

Who did want to understand it?:
A semantic, pragmatic and intonational analysis of a neglected construction
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1 Introduction

The construction referred to and exemplified in the title of the present paper is *DO*-support in subject interrogatives.¹ More precisely, the present paper focuses on *DO*-support in non-embedded, positive subject interrogatives in present-day standard English. As will be shown in section 2, the discussion of this construction in the literature is somewhat inconclusive and partly misleading (to say the least). Especially in the EFL literature it is often pronounced ungrammatical, contrary to fact. Section 3 proposes a semantic-pragmatic account of the difference between subject interrogatives that are *DO*-supported and those that are not for a typical class of cases. In section 4, this account will be related to the intonational observation that the *DO*-form has to carry the main sentence accent in *DO*-supported subject interrogatives. This in turn leads to a generalisation concerning their semantic-pragmatic nature which reveals that the class of cases discussed in section 3 is an important sub-class alongside another sub-class.

2 Subject interrogative clauses and their treatment in the literature

It is a basic fact of present-day standard English syntax that in those cases where no finite auxiliary other than *DO* is involved positive subject interrogative clauses are grammatical without *DO*-support, in contrast to *wh*-interrogative clauses that are not subject interrogatives.²

- (1) a. Who left?
b. What happened?
c. Whose car broke down?
d. The singer of which famous band married last week?
- (2) a. Who(m) **did** he see? (cf. *Who(m) he saw?)
b. Which car **did** she buy? (cf. *Which car she bought?)
c. The singer of which famous band **did** he marry? (cf. *The singer of which famous band he married?)

This syntactic state-of-affairs is commented on in well-known descriptive grammars in the following way:

If the interrogative element is subject, the order is the same as in the declarative [...], but if it is non-subject, then the interrogative element is usually placed in front position, triggering subject-auxiliary inversion. (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 238)

[*Do* is used] in all such questions as are not introduced by an interrogative word as (part of) the subject. (Jespersen 1940/1954: 508)

Negative words other than *not* do not require *DO*-support [...] Nor is there any *DO*-support in questions without inversion, *ie* questions with the normal S V O/C/A order [...]: *He said that? Who came first?*. (Quirk et al. 1985: 134, note c)³

¹ I am grateful to Colin Fosskett and Alex Thiel for valuable suggestions and proof-reading. Thanks also to the audience of my talk given at the University of Würzburg on 17 Oct 2008 for discussion, especially of example (22), and to an anonymous reviewer. All remaining errors are mine.

² The qualifier *positive* will henceforth be left out in references to the construction considered here.

The finite forms of *to do* are used in combination with a plain infinitive in questions [...] *To do*, in the functions just described, is not used: a. in questions beginning with the subject (unless they are also made negative by *not* [...]). (Zandvoort 1957/1972: 80)

The remarks by Huddleston & Pullum and Jespersen leave open the question whether *DO*-support in subject interrogatives is *possible*; and Quirk et al.'s and Zandvoort's remarks can be interpreted to mean that it is *not* possible. This picture does not change significantly if one takes further important descriptive grammars into account.⁴ Specifically, none of these grammars states that *DO*-support in subject interrogatives is possible and no relevant examples are presented or discussed. Nor does the picture change if one looks at the more comprehensive grammars of English written in a functionalist framework. For example, Halliday's (1985/1994: 85f.) analysis of sentences like *Who killed Cock Robin?* and *Where have all the flowers gone?* is as shown in the diagrams in (3) and (4). There is no discussion at all of whether the structural element *Finite* can be realised by an auxiliary, including *DO*, in the first sentence.

(3) (From Halliday 1985/1994: 85)

who	killed		Cock Robin
Subject/WH-	'(past) Finite	kill' Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

(4) (From ib.: 86)

where	have	all the flowers	gone
Adjunct / WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator
Residue	Mood		

Givón (1993: 259) writes "subject-AUX inversion does not apply to subject-WH-questions", from which we can also draw no conclusions about the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of *DO*-support in subject interrogatives.

More pedagogically-oriented grammatical descriptions and prescriptions are often rather categorical in the denial of the grammaticality of *DO*-support in these cases. Consider the following quotations from six EFL textbooks and pedagogical grammars, four of which are aimed specifically at learners of English with German as their first language.

Vorsicht bei Fragen nach dem Subjekt ('Wer oder was tut etwas bzw. hat etwas getan?'): Sie werden ohne *do/does/did* gebildet! (*English G 2000 B4* 1999: 113)

³ From the discussion of interrogatives in the main text of Quirk et al. (1985) we can draw no conclusion about *DO*-support in subject interrogatives: "[N]ormal statement order of elements is altered in *wh*-questions not only by the initial placing of the *wh*-element, but by the inversion of subject and operator in all cases except when the *wh*-element is subject, where the rule that the *wh*-element takes initial position applies, overriding the rule of inversion." (Ib.: 818; similarly Quirk et al. 1972: 395)

⁴ Bache & Davidsen-Nielsen (1997: 104), Biber et al. (1999: 899), Curme (1931: 25), Huddleston (1984: 365ff.), Kruisinga (1911/1932: 319ff.), Poutsma (1904/1928-9: 411), Snell-Hornby (1989: 258), Visser (1969: 1553).

Wenn das *wh*-Wort das Subjekt des Fragesatzes ist [...] steht dieses *wh*-Wort am Anfang gefolgt vom Verb oder der Verbgruppe. Die Wortstellung ist dieselbe wie in einem normalen Aussagesatz: keine Umstellung von Hilfsverben, keine Form von *do* zum Zweck der Frage. (Götz 1997: 142)

Wenn *who* oder *what* Subjekt des Fragesatzes sind, wird das Hilfsverb *do* nicht verwendet. (Hellyer-Jones & Horner & Parr 2004: 144)

Eine Frage wird nicht mit 'do' umschrieben, wenn das Fragewort nach dem Subjekt des Aussagesatzes fragt. (Henrichs-Kleinen 2004: 108)

If we use *what*, *which*, *who* or *whose* as the subject, we don't use *do*: [...] **What** *happened* to your car? (*not* What did happen ...?) [...]. (Hewings 1999: 66)

We **do not** use *do* when the **subject** is a question word like *who* or *what*. **Who** *opened* the window? (NOT ~~Who did open~~ ...?) [...]. (Swan & Walter 1997: 211)

However, subject interrogatives with *DO*-support do appear. The examples in (5) below are from the British National Corpus (BNC).⁵ Those in (6) are from other sources. Examples of this kind are completely acceptable and natural for speakers of standard English; they are not exclusively characteristic of certain non-standard varieties.

- (5) a. If your blood cholesterol concentration is not influenced so much by the amount of cholesterol in your diet **what does cause it to rise to unacceptable levels?** (AR7 1395)
- b. Michelet has strong emotions, and smears what he feels on paper without caring in the least how he does it, and without giving the slightest thought to technique or conventional forms – just shaping it into any form that can be understood by those who want to understand it. There was the rub. **Who did want to understand it?** (CBN 1897)
- c. 'Let's cut the cackle. I'm on my own. When I say that I mean I'm operating without back-up. Even the Director has no idea I'm here.'
'Who does know then?' (CN3 2997)
- d. 'But,' Ranulf interrupted, 'if the Lady Eleanor was not murdered by any of the good sisters...if she was not murdered by Gaveston, if no one stole across the priory walls, **what did happen?**' (H9C 2694)
- e. You might wonder why UNFPA should expend quite so much effort in [*sic*] arguing against such a crackpot idea. **Who does believe such things anyway?** Well, some rather important people: [...] (HH3 3691)
- (6) a. 'Drugs?' Ambrogiani asked.
'Could be. Or it could be something else.'
'What?'
'I don't know. Drugs don't feel right, somehow.'
'What does feel right?' (Leon 1993/1995: 167)
- b. '[...] You give me no assistance.' Then, surprising both Hamidullah and himself, he had an explosion of nerves. **'But who does give me assistance?'** No one is my friend. [...]' (Forster 1924/1979: 239)
- c. '[...] You go there to talk to him, and something happens ... you lose it. Next thing he's sparked out and you're in trouble.'

⁵ The BNC is a computerised corpus of contemporary written and spoken British English of roughly 100 million words (ca. 90 % written, 10 % spoken material). For more information on the BNC see the website at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>. The codes given in brackets after the BNC examples here and later on in the paper refer to the BNC document and the number of the sentence containing the *DO*-supported subject interrogative.

'Except it didn't happen like that.'
'So what did happen?' (Rankin 2007/2008: 341)

Some words on the search in the BNC and its results in terms of frequencies are in order: The procedure consisted of the following two steps: 1. automatically searching for strings that contain the sequence *who* or *what* followed by a form of *DO* followed by a verb tagged as base form or infinitive; 2. 'manually' sifting the output of step 1 for relevant cases. This procedure fails to identify cases where the interrogative subject is a phrase larger than *who* or *what*, of course. In addition to the five examples quoted in (5) and the four examples to be quoted in (20) and (22), the search identified 16 relevant cases involving the expression *What did happen?* – as in (5d), (6c) and (20c) – plus the nine examples given in the appendix. In sum, the BNC yields 34 relevant cases with the interrogative subject being *who* or *what*, while no attempt was made of identifying cases where the interrogative subject is a larger expression (such as *whose* + nominal phrase, *which* + nominal phrase, etc.).⁶

In most of the textbooks of English syntax written in a generative framework in the last two decades the authors concentrate on approaches to explanations why *DO*-support is not necessary in subject interrogatives. While Culicover (1997), Haegeman & Guéron (1999), McCawley (1988), and Radford (1988, 1997) say nothing about the possibility of *DO*-support here, Baker (1989: 395) and, more recently, Adger (2003: 359) and Radford (2004: 207) at least mention it, pointing out that it is possible if the *DO*-form is stressed. Adger's (2003: 359) comment on the examples in (7)

- (7) a. Who drank the poison? / Which goddess helped us?
 b. Who did drink the poison? / Which goddess did help us?

goes as follows: "These sentences [i.e. those in (7b)] are grammatical, but only on a special emphatic interpretation. What is worrying is that there appears to be no way to predict the grammaticality of the examples without *do*-support (examples [(7a)]), or the ungrammaticality of [examples (7b)] without a special interpretation." The point that subject interrogative sentences with *DO*-support are acceptable if the *DO*-form is accented has actually been made several times by grammarians working in the generative framework; in addition to those already mentioned, for example by Koster (1987: 210), Rizzi (1996: 67; see also 1997: 316f.) and Pesetsky & Torrego (2001: 404, n. 1). Interestingly, and paradoxically, the intonational condition on their acceptability has sometimes been considered irrelevant. Rizzi, for instance, claims that an utterance such as *Who does love Mary?* is "irrelevantly [...] possible with emphatic *do*" (1996: 67; see also 1997: 316f.); and he actually presents an analysis which crucially depends on the assumption of the ungrammaticality of *DO*-support in these cases. By contrast, the position underlying the present paper is this: *DO*-support in subject interrogatives is syntactically well-formed; the fact that the *DO*-form has to be accented has to be explained in terms of a theory of intonation. However, it is not the aim of the present paper to provide a syntactic analysis. Rather, a semantic and pragmatic analysis of *DO*-supported subject interrogatives is proposed, followed by a section on the intonational necessity of accenting the *DO*-form in such cases, which in turn sheds new light on the earlier discussion of semantic-pragmatic aspects.⁷

⁶ In general, a rather cautious policy in identifying relevant cases was applied, by disregarding items that raise doubts about their syntactic structure or about the way in which they relate to surrounding syntactic structure.

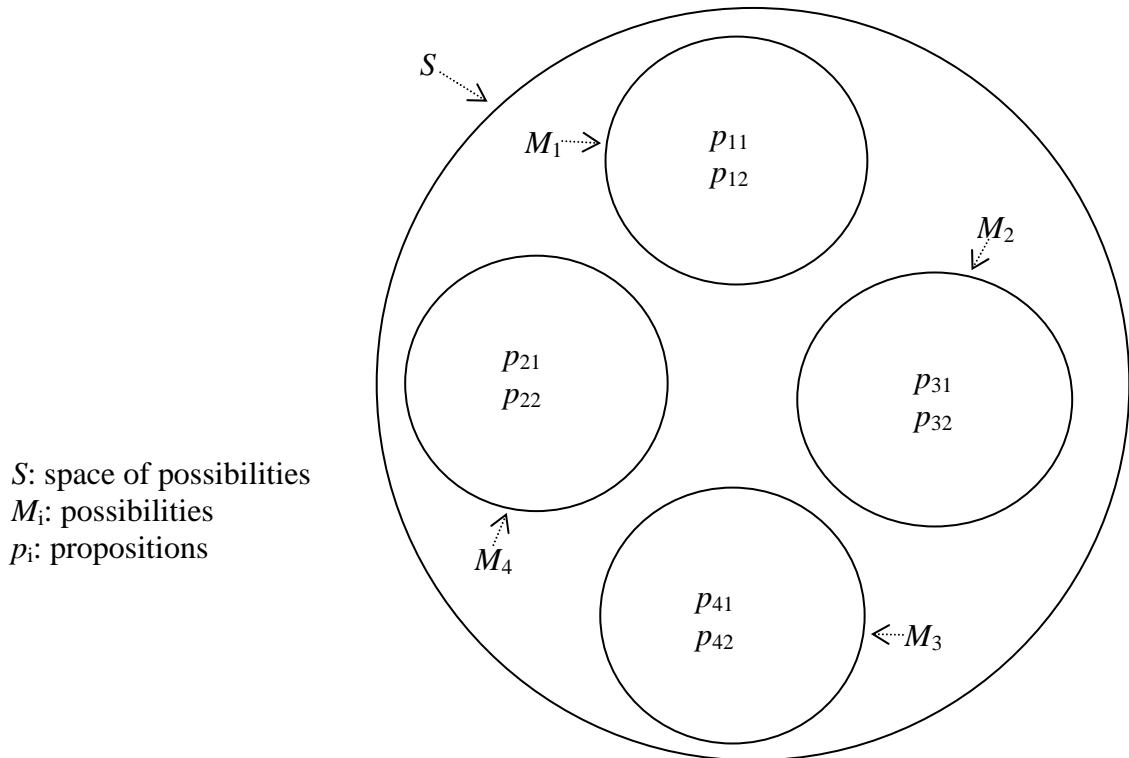
⁷ On non-standard uses of unaccented periphrastic *DO* in declaratives see the paper by Wagner (2007) and the literature mentioned there. It is a plausible assumption that unaccented *DO*-support in subject interrogatives is quite common in non-standard varieties that have unaccented periphrastic *DO* in declaratives. But this point has not been investigated for the purposes of the present paper.

3 A semantic-pragmatic approach to subject interrogatives with *DO*-support

Is there a semantic or pragmatic difference between corresponding subject interrogatives with and without *DO*-support? And if yes, what may it be? The answer to these questions to be presently developed is based on and framed in the semantic analysis of interrogatives suggested by Higginbotham (1993, 1996).

According to Higginbotham (1996), the denotation of an interrogative is what he calls a "space of possibilities". This space of possibilities is a set whose elements, the possibilities, are sets of propositions, as illustrated in (8). These propositions p_i can be thought of as those that underlie potential answers to the question and their negations.

(8)



A space of possibilities is constructed in a certain way. According to Higginbotham (1996: 371), "its elements are mutually exclusive (so that no two elements of the space can both be true), and (in the normal case) jointly exhaustive (so that one element must be true)." This makes it what is technically known as a partition.

For example, assume a discourse world in which there are only two people, Mrs. Jones and Mr. Smith, who are potential candidates for having seen Peter. Then the denotation of the interrogative *Who saw Peter?* is the space given in (9b). As just pointed out, the sets M_1 to M_4 contain propositions that underlie potential answers and their negations.

- (9) a. Who saw Peter?
 b. $S = \{M_1, M_2, M_3, M_4\}$ with
 $M_1 = \{\text{'Mrs. Jones saw Peter'}, \text{'Mr. Smith saw Peter'}\}$
 $M_2 = \{\text{'Mrs. Jones saw Peter'}, \text{'Mr. Smith did not see Peter'}\}$
 $M_3 = \{\text{'Mrs. Jones did not see Peter'}, \text{'Mr. Smith saw Peter'}\}$
 $M_4 = \{\text{'Mrs. Jones did not see Peter'}, \text{'Mr. Smith did not see Peter'}\}$

The communicative function of uttering an interrogative is described by Higginbotham (1996: 371) in the following way: "A person who asks a question wanting to know an answer to it wishes relief from ignorance as to which element of the space of possibilities set up by the question actually obtains." A response to such a question is relevant, according to Higginbotham (1996:

374), if it is "incompatible with some (but not all) possibilities." Such an incompatibility of a reply with at least one possibility eliminates elements from the space. A complete answer is one which reduces the space to a single element; a relevant but partial answer reduces the space as well, but leaves more than one element in it. This is exemplified in (10).

- (10) a. Who saw him?
 b. Mrs. Jones did, but not Mr. Smith. (complete answer; eliminates M_1, M_3, M_4)
 c. Mrs. Jones did. (partial answer; eliminates M_3, M_4)
 d. The woman did not, at any rate. (partial answer; eliminates M_1, M_2)

It may be noted that a response like '*I don't know.*' to a question is certainly also relevant in the technical sense of relevance theory (e.g. Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995, Wilson & Sperber 2004) but is not incompatible with any of the possibilities in the space and thus does not reduce it. This point is not addressed by Higginbotham (1993, 1996), and suggests that the theory needs to be supplemented to accommodate this observation.

On the semantic foundation just laid, is there a semantic and/or pragmatic difference between a subject interrogative without *DO*-support like *Who saw him?* and the corresponding one with *DO*-support like *Who DID see him?* The claim to be defended in this section for the class of cases represented by (5) and (6) above is that there is a difference which is not semantic but pragmatic. The two variants of a subject interrogative are semantically identical in that they denote the same space of possibilities. But there is a pragmatic difference, which concerns the pragmatic status of at least one of the negative propositions from the possibilities M_i . In formulating this pragmatic difference, terminology borrowed from relevance theory (e.g. Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995, Wilson & Sperber 2004) will be used.

The communicator who uses a *DO*-supported subject interrogative implicates (in the technical sense of (post-)Gricean pragmatic theory) that the addressee is to process the interpretation of this utterance in a context of shared assumptions which contains at least one of the negative propositions from the possibilities. In other words: The communicator signals that she considers at least one of the negative propositions from the possibilities to be mutually manifest to her and the addressee. This is typically the case if such a negative proposition has been active in the preceding discourse, or is inferentially accessible. It may very well be, however, that actually no such negative proposition has been active nor is accessible. In this case, the communicator using a *DO*-supported interrogative behaves *as if* such a negative proposition was active or accessible. She thereby triggers a pragmatic inference on the part of the addressee which leads to the construction of such a negative proposition and to its addition to the set of assumptions that the addressee assumes that the communicator assumes to be shared. The effect in these two cases is the same: The communicator implicates that at least one negative proposition of the appropriate kind is considered to be part of the set of assumptions shared; in other words, she implicates that at least one such negative proposition is mutually manifest. Depending on the context, there may be interpretive leeway as far as the exact form of the negative proposition(s) is concerned, as is generally the case with implicatures.

In (11) this analysis is exemplified by some of the attested examples from (5) and (6) above. (For more context, the reader is referred back to (5) and (6).)

- (11) a. Who did want to understand it? (cf. (5b))
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'Many people did not want to understand it'
 b. Who does know then? (cf. (5c))
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'The director does not know'
 c. Who does believe such things anyway? (cf. (5e))
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'Many people do not believe such things'
 d. What does feel right? (from (6a))
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'Drugs do not feel right'

Note especially the rhetorically interesting use of the interrogative in (11c) taken from (5e) above. Here the communicator implicates a negative proposition of the kind 'Many people do not believe such things', but goes on to say '*Well, some rather important people*'. This is somewhat surprising and thus has the effect of raising the addressee's attention since what the addressee expects after having pragmatically inferred the implicated proposition is something like argumentative support for it. What he is confronted with, though, is an utterance that not only fails to supply support for it, but actually makes some kind of opposing claim.

The following quotation from Wilder (1997: 340f.), in which the author refers to the contrast between (12a) and (12b), points to an account that is similar, but not identical, to the analysis of *DO*-support in subject interrogatives just presented.

- (12) a. Who bought the book?
b. Who **DID** buy the book?

A WH-question does not assert a proposition – rather, its meaning can be thought of in terms of a set of alternative propositions, its 'answer set' (the set of potentially true answers to that question). Thus, [(12a)] defines a set such as [(13)], and asks the hearer to identify the member(s) of the set that are true. Focusing AUX in a WH-question generates a second set (the 'focus set'), which contains the negations of the propositions from the answer set [(14)].

[(13)]{John bought the book; Mary bought the book; Bill bought the book; ...}

[(14)]{John didn't buy the book; Mary didn't buy the book; Bill didn't buy the book; ...}

The preceding context must then contain the negation of one or more of these propositions. [(12b)] is felicitous, e.g., if [(15)] has just been uttered.

[(15)]John didn't buy the book. (...nor did Mary, nor did Bill...)

One of the differences between Wilder's account and the one proposed in the present paper lies in the analysis of interrogatives in general. He makes use of earlier approaches to the analysis of interrogatives in which the denotation of *wh*-interrogatives is identified with the set of propositions that are potential answers. Higginbotham's theory, which has been employed here, is a development of these earlier analyses. And it is an improvement in that it can explain the adequacy of answers that are not complete. Another difference is that Wilder does not account for those cases in which a negative proposition from the possibility sets has in fact not been activated in the preceding discourse but is implicated by the communicator. Despite these differences, Wilder's analysis clearly supports the core idea of the analysis developed above. One more important difference will emerge in section 4 below. There it will be argued that the semantic-pragmatic account presented in this section covers only a sub-class, albeit a central one, of the semantic-pragmatic conditions for using *DO*-support in subject interrogatives.

It should be mentioned at this point that the pragmatic difference associated with the presence or absence of *DO*-support in these cases is not specific to subject interrogatives. In those interrogatives where auxiliary-support is syntactically present anyway, including *DO*-support, this difference is expressed by having or not having the main sentence accent on the auxiliary, as indicated in (16).

- (16) a. Who(m) **DID** she see? (*as opposed to* Who(m) did she SEE?)
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'She did not see x'
b. Who(m) **WILL** you meet? (*as opposed to* Who(m) will you MEET?)
Implicates the mutual manifestness of: 'You will not meet x'

The analogy to declaratives will be drawn at the end of the following section.

4 On the intonation of subject interrogatives with *DO*-support

It was pointed out above that the necessity of having to put the main sentence accent on the *DO*-form in the relevant cases has to be explained within a theory of intonation. This section presents a sketch of what an approach to such an explanation may look like.

There is a relation in English between the location of the main sentence accent and the information status of the referents or denotations of constituents that can be succinctly described as in (17).⁸

- (17) Constituents whose referents or denotations are considered by the communicator to be active or accessible do *not* contain the main sentence accent, unless such a placement is necessary for focus structural reasons.

A referent or denotation is active for example if it has just been mentioned in the preceding discourse or is part of the immediate communicative situation; it is accessible if its identity can be recovered from world knowledge or can be established by going through pragmatic inferential processes that involve world knowledge, the communicative situation, or the preceding discourse. The *unless*-clause in (17) is to account for cases like those in (18), where the words in small capitals receive the main sentence accent despite the fact that the corresponding referents are accessible or active.

- (18) a. Q: What happened?
 A: John has won the Nobel PRIZE. (referent of *the Nobel Prize* is accessible from world knowledge)
 b. Q: Who is to blame?
 A: YOU are (to blame). (referent of *you* is active from the communicative situation)

These main sentence accents on accessible or active constituents are necessary to signal the focus expression of the utterance – the whole sentence *John has won the Nobel Prize* in (18a), the phrase *you* in (18b) (cf. note 8).

As proposed in section 3, the point of uttering a *DO*-supported subject interrogative is this: The communicator implicates that at least one of the negative propositions from the possibility sets is mutually manifest to communicator and addressee.

- (19) Who did want to understand it?
 Implicates the mutual manifestness of: '{x / many people} did not want to understand it'

Since the referents or denotations that occur in these negative propositions (the referents or denotations of *want*, *understand*, *it* in (19), for instance) are the same as those that occur in the interrogative, they are also mutually manifest, that is, active or accessible. Consequently, in order to conform to the pattern described in (17), it is not possible to put the main sentence accent within the

⁸ For more details on this relation, see e.g. Lambrecht 1994 and Breul 2004: ch. 6. Wells's (2006: 109) formulation corresponding to (17) without the *unless*-clause and in terms of 'old and new information' is this:

In English, the location of the nucleus is strongly affected by whether the words in the utterance contain **old** or **new** information. The general rule is that we accent new information, but not old information. That is, we **deaccent** (= remove potential accents from) old information.

A 'main sentence accent' corresponds to 'nucleus' in cases where the sentence comprises exactly one intonation phrase. In cases where the sentence comprises more than one intonation phrase, the main sentence accent is the nucleus which signals the focus expression of the sentence.

phrases that have active or accessible referents or denotations. Thus, one possibility is to put it on the *DO*-form. And actually, this is the only possibility, since for other, independent, reasons it is not possible to place the main sentence accent in the *wh*-phrase in these cases, nor on any function words, such as *to* in (19), which would be the only alternatives.

There are some examples of *DO*-support in subject interrogatives in the set extracted from the BNC which do not seem to implicate negative propositions from the possibility sets, but whose explanation is nevertheless straightforward after what has just been said with respect to intonation. These are examples like those in (20).

- (20) a. [...] I thought I'd go and see who attended.'
'And **who did attend?**' (HTX 1981)
- b. 'But you want to know what went on between us between Theo and me.'
'Yes. Yes, I do, Mrs Williams.'
'Sheila. My name's Sheila. What's yours?'
'Morse. They just call me Morse.'
'All bloody 'give' on my part, this, isn't it?'
'**What did pass between you and Dr Kemp, Mrs – er, Sheila?**' (HWM 421)
- c. Mm and what would happen if it came to the end of the quarter and you had so much money accumulated to pay on your Co book, for stuff that you'd got over the quarter, and you just couldn't pay it? What would've happened? Or **what did happen?** (G63 374)
- d. 'I'm sorry about what happened the other day.' [5 lines of report by narrator]
'**What did happen?**' (Torday 2008: 198)

These are cases where the *DO*-supported interrogative is used in a kind of modified repetition of a preceding utterance that involves a corresponding interrogative without *DO*-support. In (20) these preceding interrogatives are underlined. The referents and denotations involved in the interrogative with *DO*-support are of course active after the corresponding earlier interrogative has been uttered. Consequently, in accordance with the intonational explanation just given, the repetition has to use *DO*-support in order to be intonationally appropriate. More specifically, since in a corresponding interrogative without *DO* the main sentence accent would have to be placed on a constituent with an active or accessible referent or denotation, in contravention of (17), *DO*-support is used in order to be able to place the main sentence on this item, thereby circumventing a contravention of (17).

This explanation is supported by well-known considerations of the function of "[f]ocus on the operator", as the title of the relevant section in Quirk et al. (1985: 1371) goes. The authors write: "[W]hen the finite verb phrase is in the simple present or past tense, and so would not otherwise have an auxiliary verb to function as operator, the 'dummy' operator *DO* is introduced to bear the nuclear stress." Although Quirk et al. are not discussing *DO*-supported subject interrogatives here, but declaratives, it is obvious that their point about the introduction of *DO* for the purpose of providing a bearer of the main sentence accent is precisely the one made here with respect to *DO*-support in subject interrogatives. Quirk et al. (ib.) characterise the function of an operator carrying the main sentence accent in declaratives as "signalling contrast between positive and negative meaning". In more detail: "When the operator is positive, the meaning is 'Yes in contrast to No'; when the operator is negative, the meaning is contrastive in the opposite direction." (Ib.) Some of the examples they give as illustration are those in (21) (cf. ib.):

- (21) a. (A: Why haven't you had a bath?) B: I HAVE had a bath.
b. So you HAVEN'T lost it ['You thought you had']
c. But I DO think you're a good cook [i.e. '... even if you imagine I don't']

These examples and the corresponding explanation are reminiscent of the negative proposition(s) implicated by *DO*-supported subject interrogatives, as discussed in section 3 above. Thus, the

present account of *DO*-support in subject interrogatives turns out to be the analogue of 'focus on the operator' in declaratives as far as intonation and the negative proposition aspect are concerned.

5 Conclusion

The point made in the preceding section about *DO*-support in repeated subject interrogatives reveals that the examples and the semantic-pragmatic analysis provided in section 3 cover only a sub-class of the relevant cases, although an important one. It is the intonational constraint formulated in (17) that triggers *DO*-support in subject interrogatives in those cases where lack of *DO*-support would entail a contravention of (17) due to the fact that the main sentence accent would have to be placed on a constituent with an active or accessible referent or denotation. A situation in which all the constituents eligible for main accent placement have active or accessible referents or denotations can arise if the same or a synonymous interrogative has already been uttered in the discourse prior to the corresponding *DO*-supported interrogative; it can also arise when one or more of the negative propositions from the possibility sets for the interrogative are – or are implicated to be – part of the set of assumptions shared by the communicator and the addressee.

Finally, it should be mentioned that there are occasional occurrences of *DO*-support in subject interrogatives whose motivation along the lines suggested in the present paper cannot be as straightforwardly established as in the cases discussed above – given that there is such a motivation in the first place, i.e. that the use of *DO*-support is not simply inappropriate, i.e. a slip of the tongue or the pen. A case in point is (22).

- (22) St Andrews caddies are reputedly such notorious drinkers that the Rules and Advice for Caddies, a five-page document issued to them by the Links Trust, begins with a stark injunction: 'Caddies must be sober ...' Apart from that, and a general knowledge of the links and the game, **what does make a good St Andrews caddie?** (C9E 253)

Arguably, the *DO*-supported interrogative here implicates the mutual manifestness of 'Drunkenness and lack of knowledge of the links and the game do not make a good St Andrews caddie', a negative proposition from the set of possibilities which is itself implicated by the preceding "'Caddies must be sober ...' Apart from that, and a general knowledge of the links and the game ...".⁹

⁹ Regarding the references to the EFL grammars and textbooks at the beginning of the present paper the anonymous reviewer raises the following important questions: "Should these grammars now be re-written on the basis of the findings of this article? And if so, how? Are the exceptions frequent enough to deserve a paragraph in EFL grammars, and how should this paragraph be formulated without having EFL learners vastly overuse *do*-support in subject interrogatives?" Answers to these questions need to be based on EFL and ELT scholarship. The present, linguistic, work may serve as a trigger for research into and discussion of these issues from the perspective of EFL/ELT.

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Appendix

- THE economy is in turmoil – and so are the politicians and economists. All of them seem to have different ideas about what should be done to get Britain out of recession. **But who does understand economics?** Does anyone? Is it possible to understand the subject? (CEK 3831)
- THE great whodunnit over the Di smear letter caused a right royal tizz yesterday. And the question on everyone's lips was: **Who DID write it.** Not me, said the publisher who sent the Mirror a copy. Not me, said Di's biographer Lady Colin Campbell. (CH2 12)
- 'Did you tell your daughter?' 'No, I wanted to surprise her. It was Dorothy's idea. We were going to tell her on her birthday, that's two weeks from today.' **'Who does know?'** 'The Count himself, the owner, that is, and his local agent. [...]' (CJX 2562)
- Despite all the barriers and disadvantages encountered in the movement to a market economy, there is already an infrastructure in place for the future development of a music industry. **So, briefly what does exist now?** Concerts: At the moment concert programmes in the sport arenas tend to be compiled of 5–10 bands, rather than one main act. (ED7 3090)
- He frowned at me. 'I don't like to seem stuffy friend, but if Bonanza and Mahoney were on the outs I would know it. They weren't. And as long as they weren't, nobody else in this town would dare to shoot off any cannons at one of Bonanza's men.' 'How about another outfit?' I suggested. He threw up his arms in despair. When he spoke there was somet–g [*sic*] like pity in his voice. 'Another outfit? I'm ashamed of you, Preston. Somebody in the rackets gets a bullet in him, people holler gang war. A Chinese gets run over, they shout tong war. A Negro dies of heart failure, they blame it on racial segregation. What's the matter boy? You been out in the sun too much?' He liked to talk, and that was what I wanted. 'All right, you know it all. **But tell me, who did kill him?**' I asked. (FAP 590)
- Now, since somebody killed Albie, the smart money has to be on Richardson or Carmichael. But which? Both men are prepared to talk to me: Carmichael went out of his way to, and now he even employs me. Would he have killed my brother? But equally, would Richardson kill one of his best employees – especially while he was holding ten grand's worth of his heroin? It's hardly logical. **So who did kill Albie?** (J13 2176)
- At 81, and with winter approaching, Kathleen Blanchard knows how important it is to keep warm. But she says VAT on fuel will cost her another £100 a year and affect many other pensioners. She says they don't waste their heating. It's the cruellest thing to do. Kathleen decided to do something about her concerns. [...] Mrs Blanchard's already told Mr Coombs of her plan for reducing the budget deficit. She says all the government should take half-pay for two years! The pensioners hope their day-trip to Downing Street makes the government think again. (For a political perspective on the issue of VAT on fuel we go live to Torquay and our Political Editor, Peter Hayes, who's at the Liberal Democrat Conference.) Peter, there are many people who agree with Kathleen Blanchard, how damaging is all this for the Conservatives? **Who does want VAT on domestic fuel?** (K21 2012)
- Small use threatening a man with harm to someone who matters not a rap to him. **And who does matter to Isambard?** (K8S 1460)
- [A:] It made me laugh when your mum kept on about him last night, about having all his hampers stolen. [B:] Yeah. Twenty two grand! [A:] Ridiculous innit? The blokes on the make isn't he? [B:] Yeah. You see he's [??] and then he had the cheek to charge me for insurance! Well I expect him to pay the insurance. [A:] **Who did pay the insurance?** (KCT 13867)