Lieselotte Anderwald. *The morphology of English dialects*: *Verb-formation in non-standard English*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. (xvi, 221)

This text investigates the not inconsiderable collective phenomenon of the English past tense, adopting a system of formal categories which blur the traditional boundaries of strong and weak taxonomies. The text is supplemented with 52 figures, 38 tables, and 23 maps. Appendices offer a table of the classification of verbs (according to the system delineated below) and a map and listing of the localities surveyed in the *Survey of English Dialects*. Readers will require a good grounding in historical linguistics in general and in OE and ME in particular, and must follow frequent appeals to a variety of theoretical constructs ranging from generative to psycholinguistic.

As the title suggests, this study, which makes extensive use of major corpora such as the Helsinski, ARCHER, the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, *Wright's English Dialect Dictionary* and *English Dialect Grammar*, the *Survey of English Dialects*, the Corpus of London Teenage Speech, and the Freiberg English Dialect corpus, is concerned mainly with the occurrence of forms in nonstandard varieties (12) in the British Isles. The working concept of 'standard', that which perhaps as a result of centuries of educated and literary practice is recognizable as such, seems quite agreeable, and the intuitions of educated native speakers – especially of the standard variety – can readily pick out the forms that conform to it (13).

The five formal categories of verbs adopted for this study are as follows (11):

1) infinitive/base, simple past, past participle all different in form, e.g. *swim – swam – swum*; this is the prototype for strong verbs

2) infinitive/base distinct in form from simple past, past participle, which are identical; this is the prototype for weak verbs

3) infinitive/base same as past participle, e.g., *come – came – come*

4) infinitive/base and simple past identical in form, e.g., beat – beat – beaten

5) infinitive/base, simple past, past participle all the same in form, e.g., *hit – hit – hit*

This taxonomy distinguishes not strong or weak classes per se, but groups verbs according to their form. It is argued along the way that some weak, i.e., 'regular' forms, are still not created by rule, while some strong verbs, i.e., 'irregular', do follow a rule (or pattern) in their formation (4). It is notable that the supposed classification criteria for weak verbs, the dental preterit, cuts across vowel difference as well, as in *dream – dreamt – dreamt* (6, 7). A very salient point is made that verbs with a low type frequency nonetheless enjoy very high token frequency, thus the intuition that verbs like *run – ran – run* and *come – came – come* appear quite common, despite the low number of items of that type (10). We can point out parenthetically that the notion token frequency has important ramifications in second language acquisition patterns and contact language development as well.

The second chapter reviews a number of theories of past tense formation. In each of these, because of the complexity of developmental processes involved with English past tense verb forms the past tense category can serve as a "guinea pig" (33). We could probably also add the Arabic plural to the list of good guinea pigs. In the third chapter, verbs are subdivided according to whether ablaut, dental preterit, or (-en) occurs. It is pointed out that these are "not completely independent." For example, in *send – sent – sent*, the vowel is identical, as in the fifth category above, but with a difference in form owing to the devoicing of the preterit. As the argument is tracked, there is great plausibility to the conclusion that the distinction between weak and strong forms is gradual, not categorical (59). This is probably a novel concept for students whose textbooks do not include this perspective.

The fourth chapter is given to an explication of the forms *sellt* and *knowed* and their distribution on the Isles. These developments are seen as part of a continuing "trend to regularize strong past tense forms" (67). To gain numerical data the author develops a technique of searching data bases for dental preterit suffixes and arrives at a quantification of nonstandard results which can be broken down in dialect areas (tables 79, 80). *Sellt* (and *tellt*) emerge as "shibboleths" for northern English. In contrast, *knowed* is more the more widely encountered, and is commonly found in the South East and South West regions (87, 88).

In the fifth chapter, the phenomenon of the emergence of two-part paradigms for *drunk*, *seen*, *done*, and *eat* is discussed. Here is emphasized what is characterized as a developing pattern on the analogy of *string – strung – strung*, in which a verb that heretofore satisfied the criteria for category (1) above shifts to category (2), and which involves a preterit in /ʌ/ (99). This perhaps accounts for *dig* finding a home in English in the strong verb class (101). Characterized as "newly productive" (99), this pattern, with special emphasis on the supposed gravitational attraction of /ʌ/ in the process, forms a major theme in the book.

Paradigms such as *shrink – shrunk – shrunk* demonstrate that shift (115). Curiously, along with the *see – seen – seen*, we see verbs in other vowels following that direction in American dialects, but also verbs of which the preterit form is recruited as the participle, e.g. *eat – ate – ate*. This pattern, dismissed as "marginal" [in British dialects?], e.g., *I have wrote* (146 n. 34), is ubiquitous in American dialects. It is represented that "*do – done – done* is restricted to the main verb uses of *do*" (128). Again it can be pointed out that in American dialects a rich development of *done* is found in auxiliary situations. Forms and bifurcation of *hang*, along with *dive – dove / dived*, remain fascinating.

In the sixth chapter *come* and *run* take center stage, as they represent a paradigm with one part. Interesting among these are forms of *run* with metathesis, *arnde*, *ornen*, *urnen*, *gorni*, attested as current. Again, curiously, while Wright in *EDD* notes cases of *run* as preterit in northern dialects, LALME contains no information about it (176), yet in American dialects the form is ubiquitous.

This engaging work represents an exhaustive survey of the topic, documented thoroughly with references to the numerous corpora employed and to OED citations, and offers readers in the field much to chew on.

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