Morphosyntactic Doubling Phenomena in Non-Standard Varieties of English

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(University of Freiburg)
Structure

1. The World Atlas of Morphosyntactic Variation in English

2. Survey of doubling phenomena

3. Doubling phenomena in the World Atlas from different perspectives
   3.1 Vernacular universals
   3.2 Distribution across anglophone world regions
   3.3 Distribution across L1-L2-P/C-varieties

4. Summary
1. The World Atlas of Morphosyntactic Variation in English
   (CD-ROM)

- about 100 contributors
- some 60 (groups of) varieties
- almost exclusively non-standard
- all spoken
... coming with the handbook:

The World Atlas of Morphosyntactic Variation in English (CD-ROM)
Varieties covered in the Handbook

- main national varieties
- distinctive regional, ethnic, and social varieties
- major contact varieties (pidgins and creoles)
- major English as a Second Language varieties
## Distribution of 46 non-standard varieties across world regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World region</th>
<th>Varieties for which feature classifications are available</th>
<th>Total L1 (20)</th>
<th>Total L2 (11)</th>
<th>Total P/C (15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Isles</td>
<td>Orkney and Shetland, ScE, IrE, WelE, North, East Anglia, Southwest, Southeast</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>NfldE, CollAmE, AppE, OzE, IsSE US, Urban AAVE, Earlier AAVE, Gullah, ChcE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BahE, JamC, Tob/TrnC, SurCs, BelC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>CollAusE, AusVE (Tasmania), AusCs, AbE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>Bislama, TP, SolP, Fiji E, Norfolk, regional NZE; HawC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>ButlE, PakE, SgE, MalE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>NigP, GhE, GhP, CamE, CamP, EAfE, WhSAfE, InSAfE, BlSAfE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
76-features catalogue according to feature groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T &amp; A</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb morph.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativization</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complementation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Organization and Word Order</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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,…*) (not further discussed in this talk)
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)
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)
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)
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.’
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)
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)
3. Doubling phenomena in the World Atlas from different perspectives:

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

Sociolinguists have amassed copious evidence in the past 35 years for a surprising conclusion: a small number of phonological and grammatical processes recur in vernaculars wherever they are spoken. This conclusion follows from the observation that, no matter where in the world the vernaculars are spoken …, these features inevitably occur.

(Chambers, J.K. 2004)
… vernacular universals … are primitive features, not learned. As such, they belong to the language faculty, the innate set of rules and representations that are the natural inheritance of every human being. They cannot be merely English. They must have counterparts in the other languages of the world that are demonstrably the outgrowths of the same rules and representations in the bioprogram.

Vernacular universals arise in the context of sociolinguistic dialectology as generalizations about intralinguistic variation (so far mainly from English dialects) but their universal status is emerging from analyses of putative crosslinguistic counterparts. (Chambers, J.K. 2004)
Vernacular angloversals
% of varieties worldwide where feature is attested

[74] lack of inversion in main clause yes/no questions (e.g. You get the point?)  89%
[49] never as preverbal past tense negator (e.g. He never came)  87%
[10] me instead of I in coordinate subjects (e.g. My brother and me were late for school)  87%
[42] adverbs same form as adjectives (e.g. He treated her wrong)  85%
Doubling in all varieties (N=46)

- 35: Multiple negation / negative concord
- 34: Double comparatives and superlatives
- 29: Resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 27: As what / than what in comparative
- 12: Double modals
- 9: Do as a tense and aspect marker

(44. multiple negation / negative concord)
(19. double comparatives and superlatives)
(67. resumptive / shadow pronouns)
(71. as what / than what in comparative)
(34. double modals)
(27. do as a tense and aspect marker)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Varieties Where Feature is Present</th>
<th>British Isles</th>
<th>America</th>
<th>Caribbean</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Asia</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>lack of inversion in main clause yes/no questions</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>me instead of I in coordinate subjects</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>lack of inversion / lack of auxiliaries in wh-questions</td>
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<td>degree modifier adverbs lack -ly</td>
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<td>special forms or phrases for the second person plural pronoun</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>levelling of difference between Present Perfect and Simple Past</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>double comparatives and superlatives</td>
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<td>regularization of irregular verb paradigm</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>myself/meself in a non-reflexive function</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>lack of number distinction in reflexives</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
World Englishes: Vernacular Universals vs. Contact-Induced Change: An International Symposium

University of Joensuu Research Station, Mekrijärvi
1-3 September, 2006
3.2 Distribution across anglophone world regions

The Noun Phrase

- 18: postnom. for-phrases
- 19: double comp./superl.
- 20: regularized comparison

No. of Varieties: 46 / No. of Features: 7
Modal Verbs

1 Feature selected

x 34: double modals
o 35: epistemic mustn’t

No. of Varieties: 46 / No. of Features: 2
The Verb Phrase

1 Feature selected

0 26: perf. auxiliary be
x 27: do as tense/aspect marker
0 28: completive/perfect done

No. of Varieties: 46 / No. of Features: 13
Complementation

1 Feature selected

F0 69: inv. order in ind. questions
F0 70: unsplit for to
F0 71: as/than/what in comparatives

No. of Varieties: 46 / No. of Features: 5
British Isles: % of varieties where feature is attested

19. double comparatives and superlatives
44. multiple negation / negative concord
71. as what / than what in comparative
67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
27. do as a tense and aspect marker
34. double modals
America: % of varieties where feature is attested

- 44. multiple negation / negative
- 19. double comparatives and
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 34. double modals
- 67. resumptive / shadow
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
Australia: % of varieties where feature is attested

- 44. multiple negation / negative concord
- 19. double comparatives and superlatives
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
- 34. double modals
Caribbean: % of varieties where feature is attested

- 44. multiple negation / negative
- 19. double comparatives and
- 67. resumptive / shadow
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
- 34. double modals
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
Pacific: % of varieties where feature is attested

- 67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 19. double comparatives and superlatives
- 44. multiple negation / negative concord
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 34. double modals
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker

4
Asia: % of varieties where feature is attested

- 19. double comparatives and
- 67. resumptive / shadow
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 44. multiple negation / negative
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
- 34. double modals

Asia: % of varieties where feature is attested
3.3 Distribution across L1-L2-P/C-varieties
Distribution of Doubling Phenomena: L1
L1 varieties (N=20)

- 44. multiple negation
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 19. double comparatives and
- 67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 34. double modals
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker

- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
Distribution of Doubling Phenomena: L2

JamC
IrE
IsSE
Urban AAVE
North of E
CamE
Gullah
Earlier... E
Ghanaian E
SgE
BelC
BlSAfE
PakE
SurC
BahE
AbE
WhSAfE
SolP
Bislama
TP
Norfolk
EAF
AusC
Orkney/Shetland
L2 varieties (N=11)

- 67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 19. double comparatives and negative concord
- 44. multiple negation
- 71. as what / than what in comparative
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
- 34. double modals
P&Cs (N=15)

- 44. multiple negation / negative concord
- 67. resumptive / shadow pronouns
- 19. double comparatives and superlatives
- 27. do as a tense and aspect marker
- 34. double modals
- 71. as what / than in comparative clauses

P&Cs (N=15)
Doubling Phenomena: L1 vs. L2 vs. P&C
(% of relevant varieties where feature is attested)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Top L1</th>
<th>Top L2</th>
<th>Top P/C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>multiple negation / negative concord</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double comparatives and superlatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resumptive / shadow pronouns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>as what / than what</em> in comparative clauses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>double modals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOP ≥ 50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do as a tense and aspect marker</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOP ≥ 50%**
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