REVIEW ARTICLE


Reviewed by Osamu Koma, Tokyo Gakugei University*

1. This book was originally written as a Ph. D. thesis for the University of Leiden. In this review I shall first sketch Tieken-Boon van Ostade's (henceforth, TBO) general arguments for undertaking this study, and then, offer a critical commentary on her particular descriptions and methodological perspective.

2. There are three main aims of this book. The first aim is 'to describe the use and non-use of do in eighteenth century texts produced by a number of authors and written in a variety of different styles' (3). The historical development of the auxiliary do has been a most attractive topic to scholars. Though there are diverse views concerning the origin and extension of the auxiliary do, many scholars have shared the belief that the auxiliary do reached the present-day English pattern of usage by the end of the 17th-century; thus, do-less constructions like 'I spoke not...' and 'Speak you...?' were replaced by periphrastic ones like 'I did not speak...' and 'Do you speak...?' around the year 1700. TBO tries to demonstrate that this belief is mistaken, observing that in the 18th century the use of do does not fully conform to that of the present-day English.

The second aim is 'to discuss any stylistic differences that can be detected in the authors' use and non-use of the auxiliary [do] and at the same time try to explain the existence of individual differences in usage, mainly with the help of methods evolved in the field of sociolinguistics' (3). One of the criticisms that historical linguists have faced is that the written material to be investigated is too frequently treated as a homogeneous medium, irrespective of the style of writing or the genre to

* This review owes much to Sonoda 1978, 1984. I wish to thank him for helpful advice. This work was supported in part by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Grant No. 63710141.
which it belongs. TBO avoids this criticism by taking good care of stylistically or socially relevant factors, which have been neglected by most scholars, and thereby attempts to provide a more accurate description of usage.

The last aim is 'to find out the relationship between the 18th-century grammatical description of the auxiliary and the usage of do in that same period' (3). It is well-known that the partly descriptive and partly prescriptive analysis of do by 18th-century grammarians can be helpful to historical linguists. A detailed examination of their description leads TBO to suggest that these grammar books may well have played an important role in particular authors' usage of do, or, more importantly, in the ultimate disappearance of the constructions of that period that are no longer current in PE.

3.1. In regards to the first aim, TBO's undertaking is largely successful since this book provides us with much information about 18TH CENTURY linguistic facts concerning do. In this respect she has partly fulfilled the expectations of Rydén 1979:

'... detailed examination of post-17th century English in all its various manifestations, which was outside the scope of Ellegård's dissertation, would certainly reveal interesting lines of development.' (31)

It is truly important to dig up unexplored data, but it does not necessarily lead to linguistically significant discussions. To make clear this point, let us examine the details of TBO's description and analysis.

TBO focuses on how patterns of usage of the auxiliary do encountered in the 18th century differ from those of the present-day standard English in the following ten constructions:

Type 1. do-less negative sentences: 'I question not but …'
Type 2. do-less question: 'How like you …'
Type 3. subject verb inversion without do: 'nor indeed know we …'
Type 4. not+finite: 'I not like him'
Type 5. plain unemphatic do: 'I did call …'
Type 6. do+adverbial+infinitive: 'I do firmly believe …'
Type 7. exclamatory how/what sentences: 'what dreadful days do we live in …'
Type 8. if-less conditional: 'did I see …'
Type 9. adverbial as clause openers: 'most sincerely do I condole
Type 10. clause opening with a foregrounded object: ‘These great Things does Reason … do’

Types 1-4 are *do-less* constructions that are no longer common today. Types 5-10 with unemphatic *do* are nowadays no longer in general use, either. The latter group is further divided into two subgroups according to whether inversion occurs or not: Types 5-6 and Types 7-10.

After identifying these ten constructions, TBO conducts detailed examination of the vast corpus of 18th century written materials, which include three types of style: **INFORMATIVE PROSE** (novels, essays, etc.), **EPISTOLARY PROSE** (personal or business letters) and **DIRECT SPEECH** (dialogues in plays and novels). For each type of style, the author counts the number of occurrences of the above ten constructions. The result of this examination is summarized as the following table (115):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inf pr (386,500)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epist pr (343,800)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dir sp (211,400)</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total: (948,700)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the methodological point of view, TBO’s special focus on Types 1-10 constructions that differ from PE’s is quite reasonable in view of the fact that most historical studies only compare usages at the earlier stage of a language with their current counterparts. Furthermore, following
the descriptions and discussions made by previous scholars, she carefully selects particular constructions with or without *do*. While TBO herself does not mention any structural aspects of the auxiliary *do* in particular, she implicitly regards structural distinctions as a basis of her study by identifying the above ten constructions. However, so far as we see the result of her statistical investigation and subsequent discussions, this implicit presupposition of structural significance appears not to be reflected there in any significant or efficient manner. It is to be regretted that her primary discussion (presented in Chapters 5-9) is confined to two constructions—*do*-less negative sentences and questions (Types 1 and 2)—despite painstaking statistical treatments of all the above ten constructions. The other eight constructions are left out of serious discussion merely because they are less common in the 18th-century (as can be seen from the figures in the table above). Readers will have the same impression when they, checking a number of small statistical tables, come upon the following expressions repeated throughout this book: ‘[this construction] is so rare in the eighteenth century language that it is hard to say . . .’ (118), ‘if any conclusions can be drawn on the basis of one instance only,’ (117), and others of the same kind. Why she fails to look at structural aspects throughout this study might be a matter of lack of interest on her part rather than a matter of weakness of her research. Interestingly, she admits that ‘most scholars interested in *do* today concentrate on the earlier part of its history’ (4), in other words, on the origin or extension of periphrastic *do*. Nevertheless she dares to say, ‘I am mainly interested in the latter part [of its history], the time when usage still to a certain extent varied individually as well as according to an author’s style of writing’ (4). As will be shown later, I do not mean to make light of extrastructural factors such as stylistic or social ones on which her study is based. But it would have been more interesting to challenge the structural explanation of *do*- or *do*-less constructions, as some previous scholars have done (cf. Hausmann 1974, Lightfoot 1979, Steele et al. 1981, Roberts 1985, and Denison 1985).

In sum I suspect that the lack of structural consideration might be more or less connected with the object of TBO’s study—18th-century data, where it seems to me that the general usage of *do* in those days had already come closer to that of the present-day English, though some marginal syntactic variants, as she argues, still survived.

3.2. Let us turn to the second and third aims of this book. On the
basis of a detailed examination of 18th-century literary works by sixteen authors (Defoe, Addison, Steele, Swift, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Richardson, Fielding, Johnson, Smollett, Goldsmith, Walpole, Gibbon, Burke, Boswell, Paine, and Burney), TBO finds that most of them still used *do*-less negative sentences and questions, and that the writers in those days varied considerably in their usage of *do*. To account for these facts, she has recourse to a sociolinguistic or stylistic approach: she introduces into her observation and analysis stylistic variables (informative prose, epistolary prose, direct speech, etc.) and social variables (sex, education, class, etc.). One of her interesting findings is that periphrastic negatives and questions showed a higher frequency of occurrence in direct speech than in informative and epistolary prose. This suggests that periphrastic *do* had already penetrated the colloquial speech in those days, while *do*-less constructions were limited to particular styles of writing.

Another effective use of variables is found in her explanation of the exceptional pattern observed in a few authors such as Richardson, Lady Mary, Burney, etc. TBO reveals that Burney and Richardson preferred *do*-less negative and questions. She attributes this fact to their low educational standard; she interprets their style as an imitation of upper echelon, more intelligent writers, or as the influence of Dr. Johnson's prestigious pattern. On the other hand, Lady Mary shows the lowest frequency of occurrence of *do*-less constructions. TBO tentatively suggests a possibility that the intended audience might affect the writer's usage; that is, Lady Mary's essays were not written for publication, but to be circulated among her friends.

In addition to social and stylistic factors, TBO discusses the possible effect of 18th century grammars on the development of *do*, arguing that some of these normative grammars must have contributed to the gradual disappearance of the old pattern of usages of *do* (*do*-less negative sentences and questions).

In view of these interesting findings and explanations briefly reviewed above, I conclude that this is a book with an important contribution to make, especially in the field of philology or sociohistorical linguistics. This book also offers much valuable information about methodological points in general. First, this study illuminates the difficulty in obtaining **homogeneous** linguistic materials. We must notice that though TBO's focus is placed entirely on the 18th century, this temporal restriction is not a sufficient guarantee of the homogeneity of the linguistic materials
to be analysed. I believe that is one of the reasons why she turns her attention from COMPETENCE (IDEALIZATION, ABSTRACT ANALYSIS, or STRUCTURAL factors) to PERFORMANCE (actual usages or EXTRASTRUCTURAL factors). (For another reason, see the above section 3.1.)

Secondly, the author has proved most convincingly in this book that historical linguists, confronted with an obstacle, viz. inability to use informant reaction including frequency and acceptability judgement, could make full and efficient use of knowledge of the period and the texts that they wish to describe. Moreover, they could even seek available evidence, if any, from secondary data such as normative grammar books written earlier.

4. In the foregoing section, we have seen both merits and demerits of this study mainly from the general perspective of historical linguistics. In what follows, taking the philological value of TBO's book for granted, I will concentrate on what I regarded as its weakness in section 3.1. It will be shown below that statistical studies will become linguistically significant only if the subject is approached with serious goals, based on well-articulated linguistic concepts. To begin with, I want to compare her study with one recent study dealing with the similar topic from a different angle.

In her description of do-less negative sentences and questions, TBO, like most previous scholars, pays special attention to particular verbs occurring in these constructions. Previous scholars have revealed the interesting fact that some verbs were more resistant to the periphrasis than others, as know in negative sentences and say in questions. So TBO tries to see if this tendency holds true in the 18th century as well: first, she lists all the individual verbs involved in these constructions; secondly, she counts the number of their instances for each writer, style, construction, period, etc.; finally, she summarizes their numerical distribution in tables. (Incidentally, the number of tables presented in her study, small or large, amounts to nearly 100.) That is all that she has been able to do with respect to this subject. No interesting consequences could emerge from this painstaking statistical work without any theoretical design beforehand. That is the point of my criticism of this study—what I meant by ‘lack of structural (grammatical) consideration’ in section 3.1.

As a good recent representative of STRUCTURE- or THEORY-ORIENTED studies dealing with the same problem, we choose Sonoda 1978, 1984. Based upon the examination of 16th-century (Deloney), 17th-century
(Pepys and Dryden), and 18th-century (Defoe) texts, he employs the same statistical treatment of *do*-less and periphrastic negative sentences as TBO does. However, unlike TBO's, his analysis is designed to seek a generalization underlying syntactic changes. What he intends to argue is the so-called POLARIZATION HYPOTHESIS summarized roughly as follows:

A grammatical rule tends to be POLARIZED either into a MINOR RULE or into a MAJOR RULE (For 'minor rule', see Lakoff 1970: 30; for 'Polarization Hypothesis', see Ota and Kajita 1974: 428–9); where a major rule is one that applies to ordinary lexical items but not to a small number of exceptions, while a minor rule is one that applies only to exceptions but not to ordinary lexical items.

This empirical hypothesis was originally proposed as a condition of grammatical theory restricting POSSIBLE GRAMMARS, but at the same time, it has interesting implications for syntactic changes as well. More specifically, this hypothesis predicts that if a rule-change from minor to major or vice versa takes place, the change will not be GRADUAL but ABRUPT, since the intermediate situation between the two extremities (minor and major rules) is excluded as impossible or unlikely by this hypothesis. Sonoda 1978, 1984 confirms this hypothesis by demonstrating that the change in NEGATIVE PLACEMENT TRANSFORMATION from major to minor was relatively abrupt; namely, *do*-less negative sentences cooccurred with MOST verbs at an earlier period (presumably, during the 15th and 16th centuries), but they abruptly disappeared with a SMALL number of exceptions. He notices that this kind of change is also discussed in Wang and Cheng 1977 dealing with LEXICAL DIFFUSION of phonological change.

In sum, Sonoda 1978, 1984, with the aid of structural tools developed in generative theory, seeks for the explanation of an aspect of the development of *do*. Compared with the study under review, his statistical approach is more significant because it has explicit goals for a theory of change or a theory of grammar. Evaluation of his analysis is not my main concern here. What I want to emphasize here again is that any statistical approach should be performed with a definite and deliberate design. Let me conclude this review with another quotation from Rydén (1979: 22): 'he [every syntactic historian] must be both a philologist and a linguist'.

REFERENCES


