An Analysis of Interrogative Constructions in Dangme

Regina Oforiwah Caesar
University of Education, Winneba, College of Languages Education
Department of Ga-Dangme Education, P. O. Box 72, Ajumako, Ghana

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

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

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

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

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

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

1a. What did the teacher teach them?
1b. The teacher taught them what?
2a. Bee o chan-Ø shikuru? (Dagbani)
    INT 3SG.Nom go-PERF School 'Has he/she gone to school?'
2b. O chan-Ø shikuru bee?
    3SG.NOM go-PERF School INT.
'Has he/she gone to school?' (Issah, 2015: 48).

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

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

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

4a. [CP₁ was meinst du [CP₂ weni [IP Peter Hans ti vorgest ellt dat ]]]
   ‘Who do you think Peter introduced to Hans?’
   Sabel (2000:410)

4b. Hwan na ɔbaa ha? (Akan)
   ‘Who come here?’

4c. Den na wofaai? (Akan)
   ‘What did you take?’

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

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

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

1. The Formation of Polar Questions in Dangme

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) The use of interrogative particles
b) The use of special intonation patterns
c) A change in relative word order
d) The addition of special tags
e) The use of disjunctive – negative structures
f) The use of particular verbal inflection.

In this paper, I demonstrate that Dangme uses two main strategies in the formation of polar questions:
i.e., the use of interrogative markers such as words and phrases, and falling intonation. I identify the use of particle in the formation of polar questions as the syntactic strategy and the use of falling intonation as the phonological strategy.

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

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

7a. Maa ho jua mi ᐒ ya?
   mother go.PERF market inside PRT to
   ‘Has mother gone to the market?’

7b. Anɛ maa ho jùa mi ᐒ ya?
   INT mother go.PERF market inside PRT to
   ‘Has mother gone to the market?’

7c. Maa ho jùa mi ya lo?
   Mother go.PERF market inside to INT.
   ‘Has mother gone to the market?’

7d. Anɛ maa ho jùa mi ya lo?
   INT mother go.PERF market inside to INT
   ‘Has mother gone to the market?’

7e. *Lo maa ho jùa mi ya?
7f. *Maa ho jùa mi ya anɛ?

8a. Nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika
   man DEF come.AOR give.AOR 3PL.OBJ money
   ‘The man has come to give them money’.

8b. Anɛ nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika a?
   INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money DEF
   ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’

8c. Nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika a lo?
   man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money DEF INT
   ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’

8d. Anɛ nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika a lo?
   INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money DEF INT
   ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’

8e. *Nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika anɛ?
   man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money INT
   ‘Has the man come to give them money?’

8f. *Lo nyumu ᐒ ba ke mɛ sika lo?
   INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money INT
   ‘Has the man come to give them money?’

9a. Tsatsu gbe e sukuu nya.
   Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school end.
   ‘Tsatsu has completed his school’.

9b. Anɛ Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ᐒ nya jeha ne ᐒ?
   INT Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this
   ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’

9c. Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ᐒ nya jeha ne lo?
   Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this INT
   ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’

9d. Anɛ Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ᐒ nya jeha ne lo?
   INT Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this INT
   ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’

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

10a. Nyɛɛ ya pa mi.
    2PL go river inside
    ‘Go and fetch water from the river!’

10b. *Anɛ nye ya pa mi s?*
    INT 2PL go river inside DEF
    ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’

10c. Nye ya pa mi lo?
    2PL go river inside INT
    ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’

10d. *Anɛ nye ya pa mi lo?*
    INT 2PL go river inside INT
    ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’

10e. *Lo nye ya pa mi anɛ?*
    INT 2PL go river inside INT

11a. A ba we mi.
    3PL come.AOR home inside
    ‘They came home’

11b. *Anɛ a ba we mi?*
    INT 3PL come.AOR home inside
    ‘Have they come home?’

11c. A ba we mi lo?
    3PL come home inside INT
    ‘Have they come home?’

11d. *Anɛ a ba we mi lo?*
    INT 3PL come.AOR home inside INT
    ‘Have they come home?’

11e. *Lo a ba we mi anɛ?*
    INT 3PL come home inside INT

12a. E gbe le.
    3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ
    ‘He/she/it beat/kill him/her/it.’

12b. *Anɛ e gbe le ?*
    INT 3SG beat/kill him/her/it
    ‘Has he/she/it beat/kill him/her/it?’

12c. E gbe le lo?
    3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ INT
    ‘Has he/she/it kill him/her/it?’

12d. *Anɛ e gbe le lo?*
    INT 3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ INT
    ‘Has he/she/it beat/kill him/her/it?’

12e. *Lo e gbe le anɛ?*
    INT 3SG beat/kill him/her/it INT

It is realized in examples (10a-12e) that there is no syntactic change in the constructions as compared with those in (7a-9f) where the interrogative constructions have personal names as subjects. We notice that the
distribution of lo and anɛ question particle in (10e), (11e) and (12e) has rendered those constructions ungrammatical.

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

13a. Ha mi bo.
   ‘Give me a cloth.’

13b. Enɛ ɔ lo?
   ‘Is it this one?’

13c. Anɛ enɛ ɔ lo?
   ‘Is it this one?’

14a. To ɔ fo bi.
   ‘The goat/sheep has delivered.’

14b. Lo ɔ lo?
   ‘Is it that one?’

14c. Anɛ lo ɔ lo?
   ‘Is it that one?’

15a. Tɛɛ ke e ma hiɛ ɔ.
   ‘Tɛɛ says he is coming here.’

15b. Tɛɛ ke e ma hiɛ ɔ lo?
   ‘Did Tɛɛ say he will come here?’

15c. Anɛ Tɛɛ ke e ma hiɛ ɔ?
   ‘Has Tɛɛ said he will come here?’

15d. Anɛ Tɛɛ ke e maa ba hiɛ ɔ lo?
   ‘Has Tɛɛ really said he would be coming here?’

16a. Kojo ho lejɛ ᴐ ya.
   ‘Kojo has gone there.’

16b. Kojo ho lejɛ ᴐ ya lo?
   ‘Has Kojo gone there?’

16c. Anɛ Kojo ho lejɛ ᴐ ya?
   ‘Has Kojo gone there?’

16d. Anɛ Kojo ho lejɛ ᴐ ya lo?
   ‘Has Kojo gone there?’

17a. Jame a bi ɔ maa ba.
   ‘That child will come.’

17b. Anɛ jamɛ a bi ɔ maa ba?
   ‘Will that child come?’

17c. Jame a bi ɔ maa ba lo?
   ‘Will that child come?’

17d. "loL jamɛ a bi ɔ maa ba anɛ?
   ‘INT DEM child DEF FUT come INT’

Demonstrative pronouns take the place of noun phrases. Demonstrative pronouns represent thing or things that are near or far in distance or time. The demonstrative pronouns in Dangme include lo ɔ, enɛ ɔ, hiɛ ɔ, and lejɛ ɔ. These expressions are used to indicate which entities are being referred to and also to distinguish
those entities from others.

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

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

18a. Legelegetsɛ ɔ je hiɛ.
    lanky one DEF leave.PERF yesterday

   ‘The lanky one left yesterday.’

18b. Legelegetsɛ ɔ je hiɛ lo?
    lanky one DEF leave.PERF yesterday INT

   ‘Has the lanky one left yesterday?’

18c. Anɛ Legelegetsɛ ɔ je?
    INT lanky one DEF leave.PERF

   ‘Has the lanky one left yesterday?’

19a. Yumutsɛ ɔ he ngɛ fɛu.
    black one DEF part is beautiful

   ‘The black one is beautiful?’

19b. Yumutsɛ ɔ he ngɛ fɛu lo?
    black one DEF part is beautiful INT

   ‘Is the black one beautiful?’

19c. Anɛ yumutsɛ ɔ he ngɛ fɛu?
    INT black one DEF part is beautiful

   ‘Is the black one beautiful?’

19d. Anɛ yumutsɛ ɔ he ngɛ fɛu lo?
    INT black one DEF part is beautiful INT

   ‘Is the black one beautiful.’

We can see that, the use of nominalised adjectives in subject position of the interrogative clauses in (18a and 19d) do not change the distribution of the question markers *anɛ* and *lo* in those sentences. *Anɛ* can occur at only clause initial position and *lo* maintains the clause final positions as illustrated in examples (7a-19d).

In addition to the positive polar questions, I demonstrate that Dangme has a way of expressing negative polar questions that can be expressed with *pi* in Dangme. Consider examples (20a-21d).

20a. A ke waa wo sidi akpe kake.
    3PL say 1PL pay cedi thousand one

   ‘They said we should pay an amount of one thousand cedis.’

20b. Pi ja’ i lo?
    NEG that one PRT INT

   ‘Is that not it?’

20c. Anɛ pi ja’ i lo?
    INT NEG that PRT INT

   ‘Is that not it?’

20d. Anɛ pi ja a?
    INT NEG that PRT

   ‘Is that not it?’

21a. Womi tsutsu ko lo i na
    book red INDEF FM ISG see.AOR

   ‘It is a certain red book that I saw!’

21b. Pi lo ɔ lo?
    NEG that one INT

   ‘Is that not it?’

21c. Anɛ pi lo ɔ lo?
    INT NEG that one INT

   ‘Is that not that one?’

21d. Anɛ pi lo ɔ?
    INT NEG that one

   ‘Is that not that one?’
We see in (20a) and (21a) that the negative sentences in the (b) and (c) sentences are based on prerequisite ideas from the declarative sentences in (20a) and (21a). The speaker of sentence (21a) who was thinking aloud; comes out with the sentence in (20b) ‘pi ja’i lo?’ The constructions in (20c-d) and (21c-d) follow the distribution of the question particles discussed in examples (7d) and (7e). In (21b) the use of the demonstrative pronoun lɔ ɔ refers to a noun phrase in the preceding sentence. In (21a), womi tsutsu ‘the red book’ is represented by lɔ ɔ in (21b-21d).

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

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

22a. Dooyo yeɔ madaa.
   Dooyo eat.HAB plantain
   ‘Dooyo eats plantain.’

22b. Dooyo yeɔ madaa?
   Dooyo eat.HAB plantain
   ‘Does Dooyo eat plantain?’

23a. Tsako hii nyɛɛe ja daa.
    Tsako AOR walk.PROG that ADV
    Tsako was walking in that manner?’

23b. Tsako hii nyɛɛe ja daa?
    Tsako AOR walk.PROG like everyday
    ‘Did Tsako walk in that manner?’

24a. Dede maa kase blodo sami.
    Dede FUT learn bread bake.GER
    ‘Dede will learn how to bake!’

24b. Dede maa kase blodo sami?
    Dede FUT learn bread bake.GER
    ‘Will Dede learn how to bake?’

25a. Jangma hia aghbeli ɔ.
    Jangma uproot.PERF cassava DEF
    ‘Jangma has uprooted cassava.’

25b. Jangma hia aghbeli ɔ?
    Jangma uproot cassava DEF
    ‘Has Jangma uprooted cassava?’

26a. Yayo tsi we omɔ tuo.
    mother prepare. AOR NEG rice balls
    ‘Mother did not prepare rice balls.’

26b. Yayo tsi we omɔ tuo.?
    mother prepare. AOR NEG rice balls
    ‘Did mother prepare rice balls?’

27a. Tsɔɔlɔ ɔ ba sukuu mɔtu ngmlɛ kpaago.
    teacher DEF come.AOR school morning time seven
    ‘The teacher come to school at seven am.’

27b. Tsɔɔlɔ ɔ ba sukuu mɔtu ngmlɛ kpaago ɔ?
    teacher DEF come. AOR school morning time seven DEF
    ‘The teacher came to school at seven am?’
28a. Tsaatsɛ  gbe   na.
father         kill.AOR       cow
‘Father killed a cow.’

28b. Tsaatsɛ    gbe   na?
father         kill.AOR       cow
‘Father killed a cow?’

29a. Adenɛebe   ju   to  hiɛ.
Adenɛebe         steal.AOR      goat      yesterday
‘Adenɛebe stole a goat/sheep yesterday.’

29b. Adenɛebe   lɛ   e     ju  to   hiɛ   ɔ?
Adenɛebe    FM  3SG steal goat/sheep yesterday DEF
‘Was it Adenɛebe who stole the goat/sheep yesterday?’

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

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

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

30a. Ata  ya  he  tade  aloo  tokota?
Ata  go  buy  dress  or  sandals
‘Did Ata buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’

30b. Anɛ  Ata  ya  he  tade  aloo  tokota?
INT  Ata  go  buy  dress  or  sandals
‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’

30c. Ata  ya  he  tade  aloo  tokota   lo?
Ata  go  buy  dress  or  sandals  INT?
‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’

30d. Anɛ  Ata  ya  he  tade  aloo  tokota   lo?
INT  Ata  go  buy  dress  or  sandals  INT
‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’

31a. Jokuɛwi    ɔmɛ   ye   ni  ɔ  aloo   a  yi?
child.PL   DEF.PL  eat.PERF  thing  DEF  or  3PL  eat.NEG
‘Have the children eaten the food or have not eaten it?’

31b. Hɛlɔ       ɔ   maa  ya  wo  mwɔnɛ ɔ              aloo   e    be  ya?
fisherman     DEF  3SG  go  sea   today   or  3SG  NEG  go
‘Will the fisherman be going on fishing expedition today or will not?’

31c. E   ngɛ  ni   juae   aloo   e   ngɛ  sukuu   yae?
3SG  is  thing  sell.PROG  or  3SG  is  school  go.PROG
‘Is he/she trading or attending school?’

31d. Sangmɔte  ngmaa  womi  aloo  e  fieɔ  daa  lighi?
Sangmɔte write.HAB book or 3SG play.HAB every day?

‘Does Sangmɔte writes books or plays about every day?’

31e. Ajotɛɛ le e ngmɛ le blo ne e ya

Ajomte FM 3SG allow.NEG 3SG.OBJ. way that 3SG go
aloo le nitse ne e ye?
or he himself does 3SG go.NEG

‘Has Ajotɛɛ prevented him/her from going or he/she decided not to go?’

31f. Anɛ Ajotɛɛ j lmɛ enge me le blo ne e ya

INT Ajotɛɛ FM 3SGj allow.NEG 3SG.OBJ way that 3SG go
aloo le nitse ne e ye lo?
or he himself FM 3SG go.NEG INT

‘Was it Ajotɛɛ who prevented him/her from going or him/herself did not go?’

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

3. Content Questions in Dangme

3.1 The Interrogative Words /Phrases in Dangme

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARGUMENTS</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>REFERENTIAL ADJUNCTS</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DANGME</td>
<td>GLOSS</td>
<td>DANGME</td>
<td>GLOSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>mέn?</td>
<td>who?</td>
<td>jijɛ?</td>
<td>where?</td>
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<td>mέn?</td>
<td>what?</td>
<td>mέn bè?</td>
<td>when?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>what+VP</td>
<td>mέn bè?</td>
<td>when?</td>
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<tr>
<td>mέn + NP?</td>
<td>what + NP</td>
<td>mέn hè jɛ?</td>
<td>why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mέní + VP?</td>
<td>mέn + VP</td>
<td>mέn bè?</td>
<td>when?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mέn + NP?</td>
<td>mέn + NP</td>
<td>mέn hè jɛ?</td>
<td>why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mέní bè?</td>
<td>how much?</td>
<td>ényɛmɛ?</td>
<td>how much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mέn jè?</td>
<td>how…?</td>
<td>kɛ…kɛɛ?</td>
<td>how…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mέn hè jɛ?</td>
<td>why?</td>
<td>té…nɛɛ?</td>
<td>which one?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

3.2 Movement of Interrogative Words and Phrases

Movement transformation moves constituents from one place to another. Question word and phrase movement is a type of movement that involves focusing of elements. Sabel (2000:430) states that movement of interrogative words and phrases is inherently a focus. This is so because the interrogative words and phrases may be new information or what is not pre-supposed as known. The question words/phrases can be in-situ at D-structure in three structural positions in a construction. These are the subject and object positions for nominal INT and INTPs and at the adjunct positions for the referential adjuncts as already stated. As earlier shown in (1), the argument INT and INTPs move from their original positions to the SPEC of the CP as in example (32a-c):
The moved elements in (32a-c) mɛnɔ̀ ‘who’ and jíjé ‘where’ in Dangme are the focused ones respectively. In the formation of content questions in Dangme, the question markers are moved to the canonical subject position. When interrogative word and phrases moved, they leave traces that are properly licensed as indicated above in (32a-c) with the referential index, (t). However, some interrogative words depending on the sentence structure do not move to Specifier position in order to get [+WH] feature. An example of such a question word is mɛnɔ̀ (who?) in Dangme that occur in jí constructions.

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

33a. Mò jí mɛnɔ̀?
you COP INT
you are who?
‘Who are you?’

33b. Mɛnɔ̀ jí mò?
INT COP you
who are you
‘Who are you?’

33c. Mɛnɛ jí enɛ ɔ̀?
INT COP this
what is this
‘What is this?’

33d. Enɛ ɔ̀ jí mɛnɛ?
this COP INT
this is what
‘What is this?’

As we can observe in (33a) and (33c) the question words, mɛnɔ̀ ‘who’ and mɛnɛ ‘what’ occurred at sentence final positions in (33b) and (34b). These interrogative markers moved to the sentence initial positions without any distortion in meaning. Similarly, a shift in the canonical position of an interrogative word to the sentence final position, occurs with some referential adjunct question words and phrases such as mɛnɛ be and enɛmɛ. Consider example (35a-36b) below:

35a. Mɛnɛ be o ɔ̀?
INT time 2SG come
‘When did you come?’

35b. Ô bά mɛnɛ be?
INT time 2SG come
‘When did you come?’
36a. Enyémé e ha mo?
   INT 3SG give you
   ‘How much did he/she give you?’
36b. E ha mo enyémé?
   3SG give you INT
   ‘How much did he/she give you?’

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

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

37 (a) Adétà lε yè ńtimi ñ.
   Adétà FM eat.PErf kenkey DEF
   ‘It was Adétà who ate the kenkey’.

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

37b. Ògbòó tsitsɛ̀ lε.
   Ògbòó push.PErf 3SG.OBJ
   ‘Ógbòó pushed him/her/it’.

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

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

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

38a. Kòjó gbè mɛnɔ̀?  
   Kòjó beat who.SG
   (neutral/echo question)
38b. Kòjó gbè mɛnɔ̀-mɛ̀?  
   Kòjó beat who-PL
   ‘Who and who did Kòjó beat?’
38c. Mɛnɔ̀-mɛ̀ nɛ Kòjó gbè ñ?
   Who-PL FM Kòjó beat DEF
   ‘WHO and WHO did Kòjó beat?’
38d. Mɛnɔ̀-mɛ̀ nɛ Kòjó gbè mɛ̀ ñ?
   Who-PL FM Kòjó beat 3PL DEF
   ‘WHO and WHO did Kòjó beat?’
Nɔ̀, in Dangme, means a person and mὲ is a plural affix. In (38d), we observe that the interrogative word mѣnɔ̀ ‘who’, takes on a plural morpheme, {-mԑ}. The plural nature of the interrogative word has reflected in the resumptive pronoun mὲ ‘they’ in (38d).

3.3.3 Partial focusing in Dangme

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

39a. Kὲ jökȗ-wi ṭ-mẽ ngέ kέẽ?
INT child-PL DEF-PL are INT
‘How are the children?’

39b. Kὲ wómi ṭ ngέ kέẽ?
INT book DEF is INT
‘How does the book looks like?’

39c. Kὲ ma pee lé kέẽ?
INT FUT do 3SG INT
‘How should I go about it?’

39d. Kὲ nyẽ ngέ kέẽ?
INT 2PL are INT
‘How are you?’

39e. *Kὲ nyẽ ngέ?
INT 2PL are
‘How are you?’

39f. Kὲ ma pèé kέẽ?
INT FUT do INT
‘What should I do?’

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

39g. Té tò ɔ̀ nɔ̀ nɛmɛ nɛ bá kpé bá à nɛɛ?
INT goat DEF person ones.PL that come.PERF come  leaf DEF INT
‘Which of the goats came to chew the leaf?’

39h. Té ɔ̀ bì ɔ̀ nɛ gbé sukuu nyà à nɛɛ?
INT 2SG.POSS child DEF that finish.PERF school end PRT INT
‘Which of your children has completed school?’

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

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

3.3.4 Focused Questions

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

40a. Mɛnɔ̀ gbɛ jòkȗ ɔ̀?
who beat child DEF
‘Who beat the child?’

40b. Mɛnɔ̀ lr gbɛ jòkȗ ɔ̀?
who FM beat/kill child DEF
‘Who was it that beat/kill the child?’

40c. Dede lr gbɛ jòkȗ ɔ̀?
Dede FM beat/kill.AOR child DEF
‘Dede was the one who beat/killed the child?’
When the question is focused, it demands that the answer be focused as well and so the focused element in the answer is moved to the left periphery in the language like the focused question word/phrase. The answers to the focused questions above are therefore as follows:

41a. Jìjè Kòfí hò?  (Neutral adjunct)
   INT Kòfí go.AOR
   ‘Where did Kòfí go?’

41b. Jìjè nԑ Kòfí hò?  (Focused adjunct)
   INT FM Kòfí go.AOR
   ‘Where is it that Kòfí has gone?’

42a. Mɛnɛme Kòfí kpá ngmláá wò?
   INT.PL Kòfí blow shout.AOR at
   ‘Which people did Kòfí shout at?’

42b. Mɛnɛme nԑ Kòfí kpá ngmláá wò?
   INT.PL FM Kòfí blow shout.AOR at
   ‘Which people did Kòfí shout at?’

43a. Mɛnì Kòfí yè?
   INT Kòfí eat.AOR
   ‘What did Kòfí eat?’

43d. Mɛnɛ nԑ Kòfí yè?
   INT FM Kòfí eat.AOR
   ‘WHAT did Kòfí eat?’

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

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

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

44a. Ò nà Kuami ngɛ jìjè?
   2SG see.AOR Kuami at
   ‘Where did you see Kuami?’

44b. Jìjè ó nà Kuami ngɛ?
   INT 2SG see.AOR Kuami at
   (preposition stranding in Dangme)
   ‘Where did you see Kuami?’

44c. Ngɛ jìjè ó nà Kuami?
   At INT 2SG see Kuami
   ‘At where did you see Kuami?’

4. Summary

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

I argued that content questions are marked by argument question words and referential adjunct words and phrases. These words and phrases include: mɛnɔ ‘who’, mɛnɛ ‘what’, jìjè ‘where’, mɛnɛ bè ‘when’, mɛnɛ hè jɛ ‘why’, ènyɛmɛ ‘how much’, kɛ...kɛɛ ‘how/what... and tɛ...nɛɛ ‘which...’. In the analysis of the argument interrogative markers, it was noted that the question word and phrases can be in-situ at D-structure in the three structural positions (the subject, object and adjunct positions). I demonstrate that the interrogative particle, word or phrase of arguments, moves from their original position to the specifier position of the CP.

In content question constructions, all question words/phrases remain in-situ at the D-structure level but by total or partial movements, are focused in order to become genuine content questions in Dangme. Focusing of interrogative words and phrases in Dangme involve the use of overt markers such as le or ne. All focus-marked
questions move to the SPEC of the complementizer position to get a [+WH] feature. The interrogative elements in the questions, will determine the elements that can be focused in the construction. Question words in verbless clauses cannot be focused. In pied-piped and prepositional stranding, the preposition, nge ‘at’, is left stranded when the interrogative word is moved.

Abbreviations Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>Aorist</td>
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<td>Complementizer Phrase</td>
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References


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