *go home-IMPERF* EMPH
 ‘Zaato is going home.’
- e. *Zaato* *kule* *na* *bii?*
 Zaato *go home-IMPERF* EMPH QP
 ‘Is Zaato going home?’

Sentence (16a) is a declarative sentence and the speaker asserts that the addressee is sick. In sentences (16b &c), the question particle *bii* is introduced at the final and initial positions respectively and it changes the sentences into polar interrogatives. There is however no meaning difference between its occurrence in final position and in initial position as the speaker in both sentences questions or wants to know if the addressee is sick. Similarly, example (16d) is a statement in which the speaker gives the information that Zaato is going home. But in (16e), the statement in (16d) changes to a polar interrogative by the presence of the question particle *bii* and the speaker now seeks to know if Zaato is going home. Thus in the above examples, the presence of the question particle as argued by Frazer (1996) cited in Amfo (2010), shows the speaker’s intention of seeking information and not just an assertion.

The question particle *bii* can occur in both positive and negative interrogative clauses as shown in the examples below.

- (17) a. *A* *bie* *so-n* *kuɔ* *bii?*
 DET child bath-PERF. water QP
 ‘Has the child bathed?’

- b. Bɪ a bie so-n kʊʊ?
 QP DET child bath-PERF water
 ‘Has the child bathed?’

The sentences in (17a & b) are both positive interrogatives and the question particle occurs in final and initial positions respectively. In both sentences in (17), the speaker wants to know the true state of affairs without any additional intentions or the speaker wants a confirmation of what seems to be true without any additional information or intention. In sentence (17a) for instance, a mother goes out and comes back to find her child still looking clean and neatly dressed and asked the housemate the above question. Here the speaker wants to know if the child bathed. The maid can respond either by saying ‘yes’ to affirm what seems to be the case or ‘no’ to counter the situation. In a similar way as shown in sentence (17b) the speaker makes an observation after which he demands a confirmation or otherwise.

In a negative polar interrogative, the question particle can also occur in both initial and final positions where the negative marker follows the subject or the object. Consider the negative interrogative clauses below in (18).

- (18) a. A bie bɛ so kʊʊ bɪ?
 DET child NEG bath water QP
 ‘Hasn’t the child bathed?’
- b. Fʊ bɛ so baari biɪ?
 2SG NEG bath finish-PERF QP
 ‘Have you not finished bathing?’

- c. *Bɪ* *fɔ* *bɛ* *so* *baari?*
 QP 2SG NEG bath finish-PERF
 ‘Have you not finished bathing?’
- d. *Buɔ* *bɛ* *nu* *v* *kv* *bi?*
 goat NEG FOC 3SG kill QP
 ‘Is it not a goat he killed?’

In the above sentences, the speaker’s expectations seem not to have been met and he/she seeks a confirmation. In (18a), the speaker expected the child to have bathed, but the child did not look like it and so she/he wants the addressee to either confirm or reject the speaker’s observation. Also, in sentence (18b) above, the speaker expected the addressee to have finished bathing considering probably the time spent in the bathroom, but the speaker still heard the addressee bathing and so asked, so that she/he may speed up. In example (18c), the speaker wants to know if the addressee has not finished bathing. In (18d), the speaker wants to know if it is not a goat that he has killed. Here, the negative marker follows the object *buɔ* ‘goat’ It can thus be observed from the examples in (18) that they are all negative interrogatives and the question particle occurs in different positions.

The question particle *bi* at the initial position of a polar interrogative clause also connotes a contrast between a previous idea and a newly suggested idea or opinion. In such a situation, it can be glossed as the English conjunction ‘or’. It is used when the interlocutors already have previous knowledge about something but the speaker asks a question or suggests another thing which contrasts the previous knowledge. Its use in this sense implies that the speaker is suggesting another idea contrary to what was agreed on. For example, a man who had agreed with his wife to travel on a certain day had a change of mind about the

said day and proposes a different day by asking the wife the following question in (19).

- (19) a. BII ti kyen bio?
 Or 1PL go tomorrow
 ‘Or we should go tomorrow?’

Here, the man has another idea or suggestion which he wants the wife to agree to or disagree with.

- b. BII fɔ di-rɛ na?
 or 2SG eat-IMPERF EMPH
 ‘Are you eating?’ or ‘or you are eating?’
- c. BII ti kyɛɪ bilav?
 or 1PL wait small
 ‘Or we should wait a little?’
- d. BII bɛ bɛ kye-re?
 or 3PL NEG go-IMPERF
 ‘Or they are not going?’

In all these examples in (19a-c), there is a presupposition or expectation, and a new idea which differs from the previous one is being proposed.

The particle *bii* is also used as a coordinate conjunction in alternative questions where the addressee is offered options from which he is expected to choose from. The use of this particle as a conjunction in alternative questions will be discussed later in the next chapter.

3.2.2.2 *The Particle 'Ya'*

The particle *ya* occurs only in echo questions and changes a declarative to a question. Echo questions are types of questions that repeat what has been said back in a form of a question. Echo questions in Dagara are formed by repeating the whole declarative and ending it with the particle *ya*. Thus, this particle only occurs in final position and its occurrence in initial position generates unacceptable structures in the language. Below are some examples on the syntactic position of the question particle *ya*.

- (20) a. Nɔŋmɛ zu-n libir.
 Nɔŋmɛ steal-PERF money
 'Nɔŋmɛ has stolen money'
- b. U zu-n libir ya?
 3SG steal-PERF Money QP
 'Has he stolen money?'
- (21) Fv kye-re na ya?
 2SG go-IMPERF EMPH QP
 'Are you going?'
- (22) Nye bɛ dɪ-rɛɪ ya?
 2PL NEG eat-IMPERF QP
 'You will not eat?'
- (23) A nɪbɛ bɛ wai ya?
 DET People NEG come-PERF QP
 '...the people haven't come?'
- (24) *Ya fv dɪ na
 QP 2SG eat EMPH

The question particle *ya* is used in both positive and negative polar interrogatives.

The particle *ya* is employed when the speaker having been told or heard

something, takes interest and seeks confirmation about what he has been told or heard. It is also sometimes used when the speaker is surprised about what he is been told or heard. The information could come from the addressee himself or someone else. It has the interpretation of ‘they/you/he/she said so so and so, is it true?’ I describe *ya* as a polar interrogative particle because no specific lexical meaning can be associated with it but its role is that, when it is added to a declarative, it changes it to a polar interrogative. I also consider the above sentences as polar interrogatives because the responses to these questions could just be ‘yes/no’, a confirmation or a denial. From the above sentences, it is realized that the speaker has been given some information or heard something and he/she needs confirmation from the addressee on what he has been told or heard. In example (20) for instance, the speaker was told that Nɔ̃ɔmɛ has stolen money and being surprised asked the question in (20b) whose full meaning is ‘Did you say that he has stolen money?’ In response to this question, the addressee can respond with just a yes/no answer or by saying yes/no and explaining further just to make it more clear to the speaker. In example (21), the addressee has told the speaker that he/she was leaving and as if the speaker did not hear him well poses the question. In (22), the speaker had heard that the addressees had said they will not eat and being surprised at it, questions them for confirmation. The confirmation of some expected people not coming is sought from the addressee in (23). In all these echo questions, the speaker repeats what he/she heard or thought to have heard and adds the question particle *ya*. Example (24) however is ungrammatical because the question particle occurs in the wrong position.

As indicated earlier in this work, most Ghanaian languages employ the use of particles as a strategy in forming polar interrogatives. However Saah & Dundaa (2012) following Carnie (2013) and Payne (1997) observed that unlike the English language where polar questions are formed by subject-auxiliary inversion, in Akan & Krachi, question particles are used and they may either occur in initial or final position, but no subject-auxiliary inversion. This observation also holds true in Dagara as no subject-auxiliary inversion rule is employed when forming polar questions and the SVO word order is maintained.

3.3 Types of Polar Questions and Responses

Languages have different types of polar questions and according to (Dixon 2012c), the types of polar interrogatives are based on the kind of answers that are expected or the attitude of the speaker. Dixon stressed that polar questions are not only answered by yes/no responses but could also be answered by expressions such as ‘not really’, ‘so they say’, ‘I believe so’, ‘it is not clear’ (Dixon 2012c:377) and this was reiterated by (Dorvlo 2008), that, apart from answering polar questions with a simple yes/no, the answers could be more elaborate. Dixon added that a response could be vocal as the above or a culturally appropriate gesture like a head nod which shows affirmation, shaking of the head which indicates negative, spreading of the arms and palms which means ‘I don’t know or showing ignorance’. In Seri for instance, polar questions are answered with a complete sentence (Marlett & Moser 2000). Partee (2009: 3) also asserts that “yes/no responses are elliptical or anaphoric”. Thus, a ‘yes’ represents a repetition

of the utterance that corresponds directly to the question while a ‘no’ answer represents a negation of its declarative counterpart. In Efutu, a ‘yes’ to a positive polar question indicates confirmation and a ‘no’ response shows denial of the proposition. They also sometimes answer a polar question by saying ‘I don’t know’ to portray uncertainty (Cobbina 2013: 51).

Based on Dixon (2012c) criteria on the types of polar questions, polar questions in Dagara are of two types: positive and negative polar questions. Payne (1997) explains that a clause is negative if it asserts that some event, situation, or state of affairs does not hold and these clause types normally occur in the context of some presupposition. Negative polar interrogatives in Dagara usually seek confirmation or denial of the utterance.

3.3.1 Positive Polar Interrogative

Positive polar interrogatives are formed in Dagara by adding an interrogative particle to a positive declarative or by lengthening the final syllable vowel and ending with a falling pitch. These are illustrated below:

- (25) a. Fv dɪ na.
 2SG eat PERF EMPH
 ‘You have eaten’
- b. Fv dɪ na bɪ?
 2SG eat PERF EMPH QP
 ‘Have you eaten?’

- c. Fv dɪ na-a?
 2SG eat PERF EMPH-QT
 ‘Have you eaten?’

Structurally, sentences (25a, b & c) are the same because they all have the same structure. Sentence (25a) is a positive declarative that gives the information that the addressee has eaten. From it, were formed the two questions (25b & c) using different strategies. In (25b), a question particle is placed at the final position and it changes the declarative into a polar interrogative while in (25c) a strategy known as final vowel lengthening is used. Thus the final vowel of the emphatic marker *na* in (25a) is lengthened which changes the declarative to a question. In terms of meaning however, both polar interrogatives are not different as they both seek to know if the addressee has eaten.

3.3.2 Negative Polar Questions

According to Dorvlo (2008:146), “a negative proposition is a denial of an assumed or a presupposed assertion”. Negation can be marked by the use of negative particles, a word or a morpheme. In Logba for instance, as indicated by Dorvlo (2008), negation is marked on the verb. This does not only pertain to Logba but also occurs in Ga (Kotey 2001) Efutu (Cobbina 2013) and Akan (Osam 2004).

Negation in Dagara is marked by the use of negative particles some of which include *kv*, *ta*, *taa*, and *bε*. They normally occur before the verb which they

negate. Negative polar questions in Dagara are formed by adding a negative particle to a statement and lengthening the final syllable vowel or by adding a question particle either at the beginning or end of the sentence while maintaining the falling pitch as shown in example (26b).

- (26) a. Dɛr wa na.
Dɛr come FACT
'Der has come'.
- b. Dɛr bɛ waare-ɛ?
Dɛr NEG come-IMPERF-QT
'Is Der not coming?'
- c. Dɛr bɛ wai-i?
Dɛr NEG comePERF-QT
'Hasn't Der come?'
- d. Dɛr ta wa bi?
Dɛr NEG come QP
'Shouldn't Der come?'

Sentence (26a) is a positive proposition. In order to form polar interrogatives using the two strategies, a negative marker is introduced and the final vowel lengthened which questions the verb *wa* 'come' as in (26b & c). The verb *wa* 'come' is still questioned in (26d) and the negative marker and question particle are also present. All the sentences in (26b, c & d) are negative polar questions.

3.3.3 How Polar Questions Are Answered

In Dagara, positive polar questions can be answered with either $v\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ or $v\tilde{v}$ ‘no’, or $v\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ plus some repetition of the proposition or $v\tilde{v}$ ‘no’ plus a negation of the question or by confirming or denying the proposition without necessarily saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Positive polar questions can also be answered by the use of non-verbal means such as nodding of the head to mean approval or yes, shaking of head to show ‘no’ or ‘disapproval’, shrugging the shoulders to mean ‘I don’t know, I don’t care or no’. One of my language consultants told me that it is mostly children or the younger ones who answer positive polar questions by first saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ before the rest of the sentence but adults do not. Positive polar questions are straight forward but the answers have various interpretation. In Dagara, when a person response $v\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ it means the person agrees or affirms what the speaker said. $v\tilde{v}$ ‘no’ is used to deny what the speaker said. For example

- (27) Nye di na-a?
 2PL eat PERF EMPH-QT
 ‘Have you eaten?’

The above is a positive polar interrogative and could be answered with either of the following responses:

- (28) a. $v\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ which is interpreted as ‘we have eaten’
 b. $v\tilde{v}$, which implies ‘we have not eaten’
 c. $v\tilde{v}$, ti di na.
 yes 1PL eat EMPH
 ‘Yes, we have eaten’

d. $\tilde{v}\text{-}\tilde{v}$, $t\text{r}$ $b\epsilon$ $d\text{r-}\epsilon$.
 no 1PL NEG eat-PERF

‘No, we have not eaten’

e. $T\text{r}$ $d\text{r}$ na .
 1PL eat EMPH

‘We have eaten’

f. $T\text{r}$ $b\epsilon$ $d\text{r-}\epsilon$.
 1PL NEG eat-PERF

‘We haven’t eaten’

All the above responses are acceptable answers to question (27) but an answer like ‘ $I\ b\epsilon\ bag\epsilon$ ’ meaning ‘I don’t know’ will be considered rude and inappropriate.

On the other hand, responses to negative polar questions in Dagara are different from the way they are responded to in English. Unlike English where a ‘yes’ response always means positive or confirmation and ‘no’ means negative or denial, in Dagara, $\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ is given as a response to a negative polar question as a confirmation of what the speaker said and $\tilde{v}\text{-}\tilde{v}$ a ‘no’ response means a rejection or denial of the proposition. So what happens in Dagara is the reverse of what happens in English in answering negative polar questions. Sometimes when the response to a negative question is also negative, that is rejecting the proposition, instead of saying $\tilde{v}\text{-}\tilde{v}$ ‘no’ plus a positive statement, they answer by just giving a positive statement. This I find interesting because it confirms what mathematics teaches that a negative plus negative gives a positive. Thus the silent ‘no’ goes to negate the interrogative which is already negative resulting in the positive answer. This is illustrated in the question and answer pair in (29).

- (29) a. Nye bε gã ser br?
 2PL NEG sleep/lie yet QP
 ‘Are you not sleeping yet?’
- b. ṽṽ, ti bε gã sɛrɛ.
 Yes, 1PL NEG sleep yet
 ‘Yes, we are not sleeping yet’

In the question above, the speaker expected the addressee to be sleeping by then and is surprised to find that it is not the case and therefore seeks confirmation. If they are not sleeping, they will confirm the speaker’s thoughts by responding as in (29b) above. The response then means that the addressees agree with the speaker that they are not sleeping. If however they are sleeping, the response will just be positive without saying ṽṽ ‘no’ but it is still understood as a negation of the negative thus making the response a positive one. Therefore the response to the question showing a denial of the proposition is shown below in (29c).

- c. Ti gã na.
 1PL sleep EMPH
 ‘We are sleeping/ we are asleep’

This is not so different from what occurs in other Ghanaian languages like Ga, Ewe, Akan and Efutu which are not Gur languages. In Ga for instance, when the answer to a negative question is in the affirmative, ‘no’ negates the negation and yes affirms the negation (Kotey 2001). This also occurs in Akan, Ewe and Efutu (Cobbina 2013).

3.4 Polar Interrogatives and Focus

This section discusses the relationship between polar interrogatives and focus. When an element in an utterance is emphasized, it is said to be focused. Dakubu (2005) defines focus as a device that speakers use to show that they mean one thing and not another. Halliday (1967: 202 (ff), cited in Ameka: 1992) also explains information focus, as that which “involves the selection within each information unit of a certain element or elements as points of prominence within the message...information focus is one kind of emphasis whereby the speaker marks out part which may be the whole of a message block as that which he wishes to be interpreted as informative”. Dik (1997:326, cited in Ameka 1992) adds that focal information is the information that a speaker considers being the most important in a communicative setting and wants the addressee to integrate into his pragmatic information. Focus therefore refers to a process whereby a speaker manipulates an element in a sentence for the sake of prominence. The ability of the speaker to restructure the elements to place emphasis on a specific element in the utterance is imperative in understanding what is being communicated and its implications.

Languages have various ways of marking focus to indicate prominence. Focus may be marked either prosodically, that is, by the use of stress or pitch or morphologically through the use of special morphemes and particles. Dixon (2012c) indicates that in polar questions a particular constituent may be focused and English makes use of stress to mark focus. Givón (2001b) also argues that English uses only intonation to mark focus constituents of focused yes/no

questions while Spanish makes use of intonation and word order. Other strategies are: the combination of intonation, word order and morphology, an example is Ute; and the use of cleft constructions or structures. The use of cleft constructions in marking focused polar questions is exemplified below in (30)

- (30) a. Declarative; Joe killed the goat.
- b. Subject cleft; ‘Was it Joe who killed the goat?’
- c. Object cleft; was it the goat that Joe killed?
- d. Verb cleft; was it killing that Joe did to the goat?

(Givón 2001b:298)

Saah (1988) indicated that focus in Akan is marked both morphologically and syntactically. The constituent to be focused is usually fronted and it is followed by the focus marker *na*. In Ewe, focus is marked by a change in the word order and the use of a special morpheme (Ameka 1992). Efutu marks focus by the use of focus particles (Cobbina 2013). To mark focus in Efutu, the element to be focused is fronted to the sentence initial position followed by the focus particle *na*. Dagara also mark focus morphologically by the use of focus markers and a change in the word order. The focused constituent is always fronted to the initial position and marked with the focus marker. There are two main focus markers in Dagara: *na* and *nv*. *Na* also functions as a factive or emphatic marker in the language. In Dagara focusing is meant to show the constituent that is emphasized or it helps to say that the speaker means one thing and not another. It

should be noted that the final falling pitch on the interrogative does not change. According to Givón (2001b), the types of focus in polar interrogatives depend on the element that is focused. What follows is a discussion of the constituents that can be focused in Dagara polar interrogatives.

3.5 Argument Focus in Polar Questions

All grammatical relations in polar questions can be focused in Dagara (Dakubu 2005). These elements are the major class words and they include subject, verb, direct object, indirect object, and adjunct. What follows immediately is a discussion of how the various elements are focused.

3.5.1 Subject Focus in Polar Questions

When the subject is in focus, that is to say the mentioned subject and no other person, it is placed in sentence initial position in the sentence and takes a focus marker *nv* if the subject is singular or *na* when the subject is plural. This is illustrated in the example below

- (31) Pɔgsaa nv ηmɛ a bie bɪ?
 Pɔgsaa FOC beat DET child QP
 ‘Is it Pɔgsaa (and no other person) who beat the child?’

In the above example, Pɔgsaa is the subject of the sentence and it is being focused. Thus, the subject occurs in the initial position of the sentence which is its original position and it is obligatorily followed by the focus marker *nv* plus the rest of the sentence. In the polar interrogative above, there is a presupposition that

someone has beaten the child and the speaker wants to know who exactly beat the child, whether it is Pɔgsaa who beat the child and not someone else. On the other hand, the speaker wants a confirmation as to whether it is Pɔgsaa who beat the child as he thought or someone else beat the child. This conforms to Givón (2001b:293) assertion that polar questions “are used when the epistemic doubt concerning the state or event is more specific. That is, when a state or event is assumed to have occurred, but a particular component element of it – subject, object, verb, adverb- is not fully known to the speaker”. So in this sentence above in (31) the subject is not fully known.

3.5.2 Direct Object Focus

Like with subject focus, direct objects cannot be focused in-situ in Dagara polar interrogatives. In polar questions, when a constituent that performs the grammatical function of a direct object is in focus, the focused constituent, that is the direct object, must move from its base position to the initial position of the sentence and it is then followed by the focus marker, plus the rest of the sentence. Even though the direct object is fronted to the subject position of the sentence, it does not affect its function as a direct object. Sentence (31) is repeated here as (32) with the object being focused.

(32) A bie nv Pɔgsaa ɲmɛ bɪ?

DET child FOC Pɔgsaa beat QP

‘Is it the child (not any other person) that Pɔgsaa beat?’

In the above sentence, the child receives the action of the verb making it the direct object. The direct object *bie* is made prominent and focused and therefore brought to the initial position of the sentence and marked by the focus marker *nv*. In this sentence, there is the presupposition that Pɔgsaa the subject beat someone and the speaker wants a confirmation as to whether it is the child that Pɔgsaa beat or some other person was beaten but not the child.

3.5.3 Indirect Object Focus

An indirect object usually comes before the direct object and answers the question **to whom** or **for whom** the action of the verb is done and the one receiving the direct object. To focus an indirect object in Dagara, the constituent is placed in the initial position and marked by the focus marker. This is illustrated in the examples below

- (33) a. Fv ku-n a bie a bondırı bɪ?
 2SG give DET child DET food QP
 ‘Did you give the child the food?’
- b. A bie nv fv ku a bondırı
 DET child FOC 2SG give DET food
 bɪ?
 QP
 ‘Is it the child you gave the food to?’

In sentence (33a), no constituent is focused but in (33b), the indirect object *bie* ‘child’ is being focused and thus it is obligatorily preposed to the sentence initial position and immediately followed by the focus marker *nv*. There is the presupposition that the addressee gave the food out and the speaker wants to

confirm whether it was the child who was given the food or some other person. *Fv* '2SG' is the subject of the sentence and it is followed by the verb *kv* 'give' which is a ditransitive verb and requires two objects. It therefore takes the direct object *bondiri* 'food' and the indirect object *bie* 'child'.

3.5.4 Verb focus

Verb focus in Dagara is quite complex and it is different from how the subject and objects are focused. In Dagara, the verb cannot be focused directly. So what happens is that, the verb is normally nominalized and it is then moved to the initial position of the sentence for it to be focused. Nominalization is the process of forming nouns out of verbs and making them function as nouns. In Dagara, it is done morphologically by the use of a nominalizing suffix which is added to the verb and forms something like a gerund. Thus to show prominence, the focus marker immediately follows it. Therefore, what is focused is a nominalized form of the verb; hence a nominal is what is actually focused. This does not only happen in Dagara but occurs in languages like Ga, Akan and Esahie. According to Boadi (1974:38,) Akan uses nominalizing prefix only in verb focus while in Esahie, suffix or prefixes are used (Broohm 2014). In Dagara, verb focus is done by the use of a suffix but not a prefix which is attached to the verb and immediately followed by the focus marker *na* or *nv* and a repetition of the verb. This is illustrated in the sentences below:

- (34) a. A bie diε-nε na bɪɪ?
 DET child play-IMPERF EMPH QP
 ‘Is the child playing?’
- b. **Diε-nv** na a bie diε-nε
 Nom S FOC DET child play-IMPERF
 bɪɪ?
 QP
 ‘Is it playing that the child is playing?’ (meaning: Is the
 child playing?)

In the above interrogative in (34a), no constituent is brought into prominence hence no focus marker is present. However, in the sentence (34b) below, a nominalized verb is put in focus. In the above sentence, the verb *diεne* ‘playing’ is nominalized by deleting the final vowel ‘ε’ and suffixing it with the suffix ‘v’ and then the nominal is focalized by placing it at the sentence initial position and it is obligatorily followed by the focus marker. The speaker here again needs a confirmation of a presupposition whether the child is actually playing or doing something else such as crying. Other examples are given below;

- (35) a. v pεg-rɪ a labε.
 3SG WASH-IMPERF DET bowls
 ‘He/she is washing the bowls’
- b. **Pεg-fv** na v pεg-r a
 wash-NOM FOC 3SG wash-IMPERF DET
 labε bɪɪ?
 bowls QP
 ‘Is it washing (and not something else) that she is washing
 the bowls’.

- (36) a. A dɔɔ ar-ɪ a tɪɛ pɪɛ
 DET man stand-IMPERF DET tree under
 bɪ?
 QP
 ‘Is the man standing under the tree?’
- b. **Ar-v** na a dɔɔ ar a tɪɛ
 stand-NOM FOC DET man stand DET tree
 pɪɛ bɪ?
 below QP
 ‘Is the man standing under the tree?’

Literally, it means ‘Is it standing (or something else) that the man is standing under the tree?’

In sentence (35) too, a nominalized form of the verb *pɛg* ‘wash’ is brought into focus by preposing it at the sentence initial position which is obligatorily followed by the focus marker *na* to lay emphasis. Thus, it is the act that is being emphasized. The speaker wants to know whether the bowls are being washed or something else is being done to the bowls. In sentence (36a) no element is focused. But in (36b), the verb *ar* ‘stand’ is nominalized and realized as *arv* which is focused.

3.5.5 Adverb Focus

In English, adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs and they function as adjuncts in sentences. Adverbs tell how something is done, where and when it is done, why it is done, to what extent it is done and under what condition the action of the verb is performed. Adverbs are not relevant for the meaning of sentences and can therefore be taken out from a sentence and the sentence still remains meaningful. Adverbs only provide the hearer or reader with extra

information which can be done without. There are different kinds of adverbs and they include adverb of time, reason, purpose, manner, place, degree, frequency, condition and concession. These shall not be discussed in detail here since that is not the focus of the thesis. Adverbs perform the grammatical function of adjuncts in sentences and they can be focused in polar questions to show prominence. In adjunct focus, the adverb is taken from the post verbal position and placed at the sentence initial position followed by the focus marker. The various types of adjuncts and how they are focused in Dagara polar interrogatives are described in what follows.

3.5.5.1 Types of Adjunct Focus in Dagara

3.5.5.1.1 Adverb of time

This type of adverb indicates or shows the time of an action and it answers the question ‘when?’ There are two ways of focusing adverbs of time in Dagara. When the adverb has a present or future time reference, it is focused by preposing the adverb to the sentence initial position and it is immediately followed by the focus marker which is also followed by the subject and the verb. Here, no copy of the adverb is left. This is illustrated in example (37a) and (37b) below.

- (37) a. Zina na a faara kpɪ bɪ?
 today FOC DET Priest die QP
 ‘Is it today the priest died?’
- b. Bio na a dɔɔ na wa
 tomorrow FOC DET an FUT come-
 bɪɪ?
 QP
 ‘Is it tomorrow (not any other day) that the man will come?’

On the other hand, if the adverb of time has remote past tense reference, it can either be focused by moving the adverb to the initial position of the sentence, and following it with the focus marker, then the subject and the verb follow respectively as in examples (38b) or in another way, the adverb is moved to the initial position of the sentence and obligatorily followed by the focus marker. This is then followed by the subject and a copy of the adverb is repeated before the verb follows as illustrated in (38c).

- (38) a. Yuɔra zãã wa-n ka.
 Yuɔra yesterday come-PERF here
 ‘Yuɔra came here yesterday’
- b. Zãã na Yuɔra wa a ka.
 yesterday FOC Yuɔra come DET here
 bɪ?
 QP?
 ‘Was it yesterday that Yuɔra came here?’

In this sentence (38a), focus is not marked on any constituent. However, in the example (38b), the adverb *zãã* ‘yesterday’ functions as an adjunct and it is the element that is focused. The adverb ‘yesterday’ functions as an adjunct and answers the question ‘when’, that is when the action was performed and because it is the constituent that is prominent, it is brought to the initial position of the sentence and it is then followed by the focus marker *na*. Thus the speaker needs a confirmation as to whether it was yesterday and not any other day that Yuɔra came there. In example (38b), the adverb is focused with no copy of it occurring

again before the verb, but in the example (38c) below, there is a repetition of the adverb or a copy of the adverb is left in its moved position.

- c. Zãã na Yuɔra zãã wa a
 yesterday FOC Yuɔra yesterday come DET
 ka bɪ?
 here QP
 ‘Was it yesterday (not any other day) that Yuɔra came here?’

In this sentence, the adverb ‘zãã’ yesterday is in focus and thus is fronted and followed by the focus marker. But as it can be seen from sentence (38c) above, there is a repetition of the adverb. The speaker still enquires to know whether Yuɔra came there yesterday and not on any other day. Thus, even though sentence (38b) and (38c) are structurally different, there is no difference in meaning between them. Thus in adverb focus, the adverbs being the prominent elements are brought to the sentence initial position and questioned and focused by the use of the focus marker.

3.6 The Functions of Polar Questions in Dagara

Polar questions perform various functions in Dagara and these functions are not different from those of English. According to Payne (1997), the basic function of polar question is to seek information. Polar questions in Dagara also perform this basic function that is to solicit information that the speaker does not have. Polar questions are also used to request for an action, to confirm information already possessed by the speaker, for a rhetorical effect, and for greetings. These functions of polar questions are also realized in Dagara and are illustrated in the interrogative sentences below.

- (39) A fv ma yi-n a daa wa-a?
 DET 2SG mother come out-PERF DET market come-
 QT
 ‘Has your mother returned from the market?’

In the sentence above, the speaker lacks some knowledge and seeks that information from the addressee. The information that the speaker seeks is that, he wants to know from the addressee if the addressee’s mother has come back from the market.

3.6.1 To Request an Action

Polar questions in Dagara may be used to request an action to be performed. For instance, in a situation where a mother instructed the daughter to wash some dishes in the kitchen and entered the room only to come out and find the daughter still seated. She poses the question below;

- (40) Fv bε pεg-r a labε bɪ?
 2SG NEG wash-IMPERF DET bowls QP
 ‘Are you not washing the bowls?’

The above question does not expect the addressee to answer with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but expects the addressee to perform some action immediately. Thus in the above, the speaker expects the addressee to get up right away and get into the kitchen to start washing the dishes as was instructed.

3.6.2 To Confirm Information already possessed by the Speaker

In Dagara, polar questions are also used to seek confirmation of information or knowledge that the speaker already has. Usually, the speaker has some preconceived knowledge or presupposition and needs the addressee to confirm that. This is illustrated below;

- (41) a. Simie na bε ba-rε bɪ?
 groundnut FOC 3PL crack-IMPERF QP
 ‘Is it groundnut they are cracking?’
- b. Bεgẽ na nyɪ dʊg-r bɪ?
 beans FOC 2PL boil-IMPERF QP
 ‘Are you cooking beans?’
- c. Saala na fʊ daa-r bɪ?
 charcoal FOC 2SG buy-IMPERF QP
 ‘Are you buying charcoal?’

In all the above sentences (41a-c), the speaker wants a confirmation of one action or the other. In (41a) for instance, the speaker does not seek new information but seeks confirmation. The speaker has seen that groundnut is being cracked and yet asks to confirm as to whether it is groundnut that is being cracked or something else.

3.6.3 For a Rhetorical Effect

Rhetorical questions are questions that do not require answers from the one being questioned. Polar questions in Dagara perform this rhetoric function. For instance, in a scenario where a woman is telling her friend how her husband has changed in

attitude and is maltreating her, and in the course of the narration, the friend poses the question below;

- (42) Fvũ nv wa dɪ-rɛ dɔgɛ-ɛ?
 2SG FOC come eat-IMPERF suffer-QT
 ‘Is it you (really) who is now suffering?’

With this question posed, the speaker will not stop talking and answer the question vũ ‘yes’ or v̄-v̄ ‘no’ since it is a rhetorical question, but will continue with the narration of the story. The vowel of the subject of the sentence fvũ ‘2SG’ is lengthened to show stress.

- (43) A fv zu bɛ tɔ̄-nɛ̄ bɪ?
 DET 2SG head NEG work-IMPERF QP?
 ‘Are you insane?’

The rhetorical question in (43) is posed by an angry mother to a child who is reasoning or acting below the expectation of the mother. Here the child is not expected to respond by answering the question but to reason up and act appropriately.

3.6.4 For Greetings

Polar questions are also used in greetings in Dagara. For instance, in the morning a person meets a friend and greets by asking the question below.

- (44) Nyɪ kpɛmɛ na-a?
 2PL strong EMPH-QT
 ‘How are you? (Lit. means ‘Are you strong?’)
 Or

- (45) Nye gã na ɪɪɪ-ɪ?
 2PL lie/sleep EMPH rise-QT
 'How are you?' (Lit. means 'You sleep wake up?')

These two polar interrogatives can simply be answered by responding, 'yes' and also asking back how the speaker is doing if they are indeed fine. But if for instance a family member is sick, the response *ũũ* 'yes' is still offered after which a report on the sick person is given.

3.7 Summary

The focus of this chapter is on polar questions. The different ways by which polar questions are marked in the language are discussed. It was observed from the data that two strategies are used in forming polar interrogatives in Dagara which include the use of question particles and lengthening of the final syllable vowel with a falling pitch. The question particle *bɪɪ* can be placed in both initial and final position of the sentence. Another question particle that is used in forming polar questions is the particle *ya* which occurs only in final position.

The chapter further discussed the types of polar interrogatives in Dagara and the kind of responses that are given to each type of polar interrogative. It was observed that Dagara behaves the same way like English in responding to positive polar interrogatives where a 'yes' response to a positive polar question indicates a confirmation while a 'no' response means a disconfirmation. However, with regard to negative polar questions, Dagara behaves differently from English. Unlike English where a 'yes' response always means positive or a confirmation,

and a 'no' means a denial or negative. In Dagara, a 'yes' response to a negative polar question means 'no' and 'no' answers means 'yes'.

In addition, the chapter discussed focus and polar questions and the types of focus in polar questions. A discussion of the functions of polar questions in Dagara is also elaborated on as the final issue in the section.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALTERNATIVE INTERROGATIVES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on alternative interrogatives. It discusses what alternative questions are and argues that alternative and polar questions though similar are syntactically and semantically different as argued also by Saah (1987), Kotey (2001), and Cobbina (2013). Thus the differences between alternative questions and polar questions are drawn in this chapter.

The chapter further looks at how alternative interrogatives are formed across the languages of the world, and how that fits into Dagara alternative questions. The different types of alternative questions found in Dagara are also discussed. There is also a section on how alternative questions are focused. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.1 Alternative interrogatives

Alternative interrogatives are types of questions in which the speaker provides the addressee with two or more options from which the addressee is expected to choose his answer from. According to König & Siemund (2007: 291), alternative questions are “used to ask the addressee to decide which of the two or more alternatives holds”. That is, to say which of the alternatives provided is true or false. This is illustrated below in Dagara;

- (1) a. A *bie* *na* *dɪ-n* *a* *saab* *bɪ* *v* *na*
 DET child FUT eat-PERF DET tuozaɸi or 3SG FUT
dɪ-n *kapalɛ?*
 eat-PERF fufu
 ‘Will the child eat tuozaɸi or he/she will eat fufu?’
- b. A *bie* *na* *dɪ-n* *saab* *bɪ* *kapalɛ*
 DET child FUT eat-PERF tuozaɸi or fufu
 ‘Will the child eat tuozaɸi or fufu?’
- c. A *bie* *na* *dɪ-n* *saab* *bɪ* ?
 DET child FUT eat-PERF tuozaɸi or
 ‘Will the child eat tuozaɸi or ...?’

In (1a) the addressee is offered two options to choose from and the options are between *saab* ‘tuozaɸi’ or *kapalɛ* ‘fufu’. In this sentence, two independent declaratives are joined together with each containing a subject, a verb and an object. In (1b), the subject of the first clause *bie* ‘child’ is the same subject in the second clause and thus the subject in the second clause is not physically present but it is implied. The alternative options however are the objects which are *saab* ‘tuozaɸi’ and *kapalɛ* ‘fufu’. (1c) is also an alternative question but its second alternative is not physically present but it implies that the addressee has the option of choosing *saab* ‘tuozaɸi’ or mentioning some other dish that the child will eat. In Dagara, when posing this type of question, the speaker pauses after the first alternative before adding *bɪ* ‘or’ which suggests that there are other unmentioned alternatives which the addressee can choose from.

4.2 Are Polar And Alternative Questions The Same?

Some scholars have argued that alternative questions and polar questions are the same and one of such is Bodomo (1997) who seems to treat alternative questions

as polar questions from the examples he gave for polar questions. I however hold a different view and I argue in this work that the two are different in terms of the answers given and the structure of the sentences. This difference has also been affirmed by König & Siemund (2007) who wrote that polar and alternative questions are similar but are not the same because the responses set are different. Since the answers for polar and alternative questions are different, the two cannot be said to be the same. This is because polar questions are answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, whereas in alternative questions, the addressee chooses an answer from the alternatives offered by the speaker.

Givón (2001b) also treats alternative questions as variants of polar questions. Bolinger (1978) cited in Givón (2001b:292), also argues that “polar questions are not merely open alternatives but positive polar questions involve a systematic bias towards the negative response while negative questions involve a systematic bias towards a positive response”. Baker (1989:428) cited in Givón (2001b) also argues that alternative questions are closely related to polar questions. Saah (1987) also argues that polar and alternative interrogatives differ both syntactically and semantically in Akan. He explains that in alternative questions there are options from which the addressee chooses an answer. Thus, in terms of semantics, the response for polar and alternative questions is different. Kotey (2001) is also of the view that polar questions are different from alternative interrogatives both at the level of semantics and syntax. She states that polar questions in Ga have optional question particles *ani*, *be* and *lo* while in alternative questions, the question particles function as conjunctions and must

occur between the options or appear in sentence final position in elided questions. She further argues that polar and alternative questions differ semantically in that polar interrogatives are answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' and this is not an appropriate answer for an alternative question. In the same way, Cobbina (2013) is also of the view that they differ structurally and semantically. Efutu forms alternative questions by joining two declaratives or by joining a declarative and content question and has a final falling tone while a polar question is a declarative with a falling intonation and can be formed with or without a question particle.

Bolinger (1978) cited in Biezma (2009) also argues that polar and alternative questions are not the same because they cannot be used interchangeably in certain situations. For example, in making a request, drawing inferences, asking rhetorical questions, giving invitations and starting conversations, only polar questions are appropriate and alternative questions cannot be used there. Biezma (ibid) added that polar questions have an open list which is signaled by a final rising intonation but alternative questions have a closed list with a final falling intonation which signals exhaustivity. All these views show that there is still no consensus as to whether polar questions and alternative questions are the same or not. I seek to contribute to this and I show in this work that the two are different and cannot be treated as the same.

4.3 Differences between Polar and Alternative Interrogatives

There are clear distinctions between polar interrogatives and alternative interrogatives in Dagara. These distinctions are discussed below.

First and foremost, polar and alternative questions differ in how they are formed. In Dagara, polar questions are formed by lengthening the final syllable vowel of a declarative and ending it with a falling intonation. On the other hand, alternative questions do not lengthen the vowel of the final syllable but they are formed by conjoining declaratives with the use of coordinating conjunction. This makes them different and it is illustrated below in the declarative sentences and their interrogative counterparts.

Declarative Sentence

- (2) a. Fv bε dɪ-ε.
 2SG NEG eat-PERF
 ‘You have not eaten’

Polar Question

- b. Fv bε dɪ-ε-ε?
 2SG NEG eat-PERF QT
 ‘Haven’t you eaten?’

Declarative Sentence

- c. Tɪ kpε tɪ gã.
 1PL enter CONJ lie or sleep
 ‘Let’s go in and sleep’.

Polar Question

- d. Tɪ kɛ tɪ gã-ã?
 1SG enter CONJ lie down or sleep-QT
 ‘Should we go in and sleep?’

Alternative Question

- e. Tɪ kɛ tɪ gã bɪ tɪ zɪ bilav?
 1PL enter CONJ sleep or 1PL sit awhile
 ‘Should we go in and sleep or we should sit for awhile?’
- f. *Tɪ kɛ tɪ gã-ã bɪ tɪ ta kɛ tɪ
 1PL enter CONJ sleep-QT or 1PL NEG enter CONJ
 gã-ã?
 sleep-QT
 ‘Should we go and sleep or not?’

Sentence (2a) and (2c) are declarative sentences and have their polar interrogative counterparts in sentences (2b) & (2d) respectively where their final vowels are lengthened with a final falling pitch while their declarative counterparts in (2a & c) have short final syllable vowels. Sentence (2e) is an alternative question with no final syllable vowel lengthened but it is just made of two declaratives joined together by the use of the conjunction *bɪ* ‘or’ and becomes ungrammatical when the final vowels of the conjoined declaratives are lengthened as shown in example (2f).

Secondly, whereas polar questions do not contain question words, alternative questions may contain question words when they are formed by conjoining a declarative sentence and a content question. This is illustrated in the examples below in (3).

- (3) a. Munẽ na bɪ buu-na fɔ dɔgɪ?
 rice FOC or what-FOC 2SG cook-IMPERF
 ‘Is it rice you are cooking or what are you cooking?’
- b. Abobe na fɔ bɔbr, saab bɪ munẽ?
 which one FOC 2SG want tuozaɸi or rice
 ‘Which one do you want, tuozaɸi or rice?’

As shown in (3a & b), both sentences are alternative sentences and each contains a question word. This does not happen in polar questions. Refer to examples (2b & d) above.

In terms of response, polar and alternative interrogatives are not the same because they are responded to differently. While polar questions can be responded to by a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, in an alternative question, the speaker provides options as the expected answers for the addressee to choose the one he/she thinks is the appropriate answer. In effect, an alternative question in a way has a closed list from which the addressee is expected to choose an answer from even though in Dagara, the addressee sometimes goes outside the given alternatives in providing an answer. This is however rare. In polar questions, no options are given. Thus alternative questions cannot be responded to with just a ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This is illustrated in the sentences below.

Polar question

- (4) a. Fɔ kyenɪ daa zinã-ã?
 2SG go-PERF market today-QT
 ‘Did you go to the market today?’

Responses to the above question could be any of the answers in (i-iv)

b. Responses

- i. $\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$ meaning ‘Yes’
- ii. $\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$, I kyenɪ daa zina
yes 1SG go-PERF market today
‘Yes, I went to the market today’
- iii. $\tilde{v}-\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$ meaning ‘No’
- iv. $\tilde{v}-\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$, I bε kyen daa zina
no 1SG NEG go market today
‘No, I did not go to the market today’
- or**
- v. aayɪ, I bε kyen daa zina.
no 1SG NEG go market today
‘No, I did not go to the market today’.

All the above responses are possible and appropriate answers that the addressee can give to the polar question in (4a) above but as illustrated below in (5b) in the alternative question below, it cannot be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

- (5) a. Fvɔ nv mɔ a saab bɪɪ
2sg FOC stir PERF DET tuozaɸi or
Marv nv mɔ a saab?
Marv FOC stir PERF DET tuozaɸi
‘Is it you who stired the tuozaɸi or it is Marv who stired it?’

In answering question (5a), the addressee could choose either the first or the second option as shown below in answers (5b).

b. Responses

- i Maa-nv mɔ a saab.
1SG- FOC stir-PERF DET tuozaɸi
‘It is I who stired the tuozaɸi’.
- Or

- ii. Marv nu mɔ a saab.
 Marv FOC stir-PERF DET tuozaɸi
 ‘It is Marv who stired the tuozaɸi’.

In sentence (4a) above, the speaker is ignorant about what he is asking for and wants the addressee to give him that information by responding either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Thus the appropriate response to question (4a) can be a simple ‘yes’ if the addressee went to the market and ‘no’ if he/she did not go to the market. No options have been provided here. Example (5a) however has alternatives provided for the addressee to choose one of them. So in responding to question (5a), the addressee can decide to choose response (5bi) as shown above if it was the speaker who prepared the tuozaɸi or give response (5bii) if it was Marv who prepared the tuozaɸi. In effect, (5a) is answered by selecting one of the alternatives supplied by the speaker and cannot be answered by saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ because such answers are rendered incorrect in Dagara.

Structurally, polar interrogatives and alternative interrogatives are not the same in that, polar interrogatives in Dagara are formed by attaching the question particle *bii* either at the beginning or end of a declarative while in alternative questions two structures are conjoined by the use of the conjunction *bii* ‘or’. This conjunction does not occur at initial or final position but it is always placed between the two structures and it is the indicator that the sentence is a question. Below in (6) are examples to illustrate how *bii* is used differently in both polar and alternative interrogatives.

(6) **Polar Question**

- a. A pɔg gur-e na bɪ?
 DET Woman sleep-IMPERF EMPH QP
 ‘Is the woman sleeping?’
- b. Bɪ a pɔg gur-e na?
 QP DET woman sleep-IMPERF EMPH
 ‘Is the woman sleeping?’
- c. A pɔg gur-e na bɪ v bɛ gur-e?
 DET woman sleep-IMPERF EMPH or 3SG NEG sleep-IMPERF
 ‘Is the woman sleeping or she is not sleeping?’

As can be seen from the examples above, all the sentences in (6) make use of the word *bɪ* but it connotes different meanings in the polar and alternative questions. In the polar questions in (6a & b,) it is a question particle while in the alternative question in (6c), it functions as a coordinating conjunction which has the English meaning ‘or’.

Apart from the above, another difference between a polar question and an alternative question is that while the question particle *bɪ* is not obligatory in polar questions and can be omitted and replaced by final vowel lengthening, in alternative questions, the conjunction is not optional but obligatory. For instance, in (6a), the question particle can be deleted and the structure still made an interrogative by lengthening the final syllable vowel of the emphatic marker *na*. This will be realized in (7a) as

- (7) a. A pɔg gur-e na'-a'
 DET woman sleep-IMPERF EMPH QT
 ‘Is the woman sleeping?’

There is therefore evidence that the question particle in polar question can be deleted and the final syllable vowel of the declarative lengthened and changes it to a polar question but in alternative questions, it is not possible to delete the conjunction as meaningless structures will be generated.

In conclusion, polar and alternative interrogatives though different have the same final falling pitch.

4.4 How Alternative Interrogatives are formed

Languages have different ways of forming alternative questions. In English, alternative questions are marked by the use of the conjunction 'or' to conjoin two or more clauses. It has been observed from the available literature that this process of forming alternative questions in English is similar to what happens in some Ghanaian languages. Most Ghanaian languages employ the use of particles in forming alternative questions and these particles have the meaning of the English coordinating conjunction 'or'. For instance, Cobbina (2013) on Efutu questions stated that the language uses the question particle *ntoo* glossed as 'or' in forming alternative questions and this particle joins the alternatives provided by the speaker.

In Ewe, Dzameshie (2001), cited in Cobbina (ibid) indicated that the particle *alo/aloo* 'or' is used to form alternative questions. Saah (1998) also showed that in Akan the particle *anaa* glossed as 'or' is used in the formation of alternative interrogatives. Apart from the above languages that make use of particles in forming alternative questions, Kotey (2001) also stated that alternative

questions in Ga are formed by the use of the particle *aloo/loo* which also means ‘or’. Ga also uses this same particle in forming polar questions but there is a difference in intonation. In Japanese, alternative questions are marked by repeating the question morpheme after both alternatives (Hinds 1984:160 cited in Givón 2001b: 300). It will be shown in this work that alternative questions in Dagara are formed by the use of the question particle *bii* glossed as ‘or’.

4.5 Types of Alternative Interrogatives in Dagara

In Dagara, alternative questions are formed by joining together two or more options by the use of a question particle *bii*. These options are provided as alternative answers for the addressee to choose from. Different types of alternative questions exist in Dagara just as there are various types in the languages of the world. The types of alternative questions in Dagara are based on the kind of alternatives that are given. According to Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) cited in Kotey (2001:56) two types of alternative questions exist. The first type is similar to a ‘yes-no’ question and the second type a WH-question. In Akan, Saah (1998) discussed various types of alternative questions which are similar to the types in Efutu and Ga (Cobbina 2013 & Kotey 2001) respectively. From the data collected, the various types of alternative questions that exist in Dagara are discussed below with illustrations.

The first type of alternative interrogative in Dagara is formed by joining together two independent clauses or declaratives by the use of *bii* ‘or’. This type

of alternative question has various sub-types under it. What follows immediately is a discussion of these sub-types.

The first sub-type is formed by joining clauses of the same grammatical status with the second clause being a negation of the first one. This type of alternative interrogative usually has the same subject in both clauses. This is illustrated below

- a. Bε wa na bɪɪ **bε** **bε** **wa?**
 3PL come EMPH or 3PL NEG come
 ‘Have they come or not?’
- b. Dεr dɪ-n a saab bɪɪ v
 Dεr eat-PERF DET tuozafi or 3SG
 bε **dɪ?**
 NEG eat
 ‘Did Dεr eat the tuozafi or he did not eat?’
- c. A bie gur-a bɪɪ v **bε** **gur?**
 DET child sleep-PERF or 3SG NEG sleep
 ‘Is the child asleep or not?’

The sentences above from (8a-c) are examples of alternative interrogatives and each of them is made of a positive clause and its negated form in the second clause conjoined by the coordinating conjunction *bɪɪ* ‘or’. Here, it is the verbs that are questioned. In example (8a), two independent clauses have been joined. In the two clauses, the word *bε* ‘3PL’ functions as the subject for both clauses. Even though the subject is the same, it is repeated in the second clause to avoid any ambiguity. The two clauses however are different and the difference lies in the polarity of the verb that is one is positive and the other is negative. The speaker wants to know from the addressee if they have come or they have not come. The

addressee has been offered a positive and a negative verb as options to choose from and to tell the speaker which of the options holds.

Sentence (8b), is also an example of an alternative question with the second clause being a negation of the first. The difference however is that this sentence contains a subject and a verb which takes an object. In the first clause, the subject *Der* is a noun phrase and it takes the verb *di* 'eat' and an object *saab* 'tuozaŋi'. In the second clause however, even though the subject is the same, it is in its third person singular pronoun form *v* 'he' and it refers back to the noun *Der*. Secondly, in the second clause, the object *saab* 'tuozaŋi' is deleted to avoid repetition. This could be attributed to the fact that the speaker assumes that the addressee already knows the object since it was mentioned in the first clause. Thus in sentence (8b), the verb *di* 'eat' is questioned and the speaker wants to know from the addressee whether *Der* ate the tuozaŋi or not. There are however, instances in Dagara where the addressee may not find any of the options as appropriate and therefore provides an answer outside the alternatives given by the speaker. In sentence (8b) for instance, the addressee may respond by saying '*mune na v ɔb*' which means 'he ate rice'. This in any case could still be interpreted to mean he did not eat the tuozaŋi. In example (8c), the two clauses have the same subject. However, while in the first clause the subject *bie* 'child' is a noun phrase, in the second clause the subject is in its pronominal form. That is a third person singular pronoun *v* 'he/she'. Here the addressee responds by using the pronoun and selects either the positive clause if the child is asleep or the negative one if the child is not asleep.

The second sub-type is formed by joining two independent clauses with two contrasting verbs, one being the opposite of the other by the use of the particle *bii* ‘or’. What is questioned is usually the two opposite verbs and the subject is usually the same for both clauses. Some examples of this type of alternative question are illustrated below.

- (8) a. A bie laa-ra bii v kõ-nẽ
 DET child laugh-IMPERF or 3SG cry-IMPERF
 na?
 EMPH
 ‘Is the child laughing or it is crying?’
- b. v ar-a bii v zi na?
 3SG stand-IMPERF or 3SG sit EMPH
 ‘Is he/she standing or he/she is seated’

In example (9a), the two clauses conjoined are of the same grammatical status and have the same subject, but the difference lies in the fact that the verb which is questioned in the first clause is opposite in meaning to the verb which is questioned in the second clause. The subject of the first clause *a bie* ‘the child’ is a noun phrase and it is represented by its pronoun form *v* ‘3SG’ as subject in the second clause which refers back to the subject noun phrase in the first clause. The speaker therefore provides the addressee with the options of these two opposite verbs ‘laugh’ and ‘cry’ and the addressee is expected to tell the speaker whether the child is crying or laughing by choosing one of the options as an answer to the question. Also, in example (9b), two contrasting verbs have been questioned. The verbs *ar* ‘stand’ and *zi* ‘sit’ are intransitive and therefore do not have objects. But the verbs require subjects to express meaningful grammatical constructions and therefore both clauses have the subject *v* ‘3SG’.

Another type of alternative question in Dagara is the type formed by conjoining two alternative structures of different grammatical status, with the first structure being a clause and the second one a phrase, which are then joined together by the use of *bii* 'or'. In this type of alternative question, the subject and the verb of the second alternative (phrase) are deleted because they are the same as those of the first alternative (clause) and are thus omitted to avoid repetition. In examples (10a, & c) below, the questioned elements are the objects while in (10c) the adjunct is questioned.

- (9) a. Nye di-n a saab bii a bɔŋkuu?
 2PL eat-PERF DET tuozafi or DET banku
 'Did you eat the tuozafi or the banku?'
 b. A fɔ ma kyen-i Nandom bii Hamile?
 DET 2SG mother go-PERF Nandom or Hamile
 'Is your mother gone to Nandom or Hamile?'
 c. v na kye-na ni kuur bii moto?
 3SG FUT go-EMPH with bicycle or motor
 'Will you go on a bicycle or a motor bike?'

In each sentence in (10a-c), there is an independent declarative sentence joined to a phrase by the use of a conjunction. Each sentence has alternatives that have common subjects and verbs but contain different objects which are the questioned elements. So even though the speaker provides the addressee with options to choose from, he does not repeat the subject and the verb in the second alternative but provides an alternative object because the addressee is expected to make a choice between the alternative objects. So we say that some kind of ellipsis takes place as the speaker does not repeat the initial part of the sentence, which are the subject and the verb in the second alternative. This is because both the first clause

and second phrase share the same subject and verb. In sentence (10a) for instance, the speaker inquires to know if the addressees have eaten *saab* ‘tuozaafi’ or they ate *bɔgkuu* ‘banku’. Thus in the second alternative answer, the subject *nye* ‘2PL’ plural’ and the verb *di* ‘eat’ have been deleted in the second clause leaving only the noun *banjkuu* ‘banku’ which serves as the object of the second clause. The subject and the verb in the second clause are therefore not physically present but are implied. Thus in sentence (10a), the addressee in giving an answer has to choose between the two objects offered that is ‘tuozaafi’ or ‘banku’. Also in sentence (10b), the subject and the verb are the same for both clauses and therefore are not repeated in the second alternative. But the objects are different. In the first clause the object is Nandom while in the second alternative, the object is Hamile. The speaker provides the options of Nandom or Hamile as possible places where the addressee’s mother would have gone. So the addressee selects either Nandom or Hamile as the place where his mother went. The same process takes place in (10c). The only difference is between the objects *moto* ‘motorcycle’ or *kuur* ‘bicycle’ from which the addressee makes a choice. Saah (1988) argues that in terms of structure, this type of alternative question is formed from an underlying structure by “conjunction reduction” Thus there is a deletion of the subject-verb structure which is identical with the subject-verb of the first clause.

Quirk et al. (1990) cited in Kotey (2001:68),observed that there is another type of alternative question which resembles a WH- question and Saah (1987) cited in Kotey (2001:68) explains that in this type of question, a content question

precedes an alternative question. This type of question also exists in Dagara as shown in the examples below:

- (10) a. Dɛbor na fʋ sãã na kv a
 when FOC 2SG father FUT kill DET
 bʋɔ, zina bɪɪ bɪɔ?
 goat today or tomorrow
 ‘When will your father kill the goat, today or tomorrow?’
- b. Bʋʋ-nʋ bɛ bɔbr, pɛrv bɪɪ bʋɔ?
 what-FOC 3PL want sheep or goat
 ‘What do they want, a sheep or a goat?’
- c. Nyinɛ-na nyɪ ɔŋ a kvɔ̃, pɔmpɪ bɪɪ
 where-FOC 2PL fetch DET water pipe or
bule-pɔɔ?
 well- inside
 ‘Where did you fetch the water from, the pipe or well?’

Sentences (11a-c) are each made of a content question and an alternative question compounded together. All the sentences are made of an independent content question plus an elided alternative question. In all the clauses that contain the question words, the question words occur in initial positions and contain subjects and predicates while in the alternative questions these are absent. In (11b), the independent content interrogative contains the possessive subject *fʋ saa*, ‘your father’, a transitive verb *ku* ‘kill’ with its object *bʋɔ* ‘goat’ but these elements are deleted in the second clause which is the alternative clause. This is because these elements are the same as those in the content question and therefore are not overt but are implied. In the alternative question in the second clause, only the adverbs are provided as alternatives and the subject and verb are inferred from the content question. The speaker has the presupposition that the addressee’s father will kill a

goat but is not certain when that will be. The addressee has the options of choosing between the adverbs *zina* 'today' or *bio* 'tomorrow' provided by the speaker in answer to the question. In example (11b), the content word *bvv* 'what' occurs in the initial position of the first clause followed by the subject *bε* '3PL' and the verb '*bɔbr* 'want' while the second clause which is the alternative clause contains only the objects *pεrv* 'sheep' and *bvɔ* 'goat'. The second clause does not contain any subject and verb because they refer to the same subject and verb in the first clause and are absent for convenience and to avoid repetition. For an answer to question (11b), the addressee chooses one of the objects in the alternative clauses followed by the focus marker *nv*.

In sentence (11c), the first clause is introduced by the adverb *nyɪnε* 'where' which is followed by focus marker *na* to show prominence and this is also followed by a subject pronoun *nyɪ* '2PL' and an transitive verb *ɔɲ* 'fetch'. The verb also takes object *kvɔ* 'water'. Here a location is questioned and thus in the second clause two locations are provided as options for the addressee to choose from. The subject and the verb of the second clause are the same as those of the first and therefore are not repeated.

4.6 How Alternative Questions are Focused in Dagara

The use of focus markers in Dagara alternative interrogatives is done to show that the speaker means one thing and not another or to show emphasis. There are different ways by which alternative questions are focused. What follows

immediately is a discussion of the different ways in which focus is realized in alternative questions.

First, an element in the first clause is focused by fronting it and it is followed by the focus marker *nv* or *na* while in the second clause there is no focused element. Example (11a & 10c) are repeated here as (12a & b) for illustration.

- (11) a. Dɛbor na a fʋ saa na kv a
 when FOC DET 2SG father FUT kill DET
 bʋʋ, zɪna bɪɪ bio?
 goat today or tomorrow
 ‘When will your father kill the goat, today or tomorrow?’
- b. Kapalɛ na nyɪ dɪ-rɛ bɪɪ bɔŋkʋʋ?
 fufu FOC 2PL eat-IMPERF or banku
 ‘Is it fufu you are eating or banku?’

In (12a) above, the adverb *debor* ‘when’ is the element that is put in focus and thus it is marked by the focus marker *na*. Thus in this sentence, the speaker wants to know when the goat will be killed and not how, where or why the goat will be killed. In (12b), the object of the first clause is being focused and this compels the object to occur in the initial position for it to take the focus marker. In the second clause, the object is not focused which implies that the speaker’s focus is the object of the first clause. In response to this question, the appropriate answer will also be marked by the focus marker *na* since that is the questioned element. Also in response to sentence (12a) the following answers could be given; if the first option is chosen as an answer, it is also focused with its appropriate subject pronoun.

b. Responses

i. Zma na v na kv a bɔɔ
 today FOC 3SG FUT kill DET goat
 ‘It is today that he will kill the goat’

Or

ii. Bio na v na kv a bɔɔ.
 tomorrow FOC 3SG FUT kv DET goat
 ‘It is tomorrow that he will kill the goat’

Or

iii. Deyere na v na kv a bɔɔ.
 next-tomorrow FOC 3SG FUT kill DET goat
 ‘It is next tomorrow that he will kill the goat’

As it can be observed from the above responses, the answers are also focused just as the questioned constituents. Thus the focused responses imply that it is ‘today’ or it is ‘tomorrow’ or next tomorrow that the addressee’s father will kill the goat and not on any other day.

Another way by which alternative interrogatives are focused in Dagara is where two independent clauses are conjoined and an element that is questioned in each clause is focused by putting it in the initial position of the clause and marked by the focus marker *na* or *nv*. In this type of focus, the speaker is emphatic on which ever option that will be given as a response and therefore focuses both of them which means that the speaker to some extent is certain about the alternatives and expects the respondent to choose one of the options provided. So the speaker sort of exhausts the list for the addressee to choose from. In answering this type of alternative interrogative, the answer given is also focused by the use of the focus marker because that is the information that is sought and it

creates a contrast with other unmentioned options. This is demonstrated below in the following sentences

- (12) a. Accra na bε dɔg fv bɪɪ Kumasi
 Accra FOC 3PL born 2SG or Kumasi
 na?
 FOC
 ‘Is it in Accra that you were born or it is Kumasi?’
- b. Dɛr nʋ so a bie a kʋɔ bɪɪ
 Dɛr FOC bath DET child DET water or
 Naab nʋ so v?
 Naab FOC bath 3SG
 ‘Is it Dɛr who bathed the child or it is Naab who bathed him?’

In examples (13a & b), the speaker’s focus is on where the addressee was born. Therefore the locations as options provided are also focused. The first clause is an independent clause and contains a subject *bε* ‘3PL’, a verb *dɔg* ‘born’ and an object *fv* ‘2SG’. The second clause however is a shortened clause and its full form would be *Kumasi na bε dɔg fv* meaning it is in Kumasi that you were born. In (13a), Accra refers to a place and functions as an adjunct in the first clause. It is focused by fronting it and marked by the focus marker *na*. In the second clause, Kumasi is also an adjunct and it is focused and marked by the focus marker. Thus the addressee may select Kumasi or Accra and marked by the focus marker to imply that it is Kumasi or it is Accra and not in any other place that the addressee was born. Both clauses in sentence (13a) are independent declaratives and contain the same subject *bε* ‘3PL’, the same verb *dɔg* ‘born’ and the object *fv* ‘2SG’. In (13b), Dɛr, a proper noun is the subject and it is focused in the first clause while in the second clause, Naab is the focused subject of the second clause. Also, in the

first clause in (13b), the direct object *kuɔ* ‘water’ and the indirect object *bie* ‘child’ are present but in the second clause, the direct object is absent so as to avoid unnecessary repetition and the indirect object is replaced with its pronominal form *v* ‘3SG’. Thus the speaker knows that it is either of the two, that is, Dɛr or Naab and no one else, who bathed the child and needs a confirmation as to who exactly bathed the child. The options Dɛr or *fuv* are therefore put at the initial position of the clauses and marked by the focus marker to show emphasis.

Another type of focus in alternative questions is where a phrase is joined to a content interrogative and the content interrogative is focused or one of its elements is focused. Here the content interrogative must be the second alternative and its position cannot be exchanged with the first alternative as shown in sentence (14c). Example (4c) above is repeated here as (14a).

- (13) a. Nandom bɪɪ **nyɪnɛ na** **nyɪ** **yi?**
 Nandom or where FOC 2PL come. from
 ‘Nandom or where do you come from?’
- b. Yuɔra bɪɪ **aanv** **wa** **a** **ka?**
 Yuɔra or who-FOC come DET here
 ‘Was it Yuɔra or who was it that came here?’
- c. *Aa-nv wa a ka bɪɪ Yuɔra
 who-FOC come DET here or Yuɔra
 ‘Who was it that came here or Yuɔra?’

In the second alternative in (14a) above, the adverb *nyɪnɛ* ‘where’ in the second clause is what is focused and therefore it is marked by the focus marker *na*. The speaker desires to know where the addressees come from and he is not sure if it is Nandom or some other place. He thus suggests Nandom as a possible place. The

speaker therefore asked if the addressees come from Nandom or the speaker wants to know the place of origin of the addressees. If the respondents choose Nandom, they confirm the guess of the speaker, but if they come from a different place they negate the guess of the speaker and indicate where they come from. They may choose the first option Nandom by saying,

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 14a ABOVE

- a. $\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$, Nandom na ti yi.
 yes Nandom foc 3PL come. from
 ‘Yes, it is Nandom we come from’

It is observed from the response given that even though the alternative *Nandom* is not focused in the question, it is focused when chosen as an answer. This is because the information that is prominent is to know where the addressees come from. On the other hand if the addressees do not come from Nandom, they answer by saying

- b. Tɪ bɛ yɪ Nandom, ti yin.....
 1PL NEG come.from Nandom 1PL come.from....
 ‘We don’t come from Nandom, we come from.....’

The respondents can then mention the name of the place where they come from. For instance Lawra, Wa, or Kaleo. Also, the response given is focused and it is thus followed by the focus marker *na*. The subject *nyɪ* ‘3PL’ and the verb *yɪ* ‘come from’ are absent in the first clause because they are the same as those in the second clause. The full sentence of (14a) would have been written in (15a) as;

- (14) a. Nɔɪ yi-n Nandom bɪ nyɪnɛ
 2PL come. from PERF Nandom or where
 na nyɪ yi?
 FOC 2PL come.from

‘You come from Nandom or where do you come from?’

Another type of focus in alternative questions is where both options provided as alternative answers are focused. This is illustrated below

- (16) a. Nɔŋmɛ nɔ da a dãã bɪ mää
 Nɔŋmɛ FOC buy DET pito or 1SG
 nɔ da a dãã?
 FOC buy DEF pito
 ‘Is it Nɔŋmɛ who bought the pito or I bought the pito?’

In sentence (16a), the speaker wants to know which of them bought the pito. Thus the doer of the action that is, the subject is sought and the speaker knows that it is one of them who bought the pito and therefore focuses both options. This implies that the speaker is certain that one of them bought the pito.

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter discussed alternative questions as a question type in Dagara where the speaker provides options for the addressee to choose from. It argues against the view held by some scholars regarding polar and alternative questions being the same and showed that polar and alternative questions are not the same with the reasons that polar questions are responded to by a simple $\tilde{v}\tilde{v}$ ‘yes’ or $\tilde{v}-\tilde{v}$ ‘no’ while alternative questions are answered by selecting one of the options provided by the speaker and not just a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

Polar questions in Dagara are formed by the use of question particles ‘*ya*’ and *bii* while a conjunction is employed in forming alternative questions.

Secondly, polar interrogatives differ from alternative interrogatives in terms of syntax. Even though both types of questions are formed by the use of *bii*, in polar questions, it is regarded as a question particle while in alternative questions it has the meaning of the English coordinating conjunction ‘or’. Besides, the question particle in polar questions occurs either at initial or final position of the sentence while in alternative questions, the conjunction *bii* ‘or’ occurs between two grammatical structures but not at the initial or final position of the sentence.

The chapter also elaborated on the different types of alternative questions which exist in Dagara. Two types of alternative questions are found in Dagara with sub-types. The first type is made of two independent clauses conjoined by a coordinating conjunction. This type has sub-types under it. The first sub-type is made of one positive and one negative clause, another one is made of two opposite or contrasting verbs in the two clauses. Another type of alternative interrogative is the type whereby a clause and an elliptical phrase are conjoined. The last type of alternative question in Dagara is formed by joining a content question to a polar question through the use of the conjunction *bii* ‘or’. The chapter also discussed how alternative interrogatives are focused in Dagara.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTENT INTERROGATIVES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses question word interrogatives in Dagara. It begins with a discussion of what content questions are and how they are formed cross linguistically. The chapter further discusses the strategies that Dagara employs in the formation of content questions. It will be shown in this work that Dagara prefers question words at the initial position and a change in position in a corresponding sentence may generate ungrammatical structures. However, there are a few question words in Dagara that may occur in both initial and final position of an interrogative construction. The chapter also describes question words in situ in main clauses and complement embedded clauses. There is also a section on how focus interacts with content questions. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

5.1 Content Questions

Content questions are also known as question word questions, information questions, constituent questions or Wh-questions (Payne 1997). They are called by these various names because of the elements that are used in forming these types of questions and the kind of answers that are required. The name content questions stems from the fact that in forming this type of question, a content word is used. The name Wh-questions also exists in English because most of the question words begin with a WH and they include who, what, why, where, when,

whose and how. The name constituent question also exists probably because in this type of question, a missing constituent is required as a response to the utterance and as Haegeman (2006) indicated, these types of questions ask for a replacement of an interrogative constituent and the answer normally supplies the missing constituent.

Various definitions exist for content questions. Content questions simply put are type of questions that expect a more elaborate answer than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. They are used to seek information from the addressee on the identity of a particular entity and require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Ndimele (1994:32) explains that "a question word question refers to a class of questions in which a query is focused on a particular syntactic constituent". Dryer (2005: 93) defines content questions as "questions that contain interrogative phrases and seek specific answers". Payne (1997: 299) also asserts that "such questions expect a more elaborate answer than simply an affirmation or disaffirmation" Dixon (2012c:37) also explains that a content question is "a question that is seeking information". In addition to the above, Boadi (2005:25) describes question word questions as "Pronominal Questions to which the answer 'yes' or 'no' will be inappropriate in a discourse". A characteristic of this type of question that distinguishes it from other type of questions is that it is normally introduced by a question word and this Dixon (2012c:400) describes as "its defining feature". Secondly this question type demands an answer that provides the kind of information that is required by the question word. Question words perform two

functions: they mark the clause as a question and secondly, they indicate the kind of information that is requested Payne (1997).

In this study, the term Wh-questions will not be used. However, the term content questions or question word interrogatives will be used interchangeably, because in Dagara, these types of questions are formed using question words or phrases and none of the question words or question phrases starts with a Wh.

5.2 Formation of Question Word Questions

Languages form question word questions using different strategies. There are two common strategies that are used in forming content questions. These are the in-situ and the ex-situ strategies. A language is said to be in situ when it forms content questions by placing the question word at the position where the constituent would have been. Payne (1997) shows that in OV languages, such as Japanese and Tibetan, it is common to find question words in situ rather than moving to the front. Other examples are Swahili, Amharic and Chinese (Dixon 2012c). The question word may also occur at the left periphery and this strategy is known as ex-situ. According to Payne (ibid), in VO languages such as English, question words appear at the beginning of the clause. Languages such as Hausa and Rumanian also form Content questions by placing the question word in the initial position (Dixon 2012c)

There are also some languages that make use of both the in-situ and ex-situ strategies in forming Content questions. Examples of languages that

and are similar to English and Dagbani which prefer the question words at sentence initial position. This is exemplified in the Dagara below.

- (3) a. Aa-nv bε bɔbr?
 who FOC 3PL look-IMPERF
 ‘Who are they looking for?’
- b. Nyɛ na bε kye-n?
 where FOC 3PL go-PERF
 ‘Where have they gone to?’
- c. *Bε kyenɪ nyɛ?
 3PL go-PERF where
 ‘Where have they gone to?’

In (3a & b), the question words are placed at the initial positions of the sentences and can not occur in final position as that generates ungrammatical structures. Thus (3c) is ungrammatical. This shows that some Dagara question words are restricted to the initial position of the sentence. Both (3a & b) have focused question words and are therefore marked by focus markers. In Dagara content questions, focusing plays a very vital role. This shall be discussed later in this chapter. Also, whereas in some languages a resumptive pronoun is fixed in the moved position of the interrogative word when it is fronted and focused, for instance Akan (Saah 1998), it is different in Dagara as no pro-copy of the question word is placed in the moved position of the interrogative word. This shall be shown later in this work.

5.3 Word order in Content Interrogatives

In English, content interrogatives usually have the structure of a verb plus a subject of the sentence or it has the structure of subject-auxiliary inversion when a

non-subject pronoun is fronted (Givón 2001b). In the subject-auxiliary inversion structure of content interrogatives, the auxiliary verb in the sentence is brought to the initial position of the sentence and it is then followed by the subject of the sentence. When there is no auxiliary verb in the sentence a ‘dummy’ is introduced. Thus, question word questions normally begin with a question word followed by an operator. Dagara however behaves differently from English and does not exhibit the subject-auxiliary inversion rule in the formation of its content questions.

5.4 Formation of Content Questions in Dagara

In Dagara, content questions are formed by the use of question words or question phrases. These question words or phrases are used to enquire about persons, things, time, location, amount, quantities and circumstances. According to Greenberg (1966) cited in Akrofi-Ansah (1999), there is a correlation between the basic word order of languages and the placement of interrogative words in questions. Languages that have an SVO structure mostly have their question words in clause initial position and a few in situ while SOV languages mostly have interrogative words in situ. This statement of Greenberg seems true in Dagara for the fact that Dagara is an SVO language and from the data collected, has most of the question words ex situ, so when the question words are placed in-situ, they generate ungrammatical structures. This is exemplified below

- (4) a. Aa-nv ar a be?
 who-FOC stand DET there
 ‘Who is standing there?’

- b. Bvɔ-nv fv kpɛ a daa ti da?
 what-FOC 2SG enter DET market CONJ buy
 ‘What did you go to the market to buy?’
- c. *Ar a be aa-nv?
 Stand DET there who-FOC

In sentence (4a &b), the question words occur at the initial positions of the sentences followed by a focus marker *nv* plus either a verb as in (4a) or a subject as in (4b) followed by the rest of the sentence. However, these question words cannot occur in final position. Thus sentence (4c) is ungrammatical and unacceptable in Dagara.

Generally, when forming constituent interrogatives in Dagara, the question words are obligatorily fronted and put in clause initial positions followed by a focus marker *nv* or *na* as illustrated above in (4a & b). This situation in Dagara regarding the position of question words in constituent interrogatives is similar to what obtains in Dagbani also a Gur language where interrogative words are preferred at clause initial position in the language even though there are some question words that can also occur in the final position (Issah 2013). Dagara therefore can be described as an *ex-situ* language. This looks quite different from what occurs in Letɛ Akrofi (2010), Akan (Saah 1998), Efutu (Cobbina 2013), Ga (Kotey 2001) and Kaakye (Torrence & Kandyboicz 2014) where most of the question words can be placed in both in situ and *ex-situ*. The *ex-situ* strategy in Dagara is illustrated in the examples below

- (5)
- a. **Nymɛ** na fʋ zãã gã?
 where FOC 2SG yesterday lie/sleep
 ‘Where did you sleep yesterday?’
- b. **Bvʋ**-na bɛ bʋr a be?
 what FOC 3PL sow DET there
 ‘What have they sowed there?’
- c. **Aa-nʋ** fʋ bʋɔɛ?
 who-FOC 2SG call-IMPERF
 ‘Who are you calling?’
- d. ***Bɛ** bʋrɪ a be **bʋʋ**?
 3PL sow-PERF DET there what
- e. ***Fʋ** bʋɔɛ ne **aa-nʋ**?
 2SG call-IMPERF with who-FOC
- f. ***Aa-na** fʋ bʋɔɛ?
 who FOC 2SG call-IMPERF
- g. ***Fʋ** bʋɔɛ nɪ **aa**?
 2SG call-IMPERF with who

In sentences (5a-c), the question words appear in the initial positions and are immediately followed by the focus marker. The data shows that in Dagara, content questions are formed by obligatorily placing the question word in sentence initial position and is followed by the appropriate focus marker. In sentence (5a & b), even though the interrogative words occur in subject positions they question non-subject arguments and function as an adjunct in (5a) and as objects in (5b & c). In (5a) we observe that *nymɛ* ‘where’ is an adverb of place while in (5b), *bʋʋ* ‘what’ is an object with a non-human referent. But both question words are fronted and are followed by a focus marker but they question different constituents. This shows that Dagara question words appear in specific positions and are marked by the appropriate focus markers. In (5c), *aa* ‘who’ also

occurs in subject position but functions as an object and takes the focus marker *nv*. The question words in (5a, b, & c) cannot occur in the final position of a corresponding sentence with or without a focus marker, as that generates unacceptable structures. This is illustrated in examples (5d, e, & g).

As I argued earlier, when the question word is placed clause initially and marked by the focus marker, no resumptive pronoun is left in the position of the moved constituent. Thus in examples (5a-c) above, even though the question words are located clause initially, there are no pro-copies of them in the position of the moved constituent. This however differs from what occurs in Akan (Kwa) where a resumptive pronoun is left in the position of the moved constituent (Saah 1998). I may be quick to conclude that in Gur languages, no resumptive pronoun is introduced when the question word is placed clause initially since the same thing was reported in Dagbani (Issah 2013). On the other hand, examples (5d&e) are unacceptable constructions in Dagbani because the question words are wrongly placed. Sentence (5f) is also ungrammatical because the question word is marked by the wrong focus marker. *Bvv* ‘what’ in sentence (5d) is unacceptable because the question word *bvv* occurs in the final position of the sentence. It has also been argued that constituents are focused in sentence initial position, thus the ungrammaticality of (5e) lies in the fact that the question word *aa* ‘who’ is focused in the final position. Example (5f), even though the question word occurs in the initial position as expected, it is marked with the wrong focus marker *na* instead of *nv*. This is because *aa* ‘who’ is a singular object with a human referent and should take *nv* as a focus marker.

Beside the *ex situ* strategy, a few of the question words in Dagara may occur in both the initial and final positions. These are illustrated below;

- (6) a. A ηmẽñ ηmηmɪn?
 DET look like how
 ‘How is it?’
- b. ηmηmɪn na a ηmẽñ
 how FOC DET look like
 ‘How is it?’
- (7) a. Fv bɔbrɪ abobe?
 2SG want which ones
 ‘Which ones do you want?’
- b. Abobe na fv bɔbrɪ?
 which ones FOC 2SG want
 ‘Which ones do you want?’
- (8) a. A dǎǎ in aηmɪn?
 DET pito be howmuch
 ‘How much is the pito?’
- b. Aηmɪn nɪ a dǎǎ?
 how much be DET pito
 ‘How much is the pito?’

It was observed from the data that these three question words ‘ηmηmɪn, abobe, & aηmɪn, are the question words that occur both in-situ and ex-situ positions. The above examples show that some question words in Dagara can occur both in-situ and ex-situ. When they are in the initial position they are marked by a focus marker but when they occur in the final position of the sentence, they are left unfocused.

There are also a few Dagara question words that may occur only at the end of the sentence, a strategy called in-situ. These question words are *bvɔv* ‘what’ and *ηmɪn* ‘where’. They are used when one is questioning about the name

of a person, in echo questions and when seeking the where-about of someone or something. These are illustrated in the following examples below.

- (9) a. v yuor dɪ kɛ **bɔnɔ?**
 3SG name be that what
 ‘What is his/her name?’
- b. v yel-kɛ **bɔnɔ**
 3SG say-that what
 ‘What did he/she say?’
- c. A pɔgle m **ŋmm?**
 DET girl be where
 ‘Where is the girl?’
- d. *Bɔnɔ fɔ yuor dɪ?
 What 2SG name be

In sentences (9a-c), the question words appear in the final position of the sentences and cannot be placed in the initial positions as that will generate ungrammatical structures as shown in (9d). In (9a), the speaker enquires about the name of someone, thus the question word is in final position. In sentence (9b), the speaker seeks information about what another person has said. Here it seems to me that (9b) is an echo question because the speaker wants a repetition of what another speaker has said. Finally, in (9c), the question word, questions the where-about of the girl.

What follows immediately is a detailed description of the question words in Dagara Content questions.

5.5 A Description of Dagara Question Words and Phrases

This section provides a detail description of all the question words in Dagara in terms of what they can be used to question and whether they question subjects or objects with or without human referent.

5.5.1 *Aa* ‘who’

Aa ‘who’ is one of the question words in Dagara that is used in forming constituent interrogatives. This question word is used to question the identity of a subject or object of a clause with a human referent. The subject or the object could be singular or plural. When it is used in a plural sense, it is realized as *aamine*. Its place of occurrence is restricted to the initial position of the clause where it is mostly focused but it can also be unfocused in initial position when it is meant to create a rhetorical effect such as in proverbs and when entering a house. When the subject or object it questions is singular, the focus marker *nv* is attached, but if it is plural, *na* is attached. *Aa* ‘who’ as a question word in Dagara cannot occur in situ as that generates ungrammatical structures as shown in (10d).

- (10)
- a. *Aa nv bε bɔbr?*
 who-FOC 3PL want
 ‘Who do they want?’
 - b. **Bε bɔbr aanv?*
 3PL want who-FOC
 - c. *Aa-nv wa ɓag a dakɔg?*
 who-FOC come-PERF pick DET stool
 ‘Who has come to pick the stool?’
 - d. **A dakɔg wa ɓag aa-nu?*
 DET stool come pick who-FOC

- e. *A kuɔ suɔri aa-nv?
 DET water bath-IMPERF who-FOC
- f. Aa bange lɪlɪ sebla gyɛl?
 who know chicken black egg
 ‘Who can point the egg that will hatch a black chick?’
- g. Aa be dɔŋ?
 who be room
 ‘Who is in the room?’

In sentence (10a), the questioned constituent is the object which is the missing constituent and has a human referent and it occurs in the initial position of the sentence where it is marked with the focus marker *nv*. The subject *bɛ* ‘3PL’ takes the verb *bɔbr* ‘want’ which is a transitive verb and requires an object, but its object is what the question word questions. Here the speaker seeks to know who (the identity of the person) they are looking for. Sentence (10b) is ungrammatical because the question word is in situ. Sentence (10c) question the identity of the subjects which are missing and has its objects as *dakɔg* ‘chair’ but the question word in a corresponding sentence in (10d) generates an ungrammatical sentence. In (10c) the speaker wants to know who picked the chair. Sentence (10d & e) however are ungrammatical and meaningless. This ungrammaticality lies in the fact that this question word does not occur in final position. Example (10f) is a proverb which means that no one can predict the personality and achievement of an unborn child which suggests that man is limited. Sentence (10g) is grammatical and it is used when entering into someone’s house. In such contexts, they are not marked by the focus marker probably because no contrast is created.

The question word *aa* ‘who’ can also be used to question a possessive subject. In such a situation, it forms a question phrase with the possessed entity and it is obligatorily marked with the focus marker *nv* and has the meaning of the English word ‘whose’. This is shown in the sentences below.

(11) a. Aa bʋɔ nv bɔr?

who goat FOC lost

‘Whose goat is lost?’

b. Aa libir nv dɔglɛ a dakɔg zu?

who money FOC put on top DET chair head

‘Whose money is on the chair?’

In both sentences in (11), the question words question the possessor and the interrogative words still occur at the subject position (initial position) of the sentences and they question the owners of the possessed entities. Thus in (11a), *aa* ‘who’ questions the owner of the goat and it is obligatorily followed by the focus marker *nv* because it is singular. The unit that is formed with the question word and the possessed are focused together and functions as the subject of the verb *bɔr* ‘missing’. In (11b) the question word questions the owner of the money which is on the table and not any other money. These possessors in (11a & b) can only be questioned in sentence initial positions and nowhere else. In sentence (11b), the question word *aa* ‘who’ co-occurs with the noun *libir* ‘money’ and they are focused together as the subject of the sentence which takes the adjunct *dakog zu* ‘on the chair’. The adjunct shows where the money he is talking about is and the speaker seeks to know whose money is on the chair.

In complex clauses, the question word *aa* ‘who’ still occurs in initial position of the main clause. These are illustrated below in the following sentences.

- (12) a. Fv yɛl-kɛ **aa-nv** **ɔag** **a** **bie?**
 2SG say-that who-FOC pick DET child
 ‘Who did you say picked the child?’
- b. A tigri bɛ na maalɪ-a **aa-nv** **kyen?**
 DET party 3PL EMPH prepare-PERF who-FOC go.PERF
 ‘Who went for the party they had?’
- c. Fv tɪrɛ kɛ **aa-nv** **a** **dɔɔ** **ɲmɛ?**
 2SG think that who-FOC DET man beat
 ‘Who do you think the man beat?’

Aa ‘who’ in sentences (12a-c) occurs in the initial position of the independent clauses and functions as subject in (12a & b) and object in (12c). This still confirms the argument that *aa* ‘who’ as a question word has a specific position which is the initial position and cannot occur in final position. This was also observed in Akan (Saah 1998) that subject question words do not occur in situ.

Apart from the above, the question word *aa* and the focus marker can occur alone as the only elements forming a sentence and can be used in questioning the identity of a person. Below is an example in (13a). The positions of these two words *aa* & *nv* when swarp in an utterance yields infelicitous constructions as shown in example (13b).

- (13) a. Aa-nv
 who-FOC
 ‘Who is it?’
- b. *Nv- aa?
 FOC-who

Sentence (13a) can be used in a situation where someone goes to knock at another's door, and the speaker wants to know the identity of the one knocking. In sentence (13a) above, the speaker wants to know the subject. The addressee can answer by mentioning his/her name directly or by saying 'it is I' and add his/her name. An example is **Maa Dɛr nɔ** which means 'it is I Dɛr'. Here the response given is focused because it seeks to know the exact identity of the person knocking which is the focus of the speaker. (13b) is ungrammatical because this question word does not occur after a focus marker.

5.5.2 *Bvɔ* 'what'

Bvɔ glossed as 'what' is used to question non-human entities. Unlike *aa*, it cannot occur alone without the focus marker and it is realized together with the focus marker as *bvɔvɔ* in speech. It can function as a subject or an object in the interrogative sentence. In terms of its distribution in the sentence, *bvɔ* occurs *ex-situ* that is placing it at sentence initial position in both simple and complex sentences as shown in examples (14) and cannot occur in sentence final position.

Consider the following

- (14)
- | | | | |
|----|----------|------|---------------------------|
| a. | Bvɔ-nɔ | fɔ | bɔbr? |
| | what-FOC | 2SG | want |
| | | | 'What do you want?' |
| b. | Bvɔ-nɔ | tɛr | fɔ? |
| | what-FOC | keep | 2sg |
| | | | 'What is wrong with you?' |
| c. | Bvɔ-nɔ | bɛ | ɪ-rɛ? |
| | what-FOC | 3PL | do-IMPERF |
| | | | 'What are they doing?' |

- d. *Bε I-rε bvv-nv?
 3PL do-IMPERF what-FOCUS

In sentences (14a-c), the question word occurs at the initial position and seeks to question a non-human entity which functions as the object of the sentence. In (14d), the question word is in-situ and makes the sentence ungrammatical. In example (14a) the subject of the sentence is *fv* ‘2SG’ which requires a verb and therefore takes the verb *babr* ‘want/search’ but its object is the missing constituent which *bvuv* substitutes. In (14b), the question word functions as the subject and takes the verb *ter* ‘keep’ with *fv* ‘2SG’ as its object. The question word in (14c) questions the object with *bε* ‘3PL’ as subject and *irε* as its verb. Here the speaker seeks information on what the subject is doing. Sentence (14d) is however ungrammatical. This is because the interrogative word occurs in the final position making it unacceptable.

5.5.2.1 *Bvuv* ‘What’

Bvuv is a variant of *bvv-nv* and it is also translated also as ‘what’. *Bvuv* however can only occur in the final position of the sentence and cannot be put in the initial position as that generates unacceptable structures. Even though it has the same meaning as *bvuv*, it cannot replace it in sentence initial position in a corresponding sentence but occurs only in final position as shown below in (15)

- (15) a. Tɪ dɔg bvuv?
 1PL boil what
 ‘What should we cook?’
 b. v yel-kε bvuv?
 3SG say-that what
 ‘What did s/he say?’

- c. *Bunu v yel-kε
What 3SG say-that
- d. *Fv bɔbrɪ buɔvɔ
2SG look-IMPERF what

The verb *ɔvɔ* ‘boil’ in (15a) is a transitive verb and therefore requires an object which is substituted by the question word *bunu* ‘what’. The speaker wants to know from the addressee the kind of food they should cook. In sentence (15b), the object of the verb *yel* ‘say’ is what is questioned. This is however not an echo question but a genuine content. Saah (1998) also describes such questions as genuine Wh-questions that are used to seek information and I think I agree with Saah (ibid) because when question (15b) for instance is posed, the addressee is expected to answer by giving some detail information. Sentences (15c & d) however are ungrammatical and unacceptable since the question words have occurred in the wrong positions.

Also the question word *buɔvɔ* ‘what’ is also used in complex clauses to question the subject or the object and it occurs in different syntactic positions. Below are complex sentences showing the position of the question word in the embedded clause.

- (16) a. Fv tɪɪɛ kɛ **buɔ-vɔ** a
2SG think-IMPERF that what-FOC DET
nakpããne kv?
hunter kill
‘What do you think the hunter killed?’

- b. **Bvɔ-nv** fɔ tɪɛɛ kɛ a nakpããɛ
 what-FOC 2SG think-IMPERF that DET hunter
 kv na?
 kill EMPH
 ‘What do you think the hunter killed?’
- c. *Fɔ Tɪɛɛ kɛ a nakpããɛ kv-n **bvɔ-nv?**
 2SG think that DET hunter kill-PERF what-FOC
 ‘What do you think the hunter killed?’

In sentences (16a & b), the constituent questioned is the object which is substituted by the question word *bvɔ* ‘what’. The speaker wants to know from the addressee the entity that suffers the action of the transitive verb *kv* ‘kill’. Though it is the object in the two sentences, it occurs in different positions in both sentences. In sentence (16a), the question word *bvɔ* with a grammatical role as object occurs in initial position of the main clause. In (16b) the question word is *ex situ*. The question word in sentence (16c) occurs *insitu* and this makes it unacceptable.

5.5.3 *Nymɛ* ‘where’

Nymɛ ‘where’ is another question word in Dagara which is used in forming content interrogatives. It is used to question the location of an action or the location of an entity which the speaker does not have knowledge of. This question word occurs in both *ex-situ* and *in situ*. *Nymɛ* is sometimes combined with a noun or pronoun which modifies it and has the meaning of ‘which part’. The following are some examples of the use of *nymɛ* ‘where’ in both main and embedded clauses in (17).

- (17) a. Nymɛ na bɛ yɪ?
 where FOC 3PL come.from
 ‘Where do they come from?’
- b. Tɪ kyen tɪ kɔ nymɛ?
 1PL go CONJ weed where?
 ‘Where should we go and weed?’
- c. Tɪ kyen nymɛ?
 1PL go where
 ‘Where should we go?’
- d. Nymɛ na tɪ kyen?
 where FOC 3PL go
 ‘Where did we go?’
- e. *Bɛ yin nymɛ?
 3SG come from where
 ‘You come from where?’
- f. Nandom nymɛ na a kuor be?
 Nandom where FOC DET funeral at
 ‘Which part of Nandom is the funeral?’

In sentence (17a), the question word occurs in subject position and questions the location of the subject. It is marked by the focus marker *na* to show emphasis. The sentence contains the subject *bɛ* ‘3PL’ and a verb *yɪ* ‘come from’ and requires a location (place) which is questioned. A similar thing occurs in (17b), the question word is in situ and the speaker desires to know the place where they should weed. In (17c), the question word also questions a location likewise example (17d). Sentence (17e) is a corresponding sentence of (17a) and it is ungrammatical. This shows that some question words generate ungrammatical structures when they change position in a corresponding sentence. In (17f), the question word is combined with a noun and both are put at the beginning of the sentence and focused together. The noun *Nandom* modifies the question word

nyɛ ‘where’ and functions as a locative adjunct. Here, information on the particular part or section of Nandom where the funeral is, is sought. Sometimes too, *Nyɛ* ‘where’ is combined with *loor* ‘part’ to still question about a specific part of an entity. *Nyɛ* plus *loor* forms a phrase *Nyɛloor* ‘which part’. This is illustrated below in (18).

- (18) *Nyɛ-loor* *na* *fɔ* *bi-n* *a*
 Which-part FOC 2SG place-PERF DET
 saaseɲɲ?
 key
 ‘Which part did you place the key?’

Here a specific part or location of an entity has been questioned. It could be a part of a room, or a bag and the speaker wants to know which part of the room or bag the key was placed and it also functions as an adjunct in the sentence.

5.5.4 *ɲmin* ‘where’

This question word glossed as ‘where’ can only occur in the final position of a sentence after the verb *be* and it is used to question the location or whereabouts of an entity or where someone is gone to. Both animate and inanimate entities can be questioned using this question word. This is illustrated below.

- (19) a. *A* *fɔ* *sãã* *m* *ɲmin?*
 DET 2SG father be where
 ‘Where is your father?’
- b. *A* *gan* *m* *ɲmin?*
 DET book be where
 ‘Where is the book?’

- c. **ηmin* a gan i?
Where DET book be

The interrogative word *ηmin* occurs in situ in both (19a & b) and it follows the verb *m* ‘be’. In both sentences, the question word occurs in the object position but it questions the location or whereabouts of an entity. It therefore functions as an adjunct. Example (19c) however is ungrammatical as a result of the fact that the question word is located at the initial position of the clause.

5.5.5 *ηmijmin* ‘how’

It is a question word that questions how an action is performed or the way a person behaves or how something is. It can occur either in the initial or final position of a sentence. When it occurs at the initial position, it is marked by a focus marker. This is illustrated in the examples below.

- (20) a. *ηmijmin* na fɔ i wa?
how FOC 2SG do come
‘How did you come?’
- b. A zie *ηmē* *ηmijmin*?
DET place look like how
‘How is the place?’
- c. *ηmijmin* na a zie *ηmē*
how FOC DET place look like
‘How is the place?’
- d. *ηmijmin* na a zier *ηmē*?
how FOC DET soup look.like
How does the soup taste? Lit. (How is the soup like?)

e. A zɪɛr ɲmɛ̃n ɲmɪɲmɪn?

DET soup look like how

‘How does the soup taste?’ (Lit.:How is the soup like?)

In sentence (20a) the question word is placed *ex situ* followed by a focus marker and questions how the subject *fv* ‘2SG’ came. In sentence (20b) the question word appears *in situ* while in (20c) the question word is focused and occurs at the subject position. Example (20b &c) question how a particular place is or looks like but the question word occurs in different syntactic positions. *ɲmɪɲmɪn* ‘how’ can also be used to question about the taste of food where it can occur in both *ex situ* and *in situ* as shown in example (20d &e). Both (20d &e)) are grammatical and question the subject *zɪɛr* ‘soup’, that is, the taste of the soup. But it can be observed from the data that the question word occurs *ex situ* in (20d) and *in situ* in (20e). This confirms the argument I made earlier that some of the question words in Dagara can occur both *in situ* and *ex situ* in certain contexts. Thus *ɲmɪɲmɪn* ‘how’ is one of the question words in Dagara which can occur either at the beginning or end of a content interrogative.

5.5.6 *Buor* or *Buorsob* ‘which’

The question word is translated as ‘which’ and can be used to question both animate and inanimate entities and can only occur at the left periphery of the sentence. It is used when a choice has to be made from a limited set of nouns which could be animate or inanimate. It can also qualify a noun and makes the noun more specific where it performs the grammatical function of a subject or an

object. Thus, this question word either co-occurs with the noun at the initial position in which case the noun precedes it or it occurs alone without the noun it qualifies in which case the noun is known to the addressee. The various ways in which *buor* ‘which’ is used in question word questions are exemplified below:

- (21) a. **Kpar** buor nɔ a bie na su?
 dress which FOC DET bie FUT put on
 ‘Which dress will the child wear?’
- b. **Bu** buor nɔ bɔr?
 goat which FOC lost
 ‘Which goat is lost?’
- c. **Buor** nɔ bɔr?
 which FOC lost
 ‘Which one got lost/missing?’
- d. **Buorsob** nɔ bɔr?
 which FOC lost/missing
 ‘Which one got lost?’

In all the examples above, there is the presupposition that there is more than one entity from which the speaker wants to know the specific one that is affected by the action of the verb. In sentence (21a & b) the question word co-occurs with nouns which precede it and is placed at the initial position of the sentence and questions the identity of the noun *kparu* ‘dress’ and *bu* ‘goat’ which are the object and subject respectively. In (21a) *bie* ‘child’ is the subject of the sentence and has the verb *su* ‘wear’ which is a transitive verb and therefore requires a direct object and this is what the question word seeks to identify. The sentence therefore has the structure OSV (object, subject and verb) and the speaker wants to know from the addressee which dress the child will wear. It presupposes that

there are many dresses and the child needs to wear one of them. In (21b & c), the speaker seeks to know the particular goat that is missing. It therefore presupposes that the speaker has the fore knowledge that there are many goats and that one of them is missing and seeks to know the particular goat from the addressee. It is observed that when the question word *buor* forms a question phrase with a noun in the initial position, the final vowel of the noun is deleted as seen in examples (21a & b) where the final vowels *ɔ* & *v* are deleted in *buɔ* ‘goat’ and *kparv* ‘dress’ respectively.

In sentence (21c) the question word occurs alone without a noun attached to it which implies that both the addressee and the speaker already know what the speaker is referring to and as such the speaker does not need to mention the noun he is referring to. Thus the question word functions as the grammatical subject of the sentence and takes the verb *bɔr* ‘lost/missing’ but does not contain an object. There is therefore no semantic difference between examples (21a, b & c) in the use of *buor* as it is used to question the specific identity of an entity.

5.5.7 *Abobe and bobe* ‘Which’

These are used the same way as *buor and buorsob*. However, *abobe* and *bobe* are used when questioning plural nouns and they can be used to seek the identity of particular nouns which could be animate or inanimate. *Abobe* and *bobe* as Dagara question words can only occur in the initial position of a content question. This is shown in the examples below:

- (22) a. **Kpari abobe** na nyɪ pɛg?
 dresses which FOC 2PL wash-PERF
 ‘Which dresses have you washed?’
- b. **Abobe** na nyɪ pɛg?
 which FOC 2PL wash-PERF
 ‘Which ones have you washed?’
- c. **Bobe** na nyɪ pɛg?
 which FOC 2PL wash-PERF
 ‘Which ones have you washed?’

In the use of *abobe* in (22a), it occurs together with a plural noun *kpari* ‘dresses’ in subject position and functions as the object of the sentence with a transitive verb *pɛg* ‘wash’. *Nyɪ* ‘2PL’ is the grammatical subject and it is also placed at preverbal position. There is the presupposition that some dresses have not been washed and so the speaker wants information as to which of the dresses have not been washed. *Bobe* in sentence (22) occurs alone and substitutes the objects. It connotes plurality and questions plural objects but its usage here, is without the physical presence of the noun which implies that the questioned nouns are known to the interlocutors.

5.6 Summary

The chapter contains a discussion of Content Questions in Dagara. It also contains a description of each of the question words in the language. Content Questions are questions formed by the use of content words. The chapter discusses the strategies that are used in forming Content Questions in the languages of the world which are the in-situ and ex situ strategies and proceeds with a discussion of strategies used in forming Content Questions in Dagara.

I show that sentence initial position is the preferred position for question words in Dagara. There are however a few question words that occur only in sentence final position and cannot be placed at the initial position to generate grammatical and meaningful sentences. I therefore conclude that Dagara makes use of both the in-situ and ex-situ strategies.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is the concluding chapter of this dissertation and contains a summary of all the issues discussed in the thesis. A summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations for future work are given below under appropriate sub-headings.

6.1 Summary

Chapter one is made of a general background to the study. I gave a brief explanation to the topic and provided some background knowledge of the language and the people on which this research is carried out. The chapter showed that the language has four dialects which differ at the level of phonology, lexicon and grammar. These dialects are Northern dialect (Dagara), Central dialect, Southern dialect, and Western dialect. This chapter also contains a discussion of the problem statement, the aims of the research, as well as its relevance.

In chapter two, I reviewed relevant and related literature in both related and non related languages. I then gave a description of the theoretical framework adopted for this study, my motivation for the choice of the theory and its usefulness regarding the study. The chapter ended with an elaborate description of the type of data used and the methodology used in collecting the data.

Chapter three is a major chapter where I discussed polar questions in Dagara. The strategies used in forming polar questions were discussed. Two main strategies are used in forming Dagara polar questions which are the use of question particles and the use of final syllable vowel lengthening with a falling pitch. The types of polar questions that exist in the language and how they are responded to were also discussed. I showed that polar questions could be positive or negative. It was shown that unlike positive polar questions where a ‘yes’ response confirms the proposition and a ‘no’ response denies it, in negative polar questions, a ‘yes’ response is given when the proposition is true and ‘no’ is offered when it is false. I also discussed argument focus in polar questions. The chapter ends with a discussion on the functions of polar interrogatives.

In chapter four, alternative questions are discussed. It was shown that alternative questions are formed by the use of a coordinating conjunction *bii* glossed as ‘or’ which is usually placed between the alternative answers provided by the speaker. In responding to an alternative question, the addressee is expected to choose as an answer from the alternatives provided by the speaker even though in some cases, the speaker may give a different answer without choosing from the options given. Finally, I discussed focus in alternative questions and showed that both alternatives could be focused or one of them could be focused and focus in Dagara helps the speaker to create contrast and to show what is most important to him/her.

Content Questions were discussed in chapter five. I identified and discussed the various question words in Dagara in terms of their positions in a

sentence and the elements they question. The chapter showed that, Dagara prefers its interrogative words at the initial position of the sentence where they are mostly focused. Both the in situ and ex situ strategies are used in Dagara content questions. There are however some question words that cannot be placed in situ or ex situ in a corresponding sentence as that will generate ungrammatical structures. It was also observed that subject question words cannot occur in situ but must be placed ex situ. It was also evident that when the question word is placed at the initial position of the sentence, no resumptive pronoun is placed in the moved position of the questioned constituent. I also argued that content questions and focus are interrelated thus a focused constituent and question words have the same place of occurrence with the same interpretation.

6.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

This research is basically descriptive. It describes the interrogative clause in Dagara and the types of interrogatives in the language in the area of syntax and semantics. Even though this dissertation seems elaborate and very comprehensive, it is basically a descriptive work and cannot be judged as exhaustive and without flaws. The work looked at the positions of the question words in the interrogative clause and concludes that both in situ and ex situ strategies are used in Dagara content question. It however did not account for the movement of the question words from the final position to the initial position of the clause. Therefore I recommend the application of another theory on the interrogative clause in Dagara to account for this.

This work also serves as bait that will motivate linguists to undertake similar research in the other dialects of Dagaare for cross linguistic purposes since there are variations among the dialects. The phonology of the interrogative clause has not also been worked on in the language and it is a considerable area for future researchers. This thesis has therefore contributed to the documentation of Dagara for posterity.

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APPENDIX**Table 1: Question Words in Dagara**

<u>Question word</u>	<u>English equivalent</u>	<u>Referent</u>
Aa	who	person
Buu	what	object
Nyɪɛ	where	location
Buuso or ɛbunɔ	why	reason
Buor	which	object (generic)
Buor sob	which one	object
Abobe	which ones	object
Aɲmɪn	how much	amount.
	how many	number
ɲmɪɲmɪn	how	manner
Dɛbor	when	time
ɲmɪn	where	location