

Morphosyntactic Doubling Phenomena in Non-Standard Varieties of English

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2. Survey of doubling phenomena

Candidates for syntactic doubling in non-standard varieties of English

- double comparatives and superlatives (e.g. *That is so much more easier to follow*)
- double modals (e.g. *I tell you what we might should do*)
- verb doubling, notably *do* as an unstressed tense marker (e.g. *This man what do own this...*)
- multiple negation / negative concord (e.g. *He won't do no harm*)
- resumptive / shadow pronouns (e.g. *This is the house which I painted it yesterday*)
- *as what / than what* in comparative clauses (e.g. *It's harder than what you think it is*)
- double conjunctions (e.g. *Suppose if he comes,...*)

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Double comparatives:

- (1) *That was the **bestest** chocolate gravy I've ever ate.* (Colloquial American English)
- (2) *Newport, though, is one of the **most liveliest** towns that I know of.* (Appalachian English)
- (3) *Then only can we promote **more healthier** environment to live in and make Fiji more appealing to tourists as well.* (Fiji English)

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Double modals:

- (1) *They **might could** be working in the shop.* (Scottish English)
- (2) *I can't play on Friday. I work late. I **might could** get it changed, though.* (North of England)
- (3) *You **might oughta** go to that meeting and express your opinion.* (Colloquial American English)
- (4) *You **might could** ask somebody along the road.* (Appalachian English)

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Verb doubling:

- (1) This man what **do** own this,... (SW; West Somerset)
- (2) We **do** breed our own cows. (SW; West Somerset)
- (3) I thought you *did* mean a rubber. (SW periphery, Herefordshire)
- (4) I *did* see thee this morning, [thee]' know (SW; Wiltshire;)
- (5) John *did* see it last night. (younger speakers from Somerset, Wiltshire and South Wales)

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Multiple negation:

- (1) *They **didn't do nothing** about **nobody** having **no** money or **nothing** like that.* (Urban AAVE)
- (2) ***Don't** be sittin' there tellin' me **no** lies or **nothin'**.* (Colloquial American English)
- (3) ***Nobody don't** recognize him.* (Newfoundland English)
- (4) *He **couldn't** get a job **nowhere**.* (English dialects in the North of England)
- (5) *He **wouldn't** give me **nothing**.* (English dialects in the Southeast of England)
- (6) ***Nothing don't** seriously wrong wid him.* (British Creole)
- (7) *I **couldn't** see **no** snake.* (Australian Vernacular English)
- (8) *Shi **neva** bring **no** *kaukau*.* (Hawai'i Creole)
'She didn't bring any food.'

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Resumptive pronouns in relative clauses:

- (1) *It's something that I keep returning to it.* (Scottish English)
- (2) *They jumped banks that time on the race-course that they wouldn't hunt over **them** today.* (Irish English)
- (3) *They are some students whom I am teaching **them** to write.* (Cameroon English)
- (4) *I don't think I had a teacher that I didn't really like **him**.* (Chicano English)
- (5) *The guests whom I invited **them** have arrived.* (Nigerian English)

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as what / than what:

- (1) a. *Well, Mum was as bad **as what** he was.*
 b. *So he's about eight years younger **than what** I am.* (Southeast of England)
- (2) a. *more **than what** you'd think actually*
 b. *You've as much on your coat **as what** you have in your mouth.* (Scottish English)

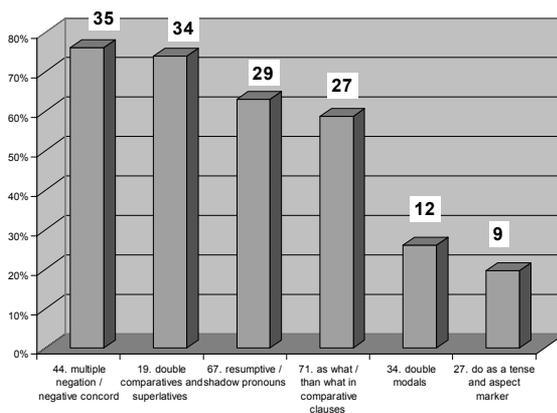
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3. Doubling phenomena in the World Atlas from different perspectives:

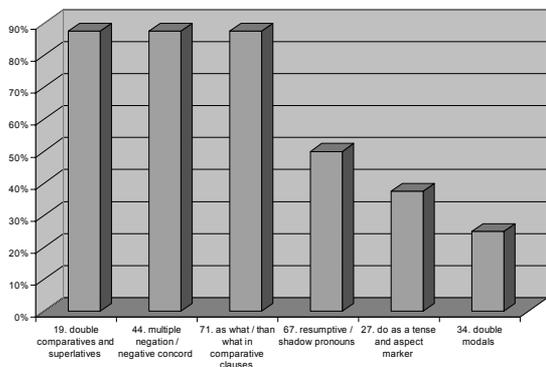
- vernacular universals (3.1)
- world regions (3.2)
- L1 – L2 – P/C (3.3)

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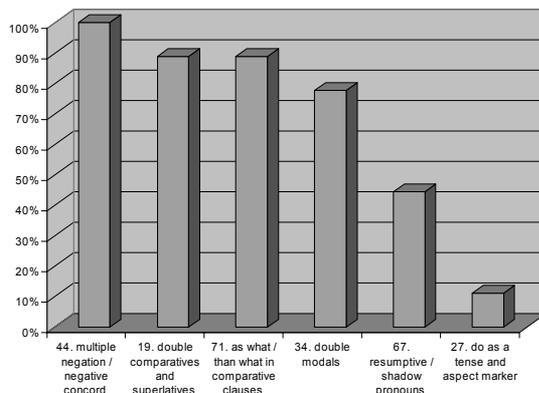
Doubling in all varieties (N=46)



British Isles: % of varieties where feature is attested

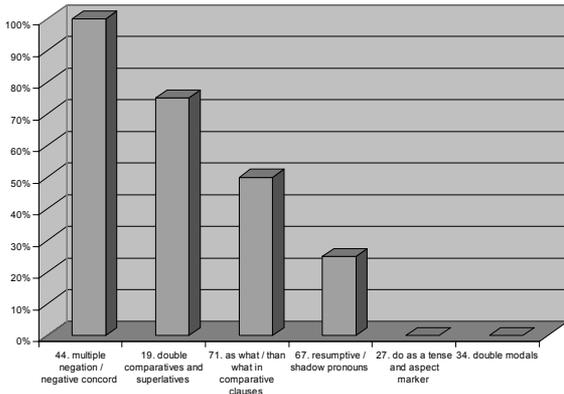


America: % of varieties where feature is attested

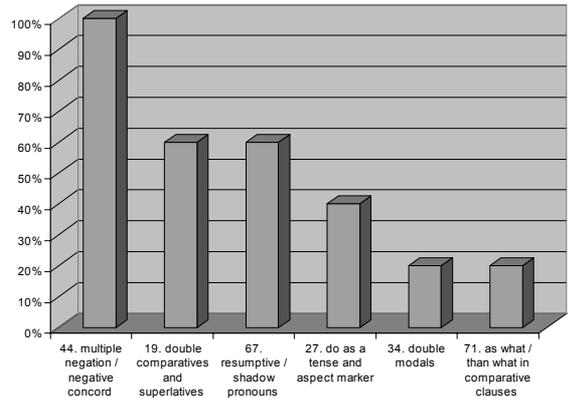


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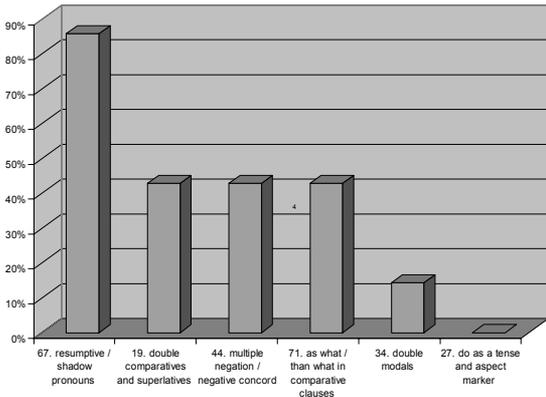
Australia: % of varieties where feature is attested



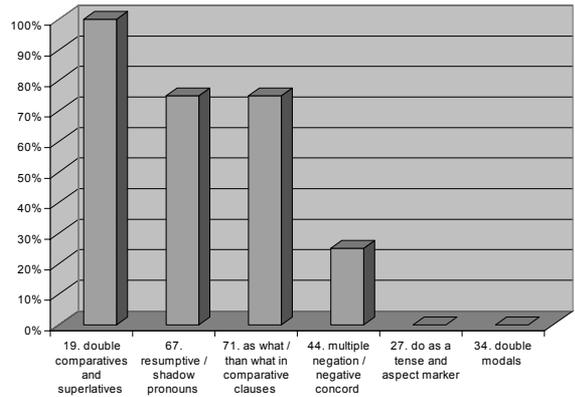
Caribbean: % of varieties where feature is attested



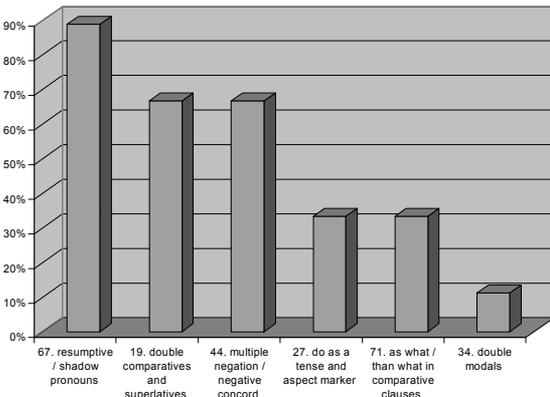
Pacific: % of varieties where feature is attested



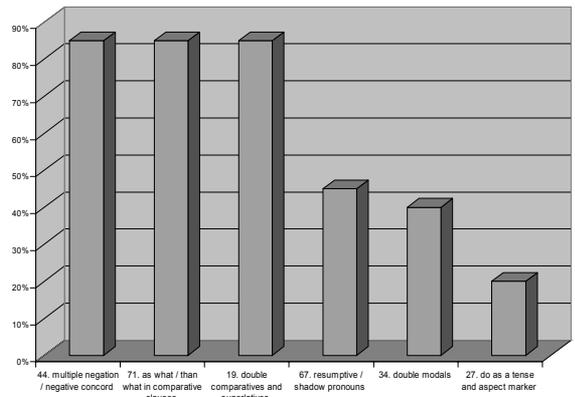
Asia: % of varieties where feature is attested



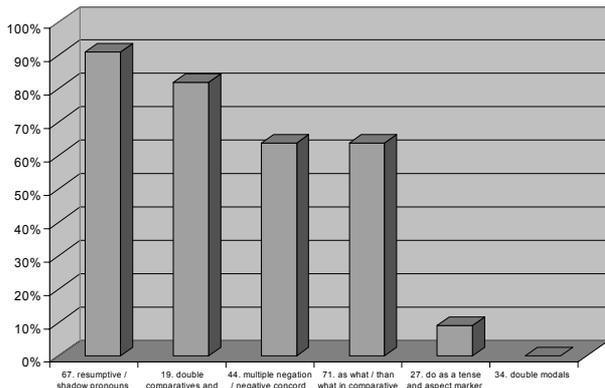
Africa: % of varieties where feature is attested



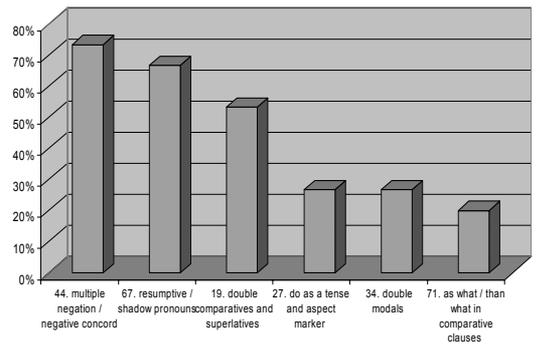
L1 varieties (N=20)



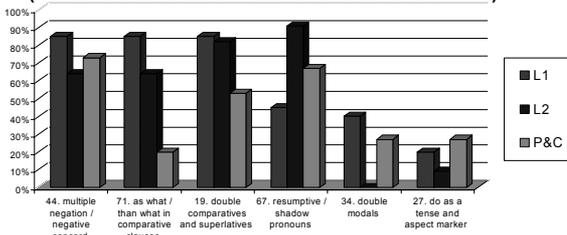
L2 varieties (N=11)



P&Cs (N=15)



Doubling Phenomena: L1 vs. L2 vs. P&C
(% of relevant varieties where feature is attested)



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Top L1 Top L2 Top P/C

multiple negation / negative concord	X		X
double comparatives and superlatives	X	X	X
resumptive / shadow pronouns		X	
as what / than what in comparative clauses	X		
double modals			TOP ≥ 50 %
do as a tense and aspect marker			

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3.4 Summary

- doubling phenomena rare in non-standard varieties of English:
 - a) < 10% of non-standard morphosyntactic features
 - b) distribution across varieties
- doubling phenomena primarily an L1 phenomenon
- prominent in both L2 and P/C: resumptive/shadow pronouns
- historically most stable across varieties: multiple negation
- for individual phenomena roots in OE and ME: double conjunctions (OE →); tense carrier *do* (ME →); double comparatives/superlatives (esp. EModE until early 17th century); shadow pronouns (late ME until mid-18th century); double modals (ME until mid-16th century)
- (relative) newcomer (dialectal usage since 17th century): as *what/than what* in L1 varieties; especially British Isles

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