

## **"Connections is drawn:" Subject-verb agreement in non-standard varieties of English and in the Insular Celtic languages**

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In the Standard English present tense verbal paradigm, subject-verb agreement is indicated by the ending *-s* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and by the absence of this ending elsewhere. Many non-standard varieties of English, however, allow for the singular ending *-s* in other contexts, like, for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural. This deviation from the Standard paradigm may be conditioned by a number of factors, one of which is the *Subject Type Constraint*. Being part of the so-called *Northern Subject Rule*, this constraint is particularly strong in the North of England, in Ireland and Scotland, but has also been reported for varieties of English across England, in Wales and overseas. Its impact on agreement patterns is such that the present tense verb, irrespective of person or number, may receive the singular suffix *-s* whenever it is used with a non-pronominal subject. Remarkably, the Insular Celtic languages display a similar pattern. In Welsh, for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural verb receives a plural ending when it is used with a pronominal subject, whereas the singular form of the verb occurs where a noun phrase constitutes the subject of the sentence. Cross-linguistically, subject-verb non-agreement as in English and the Insular Celtic Languages is rare.

Taking this observation as a starting point, a literature-based study was set up in order to provide a broad account of the different forms of non-agreement in the non-standard varieties of English. This study is to result in a theoretical model accounting for these patterns. The same approach is applied to the Insular Celtic languages, so that the comparison of the two models is expected to reveal possible links between non-standard English and Insular Celtic agreement patterns. In my paper I will present first results of this research.