

## **Wh-In-Situ in Cameroonian English (CamE): A study from a minimalist perspective and some pedagogic implications**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores wh-in-situ in CamE within Chomsky's (1998) Theory of Attraction. The data, both written and spoken, come from different sources. Given that we are a speaker of the language, part of the data come from our intuitive knowledge and everyday conversations with friends, students and colleagues. The other part is from a scrutiny of previous and recent works on CamE. The analysis shows that the LF movement analysis applies to CamE, with the wh-element moving at LF to check the Q-features carried by COMP. We also argue that both the optional intonational particle *naah*, which can be inserted in ex-situ and in-situ constructions, and the Q-features in COMP mark the interrogative nature of sentences in CamE, with the sole difference that *naah*-insertion is associated with the ideas of insistence or supplication. In cases of optional *naah*-insertion (Epoge, 2015), *naah* is assumed to have no grammatical impact on the sentence as it doesn't, in any way, influence attraction. In this vein, even in cases of *naah*-insertion, attraction takes place and the wh-element is moved to the left periphery of the clause at LF. The overall conclusion is that CamE syntactic features have to be standardized and promoted within the Cameroonian context, so as to avoid teaching structures that can rarely be intuitively followed.

Keywords: Cameroonian English (CamE), in-situ, ex-situ, LF movement, feature movement, question particle (Q-particle)

### **Introduction**

Some previous works on CamE syntax (Epoge, 2015; Fongang, 2015; Ndzomo, 2013, Sala, 2003) have shown that wh-elements may remain in-situ in root wh-questions or undergo movement in overt syntax. The in-situness of the wh-element, as argued in the above-mentioned works, results from the influence of indigenous languages and French on the variety of English that is spoken in Cameroon; henceforth Cameroonian English (CamE), and the simplification process. It is by now a familiar fact that CamE wh-questions may contain a wh-in situ element. The questions one is tempted to ask, at this point in time, are: what licenses wh-in-situ in CamE? What are the pedagogic implications of such a syntactic organisation in a context where British English is still the model advocated by government policy? As said above, previous works on CamE syntax have linked the in-situness of the wh-element to the

influence of other languages<sup>1</sup> (French and local languages) and the so-called simplification process<sup>2</sup>. This study goes beyond that to try to account for the in-situness of the wh-element from a pure grammatical perspective. It attempts to answer the following research questions: do wh-elements undergo covert movement as in some pure in-situ languages? What are the pedagogical implications of such a syntactic distribution? The study, therefore, revisits some aspects of the syntax of CamE with special focus on the in-situ nature of the wh-element. Such a study will be significant in many respects. First, it will help boost the study of CamE syntax from a transformational perspective, and open up many more research areas. Second, it will further showcase the uniqueness of CamE, and facilitate its comparison to other New Englishes, which will contribute to the move towards a Global English. Lastly, it will help draw some pedagogic implications and contribute to the desire for CamE to be considered the teaching model in the Cameroonian teaching industry. It is divided into five different sections. In section one, introductory statements are made, and background information on CamE is presented to the reader. In section two, we look at theoretical considerations, followed by the state of research on in-situ languages in general and on in-situ CamE in particular. Section three presents the method of data collection. In section four, we try to license wh-in situ in CamE. In the last section, conclusive statements are made.

### **Background to the study**

In this section, background information on Cameroonian English (CamE) is presented. The importance of such a section stems from the fact that the reader needs to know exactly what the linguistic situation in Cameroon looks like, before any attempt to look at in-situ CamE is made. It will, therefore, situate the reader within the linguistic context of Cameroon.

#### ***Linguistic situation in Cameroon***

With an area of 475,000 square kilometres and a population of about 21.14 million inhabitants (Ethnologue, 2013), Cameroon was partitioned in 1919 between Britain and France after the defeat of Germany (which had been there since the Versailles Treaty in 1884) in the First World War. After passing through independence (1960), Reunification (1961) and Unification (1972), it has, since 1984, been referred to as the Republic of Cameroon, with ten regions. Out of the ten regions, as SimoBobda (2010) remarks, there are eight Francophone regions which cover about 90 per cent of the territory and which contain 80 per cent of the population, and two Anglophone regions which cover about 80 per cent of the territory and about 20 per cent of the population. With two official languages, Cameroon has a uniquely complex sociolinguistic situation. Its multilingual setting has, for many years now, sparked some important research on the influence of those languages on one another. When two or more languages are used in the same cultural and social milieu,

they tend to influence one another in one way or the other, to the extent that even the language(s) that is (are) official in that particular area, change(s) as time passes by and gain(s) new features at all linguistic levels. Cameroon is a very good example of such areas where, because of the influence of local languages, two main lingua francas (Cameroon Pidgin English and Fulfulde) and a hybrid idiom (Camfranglais<sup>3</sup>), English and French that are official languages are changing and adapting, more and more, to the social, cultural and pragmatic realities of the country. These changes have led to what scholars call today Cameroon English (SimoBobda, 2002, Sala, 2003, 2014) or Cameroonian English (Omoniyi, 2006), which, according to Mbangwana (1992), is English in form, but Cameroonian in mood and content. Sala (2003) defines it as English with a Cameroonian touch. Since then, a lot has been written on CamE at different levels of linguistic analysis. Linguists have been trying to tell what is meant by CamE, who speaks it and why. The next sub-section of this work is meant for presenting what has so far been said about the variety of English that is spoken in Cameroon.

### ***What is Cameroonian English, who speaks it, and why?***

Defining the English spoken in Cameroon has been part of the concerns of linguists inside and outside the country. Many of them have tried to not only say what they think should be referred to as Cameroonian English, but also have given an account of who speaks it and why. The problem here is at four different levels: how Cameroonian English should be referred to, what it can be considered to be, those who can be considered its speakers, what has been said on standardisation and intelligibility issues, and what people's attitude towards it are.

At the level of terminology, the term "Cameroon English" (CamE), used by many Cameroonian linguists (Ekembe, 2011; Fongang, 2015; Ndzomo, 2013; SimoBobda, 2002, Sala, 2003, 2014, for instance), itself triggers a lot of questions. It has become a custom for scholars and researchers to term the English spoken by Cameroonians as "Cameroon English", rather than "Cameroonian English", which can better suit their intended purpose. By terming it "Cameroon English", it seems like reference is being made to the English spoken in Cameroon; Cameroon here being taken from a geographical perspective, i.e. within the Cameroonian landscape. But, "Cameroon English" cannot be the English spoken in Cameroon per say, since, in Cameroon, there are Americans, Chinese and British, who speak English. Thus, saying "Cameroon English" may encompass the English of Americans who live in Cameroon. This is the main reason why the expression "Cameroonian English" should be used, rather than "Cameroon English". The expression "Cameroonian English" immediately entails, not only that it is the English used by Cameroonians, but also that it is the English used in a Cameroonian way, that reflects Cameroonian cultural realities at all levels. This view itself, though better, is not preoccupations-free, as another question arises, which is: where will

we range Cameroonians who grew up out of Cameroon and who, of course, have English as second language? An obvious answer will be to say that they cannot be representative of CamE because what they speak will definitely not reflect the Cameroonian ways of life and culture, given the fact that they have not (really) been exposed to them.

At the level of what is Cameroon English and who speaks it, opinions abound. In the early 1990's, researchers referred to the English spoken in Cameroon as "Standard Cameroon English". According to Mbangwana (1992), as quoted in Sala (2003, p. 42), Cameroon English is "English in form, but Cameroonian in content and mood". This simply means that the English spoken in Cameroon looks like Standard British English, but is shaped by cultural, social and pragmatic realities of the country. Sala (2003) is of the opinion that Cameroonian English should be what is spontaneously and naturally spoken by Anglophone Cameroonians. Ubanako (2008, p. 56) argues that there are varieties of Cameroonian English, and that Cameroonian English is a "macrocosm of microcosms". From this, when referring to Cameroonian English, we should bear in mind that, just like native Englishes, there are regional varieties of Cameroonian English, and of course idiolects. Cameroonian English becomes an umbrella term under which different variations can be listed. According to SimoBobda and Mbangwana (2008, p. 199),

The term Cameroon English (or Cameroon Standard English used by previous authors) is meant to contrast with four main kinds of speech. First, it stands in contrast to Pidgin English widely used in Cameroon. Second, it contrasts with the speech of the uneducated speakers of English. ... CamE further contrasts with the speech of Francophone Cameroonians; some of these speakers may have a high command of English, but they are regarded as users of a performance variety and can hardly serve as a reference. Finally, the term Cameroon English excludes the speech of a handful of Cameroonians who have been so influenced by other varieties (RP, American English, etc.) that they can no longer be considered representative of the English spoken in Cameroon.

From this explanation, it is clear that in defining Cameroonian English, many Cameroonians are excluded. These include Francophone Cameroonians, uneducated Cameroonians and Cameroonians who live or have lived abroad and have been really influenced by native varieties or other foreign languages. Cameroonian English therefore becomes a matter of others. Why should a Francophone Cameroonian who speaks good English not be included in the determination of Cameroonian English? Does it mean that they are not Cameroonians? From the preceding explanation, Cameroonian English, therefore, is not the English of Cameroonians, but the English of a handful of them, let us say the English of some educated speakers in Cameroon, who are, first from an Anglophone background, and second, live in Cameroon. The question to be asked is whether we can define the standard for the country just by taking into

consideration a handful of citizens. What then can be considered CamE? Still on the issue of who speaks CamE, other researchers are of the opinion that “Francophone Cameroonians” speak a variety of English that is different from the Anglophone-Cameroonian variety. These include Kouega (2008), and Safotso (2012). Kouega (2008), in describing the English of Francophone Cameroonians, terms it “FrancoE”, an appellation which, according to Safotso (2012, p. 2471), is inappropriate, as it may refer to “any non-native variety of English spoken by Francophones anywhere in the world”. He proposes the label “CamFE” (Cameroon Francophone English), which to him is appropriate, as it is “closely related to the parent CamE”. The word “parent” in the preceding quotation clearly entails that CamE is the father of CamFE, and that CamFE should be taken into consideration when defining Cameroonian English. A solution to this problem, may be to consider CamE as a broad variety, that has regional and linguistic variations. By linguistic variation here is meant the changes that arise as a result of the influence of mother tongues, lingua francas (pidgin, Fulfulde), and second official language (which in this case is French). Cameroonian English would therefore be Ubanako’s (2008, p. 56) “macrocosm of microcosms”. In other words, CamE, just like BrE, for example, will have regional dialects.

As far as intelligibility and standardisation issues are concerned, they are worth mentioning, as there is no standard without national and international intelligibility, on the one hand, and as non-native Englishes should be standardized in order to be taught to their speakers, on the other hand. The intelligibility debate on CamE has been the topic of concern for many researchers amongst whom Atechi (2004) argues that it is obvious that CamE may be intelligible amongst Cameroonians, but what about its intelligibility at the international level at a time when calls are being made for linguists to facilitate the move towards a Global English and a lingua franca? Atechi (2004) is of the opinion that apart from some differences in pronunciation that seem to create intelligibility failure between CamE speakers and BrE and AmE speakers, these Englishes are mutually intelligible. Besides, the intelligibility problem should not be, as has often been the case, seen only from the point of view of the non-native English speaker, as even the native speaker can learn non-native Englishes to be able to easily communicate with non-native speakers. The standardisation problem has also been tackled by many researchers. The central question that is often asked at this level is why are we still relying on BrE norms, when we know that it is an impossible task to achieve. Besides, we still ask ourselves that if CamE was to be standardized, what should be the standard for the whole country? The second question, we believe, has somehow been answered, as it is closely related to what CamE is. Opinions on the first question are found in works such as Ngefac (2010, 2011). According to Ngefac (2010, 2011), Cameroonian English should be standardized and taught, because it seems like, in Cameroon, “the blind are leading the blind”, that is, those who are said to teach BrE themselves do not speak it. How,

therefore, can they teach something that they don't speak? He thus advocates the teaching of CamE to Cameroonians.

On attitudinal concerns, it can be said that no matter what is done, some people will always have a negative attitude towards non-native Englishes. This may be attributed to the fact that they are native English speakers, and they wish to "preserve" their language. But, if a non-native speaker has a negative attitude towards non-native Englishes, it would sound incomprehensible, since you cannot condemn what you naturally and unconsciously speak and write every day.

The next section of this work is concerned with the description of the theoretical framework that will guide the study, followed by the state of research on in-situ languages in general and on CamE in particular.

## **Theoretical considerations and literature review**

### ***Theoretical considerations***

The framework under which this work is carried out is Chomsky's (1998) "Attract". This section is meant to account for its positing and present what it is all about. Initiated and developed within the so-called Minimalist Program (MP), Chomsky's Attract was meant to account for the reason why elements move within sentences in the course of a derivation. Gambarage and Keudjio (2014), in explaining the notion of attract quoted Chomsky (1998), who argues that category  $\beta$  gets displaced from its base position because another category  $\alpha$  has matching features with  $\beta$  and, therefore, attracts  $\beta$  to check its uninterpretable features. In other words, a syntactic category moves from its base position because of the desire to check corresponding features carried by another syntactic category. Hence, movement is not required if category A, for instance, is featureless, or has no matching features with another category of A. This notion of Attract can be linked to Chomsky's (1995) principle of Greed, according to which Constituents move only in order to satisfy their own morphological requirements (Radford, 1998). In the analysis of the data, we will, therefore, consider the notion of "Attract" to be the prime objective of movement.

### ***Review of related literature***

This section revisits what has been said on in-situ languages in general and on in-situ CamE in particular. The importance of such a section stems from the need to know exactly what has been said on the analysis of in-situ languages in general, and the state of research on in-situ CamE in particular. Let us first look at what has been said on in-situ languages in general, before moving to in-situ CamE.

*On in-situ languages*

Though the term *wh-in situ* was not coined until the 1980's, properties of *wh-in situ* have been investigated since the 1960's (Cheng, 2003). Grammarians, in this vein, have differentiated between three types of *wh-in situ*: *wh-in situ* in multiple *wh*-questions like the one in (1) below, pure *wh-in situ* in languages like Mandarin Chinese, as shown in (2) and optional *wh-in situ* as in French and CamE, as illustrated in the question in (3).

- (1) Who gave what to the children?
- (2) Hufeimai-leshenme (Cheng, 2003, p. 3)  
Hufei buy-PERF what  
'What did Hufei buy?'
- (3) a. Jean estoù?  
b. He is eating what?

In (1) above, *what* does not move because the question feature (Q-feature) carried by COMP has already been checked by the *wh*-element *who*. So, feature attraction is no more possible with *what* because the features in COMP have already attracted *who*. Thus, attract has already taken place. (2) Illustrates pure *wh-in situ* in languages such as Chinese where the *ex-situ* strategy does not exist. In such languages, grammarians argue that the *wh*-element (*shenme* in the (2) above) undergoes covert movement. In (3) the *in-situ*-ness of the *wh*-element is optional. By optional here is meant that the *wh*-elements in (3) could undergo movement in overt syntax and yield the constructions as in (4) below.

- (4) a. Où<sub>i</sub> est Jean t<sub>i</sub>?  
b. What<sub>i</sub>is<sub>j</sub> he t<sub>j</sub>eating<sub>i</sub>?

In this work, focus is on the type of *in-situ* as illustrated in (3b). In the study of *in-situ* languages, the central question that often triggers grammarians' interest is what makes the *wh*-element not to overtly move. This has made them posit ideas that will be presented to the reader in the following paragraphs.

Previous works on *in-situ* languages (Bassong, 2010; Bošković, 1997; Cheng, 1991, Cheng & Rooryck, 2000, Fuiki, 1986, Horstein & Sportiche, 1981; Huang, 1982; Keudjio, 2013; Watanabe, 2001 and among others) have, in one way or the other, explored the *in-situ* nature of the *wh*-element in different languages (Mandarin Chinese, French, Japanese, Basa'a, Medumba and Nata). This has, progressively, made them to distinguish between languages in which the Complementizer system does not have Q-features that trigger overt *wh*-movement, languages in which there is covert *wh*-feature movement, languages in which the *wh*-element moves covertly or at LF and languages in which intonation has a role in checking the interrogative features carried by

both the complementizer system and the *wh*-element. From what precedes, it is obvious that there are different types of pure in-situ *wh*-elements, which warrant properties and different interpretations. This section is intended to present to the reader what has been said on the above-mentioned issues.

As mentioned above, some grammarians have explained the in-situ-ness of the *wh*-element by positing that unlike in ex-situ constructions, COMP in in-situ constructions does not exist or does not carry Q-features that attract the *wh*-element. The idea of COMP carrying Q-features derives from Katz and Postal (1964). According to them, an interrogative sentence has a Q-morpheme attached to it. But, they limit themselves to what Cheng (2003) calls matrix or direct question. Baker (1970) extends the Q-morpheme analysis to indirect questions as well. The main difference between the two, from Baker's (1970) point of view, is that the Q-morpheme in indirect questions is realised through the lexical complementizer "if" or "whether". We then moved from Q-morpheme to Q-feature, which in Bresnan (1970) is interpreted as [+*wh*]. Since Chomsky (1981), [+*wh*] has been assumed to be in COMP and trigger movement (whether overt or covert). But Fuiki (1986), for instance, posits that the CP layer does not exist at all in Japanese, and that is why the *wh*-element remains in-situ. Following this, it will be obvious that attract will not take place as there will be no Q to attract the *wh*-element. Others like Cheng (1991) argue that not all languages have Q-features in their Complementizer system, and that is why no overt movement is triggered in some cases. This is so because, as explained above, COMP is featureless, and attract cannot take place in such situations. But not all of them share the same point of view.

Chomsky (1995), for example, challenges Cheng's (1991) point of view by positing that all languages have Q-particles at C. It now depends on whether it is strong or weak. The strong and weak feature differentiation accounts for why, in some cases, movement takes place and not in others. According to him, overt movement is triggered by a COMP with strong Q-features and covert movement by a COMP with weak features. But since 2000, focus is no more on whether a COMP carries strong features that trigger overt movement or not, but rather on when movement takes place in relation to spell-out. This has made grammarians assume movement at LF for in-situ constructions.

The LF movement hypothesis was put forth in works such as Horstein and Sportiche (1981) and Huang (1982). According to them, in in-situ constructions, there is movement, but which takes place with relation to spell-out. The distinction between PF and LF in the grammar made it possible to posit movement at the level where there is semantic interpretation of the sentence, i.e. at LF. Movement of the *wh*-element cannot, therefore, be felt, as it doesn't take place at PF, so it is not pronounced. From this now, the idea of covert movement emanated. This has since been the most plausible analysis of the in-situ constructions.

Some works (Cheng, 2001; Hagstrong, 1998; Watanabe, 2001, amongst others), though with varying explanations on the origin of the *wh*-particle, link



the in-situ-ness of the wh-element to the existence of a wh-particle that covertly moves to check the Q-features carried by the complementizer system. This has been referred to as wh-feature movement. According to them, in situ wh-elements are associated with wh-particles or wh-features. Following Chomsky's Checking theory, those wh-particles covertly move to check the Q-features carried by the COMP system, and making the wh-element itself to remain in-situ like in multiple wh-questions. In such cases, attract is no more possible with the wh-element, as feature checking has already taken place with the wh-particle.

Moreover, in the study of the in-situ nature of the wh-element in French, Cheng and Rooryck (2000) argue that intonation has a vital role to play in checking the Q-features in COMP. Following the ideas developed by Chomsky according to which movement is triggered by the need for a specific "Probe" within the derivation of a sentence to make its uninterpretable features checked by the corresponding "Goal", they propose that in in-situ French, those features are checked by intonation. In such constructions, intonation functions exactly as the wh-particle and the second wh-element in multiple wh-questions. In a nutshell, what most of the proposals presented above have in common is that Attract takes place in in-situ constructions, and that there is indeed movement in in-situ constructions, effects of which are not overtly felt. But, as mentioned in the introductory section of this work, not many of previous works on in-situ CamE have looked into this issue. The next section is intended to present what has been said so far on in-situ CamE.

#### *The state of research on in-situ CamE*

The description of the features of Cameroonian English dates back to when scholars actually pointed out that there could be a variety of English called Cameroonian English. But, it was not long ago that scholars started to get interested in the syntactic properties of non-native Englishes in general and of Cameroonian English in particular. The reasons for this are that grammatical variations in NNEs as a whole seem to be less common, as compared to other levels of linguistic analysis. This situation started changing, as researchers observed that these features were becoming more and more common, and there was a need to actually describe them, in order to create awareness of their existence. As far as the study of transformations in CamE is concerned, works are scarce, and the ones that exist (Epoge, 2015; Fongang, 2015; Ndzomo, 2013; Sala, 2003) only posit the in-situ nature of the wh-element, without carefully looking at what licenses it from a grammatical standpoint. This section looks into ideas postulated in the above-mentioned works, which all argue about the existence of the in-situ strategy in CamE.

Sala (2003), in examining transformations in CamE, argues that there is a tendency for transformations to be avoided, as they have proven complex, especially when it comes to applying the constraints on transformations. According to him, given the fact that move-alpha is constrained, Cameroonian

English speakers tend to intuitively avoid it, and it leads to in-situ constructions. He comes up with the conclusion that in-situ CamE derives from the simplification process, as explained in the introductory section of this work. This can be said to be in line with some of Chomsky's Minimalist requirements (least effort, for example), as he advocates for the least resort to transformations, so as to make syntactic rules more minimal and as easily acquirable as possible. Moreover, Sala (2003) links in-situ-ness in CamE to the influence of indigenous languages. He uses *Lamnso* to account for his standpoint. This idea as well has proven plausible, as most works on Bantu languages (Bassong, 2010; Keupdjio, 2013 for example) posit in-situ constructions for wh-questions in Basa'a and Medumba, respectively. It is clear, following works on the departure from BrE norms in NNEs, that local language influence is a plausible account for variations in NEs. But Sala (2003) limits himself to sociolinguistic explanations of in-situ CamE. What if this could be accounted for from a purely grammatical or syntactic perspective as seen in other in-situ languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and French?

Ndzomo (2013) also argues about the possibility of ex-situ and in-situ wh-elements in CamE. For in-situ, which is the topic of discussion in the study, he shares Sala's (2003) opinion and relates in-situ in CamE to the influence of local languages and the process of simplification as well. Still at this level, there is no attempt to provide a syntactic account of in-situ CamE, though at this, properties of in-situ languages have already been well established and made known to the public through research publications.

Epoge (2015), in his study of syntax of non-focalized wh-questions in CamE, puts forth the opinion that in non-focalized wh-questions, the tendency is for the wh-element to remain in-situ and to take a final *naah*. To him as well, these variations from BrE result from the multilingual and multicultural situation of Cameroon. The innovation at this point is the idea of insertion of a final *naah* which, of course, could be given a grammatical account.

Fongang (2015) also examines in-situ CamE and links it with the simplification process and the influence of local languages and French<sup>4</sup>. He attempts a grammatical account of it and proposes that just like in other in-situ languages, CamE exhibits the so-called movement at LF. Explanations for movement at LF are not provided by the researcher in his paper. So far, the only attempt to license in-situ wh-elements in CamE from a purely grammatical perspective is presented in Fongang (2015). The others only focused on positing the in-situ strategy and linking it to either the simplification process or the influence of other languages. This study re-examines the assumption of LF movement in CamE in order to shed more light on the issue, and why not reject the assumption in favour of a more plausible one. The next section of this work is devoted to that.

## Method

The data come from a variety of sources, and are both written and spoken. The spoken data, on the one hand, come from the researcher's everyday conversations with friends, students and colleagues. The written data, on the other hand, come from previous works<sup>5</sup> on CamE syntax. The choice of these sources was motivated by the desire to include Anglophone Cameroonians from different backgrounds and with different cultural experiences.

### *Licensing wh-in-situ in CamE*

In CamE, the wh-element in root wh-questions can remain in-situ, as the sentences in (5) below show.

- (5) a. He is eating what?  
b. You are where?  
c. You are going where?

In (5a), the wh-element *what* remains at base-generated position and does not undergo overt wh-movement. The same process applies to (5b) and (5c). This could be taken as echo-questions, given their syntactic distribution. But we are not concerned with echo-questions in this article. Besides, previous works on CamE syntax have shown that echo-questions are formed following a completely different syntactic organisation<sup>6</sup>. The sentences in (5) are therefore pure wh-questions in CamE. They can be compared to the French sentences in (6) below.

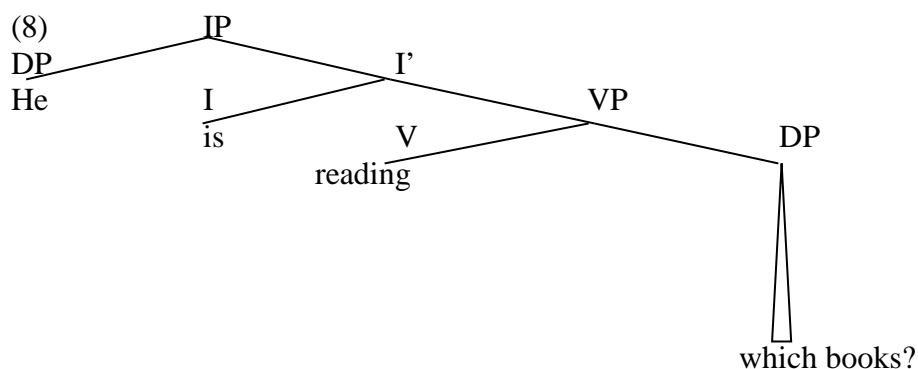
- (6) a. Tu manges quoi?  
b. Tu étais où?  
c. Tu vas où?

What then happens to the [+wh] features in COMP? How are they checked? Following the literature on in-situ languages, various possibilities can be explored, namely the CP-inexistence analysis, the covert feature-movement analysis and the LF movement analysis. These shall be explored in turn below.

### *CP Inexistence analysis of in-situ CamE*

Early works on in-situ languages have assumed that feature checking is not necessary in in-situ languages because the CP layer does not exist in those languages. From their point of view, a sentence like (7) below will have the tree diagram representation as in (8).

- (7) He is reading which books?



One could be tempted to share the same point of view, as a first look at the representation of the sentence shows that all the elements contained appear in their syntactic positions. If the CP domain, which is the host for the moved elements, does not exist, then movement will be impossible, as there will be no landing site for the moved element. This is in line with grammarians who argue that even if the CP domain exists in in-situ languages, then it is featureless. Following this, attract will not be possible, and the wh-element will remain at the base. In other words, feature checking will not take place as there will be no matching features in the derivation. This idea, though plausible, has a lot of weaknesses and has seriously been criticized by many grammarians. The point here is, if COMP in wh-questions in CamE does not have [+wh] features (question features) that has to be checked, then what marks their interrogative force? According to Katz and Postal (1964), interrogative sentences are said to be peculiar in that they all carry a Q-morpheme in the CP domain. Given this, even CamE has that property, and allows Q-morphemes in CP. Besides, if there was no Q-features in COMP in CamE, what could have accounted for ex-situ constructions? This is so because, as previous works on CamE syntax argue, CamE makes use of both the ex-situ and in-situ constructions. The sentences in (5) could well be realized in CamE as the ones in (9) below, where the wh-elements have effectively moved in overt syntax, as shown through co-indexation.

- (9)
- a. What<sub>i</sub> is he is eating<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>?
  - b. Where<sub>i</sub> are<sub>j</sub> you<sub>t<sub>j</sub></sub> <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>?
  - c. Where<sub>i</sub> are<sub>j</sub> you <sub>t<sub>j</sub></sub> going<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>?

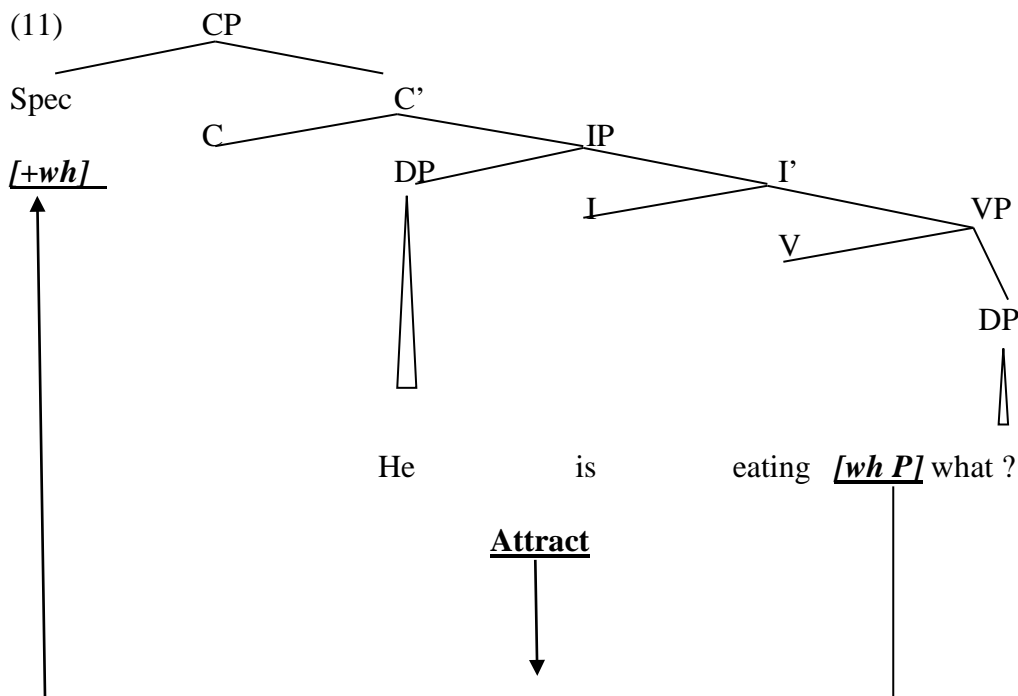
Following this, the CP inexistence and the CP-featureless analysis can rightly be said not to apply to CamE. The only possible accounts we have left are the covert-feature movement analysis and the LF-movement hypothesis.

#### *Covert-feature movement analysis in CamE in-situ constructions*

In the preceding section of this work, we have concluded that CamE, just like other in-situ languages, has Q-features in COMP. But what voids overt

movement like in other languages? Following the works of Hagström (1998) Watanabe (2001) and Cheng (2001) respectively, one can posit the existence of a *wh*-particle attached to the *wh*-element that moves covertly to check the [+*wh*] features in COMP. Chomsky (1995) even argues that covert movement is in fact feature movement, since at LF, there is no reason to pied-pipe the category (Cheng 2003). We won't look into that, since the concern of this article is not to show the link between LF movement and feature movement. If this is so, then attract takes place between the *wh*-particle and the [+*wh*] features in COMP, therefore prohibiting movement of the *wh*-element to Spec-CP. The sentence in (5a), repeated here under (10) will therefore have the tree diagram representation as in (11).

(10) He is eating what?



As the tree diagram above shows, the *wh*-particle attached to the *wh*-element *what* has been attracted by the [+*wh*] features in Spec-CP to check its uninterpretable features. Once this has been done, movement of the *wh*-element itself is no more required, as there is no other matching feature(s) that could attach, or which could trigger attract. But, it is good to mention here that the presence of the *wh*-particle is not haphazard and must be accounted for as others have, so as to make such an analysis plausible. Watanabe's (1992) feature movement in Japanese, for example, has morphological support (see Cheng, 2003); this in the sense that, as Cheng (2003, p. 130) puts it, "Japanese *wh*-words can be considered to be made up of an indefinite and a (non-overt) quantifier". In other words, Japanese *dare* (who), for example, has an invisible *wh*-operator

(*dare-op*) which moves to check the features in COMP. This operator derives from the analysis of (12) below (Cheng, 2003).

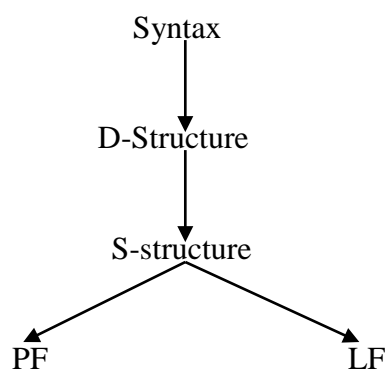
(12) <i>Dare</i>	‘who’	<i>dare-mo</i>	‘everyone’
<i>Nani</i>	‘what’	<i>nani-mo</i>	‘everything’
<i>Doko</i>	‘where’	<i>doko-mo</i>	‘everywhere’
<i>Itsu</i>	‘when’	<i>itsu-mo</i>	‘whenever’

As can be seen in (12) above, wh-elements can be said to be linked with a wh-particle. The Japanese examples in the third column; all carry the particle *mo*. By extension, the wh-elements in the first column as well carry the same particle, with the sole difference that they are not overtly realized. But, a close look at their English or CamE counterparts shows that those particles are absent. This makes us be skeptical about the feature-movement analysis of in-situ CamE. Hagstrom (1998) does the same and shows that the particle *ka* is what covertly moves to check the [+wh] features in COMP. This proves that feature-movement may be plausible in Japanese, but not in CamE, given the fact that these features seem to be absent, as (12) above shows. The feature-movement analysis may, therefore, be said to apply to Japanese, but not to CamE. This strengthens the point of view according to which there are different types of in-situ, with warrant properties. If feature movement does not apply to in-situ CamE given the facts presented above, how can they be treated? The option we have left is the LF movement analysis, which will be examined in the next section of this work.

### ***LF movement analysis of in-situ CamE***

The facts presented so far have made it possible to reject both the CP feature-less analysis of in-situ CamE and the feature-movement analysis. It therefore means that wh-elements are likely to move at LF, just like in many in-situ languages such as Basa’a (Bassong, 2010), Mandarin Chinese (Cheng, 2001), Nata (Gambarage & Keupdjio, 2014) and Medumba (Keupdjio, 2013). To make it plausible, let’s attempt an account of such a point of view. If we claim, following Katz and Postal (1964) and Baker (1970) that interrogative sentences are peculiar in the sense that they all carry a Q-morpheme, then that question morpheme has to be checked. Given that the most plausible way through which such features can be checked is through movement (though Cheng and Rooryck (2000) argue about intonation as a feature checker in French), we can conclude that whether in in-situ or ex-situ constructions, movement takes place. In other words, attract takes place, and uninterpretable features are checked. Given the fact that the movement we refer to here cannot be feature-movement, as shown above, we will assume that it is LF movement. Most of the works that have linked in-situ constructions to movement at LF have accounted for this by presenting the similitude between movement in overt syntax and movement at LF. According to them, just like overt wh-

element, covert or LF movement as well is constrained. The difference is that the constraints that apply to the two are not the same. Bošković (1997), for example, argues that unlike subadjacency constraints overt wh-movement, C constraints covert movement. For more insight on this issue, we refer the reader back to Bošković (1997). This was stated here just to show that there is indeed movement at LF, and that as normally expected, it is constrained. If this is so, then given that the two other analyses were rejected, then, there is LF movement in CamE, which licenses the in-situ nature of the wh-element. We will simply look into what LF movement is all about, as it is obvious that it applies to in-situ CamE. Within the so-called Government and Binding Theory (GBT), two levels of syntactic analysis have been added to the ones that existed (D-structure and S-structure), these include Phonetic Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF). At the SS, the derivation splits and sends a copy for phonetic interpretation (PF) and another one for semantic interpretation (LF). This can be schematized below.



From what precedes, elements are pronounced at PF, but interpreted and understood at LF. So, it is possible for elements not to be pronounced at PF, but interpreted as part of the sentence. It is within this scope that the idea of the wh-element moving at LF was put forth. This may be said to be possible because it is not overtly felt. Rather, it is interpreted at LF as part of the sentence, since it covertly moves to check the [+wh] features in COMP. In this vein, as Chomsky (1995) argues, feature movement and covert movement are the same, since there is no reason to pied-pipe the category at LF. But, as Cheng (2003) puts it, some grammarians have posited that the two are different in many respects. As said above, if in CamE the COMP position carries Q-features, then they must be checked and erased. We can assume that this is done through movement of the wh-element at LF as the last resort, since the CP-featureless analysis and the covert feature movement analysis have proven not to apply to CamE. But, as said earlier in this work, the optional *naah*, which is, at times, inserted in in-situ CamE (see Epoge, 2015) may also serve as a feature checker. The next section of this paper examines the status of in-situ wh-elements in cases of optional final *naah* insertion.

*Naah in in-situ CamE*

Epoge (2015) argues that in addition to the wh-element being in-situ in wh-questions, there is insertion of a final *naah*, which is optional. The sentences in (13) below, which are from Epoge (ibid.), illustrate that.

- (13) a. This document is from where *naah*?  
b. These children are going to eat what *naah*?

From (13) above, one clearly sees that the wh-element has not undergone overt movement, and *naah* has been inserted in the derivation of the sentence. This situation begs the question of how that *naah* can be interpreted from a pure grammatical perspective. According to Epoge (ibid.), the optional final *naah* results from the influence of Cameroon local languages, and portrays the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country. This point of view is plausible, for some works on Bantu languages (Bassong, 2010; Kegne, 2015) have shown that some Bantu languages have intonational question markers/particles that appear at the right periphery of the clause. *Naah* can therefore be compared to an intonational question particle, since it is mostly used in spoken Cameroonian English. On the nature of that particle, we can conclude that it is an intonational question marker, because it provokes tone rising. Interestingly, the question particle *naah* occupies the same position even in constructions where the wh-element has overtly moved to the left periphery of the clause as shown under (14) below, which has also been heard amongst speakers of CamE.

- (14) a. Where is this document from *naah*?  
b. What are these children going to eat *naah*?

It also appears that *naah* can only take a final position, as the ungrammaticality of (15) below shows.

- (15) a- \**naah* where is this document from?  
b- \**naah* what are these children going to eat?

In this section, focus is on the grammatical interpretation and relevance of the final intonational question particle *naah*, with regard to feature of attraction. So far, we have argued that in wh-in-situ CamE, the wh-element is attracted at LF by the [+wh] features in the Complementizer system. But, what happens in cases of optional *naah* insertion? As far as the nature of *naah* is concerned, it has already been established that it is an intonational question particle that results from the influence of Cameroon local languages, which are Bantu languages. In addition to that, we can say that it expresses doubt on a pre-stated utterance. In other words, *naah* is not inserted haphazardly, and has a great



importance in the semantic interpretation of the sentence. A sentence such as (16a) below is, therefore, semantically different from (16b).

- (16) a- You have eaten what?  
 b- You have eaten what *naah*?

(16a) is clearly understood as a wh-question. In addition to being understood as a wh-question, (16b), on the contrary, carries an idea of insistence or supplication. One can even say that, in the context of the conversation, it is not the first time it is uttered, and that the person to whom that statement is intended didn't give an answer the first time the question was asked. So, that sentence is uttered again with *naah* being inserted to signal supplication and/or insistence. It can thus be concluded that *naah*-insertion is associated with the idea of insistence or supplication, depending on the context of the conversation and the speakers' intentions. It is interesting to also note that *naah* appears only in interrogative sentences, and not in declaratives. Following this, it has the same role as the Q-features in COMP, as it marks the interrogative nature of the sentence. The problem with such an analysis is that it may appear both in in-situ and ex-situ constructions. This is so because it may also be inserted in sentences where there is overt wh-element attraction by the Q-features in COMP. What then happens to the Q-features in the COMP position after *naah*-insertion? Does it mean that interrogative sentences could be marked by both the Q-features in the complementizer system and the overt intonational question particle *naah*? The answer to the preceding question is "yes". It thus means that in cases of ex-situ, attract takes place, and the wh-element is overtly moved to Spec-CP. In cases of in-situ, attract takes place as well, and the wh-element is moved at LF. If this is so, then *naah* is not that important in the derivation of the sentence. Its importance is limited to signalling insistence and supplication, which are all related to semantics. We can therefore conclude that even in cases of *naah*-insertion, feature attraction takes place, and the wh-element is moved at LF to check the question features in the COMP system.

One could also assume *naah* to be a feature checker in in-situ CamE, following Cheng and Rooryck's (2000) paper on in-situ in French. If *naah* is considered an intonational question particle, then it is likely to function exactly as intonation in French (see Cheng & Rooryck, 2000). If this is so, then it has the peculiarity of checking the Q-features in the complementizer system, and therefore allowing the wh-element to stay in-situ. The problem with such an analysis is that it does not account for the fact that *naah* can also be inserted in ex-situ constructions as the examples in (14) above show. A close look at (14) shows that movement in overt syntax has taken place, even with the insertion of the final *naah*. This makes the analysis of *naah* as feature checker not to be plausible. *Naah* cannot, therefore, be a feature checker, since it does not void movement of the wh-elements in (14a) and (14b). In a nutshell, we can conclude that movement at LF is the most plausible way on analyzing wh-

in-situ in CamE. This is so because even with *naah*-insertion LF movement takes place in case of in-situ constructions, as shown in this section.

### **Conclusion and pedagogic implications**

In this paper, we looked into in-situ CamE following Chomsky's (1998) Attract. After presenting evidence against the CP-featureless analysis and the feature-movement analysis of in-situ CamE, we argued that the wh-element moves at LF to check the Q-features in the complementizer system. As far as optional final *naah*-insertion is concerned, we posited, in line with Epoge (2015), that *naah* results from the influence of Cameroon local languages and thus is an intonational question particle, which is associated with the ideas of insistence and supplication. This clearly demonstrates that the English language in postcolonial multilingual Cameroon has undergone significant indigenisation and, consequently, nativisation. Though linguists have strongly worked on describing its features, Standard BrE syntactic rules continue to be the preferred teaching model within the Cameroonian teaching industry. The findings of this paper clearly advocate the standardization and promotion of CamE in Cameroonian classroom, given that Cameroonians intuitively make use of in-situ constructions. This view has already been made by Ngefac (2011) in the domain of phonology. In such a context, the attainment of teaching objectives is difficult and quasi impossible, as students' outcome reflects CamE syntactic features. We can, therefore, share Ngefac's (2011, p.43) view according to which "The educated aspects of CamE can be conveniently promoted on the Cameroonian landscape".

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sala (2003), Ndzomo (2013) and Fongang (2015) relate the in-situ nature of the wh-element to the influence of local languages and French. Sala (2003) for example, uses data from Lamnso, a Bantu language spoken in North West Cameroon, to show that just like in that language, the wh-element is likely to remain in situ in CamE. Fongang (2015) relates it to the influence of French, where the wh-element can be in-situ or ex-situ. (See Bošković, 1997 and Cheng and Rooryck, 2000 for in-situ in French).

<sup>2</sup> In the study of NNEs, the desire to simplify complex rules have also accounted for the departure from BrE norms. Ekembe (2011), for example, relates the departure from BrE norms in CamE syntax to the notion of "Markedness" (complexity). According to him, new syntactic rules emanate in CamE because they are complex to follow. Given the fact that movement transformations must follow syntactic constraints, avoiding overt movement makes it possible not to care about those. This idea is re-echoed in works such as Sala (2003), Ndzomo (2013) and Fongang (2015).

<sup>3</sup> Camfranglais is a slang or colloquial language used by the youth in Cameroon. Just like the label entails, it is a mixture of many languages, dominated by English and French

<sup>4</sup> With Reference to Bošković (1997) and Cheng and Rooryck (2000) who argue about the ex-situ and the in-situ nature of the wh-element in French, Fongang (2015) assumes that, given the influence of French on CamE, the in-situ strategy may find its origin there.

<sup>5</sup> In these works, the data come from literary works of arts written by Cameroonian authors. In Sala (2003), for example, the data is from Linus Asong's *No Way to Die*. Fongang (2015) draws his data from John Nkemngong's (2004) *Across the Mongolo*.

<sup>6</sup> Sala (2014) argues that echo-questions are formed in CamE by applying a rule that deletes the super-ordinate clause as shown in (2) below, which derives from the declarative sentence in (1).

(1) I met Peter the other day on my way back to Bamenda.

(2) That what?

From Sala (2003) and Fongang (2015) perspective, the echo-question in (2) above derives from the application of the rule in (3) below to the possible BrE echo-question in (4).

(3) Superordinate-clause deletion: Delete the super-ordinate-clause to have an echo-question. (Sala 2014. p. 31)

(4) (You say) that what?

The bracketed element in (4) is what Sala (ibid.) refers to as super-ordinate clause.

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### **Note on Contributor**

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