

Homework #4

We have seen that overregularization is a pervasive feature of children's speech as they are acquiring their language. Does overregularization also occur in the speech of people acquiring a second language? This is the question we will address in this assignment.

Part I

The ten most frequent verbs in English are *be, have, do, say, make, go, take, come, see, and get*, and all are irregular in the past tense. Using an internet search engine such as Google, look for cases where these verbs are overregularized in text written by a non-native speaker of English. Find 9 examples in total, from at least 3 different verbs. Use the following format to present each example:

Sentence containing overregularized verb (with overregularized verb in **boldface**)
URL (web site address) of the page where you found the example

You won't always be able to be 100% certain, but try to present only examples written by non-native speakers of English. Do not present examples that were intended as jokes, that are imitating children, etc. And of course do not present examples from languages other than English (if an overregularized form happens to be a real word in some other language).

Part II

Now do the same with irregular verbs that are less frequent than the above ten. Present 9 examples, from at least 3 different verbs. Use the same format as in Part I.

Part III

Given the dual-mechanism model, in which class of verbs would you expect overregularization to be more common: in the most frequent verbs, or the less frequent verbs? Explain your answer briefly.

Part IV

Given your experience in doing Parts I and II, which class of verbs in fact seems to have more overregularization? In other words, was it harder to find cases of overregularization in Part I or Part II? Or was there no difference? Are these results expected or unexpected, given what you said in Part III?

Though you can turn this assignment in handwritten if you like, I would encourage you to do it on a computer, since then you will be able to cut and paste the example sentences and URL's without having to copy everything down by hand.

Two tips:

- Use Control-F on your browser to find all the examples of what you are looking for on a webpage.
- Use Google's Advanced Search, and where it says "Search within a site or domain", put "forums.eslcafe.com/student/" (without quotation marks). This will limit your search to a forum where most of the participants are non-native speakers. You may not be able to do the entire assignment this way, but it may help with part of it.