Towards a typology of *wh*-doubling in Northern Italian dialects

Introduction. In this work we consider doubling in simple main wh-question in the Northern Italian domain and show that *wh*-doubling can vary according to the type of wh-item that is doubled (the doublee) and to the type of pronominal doubling the wh-item (the doubler). We argue that all types of doubling are to be interpreted as (partial) copying that realize one or more features of the doublee along the lines proposed by Nuñez (2001). Doubling is thus an interesting test bed to determine which internal features/projections a *wh*-item contains. At the same time, our investigation can shed light on general conditions on doubling.

A. Focussing on operator doubling, i. e. forms where one of the two doubles correspond to *what*, we will then show that the doubler *what* can be clitic, weak or strong, while only full forms can occur in the lower position. This obeys Barbiers' (2008) generalization according to which the most specified form is always the lower one, since this is the first "matrix" out of which (one or several) features are copied.

(1)   a.   *Cusè* al pésa *quantu* l tò sacch?   Mendrisio (Northern Lombard)
              What it weigh how-much your sack
        b.   *Cusa* al pésa *quantu* l tò sacch?
              What it weigh how-much your sack
        c.   *Sa* al pésa *quantu* l tò sacch?
              What it weigh how-much your sack
              'How much does your sack weigh?'

B. **Operator doubling**: Furthermore, *wh*-doubling can vary according to the *wh*-items that are doubled. A first type found in Northern Lombard is sensitive to a part of Keenan and Comrie's (1977) case hierarchy, since it first targets *wh*-items typically realizing internal arguments like *what* and *where*, and then extends progressively to adjuncts like *how* and *when* (the subject *wh* requires an independent treatment since it often displays another type of structure, which is however not the canonical one). Elements like *why*, which according to Rizzi (2001) is located higher in the left periphery of complex wh-phrases, which also have a topical feature, are not doubled:

(2)   *Cossa* inviti-to *chi*?!   Paduan (Central Veneto)
        COSSA invite-you who(m)
        'Who (the hell) are you inviting?!'
        = 'You should not invite that person.'

(3)   *Cossa* ve-to *dove*?!   Paduan (Central Veneto)
        COSSA go-you where
        'Where (the hell) are you going?!'
        = 'You should not go there.'

(4)   a.   **Cossa* corito *parcossa*?!
              What run-you why
        b.   **Cossa* lesito *che libro*?!
              What read-you which book

Our proposal is that this type of doubling is sensitive to the operator feature of the *wh*-item and singles out only those *wh*-items that occur in the low CP area close to FocusP. Wh-items targeting a higher area, like Topic-like ones and those targeting IntP, like *why*, are not doubled.

C. **Nominal wh-doubling**: A second type of doubling is found in Central and Eastern Lombard dialects, where operator *wh*-doubling is restricted to nominal *wh*-items like *what*, *who*, including complex wh-items containing a N like *which* X. In this case, we argue that here what is doubled is the nominal restrictor located in the internal structure of the *wh*-item. Notice that nominal restrictors are present also in other quantifiers (like English somebody, anybody, everybody, nobody).

(5)   a.   *Che* 'ncontre-t *chi*?   Malonno (Eastern Lombard)
              Wh meet-you who
              'Whom are you meeting?'

      b.   *Ch'* ö-t   *qual*?
              Wh want-you which
              'Which one do you want?'

D. **Analysis**: Grewendorf (2011) dubs German *was* 'what' as the pure operator and shows that it has different properties with respect to all other *wh*-items. We translate this intuition in structural terms by hypothesizing that *what* has a less complex internal makeup with respect to other whs.
Capitalizing on Poletto and Pollock (2009) we propose that the internal structure of *wh*-items can include at least three projections as shown in (6):
(6) [DisjunctionP [OperatorP [RestrictorP]]]]
The *wh*-item **what** has a less complex structure as the one in (7) in some dialects or the one in (8) in others:
(7) [OperatorP [RestrictorP]]
(8) [OperatorP]
Complex *wh*-items do not have an internal OperatorP, they have the following internal makeup:
(9) [DisjunctionP [RestrictorP [NP]]]
This is the reason why they are never doubled by *what*, since partial doubling of a more complex structure is allowed, but the higher doubler cannot have more features than the lower one, and in this case it would have the Operator additional feature. The same type of reasoning explains nominal *wh*-doubling: since in these varieties *what* has a null nominal restrictor as shown in (7), only elements that contain the same nominal restrictor can be doubled by *what*.
E. **Summary**: Various types of doubling can be explained assuming that we can double different portions of the internal structure of the *wh*-item and that different types of *wh*-items have a different internal layering.