

# Double Comparative Forms in William Shakespeare Plays: Socio-linguistic Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Double Comparative forms (more mightier) are a disputable subject among grammarians long time ago. The research aims to give a better understanding of how double comparative forms used in William Shakespeare's plays from a sociolinguistic perspective. English language grammarians regarded the utilization of such structures unacceptable and non-standard in English language. I prove that these forms have roots back to Latin and they used in standard language, in William Shakespeare's drama and other dramatists till 1711. Prescriptivism regarded these kinds of structures as incorrect use of language. The study demonstrates that double comparative structures were an obvious aspect of upper-class people at that time not as some scholars regard them "Bad Double Comparatives!" and they start to be low-class language and non-standard at 1711 and onward.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The problem

Double comparative forms are argumentative for many years. It has been noticed that in the past double comparative forms were used in the daily talks of people. It was also noticed that William Shakespeare utilized such forms in his plays. This phenomenon was regarded later on by prescriptivism as improper use of language and called for eliminate them from writings and daily talks.

### 1.2. The hypothesis

It has been noticed that double comparative forms were used apparently in William Shakespeare plays and in old English language. The hypotheses are:

1. Double comparative forms were used by high-class people and it was obvious that old English contained such forms and it refutes that they are an improper use of language.

2. Double comparative forms used in William Shakespeare plays. William Shakespeare high-class characters utilized such forms to confirm that these form used only by high-class people at that time.

### 1.3. The value of the study

The value of this study is, it clarifies that these form (double comparative forms) which we regarded them nowadays as improper use of language were used by educated and high-class people once upon a time.

### 1.4. The limits

The study was limited to William Shakespeare plays which are: Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Henry IV (part II), As You Like It, Henry V, Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Othello, Measure for Measure, King Lear, Anthony and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens, Coriolanus, The Tempest, Henry VIII, and The Two Noble Kinsmen.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Comparison may be defined as a judgement on two things by weighting them on scale (Stassen 2001: 993). Double Comparatives are hybrid forms which combine more with adjectives already end with the affix -er (e.g. more healthier, more stronger). Double Comparative Forms were marginal and under dispute among scholars since they were regarded as a non-standard Language use.

Double comparatives were negligible. In spite of being used in literature, they started to fade gradually by the power of standardization (Kytö & Romaine, 2000:173). Double periphrastic forms are the aspects of non-standard use of grammar throughout Britain (Edwards and Weltens, 1985: 117). No specific date for the emerge of double comparatives but some instances are noticeable in Old English and Lati (Curme, 1931: 503 and Kytö & Romaine, 1997:330–331)

**Table 1.1 Double Comparative in OE**

Old English Examples	Translation	Text
Ma wyrse	More worse	DEFE.LS.
Swiðor (. . .) eadmodra	More humbler	ÆLF.HO.
Swiðor bettra	More better	FARM.RW.
Mare heare	More higher	ANON.NI.

In early Renaissance, high respect to Latin affects the language all along and as a result, grammar was regarded as “an attribute of Latin” (Görlach 1999: 482). But double comparative forms turn out to be patchy (Kytö 1996:128). Therefore; researches carried out on Double Comparative Forms are few in number because of the massive influence of Standardization and Prescriptivism.

## 2. William Shakespeare and Double Periphrastic Comparatives

Drama was regarded as the essential source to provide enough evidence of how linguistic practices vary among social spectrum. In drama, we need individuals who speak in a different style in order to figure out the social

status of people (high or low) since Romaine (1994: 75) suggested that difference in style tend to correlate with differences in social classes. It means that elevated style correlates high-class individuals with and non-elevated styles correlates with low-class individuals. Some critics (Magnusson 2001: 24–29 and Wales 2001:193–208) claim that William Shakespeare is the dramatists who represents registers, geographical dissimilarities and social class differences. Moreover, he is the writer with high number of double comparatives in his plays. Braunmuller (1990: 67) argues that Renaissance Second Generation Dramatists (Shakespeare and Chapman) start to take into account the linguistic performances as a reflection for individuals' personalities. Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998) notice that the occurrence of Double Comparative forms and some other aspects is determined by social differences.

Ovid is one of the sources that gives William Shakespeare inspiration and affects his work. Ovid is a Roman poet whose works were mainly concerned with myths. In his poems he talks about the metamorphosis of the world from the beginning of creation to deification of Julius Caesar. In Arthur Golding's Translation of Ovid, one can notice that he uses Double Comparatives many times. The table below shows the repetition of Comparative Forms in Arthur Golding's Translation of Ovid.

#### 2.1 Double Comparatives in Arthur Golding's Translation of Ovid

No.	Double Comparative Forms	Details
1.	<u>More nearer</u> to the Stygian caves, and ghostes of persones deade.	The Seconde Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 48
2.	Dyd follow freshly in the chase <u>more swifter</u> than the winde,	The Third Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, P. 68
3.	But such a one it was, as none <u>more sharper</u> was than it,	The Fyft Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 111
4.	<u>More neerer home</u> by Iphys meanes transformed late before.	The Ninth Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 197
5.	Her strength encreased, and her looke <u>more sharper</u> was too syght.	The Ninth Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 200
6.	<u>More wyghter farre</u> than any man. Yee would have thought his feete	The Eleventh Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 226
7.	Of waking dogge, nor gagling goose <u>more waker</u> than the hound,	The Eleventh Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 232
8.	A household care <u>more neerer home</u> did in her stomacke sink,	The Thirteenth Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p. 265
9.	<u>More longer</u> than theyr forepart is.	The Fifteenth Booke of Ovids Metamorphosis, p.303
		<b>Total = 9 Rep.</b>

The above table shows that Double Comparatives have been used in Latin and this can be seen in the translation of Ovids Metamorphosis. In another words, Latin was the dominant language in the early modern

periods not only for drama but the English grammar as well. William Shakespeare was really infatuated with these types of works that's why he utilized the same style of Ovids in the use of Double Comparative forms.

William Shakespeare utilized Double comparative forms for figures who had distinctive positions in their community. Therefore; in court sceneries, double comparative forms uttered by royal family or important figures such as (i.e. King Henry in Henry IV, the Duke of Norfolk in Henry VIII or King Lear and Cordelia in King Lear); in ancient Greek settings, double comparative forms uttered by noble figures such as (i.e. Hector and Troilus in Troilus and Cressida or Octavius in Anthony and Cleopatra), whereas in cities sceneries, they attested with wealth and powerful individuals (e.g. Angelo in Measure for Measure).

But there are only four examples of double comparatives uttered by low-class individuals: the clown in Shakespeare's All's Well That Ends Well (1 example), Touchstone in As You Like It (2 instances) and Bottom the Weaver in A Midsummer Night's Dream (1 example). These examples support the hypothesis that double comparative forms uttered by high-class individuals rather than low-class ones.

The upcoming table illustrates the distribution of double comparatives in William Shakespeare plays.

**Table 2.2. Double Comparatives in Shakespeare**

Comparative Form	Character	Play
more fairer	King Henry	Shakespeare's King Henry IV, Part II (iv, 5)
more better	Fluellen	Shakespeare's King Henry V (iii, 2)
more sharper	King of France	Shakespeare's King Henry V (iii, 5)
more happier	King Henry	Shakespeare's King Henry V (IV, viii)
more stronger	Duke of Norfolk	Shakespeare's King Henry VIII (i, 1)
more fairer	Boyet	Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost (iv, 1)
more better	Bottom	Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (iii, 1)
more elder	Shylock	Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice (iv, 1)
more sounder	Touchtone	Shakespeare's As You Like It (iii, 2)
more worthier	Touchtone	Shakespeare's As You Like It (iii, 3)
more softer	Hector	Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (ii, 2)
more wider	Troilus	Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (ii, 2)
more fitter	Angelo	Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (ii, 2)
more mightier	Angelo	Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (v, 1)
more hotter	Clown	Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well (iv,5)
more better	Prospero	Shakespeare's The Tempest (iv,2)
more braver	Prospero	Shakespeare's The Tempest (iv,2)
more nearer	Polonius	Shakespeare's Hamlet (ii,1)
more richer	Hamlet	Shakespeare's Hamlet (iii,2)

more rawer	Hamlet	Shakespeare's Hamlet (v,2)
more wider	Duke of Venice	Shakespeare's Othello (i,3)
more safer	Duke of Venice	Shakespeare's Othello (i,3)
more nearer	Othello	Shakespeare's Othello (v,2)
more better	Senator	Shakespeare's Timon of Athens (ii,1)
more kinder	Timon of Athens	Shakespeare's Timon of Athens (iv,1)
more richer	Cordelia	Shakespeare's King Lear (i,1)
more worthier	King Lear	Shakespeare's King Lear (i,1)
more corrupter	Duke of Cornwall	Shakespeare's King Lear (ii,2)
more worse	Regan	Shakespeare's King Lear (ii,2)
more headier	King Lear	Shakespeare's King Lear (ii,4)
more harder	Kent	Shakespeare's King Lear (iii,2)
more larger	Octavius	Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra (iii,6)
more worthier	Coriolanus	Shakespeare's Coriolanus (iii,1)
more bigger	Theseus	Shakespeare's and Fletcher's The Two Noble Kinsmen (i,1)
<b>TOTAL : 34 Times</b>		

If we take the speech of Bottom (the Weaver) one can say that he has the role of a nobleman and by uttering such kind of speech and specially the Double Comparatives, he is trying to act out a role of a noble man to comfort to his character.

1. **Bottom:**

Not a whit: I haue a deuise to make all well. Write me a Prologue, and let the Prologue seeme to say; we wil do no harme, with our swords, and that Pyramus is not kild indeede: and for the more better assurance, tel them, that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weauer (EMODD.SHAK.MN., III, i)

Berry (1988: 64) describes Touchstone as the "prototype of the dandy". Not only Touchstone but the other characters are trying to speak in polite and sophisticated style to be like high-class individuals. In sum, one can draw a conclusion that these characters, by acting out like this and using this kind of linguistic behavior in their speech to be in accordance with their social ambition. They are trying to climb the social ladder to reach their goals to be one of upper-class.

There are other linguistic manifestations, reinforce the hypothesis, to indicate elevated and high-class members in the society. In the first place, Hussey (1982:147), Blake (1983:28) and Berry (1988: xvi) notice that high-class people adopt blank verse or poetic prose in their dialogues to show up their distinctive rank within the society. In the connection, most of double comparative forms utilized in William Shakespeare's plays are written either in blank verse or poetic prose as in the following examples (2 blank verse and 3 poetic prose):

2. How much more elder art thou than thy looks! (Merchant IV,i)

3. thou art lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful  
than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have (LLL IV,i)

Secondly, **Blake (1983:37, 83 and Hussey 1982:162)** has noticed that dummy do was used in the sixteenth century for emphasis. He argued that there is obvious mark to indicate the utilization of dummy do during the Elizabethan era as part of the elevated style. In connection, it is not surprising that double comparative forms are used with dummy do to highlight the elevated class in the society at that time. The following examples show the use of dummy do with double comparatives in Shakespeare plays:

4. My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive

These poor informal women are no more

But instruments of some more mightier member (Meas. II,ii)

5. Without more wider and more overt test

That these thin habits and poor likelihoods

Of modern seeming do prefer against him (Oth. I,iii)

Moreover, Blake (1983: 38) notices that double comparatives co-occur with two linguistic features that can be used to indicate social differences –th / –s. He suggests that has and does might have social hints indicating a high register. His perspective is another back up for my findings that –th occurs with elevated style.

6. Infirmary doth still neglect all office, (...)

And am fallen out with my more headier will mind (King Lear., II, ii)

7. No my most wronged Sister, Cleopatra

Hath nodded him to her. He hath giuen his Empire (...)

With a more larger List of Scepters (Anthony & Cleopatra., III, ii)

Table 2.3. The Co-occurrence of –th with Double Comparatives

Character	–th Co-occurrence with Double Comparatives	Repetition
BOYET.	<u>More fairer</u> than fair ... for so witnesseth thy	1
K. HEN.	For all my reign hath been but as a scene ... Falls upon thee in a <u>more fairer</u> sort;	1
FR. KING.	<u>More sharper</u> than your swords, hie to the field ... The Alps <u>doth</u> spit and void his rheum upon:	1
SHY.	How much <u>more elder</u> art thou than thy looks! ... So says the bond:— <u>doth</u> it not, noble judge?—	1
HECT.	As far as toucheth my particular, ... There is no lady of <u>more softer</u> bowels, ... Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours:	2
TRO.	Within my soul there doth conduce a fight ... Divides more wider than the sky and earth;	1
ANG.	To some <u>more fitter</u> place; and that with speed ... Hath he a sister?	1

<b>Corn.</b>	Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect ... Harbour more craft and <u>more corrupter</u> ends	<b>1</b>
<b>K. Lear.</b>	Infirmity doth still neglect all office ... And am fallen out with my more headier will,	<b>1</b>
<b>Oct.</b>	Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire ... The kings o' th' Earth for war. He hath assembled ... With a <u>more larger</u> list of scepters.	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13 Rep. (38%)</b>

Table 2.2 reveals that the co-occurrence of the linguistic feature –th with double Comparatives occurred 13 times (= 38%). This means that there is a kind of connection between the use of –th, its co-occurrence with Double Comparatives who uttered these linguistic forms. If we take a look at the characters in the above-mentioned table, it is obvious that they are royal, noble, wealthy or important in their own society.

It is worth noticing that double comparative forms co-occur with boosters such as much. Boosters have certain use which Quirk et al. (1985: 590) explains “denote a high degree, a high point on a scale”. The following table tracks down the number of boosters co-occur with Double Comparatives.

**Table 2.3. The Co-occurrence of Boosters with Double Comparative Forms**

<b>Play</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Example of Boosters</b>	<b>Rep.</b>
<b>King Lear</b>	Tragedy	My sister may receive it <u>much</u> <u>more worse</u>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Merchant of Venice</b>	Comedy	How <u>much more</u> elder art thou than thy looks!	<b>1</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2 Rep. (= 6%)</b>

Boosters repeated twice with double comparatives. The total repetition is low but the use of boosters indicates emphasis on the double comparatives.

Double Comparatives distributed differently within Shakespeare's plays. They occur in Tragedies, Comedies and histories but their distribution varies according to the genre of plays. It helps to reinforce my findings that it is also associated with elevated style.

**Table 2.4. The Distribution of Double Comparatives in Shakespeare's Plays**

<b>Play</b>	<b>No. Double Comparatives</b>	<b>Genre</b>
Love's Labour's Lost	1	Comedy
A Midsummer Night's Dream	1	Comedy
The Merchant of Venice	1	Comedy
Henry IV (part II)	1	History
As You Like It	2	Comedy
Henry V	3	History

Hamlet	3	Tragedy
Troilus and Cressida	2	Tragedy
All's Well That Ends Well	1	Comedy
Othello	3	Tragedy
Measure for Measure	2	Comedy
King Lear	6	Tragedy
Anthony and Cleopatra	1	Tragedy
Timon of Athens	2	Tragedy
Coriolanus	1	Tragedy
The Tempest	2	Comedy
Henry VIII	1	History
The Two Noble Kinsmen	1	Tragi-comedy
TOTAL	34 Rep.	

**Table 2.5. The Classification of Double Comparatives  
in Shakespeare's Tragedies, Comedies and Histories**

Play	Genre	Rep.	Total Rep.
Love's Labour's Lost	Comedy	1	10 Rep. (= 29%)
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Comedy	1	
The Merchant of Venice	Comedy	1	
As You Like It	Comedy	2	
All's Well That Ends Well	Comedy	1	
Measure for Measure	Comedy	2	
The Tempest	Comedy	2	
Hamlet	Tragedy	3	18 Rep. (= 53%)
Troilus and Cressida	Tragedy	2	
Othello	Tragedy	3	
King Lear	Tragedy	6	
Anthony and Cleopatra	Tragedy	1	
Timon of Athens	Tragedy	2	
Coriolanus	Tragedy	1	
Henry IV (part II)	History	1	5 Rep. (= 14%)
Henry V	History	3	
Henry VIII	History	1	

The two tables (2.4 and 2.5) reveal that double comparatives are highly occurred in tragedies (18 reps) and the second place in the comedies which is the feature of elevated style at that time. According to Holbrook (1994: 92) tragedies appear to be "an upper-class mode, not only because of their subject matter but in their appeal to a specific kind of spectator".

On the whole, double comparatives appear to be a characteristic feature of elevated style and high-class speech of respective society.

### 3. Double Comparatives in Modern English Era

Despite the concept of standard language had already realized in the Elizabethan period but the effect of this concept starts to be felt in LModE (Willcock 1966: 119). Double comparatives, during William Shakespeare's era, mainly reflected the spirit of social classes. They were used to indicate

the social level of the speaker but this lasts for a while. The beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century witnesses an uprising against such usage. Critics, prescriptivists and the process of standardization took the lead against the improper use of language. Double comparatives were in the front seat. Critics justified their revolution against Double Comparatives that such forms lack logic while other critics regarded them as ungrammatical, improper and vulgarism. Table 3.1 shows some comments about Double Comparatives.

**Table 3.1. Some Comments on Double Comparative Forms in 18<sup>th</sup> Century  
(Gonzalez-Diaz: 2008)**

Grammarians	Year of Publication	Comments
Greenwood	1711/1729	Is it good English to say more stronger. . .? No.
Fisher	1750	is it good English to say more fairer..? No, you ought to say. . .
Buchanan	1753	Would it be good English to say more wiser..? No
Compleat letter writer	1756	And it wou'd not be good English to say more wiser (. . .)
Bayly	1772	(. . .) are certainly vulgarisms, yet evidently not improper in nature, nor upon earnest and sublime occasions
Buchanan	1762	Is it not bad English to say more softer, most softest? Yes, it is absurd (. . .)
Lowth	1762	The double superlative most highest is a Phrase peculiar to the Old Vulgar Translation of the Psalms
Elphinston	1765	Accuracy must never explode the pleonastic worser (..) as justly as more greater (...)
Burn	1766	The adverbs more and most ought never to stand before an adjective compared by er or est
Newbery	1770	Mistakes in forming the Degrees of Comparison
Priestley	1761 1768 [2nd ed.] 1772 [3rd ed.]	There is still a greater impropriety in a double comparative
Carter	1773	Is it good English to say, more stronger (. . .)? No
Hodgson	1770	Two comparatives as more braver (...) are improper
Smetham	1774	Two comparatives together is nonsense
Bettesworth	1778	A Comparative Adverb must not be set before a Quality compared by er or est
Egelsham	1780	There is not an error more common, among persons unacquainted with grammar, than the using of Double Comparatives
Story	1783	Two comparatives and superlatives are very improper
Fell	1784	[S]uch double comparatives (. . .) can add nothing to the Sense
Murray (A.)	1787 [2nd ed.]	Two comparatives, as more braver, (. . .) are improper
Coote	1788	These comparatives and superlatives are

		ungrammatical, as they doubly express the degree of comparison (. . .) a repetition which is absurd
Brittain	1788	Double comparisons are vitious
Bicknell	1790	Are double comparisons ever made use of? Not with propriety
Pape	1790	is it good English, or proper grammar to say, more happier or most happiest? No; this would be only a repetition of the words more, or most; as more happier signifies, as much as to say, more more happy (. . .) which is no addition to the sense, but confuses and destroys it
Haywood	1793	The word more is never used before the Comparative, when the Comparative is formed by er
Fogg	1792–96	It is a most disgusting fault to have two signs of the same degree; as some say more wiser instead of wiser
Murray (L.)	1795	Double comparatives and superlatives should be avoided
Postlethwaite	1795	Double Comparatives, or Superlatives, are ungrammatical
Rhodes	1795	Double comparatives, and superlatives, are very improper, and should not be used
Ussher	1785	There is a great impropriety in a double comparative or double Superlative
Coar	1796	A double comparative, or superlative, is improper
Fogg	1796	The rule that forbids two signs of the same degree is a plain
Gardiner	1799	Double comparatives and superlatives are very improper
Wright	1800	Two comparatives, as more braver (. . .) are improper

Table 3.2. Double Comparative Forms in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Drama

Double Forms	Character	Work
More genteeler	The prison's guard	FIEL.AA
More handsomer	Molly's sister (the gamekeeper's daughter)	FIEL.TJ.
More properer	Honour (servant)	FIEL.TJ.
More politer	Honour (servant)	FIEL.TJ.
More handsomer	Honour (servant)	FIEL.TJ.
More greater	Cloudy (watchman)	GAY.MH. (II)
More genteeler	The bailiff	GOLD.GM. (III, i)

Accordingly, table 3.1 shows that recession of double comparatives starts in 1711. All critics are inconvenient with the used of these forms. That's why; 18<sup>th</sup> century witnesses the awakening against bad use of language. They are all agree that double comparatives are improper, ungrammatical, faulty and should be avoided. Table 3.2 reveals that the characters in the drama are low class people (the person's guard, the gamekeeper's daughter, servants, watchman and bailiff).

Table 3.3. Double Comparatives in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Double Forms	Character	Work
More nobler	Nathan (old jockey)	BOUC.FS. (III, ii)
More sharper	Eccles (ex-tradesman)	ROBE.CA. (III)
More crumfbler	Jo (crossing-sweeper)	DICK.BH.
More crumfbler	Jo (crossing-sweeper)	DICK.BH.
More easier	Mr. Squeers (schoolmaster)	DICK.NN.
More flatterer	George (servant)	DICK.OC.
More tenderer	TonyWeller (ex-coachman)	DICK.PP

The above table reveals that double comparatives occurred only 7 times. If we can take a look at the characters above, one can notice that most of are low-class individuals. This indicates that double comparatives became a non-standard use of language. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show that 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a huge revolution against double comparatives as they (prescriptivists and standardization) regard them improper use of English. It is noticeable that the process of standardization became very influential and this can be seen through the restriction use of Double Comparatives in LModE. Socially, Double Comparatives start to be spoken by low – class people rather than high – class. This reveals that prescriptivists start to illustrate DCs as non – standard being spoken by low-class people. This connection (**DCs = low class**) affects the society and accordingly, the use of Double Comparatives were declined day by day. The upcoming table will reveal some comments on Double Comparatives.

Table 3.4. Some Comments on Double Comparative Forms in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
(Gonzalez-Diaz: 2008)

Grammarians	Year of Publication	Comments
Dalton	1803 [1801]	We ought not to say more fairer or most fairer
Fowler	1852 [1850]	×
Morell	1857	×
Angus	1861	×
Quackenbos	1864	×
Lennie	1870 [1810, 6th ed.]	Double comparatives (. . .) are improper
Moon	1871	MOST HIGH has been spoken of as MOST HIGHEST but the solecism has been pardoned in consideration of the intensity of the religious feeling
Morris	1872 [2nd ed.]	Double comparisons are not uncommon both in early and modern English
Morris	1874	Double comparisons are not uncommon in Middle and Modern English
Scotson	1876	×
Mason	1886 [1879]	Double comparatives and superlatives are

		very common in older writers
West	1897 [1893]	Such expressions as more better (. . .) are frequently met with Shakespeare and other Elizabethan writers
Daniel	1898 [1881]	In archaic English [double comparatives] are used for Emphasis
Nesfield	1898	The doubling of the comparatives is not now permitted, though it was once common

#### 4. Conclusions

The present paper has demonstrated that double comparatives are the linguistic feature of elevated register and high-class society members in EModE and they start to become non-standard at 1711 and onward. The following findings support the hypothesis:

1. Double comparatives occurred (34 times) in the speeches of royal family, noblemen, wealthy and important individuals in the society.
2. Most of William Shakespeare's plays written in blank verse of poetic prose. These forms were the typical feature of elevated style and high-class people during the era of Elizabeth.
3. Double comparatives co-occur with -th which is also a feature of high-class people. This linguistic feature repeated (13 times, = 38%).
4. Double comparatives occurred in tragedies more than in comedies and other genres. Double Comparatives occurred (18 times, = 53%) in tragedies, (10 times, = 29%) in comedies and (5 times, = 14%) in histories.
5. Latin was the dominant language during the era of William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare's works and especially the use of Double Comparatives were affected by Ovid works, the Roman Poet. Ovid used such forms and they were occurred 9 times in his works.
6. Double comparatives were peaked till 1711 and after that time they were regarded by grammarians as improper use of language, non-standard and for that reason should be avoided. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Doubles Comparatives were used by low – class speakers.

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## صيغ المقارنة المزدوجة في مسرحيات وليام شكسبير دراسة اجتماعية لغوية

### المستخلص

صيغ المقارنة المزدوجة من المواضيع المثيرة للجدل بين النحويين لفترة طويلة من الزمن. يهدف البحث الى إعطاء معرفة جيدة عن كيفية استعمال صيغ المقارنة المزدوجة في مسرحيات وليام شكسبير من منظور اجتماعي لغوي. حيث أعتبر النحويين ان استعمال مثل هذه التراكيب غير مقبول و غير قياسي في اللغة الإنكليزية. اثبت البحث ان هذه الصيغ لها جذور تعود للغة اللاتينية و استعملت في اللغة الإنكليزية الفصحى في دراما وليام شكسبير و من دراميين اخرين الى سنة 1711. اعتبر المصححين اللغويين هذا النوع من التراكيب بالغير الصحيح في اللغة. و اثبتت الدراسة ان تراكيب المقارنة المزدوجة هي احدى مزايا الطبقة الراقية في ذلك الوقت وليس كما اعتبرها بعض الكتاب بـ"المقارنة المزدوجة السيئة" لكن أصبحت بعد ذلك من مزايا لغة العموم و اللغة غير القياسية منذ عام 1711 و صاعداً.