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Expressive meanings and social applications of 'do'-support questions in Camuno

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ABSTRACT

The first stage in grammaticalization is often an enrichment of pragmatic meaning. If a new form is more 'extravagant' or 'expressive', it may have a competitive advantage. The grammaticalizing form described here is a primitive 'do'-support construction used to make questions, in an Italian dialect spoken in an isolated sub-Alpine valley. Living speakers describe why and when they would use 'do'-support over the simpler, main-verb alternative. Logical meanings, which include an answer presupposition and perfective viewpoint on the event, suggest that the 'do'-support form is a syntactically embedded, and pragmatically indirect question (Swinburne, 2021). The expressive meanings described here are: 1) those demonstrating prior thought (conventional presuppositions due to the syntactic structure); 2) subjective meanings expressing emotion and engaging the interlocutor (conventional implicatures of 'do'); and 3) meanings exploiting indirectness for reasons of politeness (conversational implicatures). With 'do'-support, the speaker is being polite and making an educated guess of the likely answer, while leaving open the possibility of being wrong. In the small, tight-knit, isolated communities of Val Camonica, politeness to neighbours is essential for long-term community cohesion. The politeness meaning has likely driven the grammaticalization.
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1. The issue

The mechanisms of language change and grammaticalization are strongly tied to language use and to the principles of cooperative conversation. Since Grice (1975, 1978) formalized these in his original Maxims of Conversation, various scholars have sought to adapt and refine them in an attempt to also explain language change (see Traugott, 2012). Many accounts rely on a trade-off between Maxims of Economy and Clarity. From this perspective, Haspelmath (1999: 1054), drawing on Keller (1994: 95–107), proposed four 'Maxims of Action', as summarized in one Hypermaxim. This introduces an important new element: the Maxim of Extravagance.

Hypermaxim: talk in such a way that you are socially successful, at the lowest possible cost.
Maxims:

1. Clarity: talk in such a way that you are understood.
2. Economy: talk in such a way that you do not expend superfluous energy.
3. Conformity: talk like the others talk.
4. Extravagance: talk in such a way that you are noticed.

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Extravagance is what other authors (e.g. Hopper and Traugott, 1993: 65, Lehmann, 2015 [1982]) refer to as 'expressiveness'. Haspelmath (1999: 1057) explains and amplifies his concept: 'The crucial point is that speakers not only want to be clear or "expressive," sometimes they also want their utterance to be imaginative and vivid—they want to be little "extravagant poets" in order to be noticed, at least occasionally.' This extravagance leads to social success (as indicated under the Hypermaxim). In fact both terms, extravagance and expressiveness, hint that it is not so much the informational content of the utterance that is important, but the feelings that it generates. These might be through the associations of the form, what it suggests, and what it implies.

The Maxims apply throughout the grammaticalization cycle and different ones are more important at different stages. Take the case of a new auxiliary verb construction. In the initial stages while the new periphrastic, or analytic form is coming into the language, it may coexist alongside an older synthetic form. Logically, the competing forms mean approximately the same thing, so 'Clarity' may not be an issue. Instead, 'Extravagance' is called into play: the advantage of the new form is that it is more brilliant and engaging than its simpler and duller counterpart.

In the grammaticalization literature, this first stage of grammaticalization comes with pragmatic enrichment of meaning (Hopper and Traugott, 2003: 73; Heine, 1991a,b; Traugott and König, 1991). It is the later stages that are associated with semantic loss and bleaching. As the development of an auxiliary verb construction is a slow process likely taking place over hundreds of years, the initial development can usually only be accessed in historical texts. These often lack any preserved dialogue (other than between writer and imagined reader) and there may be scant information from which to infer expressive or emotional reasons that govern the choice of forms.

Instead, this account of a grammaticalizing auxiliary verb construction is one based entirely on synchronic information available from adjacent living dialects (Swinburne 2021, 2024a, 2024b). As speakers are available to comment on the reasons for their choice of form, there is direct evidence for when and why the analytic form is regarded as preferable. This gives rise to plausible hypotheses for what has caused its increase in frequency (leading, in some dialects, to complete replacement of the synthetic form), as well as a more advanced state of grammaticalization. The case at issue is also one that has been in the spotlight because of the central role it plays in the English language: 'do'-support.

This example of 'do'-support comes from the Romance dialect of Camuno, Val Camonica, northern Italy. In this there are two competing question forms. The 'old' form is the default method of interrogation, normal for northern Italian dialects, and based on inversion of main verb and subject clitic (as in historical English: *What say you?)*. The 'new' form is restricted to the valley and uses a 'do'-support verb, inverting that with subject clitic (e.g. *What do you say?)*. The 'do'-support form was originally described from the dialect of Monno in Upper Val Camonica by Benincà and Poletto (2004). The authors were puzzled by how a form which appeared to be so similar to English could exist in a Romance dialect because it could not serve the same syntactic function (allowing verb and complement to remain adjacent) attributed to it in English. Instead, the solution proposed here is that it had expressive qualities which were socially advantageous and eventually resulted in it replacing its rival.

This paper covers the expressive meanings and their social uses. In the native speakers' own words they describe how, as the question is uttered, the questioner (speaker) would be feeling about the content emotionally, their anticipation of the feelings of the addressee (hearer), and the speaker's thoughts as they debate internally the appropriate answer(s) to the question.

The discussion starts in Section 2 with some background on Val Camonica and the dialects spoken; the 'do'-support form (FS) and its main-verb alternative (SCI). Section 3 briefly describes the characteristics of the informants and how the data was collected. In Section 4 the expressive and social meanings of the 'do'-support questions are presented. Section 5 defines types of meaning (also relating them to the logical meanings to be described in Swinburne, under revision). Section 6 concludes by providing a possible social motivation for the grammaticalization pathway of 'do'-support within the Val Camonica dialects.

2. *fa* 'do'-support in Camuno

In the Camuno dialect, 'do'-support is achieved by using a finite version of *fa* 'do' (a reflex of Latin FACERE) to 'support' an infinitival verb which carries the specific lexical content, in a phenomenon referred to here as *fa*-support (FS) (1). FS, which is restricted to questions, is unique to Val Camonica, and when described by Benincà & Poletto from the Monno dialect, was presented as the only such example of 'do'-support in a modern Romance language. Swinburne has (2021, 2024a, 2024b) shown how, in many valley dialects, FS is found alongside the form that uses just the main verb with subject enclitic (SCI) (2), in an order that is inverted compared to that of the corresponding declarative.[1]

(1)	Fe=	t	nà	a	Milà	(FS)
	do.PRS.2SG=	SCL.2SG	go.INF	to	Milan	
	'Are you going (lit. do you go) to Milan?'					
(2)	Ne=	t	a	Milà		(SCI)
	go.PRS.2SG=	SCL.2SG	to	Milan		
	'Are you going to Milan?'					

[1] In the present tense, both FS and SCI can be used for habitual events (or states) or for activities taking place 'now' but over a limited interval of time. For a longer time interval a progressive form that uses a 'be' auxiliary and the adverb 'behind' is required. No correlation has been found to use of FS and habituality and informants specifically stated that there was no such relationship.

Although *fa* 'do' is referred to here under the generic title of 'support' verb, Swinburne (2021) has suggested that, at least in the dialects where FS is optional, it should be considered a main verb, and the syntactic structure biclausal. That conclusion is based solely on the particular semantic properties, which are also described briefly below; there is no evidence in the syntax. Only a restricted range of aspectual adverbs and pragmatic particles can occur between support verb *fa* (with subject clitic) and the infinitival verb; no complementizer, lexical subject, or other parentheticals can be placed there.

FS can be used to support all verbs except 'have' and 'be', with which it is ungrammatical, and occurs in both yes/no (y/n) and wh-questions. Unlike in English, it can also be used to support modals: *podé/pudì* 'can, could' and *volé/vulì* 'want' (the latter finding contrary to Benincà & Poletto), verbs which in Italoromance have a full inflectional paradigm. Also unlike in English, FS can be used in subject questions (Manzini and Savoia, 2005: Vol 1, 586; Swinburne, 2021: Ch. 4).

In dialects where FS is optional, the degree to which it is preferred over SCI depends on the lexical semantics of the supported verb. FS is most common with agentive-subject, activity verbs; less common with theme-subject, change-of-state verbs; and least common with experiencer-subject, stative verbs (Swinburne, 2024b).[2] This is not an all-or-nothing, syntactic choice; it is a semantic-pragmatic choice, as the alternative form is usually grammatical but dispreferred in most contexts. Thus FS use at its most restrictive, and (by inference) earlier stages, begins with verbs that are semantically most similar to 'do', and with which the shared subject is most compatible. In the most grammaticalized stages, *fa* is bleached and there are (almost) no subject preferences.

Based largely on this information, Swinburne (2024a) presented the initial case for grammaticalization of the form within the pattern of valley dialects. Dialects with the highest degree of semantic restriction, and so the lowest degree of grammaticalization, are found in the south of the area, in the contact zone with other valley dialects. Those where FS has fewest restrictions, and which contain the most grammaticalized forms, are found in the more isolated locations, such as in the north at Monno.

In instances where FS use is optional with a particular verb, the question has certain 'special' meanings in addition to simply requesting information. The special meanings are most apparent in dialects where there is greatest optionality (and so FS is used at a relatively low frequency). Yet they are also present even in the (essentially) obligatory FS dialects, (such as Monno), with the very few verbs with which is SCI is still an alternative possible ('know', 'want', and sometimes 'could'). In the absence of an SCI method of making a question, FS must take over the basic informational function and so any special meaning is no longer apparent.

An important point to make is that the special meanings are not simply the semantic result of adding a *fa* 'do' component with agentive subject to a verb which might otherwise be non-agentive (Swinburne, 2024a: Section 2). In their explanations for the meaning of FS compared to SCI, informants note instead pragmatic differences in what is being communicated. So to say that *fa* in any dialect has exactly the same meaning as lexical 'do' is slightly inaccurate; a better description is that it mimics the subject requirements of a lexical 'do' and that these are loosened as grammaticalization proceeds and *fa* is bleached. Also to be emphasized is that informants describe the SAME set of special meanings from dialects around the valley. This affirms the conclusion that the meanings do not result from a secondary reintroduction of lexical content to the already grammaticalized form. If so, they would be expected to be more *ad hoc* and less systematic. Both points are returned to in Section 5.

The division between the 'logical' meanings (to be presented separately in Swinburne, under revision) and the 'expressive' and 'social' meanings (which are the topic of this paper) is not clear cut, and does not neatly follow any semantic/pragmatic division. The 'logical' ones concern the informational content and structure, but include the speaker's state of knowledge when they ask the question (a thoroughly 'grey' area for the semantics/pragmatics division). Those meanings include: speaker presupposition of the answer (the most common explanation), including the identity of a wh-item; a focus on the entire event, and intensional references (minor effects, numerically).

The logical traits were used as evidence for an underlying syntactic structure where *fa* embeds a propositional clause. In this, the embedding verb *fa* is functioning as an almost pure truth operator (but carrying a slight emphasis) and a propositional attitude verb expressing doubt. The preferred paraphrase for the FS question (reflecting it pragmatically, semantically, and syntactically) is: 'Is it really true that 'X',' where 'X' is a pre-existing proposition. The existence of the speaker's presupposition is taken to be a semantic effect due to the pre-existence of the embedded proposition, which serves as a starting hypothesis. However, what answer the speaker predicts (whether yes or no for a y/n-Q, and which is reflected in the degree of doubt being expressed) is context-dependent and pragmatic. Although not described again in detail here, the answer presupposition is evident in various examples described in this paper, where its interaction with some of the other meanings is discussed.

As the FS form is restricted to Val Camonica, in sociolinguistic terms, it can be described as 'indexical' to the valley. Thus in social terms, if a speaker asks a question with FS, they must be a valley 'insider' (although their hearer is not necessarily so).[3] However use of SCI does not imply either speaker (or hearer) is a valley 'outsider'. As will become apparent in Section 4.3, in

[2] In this there are some similarities in the semantic restrictions reported from German dialects that use *tun* 'do' support (e.g. see Schwarz, 2004; Schönenberger and Penner, 1995; Casalicchio and Perna, 2012; Angster, 2021; Jäger 2006).

[3] Perhaps surprisingly, when the speaker uses FS, their hearer is not necessarily also a valley 'insider'. Although the more 'middle-class' speakers (who are used to communicating with outsiders) are likely to accommodate to a dialect-speaking stranger and use SCI, speakers who mix mainly within the community are likely to persist with FS even if their interlocutor is unlikely to understand it.

conversations between two valley 'insiders', both FS and SCI are available. FS, as the more polite form, is used selectively to communicate with older family members or neighbours, and SCI is appropriate for siblings and friends of similar age. The link is to be expected if (optional) FS is a syntactically embedded and therefore indirect question, because indirectness is closely linked to politeness (Section 5.3).

The special meanings described in Section 4 are preceded by a brief description in Section 3 of the informants themselves and how the dataset was gathered.

3. The Camuno dataset

Examples in this paper result from a series of conversations with individual native dialect speakers, or informants, that took place at intervals during 2017–2024. They are part of a larger dataset of over 15,000 examples that includes syntactic information and the results of an elicitation experiment on lexical preferences in the supported verb. Examples of informant explanations of the question meanings were compiled into a separate dataset of 129 minimal SCI/FS pairs (87 y/n-questions and 42 wh-questions), which can be downloaded from the Oxford Research Archive. This is the same dataset as used in the paper on the logical meanings (Swinburne, under revision), and there is minimal overlap in the selections used to illustrate this paper.

In the examples in this text, speaker dialect is indicated after the example preceded by a (sequentially assigned) speaker number. This will enable the reader seeking further information to find, in the full dataset, the age and occupations of the speaker, and the degree of grammaticalization of FS in their dialect with respect to the 5 zones as defined in Swinburne (in review). Examples come from Esine (Zone 1, the least grammaticalized); Berzo Inferiore, Cividate, Malegno (Zone 2); Bienno-A/B, Cerveno, Sellero, Megno di Corteno (Zone 3); Astrio di Breno, Malonno (Zone 4); and Monno (Zone 5, the most grammaticalized).

The informants are all local people who grew up speaking dialect as their first language and became fully bilingual in Italian. They were almost all born before the mid 1960s (so were over 55 at the time the earliest data was collected). From the 1970s onwards, dialect became sufficiently disfavoured and Italian used progressively more in the workplace (as well as in institutional settings), so that most parents stopped speaking dialect to their children, thinking it would disadvantage them in later life.

In collecting the 129-question dataset, speakers were presented, in Italian, with certain scenarios, or contexts, that gave a reason why a certain question might be asked, followed by the question itself. They were then requested to provide possible Camuno translations of the Italian question. Using this method, speakers of optional FS dialects were in most instances able to provide both the SCI and FS variants, even if one was preferred.[4] The first time a certain context/question was used, it was discussed with the participant to make sure that it was appropriate given the norms of valley life and behaviour, and if not, it was altered to make it more appropriate. After that, the context with elicited question was fixed and encoded under a number in the database so that explanations for question meaning, given that context, from different informants could be directly compared.

Speakers were then asked to comment on what each of the Camuno variants of the question meant to them, and how each would likely be interpreted by the hearer. There was minimal attempt to guide the participant in their first impressions and so explanations range from logical to emotional to social (and most speakers sensed no difference at all). Participants who were amenable to this discussion were then asked how the context could be specified in more detail, or changed slightly, to ensure that one of the variants became strongly favoured. In their explanations presented here, every attempt has been made to preserve their original words (albeit with a little paraphrasing) as translated from Italian. Where any interpretation has subsequently been made by this author, it is done [in square brackets]. These informants are not, with one exception (36. Esine), trained linguists; their explanations are not made in technical terms, and do not directly relate to the semantics/pragmatics literature. That step is made by this author in the accompanying text.

Contexts describe situations that both informant and interviewer could readily understand, and are questions about modern daily life: people eating and drinking, going shopping, catching trains, looking after grandchildren and elderly relatives, gossiping about neighbours, organizing parties, watching television, etc. The focus was to engage all speakers in the 60–80 age range, both men and women, and those representing a range of occupations and educational levels: agricultural workers, factory and utility workers, shopkeepers and other business people, housewives, as well as school teachers and librarians. In the first research phases (2017–2021), informants were recruited through friends of friends of initial local contacts (BnB hosts, contacts provided through the *Comune*, or just people encountered in the local bar). Some later insights (2022–2023) came from a series of five interactive public meetings (held in Esine, Malegno, Cerveno, Berzo Demo and Monno) where the research was presented as part of a larger discussion on the value of local dialects as part of the cultural heritage.

[4] A separate dataset measured which form they would use spontaneously in a given context, without allowing them to stop and reflect their choice or to change the context presented to them. That was used for the analysis in Swinburne (2024b) on the lexical extension and grammaticalization of the form in the different valley dialects.

Speakers represent dialects spoken from Esine in the south of the Middle Valley, to Monno and Malonno in the Upper Valley, and Megno di Corteno in the Ogliolo valley in the northwest of the Upper Valley (so scattered throughout the entire FS area: see maps in Swinburne, submitted). The selection therefore includes a) dialects representing the full range of grammaticalization; b) speakers who use an /f/-initial pronunciation to the verb (*fa*) and those who use an aspirated /h/-initial version (*ha*); and c) variety in the semantic and syntactic type of supported verb. Overall, special FS meanings are present whenever there is an SCI variant for contrast. So while almost every verb could have a SCI/FS question pair in Esine, only 'know' and 'want' have such an SCI/FS pair in Monno.

In the following examples, the context presented to the participant in Italian is translated into English (and enclosed in brackets). The elicited Camuno questions follow. To economize on space, the two variants are written together, the SCI [V_{lex} = SCL] first, followed by the FS [*fa* = SCL V_{lex}.INF]. In the text, enclitics are separated from the infinitival verb with an '=', but proclitics are written as separate words, while both use a '=' in the gloss. The orthography is based on Italian with addition of two front rounded vowels: ö=/œ/; ü=/y/ and with accents only where this serves to discriminate between similar words, critically between the finite form of some verbs, e.g. *màngia*=eat.3SG, and the infinitival form (with apocope of the *-re* ending compared to Latin), *mangià*=eat.INF.

4. Expressive and social meanings of Camuno FS

The expressive and social meanings have been divided into three sections: Section 4.1, meanings demonstrating prior thought (interpreted as conventional presuppositions due to the syntactic structure); Section 4.2, expressing emotion and engaging the interlocutor (conventional implicatures due to *fa*); and Section 4.3, indirectness for reasons of politeness (conversational implicatures). Classification of the meaning categories is explained afterwards in Section 5.

4.1. Demonstrating prior thought (conventional presuppositions due to the structure)

In Swinburne (2021) the case was first made that FS has a syntactic structure where the finite *fa* embeds a propositional clause.[5] Some of the evidence for that was that the entire proposition being questioned had already been given prior thought by the questioner. It could therefore be said to already exist – at least in the mind of the speaker – at the time of utterance, even though the event itself might not have taken place. Consequent expressive traits include that the speaker has already thought about the emotional consequences of the answer(s) (§4.1.1); or is using the form as a way to raise an issue and so is less concerned with obtaining a factual answer (§4.1.2).

4.1.1. Considering the consequences of the answer

FS questions are rarely asked 'out-of-the-blue' and in many instances the proposition is an old idea which has been circulating in the community. The speaker has then had time to consider the situation at issue and the consequences of the answer(s) (3), (4).

Does this beautiful lake freeze in winter? (36. Esine)

(3)	Chehto	bel	laghet	zèle=l	/ fa=l	zelà
	this	beautiful	lake	freeze.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	/ do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	freeze.INF
	(a)nn	inverno?				
	in	winter				

SCI: Neutral question, asked out of curiousity.

FS: The person asking the question is expressing: 1) **the hope** that it freezes so as to be able to skate on it or 2) **the fear** that it freezes (because the ducks can't swim in it or because it won't be possible to fish. Either way the questioner is expressing something connected to the emotions.

(4) (The dog is on its last legs. How sad for the family!)

Will it die soon? (36. Esine)

Murirà=l	/	Farà=l	murì	
die.FUT.3=SCL.3SG.M	/	do.FUT.3=SCL.3SG.M	die.INF	
de	ché	a	mìa	tat?
of	here	from	not	long

SCI: Simple request for information

FS: Also expresses worry for its death or for the pain of losing it. There are **consequences for the speaker**.

4.1.2. Showing more interest in the topic than obtaining a factual answer

With FS, the question is more about the topic, and the speaker's feelings about the topic, and less about obtaining the factual answer. This effect is more evident in a wh-Q. In (5) below, it has the effect of drawing attention away from the wh-item and resolution of its identity, and towards the topic in general. (In these the wh-item is post-verbal, which is the more common position in Camuno. Note that there is no correlation between the wh position and use of FS versus SCI: see

[5] The case for the biclausal structure is being made in a separate paper now under revision. Note that the 'prior thought' applies to the entire proposition, including the subject, not just to the verb phrase. In this it differs from uses of other emphatic particles (such as Northern Italian dialectal *po* - see Swinburne, 2021: Section 4.1.2), or some modal utterances.

Swinburne, 2021: Chapter 4.) It is almost as if, in FS, the wh-item was functioning as an indefinite pronoun because the entire proposition (including the wh-variable) is what is up for debate, making it resemble a y/n-Q. By providing the required informational answer and the identity of the wh-item, this also satisfies the more fundamental yes/no part of the question.

(5) (You see me at home, sitting at a table with pen and paper, writing a letter.)
Who are you writing to? (154. Esine)

Hcrìe=t	/	Fe=t	hcrìer	a	chi?	
write.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	write.INF	to	whom	

SCI: If I know that you write letters and **I want to know who you are writing to**. [You're writing TO WHOM? Hcriet [a chi]. Writing is the premise of the question.]
FS: If I hardly ever see you I am **expressing surprise at the idea that you are writing** a letter. [You're WRITING to someone!? Fe [t scrìer a chi]. The focus follows the finite verb. I accept that you are writing and this is a surprise.]

4.2. Expressing emotion and engaging the interlocutor (conventional implicatures due to fa)

This section presents the expressive characteristics attributable to *fa*. They include the speaker's expression of their own emotional stance, also known as subjectivity (§4.2.1); empathizing with the addressee (§4.2.2); engaging the hearer to start or continue a conversation (§4.2.3); seeking the addressee's opinion (§4.2.4); and relating to the hearer's concerns but avoiding being too invasive (§4.2.5).

4.2.1. Expressing emotional stance (subjectivity)

Enabling the speaker to express an emotional involvement with the topic makes the FS question 'subjective', and the rather bland SCI question, in comparison, 'objective'.[7] The emotional stance taken by the speaker towards the topic can be positive (6), (7), or negative (8), but it is still largely positive towards the addressee. It is a means for the speaker to communicate their feelings and therefore an important mechanism for speaker and hearer to draw emotionally closer.

(6) (She spent a year in a wheelchair but they say that recently she's recovered. You say: Really!...)
Is she standing up now? (36.Esine)

Htà=la	/	Fa=la	htà	'mpeh	adeh?
stand.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	stand.INF	on_feet	now

SCI: Neutral question
FS: **Emotional involvement** in the girl's situation and surprise at her recovery.

(7) Does the little girl believe in Santa Lucia? (70. Cividate)

La	pina	crède=la	/	Ha=la	cridì	amò
the	girl	believe.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	believe.INF	still
hanta	Luhia?					
Santa	Lucia					

SCI: It's possible that the girl does still believe in Santa Lucia.
FS: The questioner thinks the girl probably doesn't believe any more in Santa Lucia but for the sake of the girl, **he'd like to think the girl still did believe** in her existence.

(8) (Anna has many ways for dealing with problem children.)
Will Anna succeed in teaching (even) my children to read? (54. Astrio di Breno)

Ghe	rüe=la	/	Fa=la	rüà=ga			
	3.DAT=	succeed.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	succeed.INF=3.DAT		
	a	fà	dì=ho	i	miei	pì,	Anna?
	to	cause.INF	say.INF=up	the	my	children	Anna

SCI: Without presuppositions.
FS: **Calls into question the premise** that she is capable. [And **you want to indicate that**.]

These examples also bring out the most common logical function of FS as an expression of doubt about the truth of the proposition embedded in the question. In (7) and (8) above, the doubt is sufficient that the questioner thinks the answer to their question is 'no' (the more common effect). Along with doubt, speakers are often expressing negative emotions such as annoyance, exasperation, anxiety, censure and antagonism directed towards the topic. With just a small amount of doubt (but sufficient to ask the question in the first place), as in (9) below, the speaker is indicating they would like confirmation and that the answer is 'yes'.

(We know that Elisabeta used to smoke a lot and the doctor had told her to stop. You meet a friend and you start chatting. You want to know if she followed the doctor's advice.)
(9) Is Beta still smoking? (50. Bienno)

Fùme=la	/	He=la	fümà	amò,	Bèta?	
smoke.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	smoke.INF	still	Beta	

SCI: Normal question
FS: Could be expressing curiosity or **reprimanding**.

With questions that are purely factual, FS signals an emotional involvement with the subject matter (10).

[7] This understanding of 'subjective' versus 'objective' is the insight of 36.Esine, Vittorio Volpi.

(10) (The teacher asks the student:)
Does the earth go around the sun in a year or in a month? (36. Esine)

La	tera	gìre=la	/	fa=la	girà	'nturen					
the	earth	turn.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	turn.INF	around					
al	hul	an	de	'nn	an	o	'n	de	'n	meh?	
the	sun	in	of	the	year	or	in	of	the	month	

SCI: Simple curiosity.
FS: As if to say that **the answer is very important to the questioner**: if it's in a year that's one thing; if it's a month, that's something else.

In (11), emotional involvement is inappropriate as it would be better for the speaker just to stick to the point. For that reason FS would not be used.

(11) (Tell me:)
Do tomatoes ripen without the sun? (78. Malegno)

I	pomodor	morüde=i	/	fa=i	marudà
the	tomatoes	ripen.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	ripen.INF
henha	al	hol?			
without	the	sun			

SCI: Neutral question.
FS: Shows **anxiety or exasperation** because speaker thinks it's a stupid question. [Informant had to be asked for FS.]

Similarly, in (12), FS would result in too much speaker attitude, particularly doubt, yet the situation is objective, as every normal person would be expected to have the same attitude.

(12) (Their aunt died recently and today is the village festival.)
'Does(n't) it seem right to you too, to stay at home?' (36. Esine)

Te	homèe=l	/	#Fa=l	homeà=t	giüht			
2SG.DAT=	seem.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	seem.INF=2SG.DAT	just			
anche	a	te	de	htà	a	ca?		
also	to	you	to	stay.INF	at	home		

SCI: The only appropriate way to make this question.
FS: The question with *fare* seems artificial, insistent, and to be avoided because it **presupposes an attitude** (such as exaggerated concern or excessive tact) which isn't appropriate in the situation.

4.2.2. Empathizing with addressee

With FS the speaker is 'reaching out' to the addressee and empathizing with them (13), (14). This leads to building a closer relationship.

(13) (Roberto is almost wet with sweat! You ask:)
Does that suitcase weigh a lot? (36. Esine)

Pède=le	/	Fa=le	pedà	trop	tant	chèle	'alìh?	
weigh.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.F	weigh.INF	too	much	those	suitcases	

SCI: Indifference, and not an invitation to help.
FS: Implies **a willingness to help**.

(14) How are you going to Milan? (36. Esine)

Ne=t	/	Fe=t	nà	cóme	a	Milà?	
go.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	go.INF	how	to	Milan	

SCI: Q is very direct and putting B 'on the spot' because B probably hasn't thought it through. A might also be making fun on B: Are you actually going to Milan (and if so, how?)
FS: A demonstrates **empathy towards B and a willingness to help** with a solution. It could be rhetorical in the sense that B doesn't have an answer. A is already aware of the difficulty B faces. Also could be interpreted as: Are you actually going to Milan (and if so, how?)

4.2.3. Starting (or continuing) a conversation

FS brings up an old topic with present relevance. Although in some senses the speaker is doing this to check the 'truth' of the embedded proposition, the more fundamental reason is emotional and to engage in conversation (15), (16), (17).

(15) Do you usually do the shopping on Saturday? (70. Cividate)

Fe=t	/	He=t	fà	la	spesa	al	habet?	
do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	do.INF	the	shopping	the	Saturday	

SCI: Direct question. Just wants a brief answer. Only need confirmation.
FS: The **start of a conversation**. Curiosity and surprise has been induced.

(16) (Why is Anna so afraid of sleeping here?)
Does she think that there is a ghost in the house? (50. Bienno)

Pènhe=la	/	He=la	penhà				
think.PRS.3SG=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3SG=SCL.3SG.F	think.INF				
che	'l	ghe	hàeha	an	fantasma	an	ca?
that	SCL.3DEF=	LOC=	is.SUBJ.3	a	ghost	in	house

SCI: Spontaneous, expressing astonishment.
FS: **Easy-going conversation**.

(17) (You meet me in the restaurant eating an strange-looking dish.)
What are you eating? (154. Esine)

Mànge=t	/	Fe=t	mangià	ché?
eat.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	eat.INF	what

SCI: [Not in this context] Would use this question if no food had been brought.
FS: He would use this one given this context. He is expressing surprise at the strange food and **wants to know more**. [What ARE you eating?]

4.2.4. Seeking the addressee's opinion

Not only is the FS question subjective in that it reflects the speaker's views, but it also acknowledges that the reply will be the opinion of the hearer. There is then a difference between the SCI question which is asking simply for objective and factual truth (as far as that is possible to obtain), and the FS question, which is asking for an opinion from the addressee about the embedded proposition. In certain circumstances, the two questions, SCI and FS, would then be asked of different interlocutors (18), (19), (20).

(18) (The arm is very swollen.)
Could be broken? (39. Malonno)

Pòde=l	/	Fa=l	podé	eser	ròt?
be_possible.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	be_possible.INF	be.INF	broken

SCI: Normal question.
FS: Said **to the doctor** [because **you want an authoritative answer** of whether or not it could be true that it's broken.]

Example (19) is one of three very similar explanations given independently by different informants. Each of them indicated that SCI would be used to obtain the factual answer (from the shopkeeper), but FS would be used to seek another opinion on the topic.

(19) (In the shop:)
Is this nice fish expensive? (50. Bienno)

Còste=l	/	He=l	cohtà	tàant
cost.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	cost.INF	much
chel	bel	péh	ché?	
that	beautiful	fish	here	

SCI: With **the shopkeeper**. I want to know right now.
FS: To **my husband**. We're not sure about it.

FS can also be used for internal reflection (20).

(20) Does my coat smell of smoke? (33. Berzo)

Pùhe=l	/	Ha=l	pühà	di	fümo
smoke.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M	smoke.INF	of	smoke
‘l	me	paltó?			
the	my	coat			

SCI: Asking **someone else** [for information].
FS: Not sure if it smells. Could be **asked to self**. [Is it true [that it smells of smoke]?]

4.2.5. Talking to the person directly affected

FS is associated with intimacy and a desire to strengthen an emotional connection. There can therefore be a difference in likelihood it will be used when the question is addressed to the person directly affected (2nd person question), versus when it concerns another person not present (3rd person question) (Swinburne 2021: 205–207). The effect was observed in the qualitative phase of data gathering when the probability of FS use was tested with an elicitation experiment. This showed that when the verb on which the question was based was an activity or causative verb, e.g. ‘work’, ‘eat’, or ‘make’, FS was slightly more likely in the 2nd person than the 3rd person (e.g. FS use with ‘Do you eat meat?’ > ‘Does she eat meat?’). This is explainable by the speaker ‘reaching out’ to the hearer to relate to their lives and concerns.[8]

However, a much stronger effect, and in the opposite direction, was observed with a few cognitive stative verbs, ‘like’, ‘want’, ‘know’ and ‘can, could’ (e.g. FS use with (Camuno) ‘Do you like prosecco?’ << ‘Does he like prosecco?’). The best explanation for this is that when asked directly to the person affected, FS is perceived as aggressive and invasive, as by expressing doubt it seems to suggest that the addressee does not know their own mind. It is then perceived as rude, so contrary to the inherent politeness of FS (see Section 4.3).

4.3. Indirectness for reasons of politeness (conversational implicatures)

In this section, the special meanings of the FS question are directly attributed to their use in conversation and for expressing politeness. This is a secondary effect of an embedded syntactic structure because the question is then an indirect one. By being indirect, the speaker is perceived as less confrontational when raising an issue (§4.3.1); and it enables them to

[8] Note that neither effect was sufficiently large to account for the more general pattern of agentive subject > theme subject > experiencer subject, which was also apparent when all subjects were 3rd person.

talk ABOUT the topic rather than approach it head-on (§4.3.2). The FS form has come to be associated with the speaker being courteous and not presumptuous. For this reason, it is appropriate for speaking to someone from the same or a neighbouring community but who the speaker does not know well (§4.3.3). This is critical to its function of building and maintaining good relationships, which is particularly useful if the community is small and isolated.

4.3.1. Being non-confrontational

By using FS rather than SCI, the questioner is perceived as being less aggressive, kinder, and gentler towards the addressee (21), (22). Although they may still want an answer to their question, or have action taken to address their request, the speaker is taking the addressee's feelings into account in the way they ask the question.

(21) (The boys are smoking next to the table. Ask their mother:)
Could you get them to go outside to smoke (Signora)? (54. Astrio di Breno)

Pòde=la	/	Fa=la	podé		
be_able_to.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.F	be_able_to.INF		
fà=i	nà	de=fò	a	fumà?	
make.INF=3PL.M.ACC	go.INF	of=out	to	smoke.INF	

SCI: More direct.
FS: **Gentler**.

(22) Do they often make you sing in church? (50. Bienno)

Te	fa=i	/	He=i	fà=t	cantà
2SG.ACC=	make.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	make.INF=2SG.ACC	sing.INF
de	hpeh	an	ciesa?		
of	often	in	church		

SCI: They couldn't find anyone else? They really had to come after you?
FS: More **easy-going** question.

4.3.2. Making indirect references

FS is used to comment indirectly on a situation, and the topic is being discussed in principle, or in somewhat abstract terms (23). As in the examples in Section 4.1.2 above, this has the effect of backgrounding the wh-item and making the question more about the topic in general than just the identity of the wh-item.

(23) You see your friend Maria opening the car door.
Where are you going? (154. Esine)

Ne=t	andòe?	/	Fe=t	nà	'ndòe?
go.PRS.2=SCL.2SG	where	/	do.PRS.2=SCL.2SG	go.INF	where

SCI: If I want to know where you're going just because I want to know if you're going to one place, or to another.
FS: If I was talking to you and suddenly you stop the conversation and leave in a hurry. [I'm **expressing frustration**: 'what on earth are you doing (by leaving so abruptly)?' and commenting on the fact that you are going somewhere.]

The indirect approach is preferred for more sensitive topics when it is best for the speaker not to be too demanding (24).

(24) (You meet your neighbour Alberto in the supermarket. His wife has just died. You want to be sure he's ok.)
What are you eating for dinner? (155. Bienno)

Màngie=t	/	Fe=t	mangià	ché	da	hena?
eat.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	eat.INF	what	for	dinner

SCI: You're being specific. [You want to know what.]
FS: You're getting at the subject **in a roundabout way**.

4.3.3. Being courteous but not presumptuous

As less aggressive and gentler, FS is often described by speakers as a more 'polite' form, and it is also recognized as the longer one. This produces a contrast in use between FS for a neighbour, or older family member, and SCI for a close family or friend of similar age, (25), (26).

(25) (Now they work in Switzerland...)
Does Teresa miss her children? (70. Cividate)

Ghe	manche=i	/	Ha=i	mancà=ga
3.DAT=	miss.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	/	do.PRS.3=SCL.3PL.M	miss.INF=3.DAT
i	ho	fiöi	a	Teresa?
the	her	children to	Teresa	

SCI: If you know the addressee well.
FS: **If you don't know the addressee particularly well** this longer form is better.

(26) (You've invited your neighbour to lunch on Sunday but she hasn't replied yet. Ask her:)
Could you let me know tomorrow? (50. Bienno)

Pòde=t	/	He=t	podé	
be_able_to. PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	/	do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG	be_able_to.INF	
fà=mo=l	haè	domà?		
let.INF=1SG.DAT=3DEF.ACC	know.INF	tomorrow		

SCI: Direct
FS: More relaxed. Asking **'ti prego di X'** or please would you [be so kind as to] let me know tomorrow.

In (27), in using FS the speaker is maintaining social distance between themselves and the hearer (which is a form of negative politeness), and notes that in these circumstances the question would also be most compatible with use of the impersonal 3SG form.

(27) (You meet me in the street.)
Where are you going? (87. Megno di Corteno)
'nde nde=t? / fe=t andà?
where go.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG / do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG go.INF
SCI: This is a more intimate question. You know this person better.
FS: It's as if you are using 'Lei' [Italian 3sg deferent form], with a certain distance. It's a **politer form**.

In (28), (29), the informant links the speaker's presupposition of the answer to the degree to which the speaker knows the hearer. With FS, the speaker is making an informed guess of the likely answer, while still allowing themselves the possibility of being wrong, so avoiding being presumptuous. In comparison, the SCI question is either largely rhetorical, as the speaker either already knows the answer for sure (as indicated in these two particular examples), or (for other speakers) has no idea of the answer because their interlocutor is a (dialect-speaking) stranger and they cannot predict their behaviour.

(28) (You meet me in the street.)
Where are you going? (154. Esine)
Ne=t / Fe=t nà (a)ndóe?
go.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG / do.PRS.2SG=SCL.2SG go.INF where
SCI: If you are from my family.
FS: If **you're not from my family**, I [don't know for sure but] can guess at the answer and I want to understand.

(29) (We want to celebrate.)
Do you like Prosecco? (154. Esine)
Te piàde=l / Fa=l piadì=t
2SG.DAT= please.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M / do.PRS.3=SCL.3SG.M please.INF=2SG.DAT
'l prosec?
the prosecco
SCI: I'm sure that you like it [so I can use this blunt form]. [In-family. I know you so I know the answer.]
FS: Someone you've just met so I don't know if they like prosecco or not. **It's almost a polite form.** It leaves them the possibility of saying that they really don't like prosecco at all.

5. Meaning types

This section provides the justification for the labels used to describe the categories above. Meanings attributable to the syntactic structure in Section 4.1 are interpreted as conventional presuppositions; those derived principally from *fa* in Section 4.2 are considered conventional implicatures; and the politeness meanings of Section 4.3 are taken to be conversational implicatures. These concepts are as originally described by Grice (1989 [1975, 1978]), with a definition of conventional implicature from Potts (2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2012) (which also has its origins in Grice's work), and politeness theory from Brown and Levinson (1987 [1974]).

5.1. Conventional implicatures and conventional presuppositions

In his division of meaning types, Potts (2005: Fg. 2.1) first splits those that are context dependent (conversational implicatures and conversational presuppositions) from entailments. Within the entailment branch, there is a three-way split. The 'at-issue' branch is the main truth-conditional content of the utterance, dependent on the lexical content of the words and the ways they are combined in the syntactic structure. This leaves conventional implicatures and conventional presuppositions as categories to contain the context-independent, exceptional meanings of FS (which are divided here into those primarily attributable to the structure and those derived from the meaning of *fa*). Potts explains how sentences can have multidimensional meanings which may interact pragmatically (Potts, 2007a: 675–6), as well as depend on each other syntactically (Potts, 2007b).

Potts takes a highly restrictive view of what is a conventional implicature, and it is inherently speaker oriented. In addition, the designation must be associated with a word or phrase, so for this reason properties associated with the structure described in Section 4.1 must be seen as conventional presuppositions. The presupposition is explained here by the embedded clause being a complete proposition that already exists at the time of utterance.

For Potts, the term 'conventional implicature' can apply only to items that do not, in addition, have 'at-issue content' (a stipulation which, as Potts recognized, is controversial). Speaker-oriented words such as discourse connector such as *but* or epithet *damn* are then typical in that regard. For Potts (2005: 33) these conventional implicatures differ from conventional presuppositions in that they may introduce new content that is not part of the Common Ground when uttered. They are 'items [which] are primarily devices for situating the main clause in the web of information that comprises the discourse' (Potts, 2012: 2517).

It is true to say that, in all dialects, the function and therefore meaning of *fa* is that of a speaker-oriented truth operator. Yet for it to be considered a conventional implicature, under Potts' strict definition it cannot also have 'at issue' meaning, and, at first glance, this seems to present a problem. Evidently in the less grammaticalized dialects, *fa* has meaning. This meaning is

equated with 'do' because *fa* is used preferentially with different semantic categories of verbs almost exactly as expected if it were main verb 'do', as judged by the felicity of the *do so/it* test (Swinburne 2024b). Syntactically this lexical verb supports the propositional clause giving rise to the particular logical meanings.

Yet other evidence suggests that *fa* is not adding a 'do' meaning to the combination. Note that in the (rarer) instances where *fa* is used with a non-activity verb (e.g. (3), (4), (8) with theme subjects; (7), (16), with experiencer subjects), it does not add activity or subject agentivity (or causation). So even though it has the properties of lexical 'do' (as shown by its subject preferences), it is not contributing 'do' to the 'at-issue' content. The apparent contradiction (in *fa* having, or not having, lexical content) therefore goes away with the stipulation that *fa* adds its meaning in another 'dimension' (to use Potts' word), outside the main proposition being expressed. Therefore within FS, 'do' as a grammatical element is part of the 'at issue' content, but it contributes its meaning to the construction as a conventional implicature. This fits with Potts' (2007b) description of how these two levels of meaning can be interwoven and depend on each other syntactically.

5.2. Conversational implicatures

The meanings of Section 4.3 are relatively easily classified as conversational implicatures because informants are commenting directly on the intended effect of the form and with whom they would use it. They all fit within the politeness framework of Brown and Levinson (1987 [1974]) and help to connect the expressive meaning of the form to its social function. Politeness, according to B&L, is communication applying a series of techniques to minimize the potential threat to the 'face' of the interlocutor inherent in every speech act (and which is particularly apparent in questions). In positive politeness, the speaker is communicating that their desires are also shared with the hearer ('I want what you want'). In negative politeness the speaker is minimizing the imposition they are placing on the hearer in making the speech act ('I would not presume/assume').

In politeness theory, it is assumed that Grice, 1975 conversational maxims are still in operation. By the speaker seemingly disobeying the rules, the hearer infers that there is a reason behind it, in this case that of politeness. For instance, as FS is the longer form (as informants overtly comment), it is not the maximally efficient, so seems to be contravening his Maxim of Quality. Furthermore, as it distances the speaker from the propositional content, it contravenes the Maxim of Manner. It could also be said that by introducing doubt about the truth of embedded propositional content it is a kind of 'hedge' ('Is it *really* true that 'X'?). And, as it is not simply asking about the truth, yes or no, of the embedded proposition, but about its degree of truth, it therefore goes against the Maxim of Relevance.

In describing the identity of the interlocutor with which FS rather than SCI would be appropriate, there are two systems in operation, and these can be roughly correlated with attempts at positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is about minimizing social distance ('we're all one and the same') and is accorded to community 'insiders' (FS) to distinguish them from 'outsiders' (SCI) (at least by speakers who have this flexibility). Negative politeness involves maximizing the social distance ('you are more worthy than me') and is observed in the neighbour/elderly parent (FS), close family/friend (SCI) contrast.

There are conflicting pressures in applying negative politeness because it can also be considered more polite for a speaker to get to the point (i.e. 'be direct'). Thus in the context of close family or friend, where the rather abrupt SCI is preferred, SCI is not considered rude, but a need to express the message as simply and quickly as possible. (It is also preferred in cases of urgency or seriousness, regardless of the interlocutor – see (12) above.) If simplicity is not of overwhelming importance, then politeness is achieved by the speaker using the strategies of 'be conventionally indirect' and 'don't presume/assume'. The reader might note how, in (29) above, this mimics the informant's interpretation of FS in the neighbour scenario to indicate 'I think I know what you want, but I'm open to being wrong' (i.e. 'don't presume'), but with the close-family, SCI scenario, to be able to indicate with certainty 'I know what you want' (presumption acceptable) (and in cases where the interlocutor is a stranger, there would be no presupposition at all, so no presumption.)

5.3. Expressive versus logical meanings

A further point to be made regarding the classification of meaning types is that there is no clearcut division between the logical meanings of Swinburne (under revision) and the expressive and social meanings described here.[9] As mentioned above, it does not strictly follow a pragmatic-semantic division. Presuppositions (both papers) are allocated by different authors into the semantic or pragmatic category, and conventional implicatures (this paper), as they are context-independent (at least under Potts' definition), would be semantic. In fact, the content has been divided this way because it is of interest to different readerships.

Some traits are clearly closely related, as if the expressive meanings were natural consequences of the logical ones. For example, Swinburne (2021: §5.5.2.4) described how the event being questioned was seemingly viewed 'from afar' and therefore perfectively, and interpreted this as due to the proposition being embedded. For the same reason, because the idea of the event (though not the event itself) reflected in the embedded proposition would be anterior to the time the utterance is made, the speaker has already thought about the proposition and so is expressing their concern about the consequences (this

[9] In the thesis (Swinburne, 2021), both sets of meanings are listed together. The separate account of the logical meanings (Swinburne, in revision), includes new data and examples of intensional reference. This provides the strongest support for a biclausal analysis of FS (in those dialects where it is optional), because it cannot be simply attributed to a greater lexical content to 'do'.

paper, Section 4.1.1). Similarly, Swinburne (in revision) notes some references to entities in FS that were indirect and thus intensional, but in the corresponding SCI question, they were direct and extensional. This is similar to the effect when the speaker talks about the topic 'in a roundabout way' (this paper Section 4.3.2) resulting in the utterance being perceived as gentler and less confrontational. It is also key to calling FS a (syntactically) embedded, and therefore indirect question, and linking it to the meaning of politeness (this paper Section 4.3.3).

Despite this causal relationship between the two types of meaning, it is not possible to conclude that the logical meanings are primary and precede in time the expressive meanings, which would then be derived and secondary. It seems that all informants sense both types of meaning, but differ in which aspects were more salient to them. For example, informant 36.Esine (male) who invented many rich stories of what the speaker might be thinking on asking each question variant, was strongly focused on the expressive meanings and the emotional concern the speaker was feeling for the addressee. He also tended to see FS as indicating strong doubt and the presupposition of a negative answer. Other informants were more likely to associate FS with minor doubt and the question seeking confirmation of a positive answer. Informants 50.Bienno (female) and 70.Cividate (male) were both inclined to view FS as polite, engaging, and used to start a conversation, but SCI as aggressive and confrontational.

In conclusion therefore, despite the differences between informants, it is true to say that there is sufficient overlap so that no one person, or group of people (as classified by gender, age, geography, or socio-economic class) differs substantially in their overall interpretation: it is just that different individuals employ one meaning more than another due to their own personalities. Overall, within the limits of the grammaticalization cline represented in the valley dialects, no chain of meanings is discernible and it appears that the meanings present at the beginning are also present at the end.[10]

6. Grammaticalization and subjectification

The meanings of FS were described in Section 4.2 as 'subjective'. They showed how FS enables the speaker to express their stance on the topic, including doubt about what was previously taken to be true, so engaging the addressee. Traugott (2010: 30) defines subjectivity as meaning that indicates the 'relationship to the speaker and the speaker's beliefs and attitudes', and the process of subjectification 'the reanalysis of pragmatic meanings as coded semantic meanings in the context of speaker-hearer negotiation of meaning'. This raises the issue of whether the development of these particular FS meanings should more properly be described as subjectification rather than grammaticalization. Subjectification is viewed by Traugott as a distinct process, although, because of the nature of grammaticalization, it is commonly associated with it. In fact, the following discussion will conclude that, in this case, there is at most only the exaggeration of a meaning that was already present in the word 'do' so there is no separate subjectification process operating.

6.1. Subject perspective inherent in 'do' semantics

Other constructions available in Italian/Camuno and English demonstrate how main verb *fare/fa* 'do' naturally comes with emphatic and intensifying qualities. For example, note the meaning conveyed in (30). (This is clearly biclausal with a lexical 'do' verb that in Camuno can take an additional 'do' support verb. A complementizer *a* separates the clauses. Parenthetical material such as the lexical subject *tu/te,* and a wh-interrogative such as *come* 'how', may also be placed between the verbs.)

(30) a.	Come	fai	tu	a	mangiare	tutta	quella	cioccolata!?			(Italian)
	how	do.PRES.2SG	you	to	eat.INF	all	that	chocolate			
b.	Fe-t	fà	comè,	té,	a	mangià	tüta	chela	ciaculata?		(Esine)
	do-SCL.2SG	do.INF	how	you	to	eat.INF	all	that	chocolate		

'How (on earth) can you eat all that chocolate'? (Lit.) How are you doing eating all that chocolate?'

The same pragmatic meaning is found in the almost identical English construction in (31). It is also apparent when support verb *do* is used (optionally) as an intensifier in the affirmative in (32) and (33) (with dó-eat/like as a single intonational unit and dó attracting minor stress), and possibly also in its use with heavy intonational stress to counteract the presupposition that the opposite is true in (34).[11] [12]

(31) What are you dóing eating all that chocolate?
(32) You dó-eat a lot of chocolate!
(33) You dó-like your chocolate!
(You said you were allergic. But the chocolate is all gone. So I have to conclude...)
(34) You DÓ eat chocolate!

Given this evidence, a subjective quality to FS is scarcely mysterious: it seems to be a natural and expected development given the emphatic and intensifying quality of 'do'. A similar role in different languages whenever 'do' is not a syntactic necessity – in Camuno in a question and in English in a statement – is compelling evidence that the speaker perspective is

[10] This is evident in the full dataset which can be downloaded from the Oxford Research Archive, as sorted by the meaning or by dialect and informant.
[11] The effect in (34), but probably not in (32), (33), can also be attributed simply to the presence of any auxiliary providing a locus for stress: You HAVE eaten / ARE eating the chocolate!.
[12] Interestingly, a highlighting and speaker-perspective function is also attributed to non-emphatic affirmative *do* in historical English by Stein (1990: Chap 3).

buried in the word 'do', and is released in its use as a support verb. Another way to conceive this, is that, in Camuno, during grammaticalization the 'do' meaning that was previously backgrounded became foregrounded, and was re-packaged in a proposition separate from the main logical content.[13]

6.2. Grammaticalization

As mentioned briefly in the introduction, typically the first stages of grammaticalization involve an expansion in meanings as new implicatures (*sensu lato*), such as metaphors or conceptual metonyms (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 27–34), are adopted and maintained alongside the older more literal senses of a construction. Later on, the older, more literal/logical meanings may be lost leaving only the implicatures, so reducing the richness of meaning. FS, when optional (as described in this paper through the plethora of special meanings) is at a relatively early stage and it is being used selectively by speakers, according to the context, to produce certain effects. When the form is obligatory, there are no more special meanings because there is no alternative with which to contrast.

We now return to the scenario presented at the beginning to ask: is this correct for FS? Do we have, with FS, a construction which came to dominate and eventually replace its rival, SCI, as a consequence of its meanings being more 'expressive', or 'extravagant'? There is certainly sufficient evidence from native speaker judgements that FS is the more expressive; and most people would likely agree that the best interpretation of the preserved dialectal pattern is that overall FS has been replacing SCI. Yet whether or not the two phenomena are causally linked cannot be definitively proven even if the weight of evidence can strongly suggest it.

Despite this, it is still possible to claim that such a connection is a plausible hypothesis, and critical to this is how the expressiveness is being applied. FS, with its subjective, empathic, and conversational qualities, blended with the slightly distant and deferent approach that comes from indirectness, have produced a form which is interpreted by speakers as more polite. Politeness, we can infer, would be especially valued in small, isolated mountain villages where having good relations with neighbours leads to the long-term community survival.

To sum up: linguistically, the quality of politeness ultimately results from the particular combination of lexical source material and the syntactic structure built around it; the speech acts in which the construction is used and the cultural background of the speakers. In other languages, such as English or German, although the same basic lexical elements may be present, the ways in which they are combined may differ syntactically. Furthermore the uses to which the form is put, and so the reasons for its adoption by different societal groups, may be different. Thus cross-linguistically, although we can infer similar tendencies, there is no guarantee that the exact same pattern of grammaticalization will be repeated.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Nicola Swinburne: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Data availability

Full dataset will be made available through the Oxford Research Archive.

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[13] Traugott (2010: 40) proposes several reasons why grammaticalization and subjectification might go hand-in-hand. However, unlike in the instances of future auxiliaries (e.g. English *be going to* or *will*), where the (speaker-oriented) time component is indicated by the verb itself, the use of *fa* as a finite support verb rather than a finite main verb is not increasing the speaker perspective on the event. In Camuno the verb *fa* 'do' itself is not indicating tense, aspect, or modality (Swinburne, 2024b; Swinburne, in revision): these functions come from the affixes attached to it. However, the same absence of an aspectual function for *do* might not be true for historical English where *do*-support is more common in habitual (and past time) contexts: see Jones and Tagliamonte (2004) and references therein.

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The research published here was part of Nicola Swinburne's DPhil thesis at the University of Oxford (October, 2021, supervisor Sandra Paoli), with additional fieldwork in 2022-4. Dr. Swinburne's main interests are in grammaticalization, whether seen through synchronic or diachronic data. She is now a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp and hopes to research the history of 'do'-support in English.