



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **The co-occurrence of regular and irregular plurals in English nouns**

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Short characteristics of the thesis

The main purpose of the research was to examine the co-occurrence of the regular and irregular plural forms of nouns which – according to theoretical sources allow both plural forms – and to compare this with the real usage of these plural forms across the different language varieties (American and Standard English/written and spoken) represented in two selected corpora (BNC and COCA) to determine which plural forms were manifested.

For the corpus analysis, a sample of nouns with oscillating plural form based on the theoretical sources – Dušková (1988), Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston (2002) respectively – were chosen. Each noun was queried in the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary English (COCA).

Nouns occurring at an analysable rate in the plural form were classified in the following categories: acceptance of only irregular plural, preference of irregular plural with the possibility of regular plural variant, and preference of regular plural. The outcomes of the analysis of both the theoretical sources and those of the corpora were then examined.

Overall assessment

The overall structure of the thesis is clear and generally logical and individual chapters have their justification in the development of the work. The body of the thesis builds up examples of specific types of word endings, explains their origins in language and the irregular pluralisation which they undergo. This is well researched, informative and clear. Many examples are presented to illustrate or underpin each point made.

The analysis is well thought out and well presented. It is based on a three-step approach which is reasonably thorough and systematic:

1. The analysis of three research theories as presented in grammar books and a statistical summary of their findings on the occurrence of regular and irregular plurals.
2. The analysis of two English corpora, one UK based, one US based, and a comparison of how plurals occur in those data sets.
3. The presentation and comparison of the data into a single report enabling comparison of both the theoretical and corpus data.



This is further supported by a statistical presentation of the occurrence of plurals and their use in the theoretical grammars and the corpus. This presents data in a visual format and provides numerical information to allow the reader to understand how the researcher came to her conclusions.

Although the work is written with readable language, the text contains some inconsistencies. These somewhat undermine the otherwise methodical flow of the argument presented. They also possibly raise questions about the degree of independent writing. Examples include: "to classify them according to following the particular pattern of pluralisation in general" (p. 37); "Although the majority of analysed nouns is accepted in both plural forms, only 20% of nouns with oscillating plural form follow rather a regular pattern of pluralisation than their irregular plural inflection, furthermore, the noun focus is debatable in terms of high frequency of its regular plural form because the high number of hits refers not only to the regular plural focuses but also to the verb focus in the third person singular so it is difficult to decide about the preferable plural form" (p. 37); or "How was already mentioned above, there are" (37)". I believe it would be useful to clarify some of these inconsistencies as part of the defence.

Despite these comments, the work is coherent and meeting fully the requirements of an undergraduate dissertation. I do recommend it for defence. I propose the evaluation "very good" (velmi dobře).

Areas for discussion:

1. Can you correct the following citation: The reason for this is that the "morphological variants of individual words are not appeared to be cognate to one another" (Amstrong 128) [page 24]?
2. Can you document the original source of the following quotation: Based on this theory, regular inflection (in this case –s plural ending marking the plural form) "is generated by a mental operation that combines grammatical variables productively" (Beret, Pinker 150) [page 14];
3. Can you clarify your use of the abbreviation "cf."?
4. Can you clarify your data sample as your statements on pages 24, 36 and 44 do not seem to correspond? Consider: p.24 – The sample of chosen seventy nouns was searched in both corpora the BNC and COCA and based on the results, nouns are categorized according to the following criteria which are specified below; p. 36 – On the whole, fifty instances of nouns with the possibility of taking both plural forms were entered in corpora and results showed the particular tendencies, which are described in the following; and p. 44 – For the corpus analysis, 70 nouns with oscillating plural form based on the theoretical sources were chosen. Each noun was entered in the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary English.
5. Which of your findings do you consider most original and why?
6. What do you consider your major learning experience and how do you plan to capitalise on that in the future?

