Response to Roberts

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Roberts’ interesting and wide-ranging Comments (this issue) share many of the fundamental goals and commitments of Grimshaw (this issue), henceforth ‘SST’, agreeing most prominently that language variation is highly principled and that the theory of Universal Grammar must play a critical role in characterizing it. Roberts challenges the OT-based constraint/ranking treatment of do-support (‘DS’) as well as the typology which is predicted by the analysis in SST. The first section of this response focuses on DS, and the second takes up some of the typological issues which arise from the Comments, focusing largely on the implications of Quotative Inversion for the typology. I do not attempt to address all of the material in the Comments: my goal is to dispel some important misconceptions about the SST account and to illustrate how it extends into some of the broader domains that Roberts brings to the fore.

1. The SST Proposal

Roberts’ comments on do-support focus on an analysis which he summarizes, in his (1), as follows: ‘Do is a dummy auxiliary, inserted exactly when the usual relation between Agr/T and V is blocked (e.g. by negation, emphasis or interrogation)’. Roberts presents a number of arguments against this analysis, which he refers to in several places as a ‘last-resort mechanism’. However, this characterization of DS is not the one given in the constraint/ranking account of SST. The discrepancies are listed in (1).

(1) a. DS is not a ‘last-resort’ in any meaningful sense.
   b. The morpheme do is recruited as an epenthetic auxiliary under certain circumstances. It is not a ‘dummy’ auxiliary by definition.
   c. DS is not predicted to occur exactly when the relationship between Agr/T and V is blocked.

The phenomena that Roberts points to are not problematic under the OT constraint/ranking proposals of SST.

Why is (1a) true and important? This point is extensively developed in Grimshaw, 2013, where I argue (p. 270) that ‘Do-support is a last-resort in exactly the same
sense as any other grammatical strategy is: it is the best that can be done in the circumstances’. There is, for example, no intrinsic difference in status among DS, VR and FT. Each is a structural option chosen as optimal under some rankings and not under others.\(^1\) A simple demonstration of this point is provided by the violation tables for Negation and Wh-question candidates in (21) and (24) of SST. As noted in the text ‘Each of the structures is preferred over the alternatives by at least one constraint and dis-preferred by at least one constraint’. There is no sense in which one is a last resort and the others have some different standing. The commensurate stature of DS, VR and FT is also seen in the candidate sets (see (8) in SST) and in the predicted typology (see (9) and (18) in SST). The alternative candidates do not have exactly the same distribution in the typology, but this is a consequence of the patterns of constraint violation that they are associated with. The notion of a ‘last resort’ plays no role at all in characterizing the three grammatical options under consideration, the languages, or the typology.

I turn now to (1b). The constraint/ranking analysis does not require that the morpheme do is always epenthetic.\(^2\) The claim is rather that it can be epenthetic. There is no incompatibility between the analysis of DS given in SST and the existence of meaningful occurrences of auxiliary do in some variety of the language. Modern Standard English has meaningful auxiliaries, such as have, which appear as the realization of input specifications particular to them: such as [+perfect]. The presence of these auxiliaries in a candidate does not violate FullInt. Common morphemes frequently have multiple analyses: have is both a main and an auxiliary verb, as is do itself. Therefore, in some variety of English, do can have a meaningful variant. In the dialects that Roberts reports on in Section 1.1, do occurs as an aspectual auxiliary verb encoding a [+habitual] specification. In these cases, do is comparable to the Standard English have. In fact, a single grammatical system can have both a meaningful do and an epenthetic do, with the distribution of each being determined by the ranking of the constraints.

What of (1c)? The OT constraint/ranking proposal does not hold that DS occurs in all and only situations where the relationship between Agr/T and V is blocked. Consider again the violation table for Negation in SST (21). It shows three alternative candidates: one has VR, one has DS and one has FT. In each candidate, Agr/T and the V are separated by Negation. In this candidate set any of the three candidates can be optimal, depending on the rankings. Clearly then, DS does not always occur where Agr/T and V are separated. Should DS occur only in this situation? This is not the prediction of the constraint/ranking analysis. DS should occur exactly where it is optimal: that it is optimal only in certain circumstances is a result of the universal constraints ranked in particular grammars.

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1 See Grimshaw, 2013, pp. 268–9 on the wide variety of languages where the counterpart of do is used in some version of DS.
2 The morpheme do is also, of course, a main verb: in Grimshaw, 1997, I suggested that the choice of do as an epenthetic verb is related to its unmarked verbal meaning.
The three points in (1) have pervasive effects. Consider, for example, Roberts’ claim regarding wanna in simple positive declaratives (Section 1.1).³ He writes ‘... we expect that do-support should apply to 3-sg-present and past-tense wanna...’ However, the analysis in SST does not entail that a DS candidate must win here. In addition to the DS, VR and FT candidates analyzed in SST, unfaithful candidates, which do not realize T and/or Agr, compete for optimal status. Which candidate is chosen depends on a precise analysis of the nature of the input for wanna candidates, the possible outputs, and the relevant constraints and rankings.

2. The Typology

SST shows that the OT constraint/ranking analysis makes strong predictions about possible and impossible cross-linguistic variation: while languages may be non-uniform in their choice between DS, VR and FT, only some non-uniform systems are predicted to be possible. Those in SST (9) and (18) are possible, while those in SST (17), among others, are not. The theory predicts that it is impossible for a grammar to choose VR as the optimum in the Wh-question c-set while choosing DS as the optimum in the Negation c-set since no consistent ranking of the universal constraints generates such a system (‘Anti-Monnese’ in SST (17)).

Roberts introduces a further candidate set into consideration: English quotation structures such as (2) (Roberts’ (15a)).

(2) ‘Never!’ cried/shouted/whispered/averred/screamed/said John.

Roberts argues that the verb, which precedes the subject in (2), due to ‘Quotative Inversion’ or ‘QI’, is in the C position. (See also Roberts, 2010.) If this is correct, then English chooses VR to C as the optimum with Quotations, while choosing DS as the optimum in the Negation c-set, thus bearing a suspicious resemblance to Anti-Monnese, a language claimed in SST to be impossible.

In order to characterize a language in which Wh-questions and Quotations exhibit distinct optima but otherwise have exactly the same structure, it would be necessary to introduce constraints which are specific to constructions: to wh-questions and/or to quotation. This is in effect what Roberts does, positing the representation in (3) (his (16) slightly modified), which uses the grammatical specification ‘Quote’ to identify quotation structures.

(3) [CP Quote [C’ [C V[+Quote]] [TP Subj T ... (V) ... ]]]

Such an account risks the loss of the predictive power that makes the OT proposal compelling, since the grammar is now construction specific. See Sections 1 and 4 of SST. If Quotation can involve V-to-C in a language where Wh-questions involve

³ Roberts discusses the analysis of this candidate set in Section 1.3, arguing against a lowering analysis, which has no role in the SST proposal. For OT research on the status of tense and agreement on lexical verbs see Grimshaw, 1997; Ackema, 2001; Vikner, 2001.
DS, one would expect the reverse to be equally possible: a language in which DS is found in Quotations and VR in Wh-questions. It seems clear that the analysis of QI is leading down a theoretically problematic path.

The same danger is posed by Roberts’ typological proposal based on the notion of a ‘marked clause type’ (Section 1.2). Of English he writes ‘In these terms we can simply state that do realises T where T is of a marked clause-type, and no modal or aspectual auxiliary appears there.’ Roberts also says that it is ‘quite easy to see how the fa-support phenomenon of Monnese . . . could be accounted for along these lines.’ Presumably we ‘can simply state’ that fa realizes T in the interrogative marked clause type. The problem is that it is equally easy to state that fa realizes T in the negative clause type. What then will rule out Anti-Monnese? If each marked clause type is independently assigned a realisation, there is no reason why every combination of realisations should not be attested. We are back at the central focus of SST: if non-uniform systems are possible, why isn’t every non-uniform system possible?

The problematic line of reasoning that we have just explored is based on treating QI as a case of V-to-C. A different line of reasoning is suggested by strong evidence that the V and the subject are lower in the clausal structure than the auxiliary and subject in a Wh-question. If this is the case, then English does not exemplify the problematic combination of DS in the Negation c-set and VR to C in Quotations. The strong predictions of the OT constraint/ranking analysis can then be maintained.

The critical property which shows that the V is not in C is that its well-formedness interacts with the nature of the complement of the verb. QI is limited to a particular semantic verb type but it is also limited to verbs that have no direct object (Collins, 1997; Collins and Branigan, 1997; Suñer, 2000). This is illustrated by the paradigm in (4) and (5). (See Suñer, 2000, for a more comprehensive report on the paradigm.) The intransitive verbs in (4) allow the quote to follow them (4a). They also allow the quote to be in initial position, in both the Subject-Verb (4b) and the Verb-Subject (QI) order (4c).

(4) a. Billy said ‘That book is good’.
   Billy asked ‘Is that book good?’
 b. ‘That book is good’, Billy said.
   ‘Is that book good?’ Billy asked.
 c. ‘That book is good’, said Billy.
   ‘Is that book good?’ asked Billy.

The transitive verbs in (5) allow the quote to follow them. When the quote is in initial position they disallow QI, i.e. the Verb-Subject order.

(5) a. Billy told the teacher ‘That book is good’.
   Billy asked the teacher ‘Is that book good?’
 b. ‘That book is good’, Billy told the teacher.
   ‘Is that book good?’ Billy asked the teacher.
 c. *‘That book is good’, told Billy the teacher.
   *‘Is that book good?’ asked Billy the teacher.
These generalizations establish a major difference between ‘inversion’ in Wh-questions and ‘inversion’ with Quotations. The position of verbs in Wh-questions is completely unaffected by the presence of direct objects in the complement structure of the verb.

Coupled with the puzzle we started from, that main verbs appear in ‘inverted’ positions with Quotations but only auxiliary verbs ‘invert’ in Wh-Questions, this suggests that the position of the Verb-Subject sequence in QI is not in the area of functional structure where ‘C’ is found, but lower down, within one of the projections which encases VP. Indeed the principal prior research on QI proposes structures of exactly this kind (Collins, 1997; Collins and Branigan, 1997; Suñer, 2000). The subject is analyzed as the specifier of VP (or a related projection) and the Verb as the head of a higher projection in the VP complex. The fact that the subject cannot co-occur with another nominal argument, as shown in (5), then follows from principles governing the distribution of nominal expressions within the complex, such as the version of the Minimal Link Condition proposed in Collins and Branigan, 1997.

What emerges from this is a clear picture of the distribution of VR. Within English, VR is possible within the VP complex, hence in QI, but verbs cannot raise any higher. Within Monnese, VR is possible within the VP complex and within the TP region of structure but verbs cannot raise any higher. Within German, VR is possible within the VP complex, the TP region and the CP level, which is higher. I do not have space here to demonstrate this, but extending the logic of SST in this way leads to the prediction that every language which permits VR at the CP level permits it at the TP and VP levels. Every language which permits VR at the TP level permits it at the VP level. The further pattern of verb preposing found in English when negative constituents such as under no circumstances are fronted, supports this characterization of movement possibilities. It involves movement below the CP level (since the fronted expression follows the complementiser that, as illustrated in (6)), and it is insensitive to the transitivity of the main verb, suggesting that it is a TP level phenomenon, not a VP level phenomenon like QI. As expected, it is an auxiliary verb which raises in this context, with DS occurring when there is no other auxiliary. The complementiser, fronted negative PP, raised auxiliary and subject are all bolded in (6).

(6) The teacher claimed that under no circumstances would/did he fail a student like Billy.

In the approach to variation sketched by Roberts in Section 3, parameters and their values are posited based on evidence from individual languages and patterns of variation. The parameters are then organized into hierarchies which define implicational relations among parameter settings, with the goal of characterizing the set of possible human languages. This is of course an extremely interesting project which will greatly further our understanding of parametric theory. It differs critically from the typological theory instantiated in OT, in that the hierarchies are provided by a sub-theory which is needed in addition to the grammatical analysis of...
individual languages. SST aims to highlight the direct relationship between individual grammars and the typology that OT defines. A constraint that is in the grammar of any language is in the grammar of all languages. Once the set of universal constraints is identified, from the study of individual systems and patterns of variation, the typology is known.

References