Double Modals beyond the South: *Would Might*

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Abstract: Multiple modals are a well-known feature of Southern American English. However, a single combination, *would might*, shows up outside the South. In the present paper, we present a formal analysis of *would might* in non-Southern dialects. In our analysis, *would* and *might* head independent functional projections. We discuss differences in subject-aux inversion between *would might* and well-known Southern multiple modal constructions. Lastly, we outline the conditions under which *would might* is possible for the non-Southern speakers who use it.

Key Words: multiple modals, *would*, *might*, contraction, subject-aux inversion, non-Southern American English.

1. Introduction

In walking down University Place (near New York University), on March 5, 2015, one of us (Singler) overheard the following utterance:

(1) Why? Why? Why would I might know him?

The utterance was produced by a white male in his twenties walking with two of his friends. The snow conditions that day had forced slower walking, making it possible to hear the sentence

quite clearly. The speaker was a native speaker of American English who did not have a Southern accent.

In (1), there are two modal auxiliaries: *would* (which has undergone subject-aux inversion) and *might*. It is a well-known principle of standard American English that: "The modals are mutually exclusive. Except in coordination, they cannot combine…" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 105). Huddleston and Pullum illustrate this generalization with the following examples:

(2) a. *He will can swim soon.

b. *She may will help you.

In fact, not all *would might* combinations are equally good. Consider the following:

(3) *If I saw a tiger, I would might run.

To our ears, (3) sounds significantly worse than (1).

The relevance of the dialect of the speaker of (1) is that double modals in American English are a recognized property of Southern English but are not ordinarily reported outside the region. Michael Montgomery and Paul Reed have established *Multimo,* an online site housed at the University of South Carolina, as a repository of multiple modals "that brings together the research and investigations from more than forty years of scholarship, primarily in the Southern United States, Scotland, and Northern England" (http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/multimo). It includes as well an exhaustive bibliography. (See also the Yale Grammatical Diversity Project's discussion of the topic, http://microsyntax.sites.yale.edu/multiple-modals.)

Neither author of the present work comes from the South. We propose to examine the use of a specific combination, *would might,* in non-Southern American English.

In writing this article, we make crucial use of data obtained via a search engine, and we discuss that in section 2. In section 3, we look at grammaticality judgments pertaining to *would might* sentences and consider their properties. Having discussed the source and nature of the relevant data, we then set out a syntactic analysis of it. In 4 we give our syntactic assumptions about modal auxiliaries, and explain why the sentences in (2) are ungrammatical. In section 5 and 6, we discuss a range of sentences in which the combination *would might* appears, and delineate some of the factors that lead to acceptable *would might* combinations. In section 7, we show that *would might* is the only combination of modals allowed. In section 8, we give a preliminary syntactic analysis of sentences like (1). In section 9, we compare *would might* combinations to multiple modal constructions found in Southern English. In section 10, we outline a semantic analysis of *would might*. In section 11, we summarize the conditions of occurrences of *would might* in non-Southern American English. Finally, we provide our conclusion in Section 12.

2. Searching for data

Over the past two decades, search engines have been a boon for linguists. Sociolinguists have used them for quantitative studies of variation, e.g. the case marking of pronouns in coordinated NP's in English being one early example of the use of Internet data (Angermeyer *et al.* 1998). The Internet can be used to test the extent of paradigms, e.g. the coordinated possessive pronouns, as illustrated by *my wife and I's/my's/mine's/myself's problems* (cf. Zwicky 2006). It can be used in conjunction with newspapers and newspaper archives to track the distribution of lexical variants across regions (Grieve, Aznaghi, and Ruette 2013) or the emergence of new syntactic structures (Singler and Woods 2002, Fairon and Singler 2005). Yet even as the

principles of big data come to dialectology and to linguistics more generally, the Internet continues to function quite simply as a rich source of examples of specific constructions. For example, instances of the possessive relative *that's* (*This is the house that's roof fell in*, Milroy and Milroy 1985) are readily available once one plugs in suitable nouns, e.g. *a car that's engine, the cat that's tail, a person that's child*.

A critical feature of the power of search engines is not simply the amount of data they provide, but also the range of data. In particular, written language no longer has to pass through an editorial process before it becomes generally available. In the present case, Google provided the invaluable function of helping us to find possibilities that we might not otherwise have thought of. Those possibilities then served as basic data for syntactic analysis.

The bulk of the data for this paper was collected by Google searches. In general, a string was searched, such as "would might otherwise." Out of the search results, an example was chosen that the first author found acceptable. The reason for focusing on the judgments of the first author is that the second author has a more conservative dialect, which rated the relevant sentences as marginal at best. We did not investigate the geographical location (or origin) of the writers of the Google sentences. Rather, we used Google to find contexts where *would might* is acceptable for the first author, and then used a subset of these sentences in our survey reported in the Appendix. In future studies, we plan to look at the geographical location of users of electronic media who produce *would might* sequences.

3. Judging *would might*

Unlike Southern English, where multiple modals in the grammar serve an indexical function for Southern identity, *would might* in non-Southern speech does not have such a function. To get at

grammatical judgments of *would might*, we prepared a set of eleven examples, with all but two the product of Google searches. The two authors took the survey themselves as did a panel of three of our colleagues, two students and a faculty member, all of them syntax-oriented and speakers of Northern dialects of American English. Collins's native dialect is likewise Northern, while Singler's is Midland. Differences between raters emerged, but we do not see differences in regional dialect as being the basis for the differences in judgment.

In assessing the degree of grammaticality of a given sentence, raters were given four options: OK, ?, ??, *. For the most part, in the example sentences *would* could be contracted, either to *–d* or - *əd*. Raters were asked to evaluate the full form and the contracted form. Thus, the eleven example sentences yielded 22 judgments. We present the examples and the judgments in an Appendix.

The two authors proved utterly divergent in their evaluations: the first author found 18 of the 22 sentences to be OK; the second author found none of them to be entirely grammatical. (In the second author's case, it is probably relevant that he came to linguistics through being a high school English teacher.) Given the two authors' tendency towards extremes, we consider the scores of the other three raters. Of the 22 sentences, one rater found 11 grammatical, and the other two found 10. While the scores seem similar, in fact the raters usually did not agree about the degree of grammaticality of a particular sentence. Indeed, the overall lack of agreement is striking. There were only six instances out of the 22 where all three assigned the same level of grammaticality to the sentence:[1] In five instances—just one less than the number of cases of total agreement among the three raters—one rater found the sentence good, a second found it bad, and the third placed it somewhere in between.

[1] One of the raters did not provide an evaluation for two contracted versions of a sentence. In neither of those cases did the other two raters agree as to grammaticality.

We see these results as making two primary points. The first has already been pointed out, namely the striking lack of agreement as to the level of grammaticality of these sentences. The second is that the raters were quite clear in seeing different sentences as having different levels of grammaticality. Apart from the four instances where the three raters all found a given sentence grammatical, the assessments reflect a range of judgments; these judgments are not fundamentally binary.

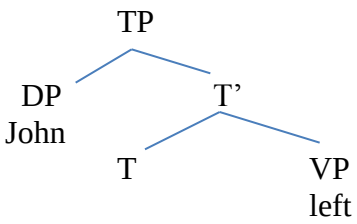
As noted, we presented both the full and contracted versions of each of the 11 sentences. Raters' judgments reflected the importance of this distinction, but they varied among themselves as to which they preferred. For example, one rater consistently preferred the contracted variant, while another preferred the contracted variant in declarative sentences and the full variant in questions.

Our interest now becomes determining how it is that any instances of *would might* are analyzed by a non-Southern grammar for those speakers who find it acceptable. The analysis we present is formal; it begins with a statement of what we assume about syntax.

4. Syntactic Assumptions

In the Principles and Parameters/Minimalist syntactic framework, the sentence is considered to be a projection of TP (Tense Phrase), as in the following tree for the sentence *John left*:

(4)



In this tree diagram, the DP *John* is the subject, which is in Spec TP (the specifier of T). The VP *left* is the predicate, which is the complement of T. T itself is the locus for subject-verb agreement and tense morphology.

We will adopt the following assumptions about modal auxiliaries:

(5) Assumptions about Modal Auxiliaries

a. Modal auxiliaries head a projection distinct from TP.

(see Iatridou and Zeijlstra 2013: 546)

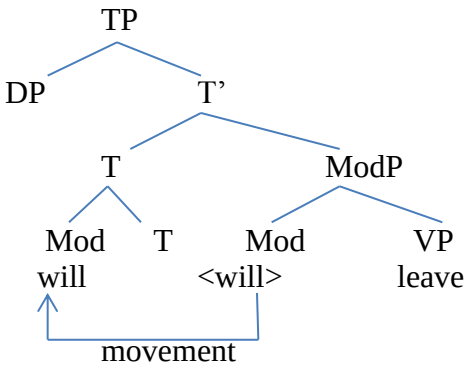
b. Modal auxiliaries obligatorily move to T.

(see Iatridou and Zeijlstra 2013: 547)

c. At most one modal auxiliary may move to T.

Putting these assumptions together, the sentence *John will leave* has the following structure. In this structure, the modal *will* is generated as the head of ModP, and raises and adjoins to T.

(6)



Given these assumptions, the reason why (2a,b) are ungrammatical is that the main clause only has one T position, but these sentences have two modal auxiliaries. The two modal auxiliaries need to move to T (by assumption), but only one can. We will call this the syntactic account of the ban on multiple modals.

Another less syntactically oriented account of the ban on multiple modals was given by Huddleston and Pullum 2002. They claim that modals are morphologically defective in that "The modal auxiliaries have no secondary inflectional forms and hence cannot occur in constructions which require one." (pg, 106) For example, modals have no participial forms. From this it follows that modals cannot combine: ". . . the verb following a modal must be in the plain form, and modals do not have plain forms, so the verb following the modal can never be another modal." (pg. 107). The plain form is defined as that form of the verb used in the imperative, the subjunctive, and the infinitive (pg. 83). We will call this the morphological account of the ban on multiple modals.

In section 8 we will suggest how these assumptions must be loosened to allow *would might* sequences.

5. Declarative Contexts

As noted, the bulk of the data for this paper was collected by Google searches. In general, a string was searched, such as "would might otherwise." Out of the search results, an example was chosen that the first author found acceptable. In the first set of searches we focused on declarative clauses. The first search was for the string "would might otherwise" (the quotes are part of the Google search). Another search that yielded a number of positive results was "would might not otherwise", but we do not include the results here.

(7) Just as I must get my teeth cleaned and fixed, so I must clean up and fix what would might otherwise be a flawed song, God-breathed or no.
(https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0830832297)

(8) Tailored yoga and gentle exercise sessions for people who would might otherwise find it difficult to enjoy the many benefits that yoga has to offer.
(websites.uk-plc.net/.../Tailored_yoga_and_gentle_exercise_sessions_for_...)

Another search that yielded positive results was "would might then":

(9) The town was fortunately not involved, because I believe we would might then still be fighting.
(www.lbknews.com/.../longboat-key-letters-week-ending-december-20-2...)

Another search that yielded results was "would might never":

(10) A love story which would might never have happened had Mr. Lewis not stumbled into Vivian's patch on Hollywood Boulevard whilst driving ...
(m.ft.com › Home › FT Alphaville)

(11) If we had not gone to that meeting we would might never have had the pleasure of knowing Michelle, let alone share a passion for her mission.
(mastersdegreedogtraining.com/.../training-service-dogs-disabled-veterans...)

6. Question Contexts

The first question context we searched was "why would I might":

(12) In all fairness, I might want to rate this DVD four stars…Why would I might want to rate it four stars? (www.amazon.com/Tostitos-Fiesta.../B00127C4U4)

Phrasing the question with *might* inversion (as *Why might I want to rate it four stars?*) approaches what Wolfram and Fasold (1974) call "superstandard": if a listener's "attention is diverted from the meaning of the utterance because . . . [the form] sounds 'snooty,' then the utterance is superstandard" (pg. 20). Because it avoids inverting the subject with the modal *might*, the phrasing in (12) avoids the risk of sounding superstandard.

In the second context, we added negation in the search "why would I might not":

(13) A: I'm sure you can mail a poster to the theatre to get it signed, but you MIGHT not get it back…

B: thanks! but, why would i might not get it back?

(www.broadwayworld.com/board/readmessage.php?...)

In (13B), the why-question with *would might* is facilitated by the corresponding declarative with the modal *might* in (13A).

In the third question context, we used the question word *when* instead of *why* in the search "when would I might":

(14) Yea. you can almost QUOTE me as having said that. When would I might have said that? Maybe when VMware had GSX out (Pre-ESX days) and our computers were run with the power of Potatoes. *(*http://www.pkguild.com/2011/04*/)*

In the next search, we left the subject position open by using a * as a wild card: "when would * might":

(15) I just gave an introductory talk to Clojure and one of the questions after the event was when would a Java programmer might want to switch to using Clojure?
(rrees.me/category/java/clojure-java/)

7. Other Possible Combinations

The fact that sentences with *would might* are often acceptable brings up the question of whether any other combinations of modal auxiliaries are possible in non-Southern American English. The complete set of modal auxiliaries in English is *may*, *might*, *must*, *can*, *could*, *will*, *would*, *shall*, *should*. Therefore, the total number of combinations is 9 x 8 = 72 (assuming no repetitions). We will focus in this section on combinations including either *would* or *might*, using the sentences discussed above as models. In the following sentences, * means unacceptable to the first author, but it also reflects the absence or virtual absence of these combinations from the Internet, at least from speakers of non-Southern American English.

(16) a. Why would I might rate it four stars?
b. *Why would I may rate it four stars?
c. *Why would I must rate it four stars?
d. *Why would I can rate it four stars?
e. *Why would I could rate it four stars?

f. *Why would I will rate it four stars?

g. *Why would I should rate it four stars?

(17) a. We would might then still be fighting.

b. *We would may then still be fighting.

c. *We would must then still be fighting.

d. *We would can then still be fighting.

e. *We would could then still be fighting.

f. *We would will then still be fighting.

g. *We would should then still be fighting.

(18) a. *Why may I might rate it four stars?

b. *Why must I might rate it four stars?

c. *Why can I might rate it four stars?

d. *Why could I might rate it four stars?

e. *Why will I might rate it four stars?

f. *Why should I might rate it four stars?

(19) a. *We may might then still be fighting.

b. *We must might then still be fighting.

c. *We can might then still be fighting.

d. *We could might then still be fighting.

e. *We will might then still be fighting.

f. *We should might then still be fighting.

Ultimately, the analysis we give of the *would might* combination should account for the fact that in non-Southern American English no other combination is possible. Although we will not be able to give a theory that meets this objective, we will give some preliminary comments in sections 8 and 10.

8. Syntactic Structure

From the question data presented in section 6, one can draw some preliminary syntactic conclusions. Consider the question data again from (12) and (15). These examples involve subject-aux inversion where the order of the subject and the auxiliary verb is permuted:

(20) a. Why would I might want to rate it four stars?

b. *Why might I would want to rate it four stars?

c. *Why would might I want to rate it four stars?

(21) a. When would a Java programmer might want to switch to using Clojure?

b. *When might a Java programmer would want to switch to using Clojure?

c. *When would might a Java programmer want to switch to using Clojure?

The generalization about word order in questions can be stated as follows:

(22) a. …would SUBJ might VERB…

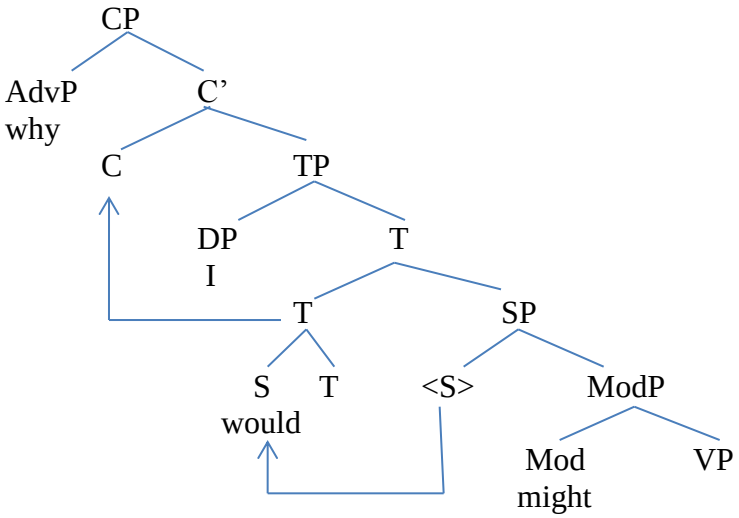
b. *…might SUBJ would VERB…

c. *…would might SUBJ VERB…

In other words, subject-aux inversion moves *would* to the left of the subject. It is impossible for either *might* or *would might* to move to the left of the subject. This generalization suggests that *would* is the higher modal in the *would might* construction.

Consider now the structure of the question in (20a) and (21a). In the Principles and Parameters framework, subject-aux inversion is modeled as T (tense) to C (complementizer) movement. Recall from section 2 that the modal heads a ModP (modal projection). If there are two modals, then there need to be two projections. For convenience we will call these SP ("shifter phrase") and ModP. In section 10, we will return to the semantic basis for this distinction. Given these assumptions, the structure of (20a) is given below

(23) Why would I might want to rate it four stars?



In this structure, the modal *would* located in S is moved to T. Then T is moved to C, giving rise to the subject-aux inversion word order.

Consider this structure from the point of view of the syntactic assumptions presented in section 2. In the structure in (23) not all modal auxiliaries are moving to T (only the highest one does). We propose that the modal auxiliary *might* has the exceptional property of not having to raise to T (whereas all other modals must raise to T).

Similarly, in the framework of Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 107, we suggest that *might* has the exceptional property that it has a plain form, and thus can appear after another modal (unlike all other modals).

While these two assumptions rule out the bad sentences in (16) and (17) (since in those sentences the second modal is not *might*), they do not rule out the bad sentences in (18) and (19). Consider again (19d), repeated below:

(24) *We could might then still be fighting.

If *might* had the exceptional properties of not raising to T and being able to appear in the plain form, then (24) should be acceptable, but it is not. Therefore, some piece of the puzzle is missing. We return to this in section 10.

9. Southern Double Modals

Hasty 2012: 1717 gives an overview of Southern double modal constructions. He presents the list below:

(25)

might could	must can	might oughta
might should	must could	could oughta
might would	may can	should oughta
might can	may could	would oughta
might will	may will	
	may should	

None of these combinations are possible for the authors. For example, for the authors the combination *might could* is never a possible combination of modal auxiliaries, and sentences where it occurs sound Southern, i.e. not part of their dialects. Our assessment corresponds to the mapping of occurrences of *might could* in tweets carried out by Grieve (2015) and extends to the other modal combinations that he examined (*might can*, *must can*, and the more problematic but extremely infrequent *would could*).

The combination *would might* does not appear on Hasty's list, raising the question of whether *would might* is a Southern double modal construction. To test this, we did a search of Multimo, the database of multiple modal constructions referred to in Section 1.

We found the following examples of *would might* in Multimo. Note that all the occurrences were collected in the South (South Carolina and Tennessee).

(26) Declarative *would might* sequences in Multimo

a. We would might run maybe ten hams a week. (SC)

b. We would have might maybe made it. (SC and TN, Nashville)

c. You would might have ask me. (TN, Nashville)

d. What we would might want to do is ... (SC)

e. We would might want to take those out. (SC)

Would might, as opposed to the other multiple modal constructions in (25), has currency beyond the South. However, there is a crucial syntactic difference between the *would might* combination described herein and the other modal combinations in (25). Consider the following data from Hasty 2012: 1718:

(27) a. You might could go to the store for me.

b. Could you might go to the store for me?

c. Might could you go to the store for me?

d. *Might you could go to the store for me?

Regarding this data, Hasty (2012: 1732) calls (27c) into question: ". . . I am not convinced that raising both modals is in fact grammatical in SUSE [Southern U S English]. To my knowledge there have been no published accounts of naturally occurring questions where both modals are raised."

Putting (27c) aside, this data shows that in a Southern multiple modal construction, it is the second modal, not the first, that moves to a clause-initial position in questions. This pattern contrasts with the pattern that we discovered for the *would might* construction in non-Southern speech in (22).

We suspect that the Southern *would might* construction (illustrated in (26)) will pattern with the non-Southern *would might* construction in terms of subject-aux inversion. Therefore, we

predict that Southern multiple modal constructions will show two patterns of subject-aux inversion. One pattern is that illustrated in (27), and the other is a pattern parallel to (22). We have not been able to confirm this prediction yet. [Note: We have written to Michael Montgomery and Paul Reel regarding the facts in question].

The possibility of two patterns of subject-aux inversion for Southern speakers raises further syntactic issues. We have documented in (26) that Southern American English has *would might* combinations. A search in Multimo also shows that *might would* combinations are common. The first issue is whether there is a difference in interpretation between *would might* and *might would*. Since we are focusing on non-Southern American English in this paper, we will not pursue this issue here.

Furthermore, if in *would might* combinations, the first modal is fronted in questions, and in *might would* combinations, the second modal is fronted in questions, the resulting sequence would be [would Subject might….] in both cases. Whether or not the existence of two patterns of subject-aux inversion gives rise to structurally ambiguous questions is an issue we cannot pursue in this paper.

Similarly, one could ask whether our question data in (12-15) involved *would might* combinations with *would* fronted, or *might would* combinations with *would* fronted. The importance of the Google sentences in our study is that they were rated as acceptable by the first author. Since the first author does not accept any of the declarative *might would* combinations from Multimo, we assume that for the first author (and for the non-Southern raters in the survey who accepted the questions), the question forms in (12-15) are not derived from underlying *might would* combinations by subject-aux inversion.

In this paper, we are not trying to give a formal account of multiple modals in Southern American English, nor an account of the difference between Southern and non-Southern American English modal constructions. Rather, we are focusing narrowly on the description and analysis of the *would might* construction in non-Southern American English for those speakers who find it acceptable.

10. The Semantics of *would might*

In this section, we take a deeper look at the semantics of the *would might* combination. Consider the following conditional, where the *if*-clause is labelled P and the main clause is labelled Q.

(28) If John left, Mary would be happy.

P Q

To interpret this sentence, *would* shifts the world of evaluation of Q to those worlds where P holds (and which are similar to the actual world). In other words, (28) is true if in those worlds where John left (and which are similar to the actual world), Mary is happy (see Lewis 1973 for more on counterfactual conditionals).

Now given that background, consider a counterfactual conditional involving a modal auxiliary *might*:

(29) If John left, Mary might be happy.

P Q

The modal auxiliary *might* does two things in this sentence. First, *might* shifts the world of evaluation of Q to those worlds where P holds (and which are similar to the actual world), just like *would* did in (28). Second, *might* says that in the shifted-to world of evaluation there is a possibility that Mary is happy. So it looks as if *might* is doing double semantic duty in sentences like (29).

We suggest that in (29), there is a covert *would* that shifts the world of evaluation. The structure is as follows.

(30) If John left, Mary <would> might be happy.

The notation <would> means that *would* is present syntactically, but it is not pronounced. We call the process by which *would* becomes silent or unpronounced *would*-deletion.

We are not claiming that all instances of the modal auxiliary *might* involve a deleted *would*. Consider for example the following exchange:

(31) A: Where is John?

B: He might be at home.

There is no *would*-deletion in (31B). (31B) says that given what is known about the actual world, there is a possibility that John is at home. There is no shifting to a different world of evaluation.

In summary, we are assuming that the abstract underlying sequence *would might* is grammatical and is compositionally interpreted in all dialects of American English (assuming that all speakers of American English would accept sentences such as (29)). In standard written English, when *would might* is syntactically generated, *would* is obligatorily deleted (*would*-deletion). For some Northern and Midland speakers, in spoken American English, and informal written English (such as what one finds with Google), *would*-deletion is not obligatory under certain circumstances (for a summary, see section 11 below). We have yet to explore what the conditions for the use of *would might* are in the South.

Recall that in section 8 we proposed that *might* has the exceptional property of not having to move to T. Alternatively, *might* has the exceptional property of being able to appear in the plain form. These assumptions allowed us to rule out the unacceptable sentences in (16) and (17), but not those in (18) and (19). Equipped with the results of this section, we can now address the question of how to rule out (18) and (19).

We are proposing that the modal auxiliary *would* is special amongst all the modal auxiliaries in having the semantic function of shifting the world of evaluation. None of the other modal auxiliaries has exactly this function. For example, the modals *may* and *must* express possibility and necessity respectively; they do not "shift." It is for this reason that we called the projection headed by *would* a SP ("shifter phrase"). Syntactically, SP can take either a VP or a ModP complement. If SP takes a ModP complement, we get a *would might* combination.

Given this background, consider again (19d), repeated below:

(32) *We could might then still be fighting.

Since *could* is an epistemic and deontic possibility modal, we assume that like other modals it heads a ModP (modal phrase) and not an SP (shifter phrase). Since *could* does not head a SP, it cannot take a ModP complement.

Furthermore, we make the assumption that each clause has at most one ModP, and that the head of ModP can be filled by one and only one modal auxiliary. Under these assumptions, there is no way to generate (32), and it is ungrammatical.

11. Conditions on *would*-Deletion

In the above section we proposed the rule of *would*-deletion, which deletes the modal auxiliary *would* when followed by *might*. In standard written English, this rule is obligatory, as can be seen from the unacceptability of sentence (3), repeated below:

(33) *If I saw a tiger, I would might run.

If this sentence were acceptable, it would have the same interpretation as (33), which is pragmatically felicitous:

(33) If I saw a tiger, I might run.

We have yet to explain when *would*-deletion is obligatory and when it is optional. Unfortunately, we can offer no successful analysis here. Rather, we can enumerate some of the factors that contributed toward well-formed *would might* strings.

The three main factors seem to be the following:

(34) a. Contraction: The form of *would*, i.e. whether full or contracted, bears on the assessment of the sentence, with speakers assessing one variant as better than the other. More often than not, it is the sentence with contracted *would* that speakers appear to prefer.

b. Adverbs: The presence of certain adverbs (such as *otherwise, then, never*) ameliorates *would might* sequences.

c. Questions: Examples such as (12-15) show that under certain circumstances questions can contain *would might* sequences.

Prosody may play a role in the first two of these. Alternatively, it is possible that all three factors can be unified into a single principle that determines when *would*-deletion is obligatory and when it is optional. It is too early to know at this point.

An interesting question for further research is whether *would might* combinations in Southern American English (see examples (26)) are influenced by the factors in (34).

12. Conclusion

In this paper we have given a preliminary exploration of the combination *would might* in American English outside the South. We have given a range of examples from Google searches containing the combination. We presented a formal analysis of *would might* in non-Southern dialects. In our analysis, *would* and *might* head independent functional projections. We discussed differences in subject-aux inversion between *would might* and well-known Southern multiple

modal constructions. Lastly, we outlined the conditions under which *would might* is possible for the non-Southern speakers who use it.

An outstanding issue is what the status of *would might* is in the South. In particular, do Southern speakers have two patterns of subject-aux inversion, as speculated in section (9)? Do Southern speakers show the same variability in the use of *would might* that our survey results indicate for non-Southern speakers? And, do the factors that influence *would might* outlined in (34) also play a role for Southern speakers.

Ultimately, a syntactic account of *would might* would need to clarify the factors in (34) in various ways. For example, why is it that adverbs ameliorate *would might* combinations? What is the range of adverbs? And, can the factors in (34) be unified in some way?

From a sociolinguistic perspective, questions arise as to the distribution *would might* outside the South in terms of geography, age, gender, social class and medium.

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Appendix

Below we present the survey we developed as well as the raters' responses. In assigning regional dialects to the raters, we assume the tripartite division of American English east of the Mississippi River into Northern, Midland, and Southern. Hudson Valley, Inland North, and North Central are all dialects of Northern. (Kurath 1949; Labov, Ash, and Boberg 2006; Dinkin 2009). Singler grew up in Illinois in the North Midland region. On the basis of word geography, Kurath posited North and South Midland, with the Ohio River separating North Midland from South Midland. Phonological evidence prompts *The Atlas of North American English* (Labov *et al.* 2006) to redesignate "North Midland" simply as "Midland," with the Ohio River the southern boundary of Midland for Illinois; in the *Atlas*, Kurath's "South Midland" is absorbed into Southern English.

Prior to Labov *at al.* and drawing on morphosyntactic evidence, Bigham (2000) moves the Midland/Southern boundary into Illinois, so that his home town of Pinckneyville is Southern, specifically Appalachian, rather than Midland. The presence of Southern double modals are central to his argument. Singler grew up ninety miles north of Bigham, but he had no exposure to Southern double modals.

		Z	A	S	Chris Collins	John Singler
		20's male New York (Hudson Valley)	20's female Michigan (Inland North)	40's female Minnesota (North Central)	50's male Minnesota (North Central)	60's male Illinois (Midland)
1. Why? Why? Why would I might know him?						
	Full	OK	OK	??/*	OK	??
	Contracted	*	N/A	?	OK	*
2. If I saw a tiger, I would might run						
	Full	*	*	*	*	*
	Contracted	OK	*	??/*	*	*
3. Just as I must get my teeth cleaned and fixed, so I must clean up and fix what would might otherwise be a flawed song, God-breathed or no.						
	Full	?	OK	*	OK	??
	Contracted	?	?	??	OK	?
4. Tailored yoga and gentle exercise sessions for people who would might otherwise find it difficult to enjoy the many benefits that yoga has to offer.						
	Full	?	OK	*	OK	*
	Contracted	OK	OK	OK	OK	??/*
5. The town was fortunately not involved, because I believe we would might then still be fighting.						

	Full	?	?	?	OK	*
	Contracted	OK	?	OK	OK	?
6. A love story which would might never have happened had Mr. Lewis not stumbled into Vivian's patch on Hollywood Boulevard whilst driving ...						
	Full	?	OK	?	OK	?
	Contracted	OK	OK	OK	OK	?
7. If we had not gone to that meeting we would might never have had the pleasure of knowing Michelle, let alone share a passion for her mission.						
	Full	OK	OK	??	OK	??
	Contracted	OK	OK	OK	OK	?
8. In all fairness, I might want to rate this DVD four stars…Why would I might want to rate it four stars?						
	Full	OK	OK	OK	OK	??
	Contracted	??	N/A	OK	OK	*
9. A: I'm sure you can mail a poster to the theatre to get it signed, but you MIGHT not get it back.… B: thanks! but, why would i might not get it back?						
	Full	OK	*	?	OK	?
	Contracted	*/??	*	OK	OK	*
10. Yea. you can almost QUOTE me as having said that. When would I might have said that? Maybe when VMware had GSX out (Pre-ESX days) and our computers were run with the power of Potatoes.						
	Full	OK	OK	?	OK	?

	Contracted	??	?	OK	?	*
11. I just gave an introductory talk to Clojure and one of the questions after the event was when would a Java programmer might want to switch to using Clojure?						
	Full	??	OK	OK	OK	?
	Contracted	??	?	OK	?	*