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The Mode Potential of Focal Finite *do*: A Systemic Functional Approach

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Abstract

Within systemic functional linguistics (SFL), the primary-tense Finite may be realized separately from the Predicator in affirmative declarative clauses through do, does, or did. Existing SFL research has related this marked choice to the textual foregrounding of the process, while other studies have associated affirmative do with polarity focus, contrast, correction, and confirmation. However, these descriptions do not by themselves explain how the process-foregrounding function of focal Finite *do* may be related to mode in the context of situation, or what analytical distinctions are required when rhetorical orientation, turn, medium, and channel are considered. This article therefore investigates the mode-related potential of focal Finite *do* by drawing on SFL accounts of finiteness, polarity, information structure, and mode. It offers a qualitative analysis of a systemic contrast, published corpus examples, and dialogue represented in a literary work. Where focal prominence is evidenced or independently warranted by contextual conditions, this marked pattern may foreground the occurrence of a process or the positive validity of a proposition. It finds that the marked *do* construction provides a distinct grammatical resource through which the occurrence of a process or the positive validity of a proposition may be foregrounded. In the examples examined, this foregrounding contributes, together with related clauses and contextual information, to a locally explanatory relation of meaning, the confirmation of a central claim, and the acknowledgement of an anticipated objection. Dialogue and monologue, spoken and written media, and phonic and graphic channels provide different conditions for identifying and interpreting these contributions. The study extends the process-foregrounding account of the Finite to its mode-related potential, while showing that an individual occurrence of do neither independently realizes nor determines a value of mode.

Keywords

Finiteness, Do, Mode, Contextual Potential, Systemic Functional Linguistics

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1. Introduction

Research on focal Finite *do* can build on existing descriptions of process foregrounding to examine how this textual function contributes to the role of language in a situation. In affirmative declarative clauses in English, the primary-tense Finite is usually fused with the Predicator. When the Finite is realized separately as *do*, *does*, or *did*, declarative mood and the relevant primary tense are retained, while the organisation of information prominence changes. Zhang and Yang (2016) identify a functional motivation for this marked choice, in which the Finite is separated from the Predicator without a change in mood. Where phonic evidence is available, Tonic prominence enables the Finite to carry information focus and thereby foreground the process. They also identify *do/does/did* as forms realizing process foregrounding. This description relates lexicogrammatical choice to textual function. The present article examines how that function contributes to mode in the context of situation.

Extending the analysis from textual function to mode requires an account of the contextual dimensions to which the function relates. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) define mode primarily in terms of the role of language and other semiotic systems in a situation. This includes the division of labour between semiotic and social activities and between language and other semiotic systems. Mode also includes turn, whether dialogic or monologic, medium, channel, and rhetorical mode. The textual metafunction belongs to the functional organisation of language, while mode is a variable of the context of situation. Their relation is one of realization. An analysis therefore needs to account for both the meanings construed by linguistic resources and their contribution to the situation.

Research has already established relations between affirmative *do* and polarity focus, contrast, correction, and confirmation. Wilder's (2013) analysis of affirmative polarity focus, Luzón Marco's (1998) corpus study, and Callies's (2013) discussion of different conditions of use in an interview provide linguistic evidence for a contextual account of the Finite. The question addressed here is which dimensions of mode, as defined in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), are implicated in these uses, how process foregrounding contributes to the relation, and what conditions constrain its realization.

The article addresses three questions. How should the relations between primary tense, polarity, and information focus be understood when focal *do* realizes the Finite? How does process foregrounding contribute to rhetorical mode in explanation, persuasion, and polemic? How do dialogue or monologue and configurations of medium and channel affect the expression and identification of this contribution? The study combines theoretical argument with the analysis of representative examples: systemic contrasts reported in earlier research, material from published corpus studies, and dialogue represented in a literary work. Its conclusions concern functional potential and the conditions of its realization. No claims are made about overall frequencies or distributions across registers.

2. Research on *do* as a Finite and a Resource for Focus

Research on *do* has developed different accounts of tense morphology, polarity, and prominence. Relating these accounts to the system of finiteness requires identifying their grammatical object and specifying their contribution to the present analysis. The distinction between auxiliary and lexical *do* establishes the scope of the study. Accounts of discourse use provide evidence for examining relations with mode.

2.1. Finiteness and the Realization of Primary Tense

The auxiliary status of *do* and its tense morphology support an analysis of it as a realization of the Finite. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) distinguish the Finite from the Predicator and explain that the primary-tense Finite can be fused with the Predicator. In English simple present and simple past clauses, the relevant form of a lexical verb can perform both functions. When the Finite is realized separately, an auxiliary carries the tense morphology and the Predicator remains in its base form. Zhang and Yang (2016) develop this account in their examination of the grammatical nature and metafunctions of finiteness, including *do/does/did* in emphatic *do* clauses within the textual system of finiteness as a resource for foregrounding the process.

Syntactic studies of *do*-support in international journals also address the finiteness and morphological features of *do*. Grimshaw (1997: pp. 382, 390-391) relates the first auxiliary to tense morphology and specifically discusses tensed *do* in the analysis of negation. The study also distinguishes auxiliary *do* from *do* with the status of a lexical predicate (Grimshaw, 1997: p. 386). These descriptions provide supplementary evidence for the structural status of *do*. Grimshaw's analysis mainly concerns *do*-support in interrogative and negative environments; its constraint system does not specifically account for emphatic *do*. The theoretical framework differs from SFL, and the present study uses only its descriptive observations about finite auxiliaries and tense morphology.

In an SFL account, the formal differences among *do*, *does*, and *did* concern primary tense and the associated grammatical requirements. Focal *do* realizes the primary-tense Finite and can also carry prominence. These contributions require separate analysis. The occurrence of *did* in a past-tense environment does not by itself establish past time as the current focus. The content requiring the addressee's attention must be identified through information structure and context.

2.2. Polarity and Information Focus

Affirmative polarity focus provides an important basis for the analysis of emphatic *do*. Wilder (2013: p. 142) states in the abstract:

"Emphatic 'do' in both types realizes affirmative polarity focus."

This statement directly relates the object of study to affirmative polarity and focus. Wilder discusses finite auxiliary *do* and distinguishes uses with different

configurations of prominence. The contribution of affirmative *do* therefore requires more than a general label of emphasis applied without reference to context. This article draws on the observation of affirmative polarity focus, while developing its account through the SFL concepts of the Finite, polarity, and information structure.

The analysis of polarity also follows the distinctions established in earlier work on finiteness. Zhang and Yang (2016, 2019) stress that polarity extends across different categories within the clause. They distinguish polarity within the category of finiteness from the polarity associated with other components. Accordingly, this article treats polarity as a system co-occurring with finiteness. In the affirmative declarative construction under examination, focal *do* realizes the primary-tense Finite, and affirmative polarity is co-selected with the construction. The occurrence of *do* adds no further lexical process, and prominence on *do* leaves the functional status of other components unchanged.

Information focus has an independent basis in SFL. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: pp. 116-118) describe the information unit as consisting of New information and optional Given information, with tonic prominence realizing information focus. The distinction between Given and New depends on whether the speaker presents information as recoverable by the addressee or as requiring attention. Previously mentioned content can be presented as New because of contrast or the requirements of the current exchange. A focal reading of *do* can thus foreground a process or proposition already introduced into the context. Its informational contribution needs to be interpreted in the current speech situation.

2.3. Prominence and Discourse Use

The relations of affirmative *do* to simple tense, nuclear stress, and discourse contrast have been described in an international journal. In reviewing grammatical accounts, Luzón Marco (1998: p. 88) writes:

> "The support operator do is used to bear the nuclear stress when the finite verb phrase is in the simple present or past tense …"

Drawing on the Bank of English, the study examines affirmative *do* in contrast, correction, and the anticipation of objections, and discusses its co-occurrence with concessive contexts (Luzón Marco, 1998). The account relates the discourse contribution of *do* to the contexts in which it is used. The content foregrounded is associated with negative claims, concessions, and subsequent positions in the surrounding text. Contrast and concession concern relations between clauses and within texts; they cannot be assigned in full to the lexical meaning of *do*.

Callies (2013) identifies implicit contrast, explicit contrast, and non-contrastive confirmation within a single interview passage. When the interviewer suggests that the interviewee does not have to cook, the interviewee corrects that claim with an affirmative expression containing *do*. A later occurrence intensifies a confirmation of preceding content. These examples show that *do* can respond to an ex-

plicit counterclaim or reaffirm a claim in a particular context. The chapter's broader aim is to advance learner-corpus research and pragmatics. The present study draws on its analysis of individual examples without treating them as an exhaustive functional classification.

Together, these studies establish three points relevant to the present inquiry: the finite auxiliary status of *do*, the relation between affirmative polarity and prominence, and the contextual conditions of prominence in discourse. Zhang and Yang (2016) explain the marked grammatical choice in terms of process foregrounding. This article considers how that function contributes to the realization of rhetorical mode and how its realization varies with turn, medium, and channel.

3. Mode and the Basis for Analysing Focal Finite *do*

An analysis of the mode potential of focal *do* centres on rhetorical mode, with turn, medium, and channel as relevant conditions. This scope follows the established SFL account of mode and corresponds to the evidence available. Lexicogrammatical and semantic analysis provide the linguistic basis for contextual interpretation. The communicative purpose and semantic organisation of a complete text support the identification of rhetorical orientation.

3.1. Field and Tenor Orientations in Rhetorical Mode

Rhetorical mode concerns a text's orientation in its situation. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) relate orientation towards field to the development of a domain of experience, including the explanation of phenomena, the construction of classifications, and the organisation of activities. Orientation towards tenor concerns the maintenance or modification of the relationship between speaker and addressee. Texts with this orientation can organise evidence and reasons around a central proposition or proposal, increasing the likelihood that the addressee will agree, accept, or act accordingly. The two orientations can coexist, and their interpretation depends on the text's specific contribution to the situation.

Persuasion and polemic are treated as potentially overlapping tenor orientations rather than mutually exclusive text types. The criterion is the way in which an opposing position is organisationally incorporated. In a persuasive orientation, the text organises evidence and reasons around a central proposition or proposal in order to increase the likelihood of the addressee's agreement, acceptance, or action; an opposing position may be present, but it is not necessarily represented as an explicit counterclaim requiring acknowledgement. In a polemical orientation, the text explicitly represents, acknowledges, or anticipates an actual or possible objection or counterclaim and responds to it while maintaining a position; concession, correction, and rebuttal are thereby made part of the text's local organisation. The two orientations overlap where a persuasive aim is pursued through the acknowledgement and answering of an objection. Their distinction is therefore a matter of the dominant local organisation of the passage, not of a fixed property of the lexicogrammatical form. In the material examined in Section 5,

example (3) is treated as primarily persuasive because its organisation supports the confirmation of a central claim and the reconsideration of the addressee's view, although it responds to the father's doubt; example (4) is treated as primarily polemical because it explicitly acknowledges a possible criticism and then maintains a position. Both labels describe contextual orientations that focal do may help to realize jointly with related clauses, but neither is independently encoded or determined by *do*.

This account gives the analysis of focal *do* a defined contextual basis. In explanation, the occurrence of a process or the validity of a relation may require clarification. In persuasion, a central claim may require the addressee's acceptance; in polemic, a position may require maintenance in the face of an acknowledged or anticipated objection. A focal reading of *do* gives prominence to that content and works with explanation, evidence, reasons, and responses. An explanatory, persuasive, or polemical orientation needs to be established through the organisation and role of the relevant text.

Orientation towards tenor within mode also needs to be distinguished from tenor as a contextual variable. The former concerns how a text operates to maintain or modify the relationship between speaker and addressee. The latter describes institutional, status, contact, and affective relations among participants. In the father-daughter dialogue and the discussion of social views examined here, roles and attitudes provide background for understanding the material. The analysis remains concerned with how focal *do* contributes to the text's rhetorical role.

3.2. Lexicogrammar, Semantics, and the Context of Situation

Process foregrounding provides the semantic basis for relating choices in finiteness to mode. Zhang and Yang (2016) include the separation of the primary-tense Finite from the Predicator within the textual system of finiteness and identify its function as foregrounding the process. This article follows their account and examines the textual organisation that calls for process foregrounding.

The relation can be considered at three strata. In lexicogrammar, the Finite is realized separately as *do*, *does*, or *did*. In semantics, the Finite, prominence, and context jointly present the occurrence of a process or the validity of a state of affairs as the focus of the current organisation of information. In the context of situation, this expression contributes to explanation, confirmation, or polemic. Each stratum requires appropriate evidence. Structural form supports the analysis of the Finite; related clauses support semantic interpretation; rhetorical orientation requires fuller information about the text and situation.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: p. 34) describe the relation between context and language as bidirectional realization. Configurations of mode affect the expressions available, while linguistic choices contribute to the text's role in its situation. Recent SFL work on context develops this account further. In reconsidering realization, instantiation, and individuation, Doran, Martin, and Herrington (2024) reconceptualise mode as a resource for composing texture. They emphasize that

instantiation involves probabilistic co-selection and configurations of options within language, across languages, and across modalities, with these principles of coupling operating across metafunctions. This article specifically adopts these principles of probabilistic co-selection and coupling. They support rather than replace the analytical framework of mode dimensions established by Halliday and Matthiessen. They clarify that focal *do* realizes its mode potential jointly with other resources without independently determining mode variables. Accordingly, mode potential here refers to the contributions that focal *do* can make, through its semantic function, within a particular configuration of mode.

Martin (1992) provides resources linking clause-level Theme and New choices to larger periodic patterns through hyper-Theme and hyper-New as well as macro-Theme and macro-New. Doran, Martin, and Herrington (2024) propose coupling principles as a partial account of probabilistic co-selection in instantiation and model mode as a resource for composing texture. Read together, these accounts provide grounds for developing a theoretical framework to explore how clause-level information focus may contribute to mode-related texture, and this integrated perspective forms the basis for the present analysis.

3.3. The Object of Study and the Material

The core object is the co-occurrence of *do*, *does*, or *did*, realizing the primary-tense Finite, with a complete Predicator in an affirmative declarative clause. Lexical *do*, *do* required by interrogative or negative structure, imperative *do*, and elliptical responses are considered only where necessary to delimit this scope. Complete constructions in a literary work are retained as representative qualitative material, with due attention to their historical language and the status of represented dialogue.

Phonic and graphic material provide different kinds of evidence. Published accounts of nuclear stress support the theoretical relation between prominence and information focus. Written constructions and their contexts support the corresponding semantic interpretation. Written material alone provides no direct evidence of the precise tonic placement, pitch, or duration. This article makes no acoustic claims about literary characters' speech and does not treat subsequently added typographic emphasis as an original phonetic fact. Distinguishing these forms of material keeps the theoretical basis of process foregrounding consistent with the evidence available for individual examples.

In this article, "focal Finite *do*" is reserved for tokens for which focal prominence on *do* is evidenced or independently warranted. Focal prominence is evidenced where direct phonological, and in particular prosodic, information is available, for example in a phonic recording or an explicit metalinguistic comment on stress placement. Where such evidence is absent, focal prominence is independently warranted only if the surrounding text provides contextual conditions that make a focal reading the interpretation most strongly supported by the contextual organisation of the exchange. These conditions include an adjacent claim and re-

sponse in which the same proposition is corrected, confirmed, or contrasted; a subsequent response that presupposes or reacts to the prominence of the Finite; an explicit acknowledgement of an anticipated objection that the focal claim is designed to answer; and a contrastive organisation in which the Finite is the element available to carry the relevant focus. The mere presence of a separately realized Finite *do* in a written text does not by itself satisfy this criterion. Where only an orthographic text is available, "separately realized Finite *do"* denotes the observable construction; a focal interpretation is then a contextual analysis rather than a finding about actual tonic placement. In such cases, the analysis identifies the contextual conditions that warrant a focal reading, without asserting the actual placement of a tonic or claiming that the focal reading is the only possible interpretation.

The qualitative analysis selects four representative examples to illustrate specific distinctions. The systemic contrast in example (1) establishes the structural conditions of the marked choice. The three contextual passages in examples (2), (3), and (4) illustrate the explanatory, persuasive, and polemical orientations respectively. These examples serve as qualitative representatives and do not constitute an exhaustive classification.

4. Primary-Tense Realization and Process Foregrounding in Focal Finite *do*

Focal *do* separately realizes the primary-tense Finite that is usually fused with the Predicator, providing an identifiable grammatical form for process foregrounding. Systemic comparison establishes the structural conditions of this choice. Information analysis identifies the content foregrounded. These accounts provide the basis for the examination of rhetorical mode in Section 5.

4.1. Fusion and Separation of the Finite and Predicator

Different realizations of the Finite are possible while primary tense and declarative mood remain unchanged. Zhang and Yang (2016, p. 530) give the following contrast:

(1) a. But he came back.
b. But he did come back.

In (1a), *came* realizes both the past-tense Finite and the Predicator. In (1b), *did* realizes the primary-tense Finite and *come* realizes the Predicator. The participant and the process of returning are the same in both clauses, as are affirmative polarity and declarative mood. The structural difference lies in the separation of the Finite from the Predicator, which enables the Finite to carry prominence independently.

The contrast also distinguishes the contribution of focal *do* from the lexical process. In (1b), *come back* realizes the process of returning and *did* realizes the Finite. Adding *did* introduces no further activity of doing and does not change the lexical content of the original process. The clause can be interpreted through a

textual choice within the system of finiteness, maintaining the relation between grammatical status and process foregrounding.

Both clauses can enter a speech exchange as negotiable propositions. The focal choice further specifies what requires attention in the current exchange. The non-focal form retains the arguability of the proposition. The interpersonal and textual functions of the Finite coexist and concern different aspects of the clause.

4.2. The Form Carrying Focus and the Content Foregrounded

Prominence is realized on *do*, while its semantic contribution can concern the occurrence of the whole process or the validity of the state of affairs. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: p. 116) explain that the tonic marks the culmination of New information. The extent of the New still requires contextual interpretation. The position of a word, the form carrying focus, and the semantic content foregrounded therefore require separate consideration.

In the SFL framework, process foregrounding and polarity focus describe distinct contributions at different analytical levels that are co-realized in this construction, rather than interchangeable labels for the same semantic effect. Process foregrounding is primarily a textual function, arising from the organisation of New information. It foregrounds the process or the state of affairs as the focus of the current exchange, which may include the validity or consequences of that state of affairs. Polarity focus is an interpersonal semantic effect concerning the affirmation or denial of the proposition.

For (1b), if the preceding context makes the question of his return a matter for confirmation, a focal reading with prominence on *did* can confirm that the return occurred. At the textual level, this foregrounds the state of affairs of his returning as New information. At the interpersonal level, the affirmative polarity co-selected with this marked Finite affirms the positive validity of the proposition. Other contrasts in the preceding context may lead to different interpretations of focus. The past-tense form of *did* alone does not establish a contrast between past and present. Wilder's (2013) observation of affirmative polarity focus is related to the present account of the validity of a state of affairs. The relation is explained through the Finite and information structure in SFL; the analytical categories of different theories remain distinct.

Process foregrounding can involve material, mental, and relational processes. The content foregrounded varies with the Predicator and the related clauses, while the finite status of *do* remains. Process foregrounding is consequently a systemic function, with correction, confirmation, or explanation arising under particular contextual conditions.

4.3. Previously Introduced Content and Claims Requiring Attention

A focal reading of *do* can make previously introduced content the focus of the current exchange. Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014: p. 118) account of Given and

New allows content presented as requiring attention to have occurred earlier. A process may already have been discussed while its validity still requires confirmation in the current exchange.

This organisation of information is particularly relevant when a position is questioned or needs clarification. The addressee may know the participants and process but hold a different view. By repeating the same lexical content with a focal reading of the Finite, the speaker gives the affirmative claim current informational significance. The systemic contrast in (1) establishes the formal conditions of this expression. Its contribution to explanation, persuasion, or polemic requires further examination of the relevant text.

5. Focal Finite *do* and Contributions to Rhetorical Mode

The mode-related contribution of focal Finite *do* must be inferred from its coupling with process foregrounding and the semantic organisation of a text. In a locally explanatory, persuasive, or polemical organisation, the marked form may foreground a relation or claim requiring attention. It does not by itself realize, identify, or determine a rhetorical mode. The specific orientation depends on the text's purpose, related clauses, and subsequent responses. This section examines these relations without assigning a rhetorical mode solely on the basis of affirmative *do*.

5.1. Relations of Meaning in an Explanatory Orientation

Focal *do* can contribute to an explanation of the validity of a consequence or implication. The material cited by Luzón Marco (1998: p. 100, example 44) contains the following passage. The initial ellipsis is retained from the source:

(2) … are the logical result of design-by-committee. This does not mean a desktop computer has to look like a camel, but it does mean that it is likely to be smooth, overtly practical and rather dull.

The construction analysed is *it does mean* and the content that follows it. The first *does* co-occurs with negation as part of the negative structure. The second occurs in an affirmative declarative clause and is followed by the base form *mean*, corresponding to the separation of the Finite and Predicator examined here. The same word form appears under different conditions of co-selection and requires separate analysis.

The passage first excludes an exaggerated inference and then explains the consequences that can follow from the design. The Subjects *This* and *it* refer to preceding content, and the relation of meaning expressed by *mean* has already entered the discussion. The second clause contains a separately realized Finite. In this contrastive context, it is interpretable as reinforcing the positive validity of the explanatory relation, while the excerpt itself does not establish the placement of a tonic on *does*. The following that-clause specifies its content. The contribution of *do* is consistent with this organisation: what requires the addressee's attention is the consequence of the design conditions already under discussion.

Orientation towards field means that the goals or intended outcomes of the situation concern field, more specifically its development (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: p. 41). The local organisation in (2) explains a relation of meaning while retaining a contrast that excludes a misunderstanding. Process foregrounding can thus be jointly realized with the explanation of experiential content and with the correction of a view. The two contributions coexist within the passage. The form of *do* alone cannot distinguish explanation from polemic.

The source does not provide the complete situation of the original text. The analysis is therefore confined to the explanatory and corrective functions visible in the passage, leaving the rhetorical orientation of the complete text undetermined. The topic of computers does not establish an orientation towards field, and *but* alone does not establish an orientation towards tenor. The evidence for this analysis consists of the exclusion of one inference, the confirmation of another implication, and their semantic organisation.

The contrast in (2) is expressed jointly by the related clauses and *but*. Where a focal reading of the separately realized Finite is warranted by the contrastive organisation, the Finite contributes to the current informational significance of the second claim without independently expressing the contrast. Replacing the target construction with *it means* would still express the relation of meaning. The focal choice provides conditions for giving prominence to the validity of that relation. This reformulation serves only as a structural comparison. It is not presented as original corpus material or as experimental evidence of an addressee's response.

5.2. Confirmation of a Central Claim in a Persuasive Orientation

The contribution of focal *do* to a persuasive orientation can be examined through a central claim and the content supporting it. In Chapter 59 of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth needs her father to understand that her feelings towards Darcy have changed. Drawing on her earlier attitude, he questions her decision and treats her genuine liking for Darcy as a matter requiring confirmation. She replies:

> (3) "I do, I do like him," she replied, with tears in her eyes; "I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable. You do not know what he really is; then pray do not pain me by speaking of him in such terms." (Austen, 2004: pp. 323-324)

The page numbers given for this example are those of the 2004 Evans Brothers edition cited in the reference list. The construction analysed is the second, complete *I do like him*. The preceding *I do* is retained as adjacent repetition and is not separately analysed as an elliptical realization of the Finite.

The central claim is that Elizabeth *does* like Darcy. Her father already knows the people concerned and her earlier opinions of Darcy. Her present attitude is what requires confirmation.The content expressed by *like* is recoverable from the preceding exchange. The written dialogue supports a reading in which the marked Finite reinforces Elizabeth's positive claim. It does not, however, provide direct phonetic evidence for the placement or extent of information focus. The subse-

quent expressions elaborate her feelings and make a series of claims about Darcy's character. Together, they support her father's reconsideration of his earlier view.

This organisation corresponds to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014: p. 41) account of orientation towards tenor: related text supports a central proposition and increases the likelihood of the addressee's agreement. Within this organisation, *do* helps present the claim that currently requires acceptance. The account of Darcy's character and the correction of the father's understanding provide further support. The relation between focal *do* and a persuasive orientation becomes apparent when the clauses are considered together.

Example (3) also shows how process foregrounding works with different process types. The mental process in the target clause is realized by *like*, and the separately realized Finite makes available a focal reading of its validity. Where the exchange warrants such a reading, the Finite contributes to bringing that validity into focus. The immediately following *love* intensifies the stated feeling, while the subsequent relational clauses provide assessments of character. The separately realized Finite, lexical content, and related clauses make distinct contributions that together support the central claim. The analysis does not assign tonic prominence to the Finite based on the written text alone.

The father continues to advise his daughter, showing that a prominent form cannot by itself ensure successful persuasion. The example supports an account of the conditions under which focal *do* contributes to a persuasive orientation and of the semantic organisation involved. Communication represented in a literary text can be used for qualitative analysis. Its effects must be assessed through the characters' responses and the subsequent narrative; the occurrence of *do* and the securing of agreement do not warrant a direct causal relation.

5.3. Acknowledging and Responding to Objections in a Polemical Orientation

Focal *do* in polemic can give prominence to content that the speaker has already acknowledged, working with subsequent claims to answer an objection. Luzón Marco (1998: p. 97, example 32) discusses material concerning the Working Mother of the Year award and explains that *do know* anticipates possible criticism. The relevant passage is:

> (4) Yes, I do know that all mothers work, regardless of whether they have a paid job outside the home. But my view is that, for as long as mothers with careers continue to shoulder most of the responsibility of bringing up children and doing the housework (...) I'll continue to wave the flag for working mums.

The ellipsis is retained from the source. The context concerns attention and criticism directed at the award. Referring to a particular group as working mothers may prompt an objection that other mothers also perform work. The speaker first confirms awareness of the fact that all mothers work, then states a position of continuing support for mothers who combine careers with primary family re-

sponsibilities.

The target clause presents an explicit affirmative claim, with the content of *know* elaborated in the *that*-clause. The separately realized Finite, together with the acknowledgement of a possible objection in the surrounding text, independently warrants a focal reading of the positive proposition that the speaker knows the stated fact. Without phonological evidence, the analysis should not specify the exact extent of the information focus. The subsequent *But my view is that* introduces the position of continuing support for the group concerned and gives family responsibility as a reason. This organisation confirms content that can be jointly accepted while retaining a specific claim for debate.

The concessive contribution of (4) concerns the relation between preceding and subsequent content. The speaker acknowledges that all mothers work while continuing to argue for the appropriateness of supporting a particular group. Focal *do* helps present the initial acknowledgement explicitly. Contrast, reasons, and the subsequent position jointly realize the polemical contribution. Acknowledgement or concession can therefore be a contextual condition of *do* without being assigned to its independent lexical meaning.

The example further specifies the contribution of process foregrounding. A foregrounded affirmative claim need not directly oppose the preceding utterance. An accepted fact may still require prominence because of an objection within the debate. The cognitive clause in (4) confirms the relevant awareness, after which the text moves to a more specific issue. The focal choice can thus help establish content for joint acknowledgement in the current exchange and provide a clear basis for subsequent argument.

Examples (3) and (4) have different rhetorical goals. The first seeks a revision of the addressee's view of the speaker's feelings. The second maintains and explains a position while acknowledging a shared fact. Both use a marked realization of the Finite to foreground central content. The particular rhetorical contribution is established by adjacent clauses and the purpose of the text. The systemic function of focal *do* lies in process foregrounding; its relation to mode arises through the joint realization of that semantic function and textual organisation.

5.4. The Scope of the Relation between Rhetorical Orientation and Finite Choice

The relation between rhetorical orientation and focal *do* is conditional: the same form of the Finite can enter different textual organisations. Example (2) explains and corrects a relation of meaning. Example (3) confirms a central claim about feelings and supports it. Example (4) acknowledges a shared fact and argues for a subsequent position. These differences arise mainly from the process foregrounded, the related clauses, and the purpose of the situation. The status of *do* as a primary-tense Finite remains unchanged.

The material also shows that process foregrounding makes only part of the text's contribution. Explanation requires specific explanatory content; persuasion

requires grounds for supporting a claim; polemic requires an identifiable objection and relevant reasons. Where a focal reading is warranted, *do* makes a particular claim the current focus, while other resources place that focus within an intelligible semantic organisation. Rhetorical mode can accordingly be treated as the main dimension of its mode potential, with the scope of the realizational relation between lexicogrammatical choice and contextual orientation kept explicit. The analysis identifies the contextual grounds for this reading without claiming that it is the only possible interpretation.

6. Turn, Medium, and Channel in the Use of Focal *do*

The particular contribution of focal *do* is also affected by the organisation of the speech exchange and the conditions of realization. Dialogue or monologue determines how relevant claims enter the current expression. Medium and channel affect the realization of prominence and the evidence available. These dimensions belong to the established account of mode and are not independently encoded by *do*.

6.1. Conditions for Response in Dialogue and Monologue

Dialogue provides direct conditions for focal *do* through an adjacent claim and response. In the represented father-daughter exchange in (3), the father's doubt precedes Elizabeth's answer. The claim expressed by *like* recurs within the same exchange. The separately realized Finite *do* supports a focal reading of the later affirmative claim and works with further explanation. Its interpretation depends on an identifiable preceding turn, and the father's subsequent response provides evidence for assessing its rhetorical contribution.

This relation in dialogue can be explained alongside the propositional function of the Finite. The Finite enables a proposition to enter an exchange, and the focal choice gives further prominence to what requires confirmation. The addressee may accept, continue to question, or request clarification, with these responses potentially affecting subsequent expressions. The Finite *do* contributes to how a proposition is presented and answered, without independently determining turn allocation or the outcome of the exchange.

Monologue can also incorporate other people's possible views. The passage cited in (4) presents a continuous statement by one speaker, acknowledging a fact that might constitute an objection before explaining a position. No immediate response by another participant is shown, but the anticipation of an objection and the conditions for answering it are clear. The passage illustrates how a monologic expression can use focal *do* in polemic. The actual configuration of the exchange beyond the cited passage requires additional evidence.

An analysis of turn needs to distinguish the views of others represented in a text from actual turns. Quoting or anticipating another person in a monologue can establish a semantic response to an opposing view while retaining a monologic configuration. A turn in dialogue may likewise contain an extended explanation

or argument. Focal *do* can foreground a claim under both conditions. Its particular contribution depends on the source of the claim, the position of the response, and the subsequent content.

6.2. Conditions of Expression in Spoken and Written Media

Medium affects the expression of focal meaning, while lexicogrammatical choice still requires interpretation through the particular material. Luzón Marco (1998) discusses affirmative *do* in different types of material, and Callies (2013) provides an interview transcript with an analysis of use. These studies establish various conditions under which *do* occurs in communication. Relations between corpus distribution and a type of medium need to be understood in light of each study's sampling and classification.

In spoken exchanges, speakers can use tonic prominence and continue their explanation in response to the addressee's immediate reaction. Written expression can organise adjacent sentences to place content requiring confirmation alongside supporting reasons. The separately realized Finite *do* keeps the focal option identifiable in writing, and readers can use the context to interpret confirmation or correction. Differences of medium chiefly affect the conditions for expression and identification; they leave the functional distinction between the primary-tense Finite and the Predicator intact.

The literary example used here is dialogue represented in writing. It contains characters' turns but provides no corresponding original recording. Dialogue or monologue must therefore be identified separately from spoken or written medium. Turn concerns the organisation of the exchange, and medium concerns the form of expression. The two dimensions can be combined. Written dialogue has qualitative value for analysing response relations, while the distribution of prominence and immediate responses in naturally occurring speech requires other material.

6.3. Prominence and Its Identification in Phonic and Graphic Channels

Medium and channel are analytically distinct because they do not always coincide in actual communication. Medium concerns the semiotic organisation of the exchange, distinguishing between spoken and written forms. Channel concerns the physical transmission of the text, distinguishing between phonic and graphic forms. This distinction clarifies the present analysis because it allows for combinations such as dialogue represented in writing. In this case, the written medium and graphic channel provide the written form, while the dialogic organisation provides the turns and anticipated responses. Therefore, while focal *do* may be supported by the dialogic organisation, its actual tonic prominence cannot be asserted from the graphic channel alone.

The phonic channel can directly realize tonic prominence. Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014: pp. 114-119) account of information structure and Luzón Marco's

(1998: p. 88) description of nuclear stress provide a basis for this realization of focal *do*. The separate form of the Finite co-occurs with the relevant phonological choice, enabling the occurrence of a process or the validity of a state of affairs to be presented as information requiring attention.

Analysis of phonic material also needs to identify the location of prominence and the extent of information focus. The tonic may occur on *do*, while the onset and extent of the New still require interpretation through context. The same primary-tense form in different information units may foreground different extents of content. Intonation should consequently be analysed together with the clause and the surrounding text. A single stressed word is insufficient for an account of the entire organisation of information.

The graphic channel provides written forms, typography, and context. The separate occurrence of *do* and the surrounding claims can support a semantic interpretation of process foregrounding. Bold or italic type may also indicate an intention to give prominence. Precise tonic placement, pitch, and duration in speech require corresponding phonic evidence. The literary and corpus examples cited here retain their original word forms; added capitals or bold type are not used to simulate actual speech.

Medium and channel primarily constitute conditions of realization in this study. The Finite *do* can be co-selected with prominence in the phonic channel, while its construction and contextual relations remain identifiable in graphic expression. Both can relate to rhetorical mode, with different evidential scope. Distinguishing these conditions maintains the stratal relations among mode, lexicogrammar, semantics, and phonological realization.

6.4. An Account of Mode Potential

The relation of focal *do* to mode can be understood through the functional realization of process foregrounding in particular texts. A separately realized primary-tense Finite provides an identifiable grammatical form. Information structure and context indicate which process or claim constitutes the current focus. Rhetorical mode concerns how this foregrounding contributes to the development of experiential content or to the maintenance and modification of participants' positions. Turn, medium, and channel provide conditions for response and realization.

This account also establishes the scope of the inquiry. The functional potential of focal *do* can contribute to different rhetorical orientations, each requiring textual evidence. Co-selection of related resources can also realize some explanatory or polemical contributions through other forms. The material examined supports an account of rhetorical mode and its conditions of realization. It does not establish an independent contribution of focal *do* to the division of labour between semiotic and social activities or between language and other semiotic systems. The six dimensions of mode provide the overall theoretical scope. Analysis of an individual resource can focus on those relations supported by the available evidence.

7. Conclusion

The mode potential of focal Finite *do* can be examined at the stratum of the context of situation through its realization of primary tense and its foregrounding of the process. The forms *do*, *does*, and *did* separate the primary-tense Finite from the Predicator. Where phonic evidence is available, prominence and context may jointly present the occurrence of a process or the validity of a state of affairs as information requiring attention; where only written material is available, the separately realized Finite *do* supports a focal reading rather than establishing tonic placement. This account builds on Zhang and Yang's (2016) study of the textual function of finiteness and draws on descriptive work in international journals on finite auxiliary status, nuclear stress, and affirmative polarity focus.

Rhetorical mode is the main dimension of mode examined here. The representative material shows that process foregrounding can contribute to a relation of meaning requiring explanation, a central claim requiring confirmation, and an objection requiring a response. The specific contributions to explanation, persuasion, and polemic arise through the joint realization of focal *do*, related clauses, supporting content, and the text's purpose. The Finite retains its grammatical status, while rhetorical orientation varies with the situation and semantic organisation.

Dialogue or monologue provides different sources of claims and conditions for response. Configurations of spoken and written medium and phonic and graphic channel affect the expression and identification of prominence. These conditions explain how the same resource contributes in different situations. They also constrain the inference of phonic realization from written form and of a complete text's orientation from a local passage. An account of mode potential therefore requires related grammatical, semantic, and situational evidence.

The study relates process foregrounding to established dimensions of mode in SFL on the basis of linguistic evidence. Further research can examine the distribution and conditions of co-selection of these relations in texts with sufficient contextual information and in phonic material. Discussion of the broader dimensions of mode should proceed through the analysis of corresponding evidence.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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