

THE USE OF *DO*-SUPPORT IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN

Comparative Syntax 2023



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

MINDS
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WHY DID I CHOOSE TO DO THIS?



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OPTIMALITY THEORY

- Analytic framework that ranks different constraints in a hierarchical order to determine grammaticality
- Four aspects: there are universal constraints in every language, constraints are able to be violated, they are ranked, and that only the version of a given input is grammatical/optimal, if it does not violate the highest-ranking constraint in the order but only those below
- Relevant for *do*-support: OP-SPEC > NO-LEX-MVT > CASE > OB-HD > SUBJ > FULL-INT > STAY (Grimshaw 1997)

The constraints that play a central role in the proposal are these:¹

Constraints related to specifiers

OPERATOR IN SPECIFIER (OP-SPEC)

Syntactic operators must be in specifier position.

CASE MARKING (CASE)

DPs must be Case-marked.

SUBJECT (SUBJ)

Clauses have subjects.

Constraints related to heads

OBLIGATORY HEADS (OB-HD)

A projection has a head.

HEAD LEFT (HD-LFT)

The head is leftmost in its projections.

HEAD RIGHT (HD-RT)

The head is rightmost in its projections.

NO LEXICAL HEAD MOVEMENT (NO-LEX-MVT)

A lexical head cannot move.

Government constraints

TRACE IS GOVERNED (T-GOV)

A trace is governed.

TRACE IS LEXICALLY GOVERNED (T-LEX-GOV)

A trace is lexically governed.

Others

PURITY OF EXTENDED PROJECTION (PURE-EP)

No adjunction takes place to the highest node in a subordinate extended projection; and no movement takes place into the highest head of a subordinate extended projection. (Note that this constraint was called *Projection Principle* in Grimshaw 1993.)

ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT (STAY)

Trace is not allowed.

FULL INTERPRETATION (FULL-INT)

Lexical conceptual structure is parsed.

CONDITIONAL (COND)

A dependent head c-commands the extended projection containing it.

LOCAL θ -MARKING (θ -MARK)

Lexical heads θ -mark within their lexical projection.

¹ In Grimshaw 1993 and 1994 I assumed an additional constraint, MINIMAL PROJECTION, which required that a functional projection make a contribution to the functional representation of the extended projection that it is part of, thus ruling out entirely empty projections. In the current system, there is no need to stipulate such a constraint: the main effects follow from OB-HD and STAY, as will be shown in section 2.



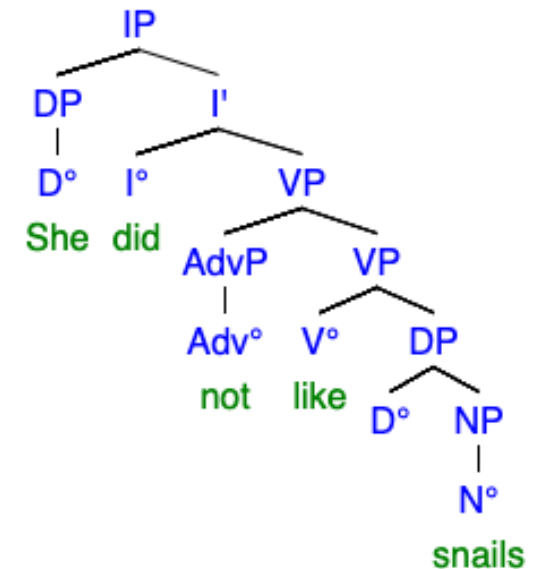
WHAT DO THE CONSTRAINTS MEAN?

- OP-SPEC: There needs to be an operator in the specifier position
- NO-LEX-MVT: Lexical heads cannot move
- CASE: There needs to be a case assigner
- OB-HD: A projection needs a head
- SUBJ: Every phrase needs a subject
- FULL-INT: A word must contribute to the structure of the input
- STAY: Trace is not allowed



THE USE OF *DO*-SUPPORT IN ENGLISH IN GENERAL

- Last resort option
 - Only residual V2 and no proper V°-to-I° movement
- Used in negation, *wh*-questions and for emphasis
- Only possible when there is no other verb available to fill I°



OPTIMALITY THEORY AND *DO*-SUPPORT IN ENGLISH *WH*-QUESTIONS

- In *wh*-questions, *do* has to be inserted in order to satisfy OB-HD, despite it violating FULL-INT since *do* is semantically empty.
- Inversion is not an option since that would violate the higher-ranking constraint NO-LEX-MVT

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| a) What did she say? | FULL-INT violated |
| b) *What she say? | OB-HD violated |
| c) *What said she? | NO-LEX-MVT violated |



OPTIMALITY THEORY AND *DO*-SUPPORT IN ENGLISH NEGATION

- Three more restraints are relevant in negation: NO-LEX-MVT, CASE and SUBJ
- *Do* has to be inserted in negations since a lexical verb cannot be moved in front of *not* without violating NO-LEX-MVT
- If there is simply no auxiliary verb, CASE is violated
- *Not* cannot be moved without violating SUBJ

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| a) He did not say that. | FULL-INT violated |
| b) *He said not that. | NO-LEX-MVT violated |
| c) *He not said that. | CASE violated |
| d) *Not he said that. | SUBJ violated |



THE USE OF *DO*-SUPPORT IN STANDARD GERMAN

- German is a V2 language, thus no need for *do*-support
- In Standard German, *do*-support (*tun* periphrase) is, however, allowed (and necessary!) in one context: During verb topicalisation if no other auxiliary is available.

C°

- a) Sie singt nicht.
- b) *Singen sie nicht.
- c) Singen kann sie nicht.
- d) Singen tut sie nicht.

- Stigmatisation of *tun* periphrasis in German



COLLOQUIAL & NON-STANDARD GERMAN

- In colloquial German, *tun* can be inserted as an auxiliary verb in standard main clauses though it is not required to do so. (“Sie tut das machen.”)

Many non-standard versions of German use *tun* periphrasis in certain contexts:

- Bavarian: used in habitual expressions, progressive forms, to express generic situations, and imperatives to weaken them (Schwarz 2004)
- Alemannic: used in present and past conjunctive, imperatives, and emphasis (Erb 2001)
- Overall, *tun* periphrasis has much fewer restrictions in non-standard versions of German than in English and can be used in more flexible contexts.



TUN-PERIPHRASE AND OPTIMALITY THEORY

- In German, both OB-HD and FULL-INT outrank NO-LEX-MVT since it is a V2 language and the movement of inflected verbs into C° otherwise would not be possible.
- Bader and Schmid (2006) suggest a new constraint: TOPIC (“Topics are sentence initial”), ranked above OB-HD, which makes the use of *tun* possible when the main verb is topicalised
- In colloquial German, FULL-INT and NO-LEX-MVT are set as equals which allows for *tun* to be inserted if so desired, but makes it not mandatory
- Similar case in non-standard versions of German



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