

‘PEOPLE SPEAKS LIKE THIS!’ A FEW NOTES ON SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT IN AMERICAN ENGLISH DIALECTS

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Abstract: *Subject-verb agreement is such a basic phenomenon in language that we usually take it for granted. The verbal concord system in English is an exciting area of research due to the rich regional variation. Some types of non-standard concord systems are found in traditional dialects and some of them are well attested historically and can be traced to the Middle English period (Pietsch, 2005: 125). Nowadays, there are also other types of nonstandard concord forms, identified in different varieties of English. Chambers (2004) suggests that some of these have the status of ‘vernacular universals’. This paper takes a closer look at the nonstandard agreement forms (the verbal suffix -s) found in several American English dialects (Appalachian English, Newfoundland English, African American English, Samaná English) and comments on their function(s).*

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