

**‘SHE MAY HAVE TOOK THE BOOK’: IRREGULAR VERBS
IN STANDARD AND NONSTANDARD ENGLISH.
A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS**

Costin-Valentin OANCEA
Ovidius University of Constanța

Abstract

Regularization of irregular verbs is a quite widespread phenomenon in nonstandard English dialects. This paper looks at the nonstandard past tense and past participle forms in several British and American English dialects. Some verbs display two past tense and past participle forms in Standard English: an irregular and a regular one. Their frequency is measured using two large-scale corpora: the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Briefly mentioned is the view shared by eighteenth century prescriptivist grammarians regarding the process of simplification involving irregular verbs. Reference is also made to two processes taking place in nonstandard English dialects: analogy and leveling. Regularization and irregularization of verb forms are discussed at length in the last part of this paper, using Ngrams as statistical evidence.

Keywords: *nonstandard English; leveling; past tense; past participle; regularization; irregularization; irregular verbs; analogy, Ngrams.*