

Dependent Verb Forms

Summary

The question of "dependent forms" has come up in our discussion of relative clauses, and a little review is in order. They only occur with a few of the irregular verbs, and then only in some of the tenses (not the same for all verbs).

What makes most irregular verbs irregular is stem changing (ith - íos, tioc - tag, etc.); special past forms (chuala); strange mutation exceptions (a deir, ní bhfuair); and sometimes having dependent forms. If they do have dependent forms, they use present tense (nach) verbal particles even in the past tense (where you would expect nár)

The verbs that have dependent forms are:

bí déan faigh feic téigh

What We Are Talking About

When a verb stands alone, say, at the start of a sentence, that is the independent form. You will encounter dependent forms only after various verbal particles, namely:

ní an nach go a (relative) cá mura sula dá

A common example of an independent-dependent pair would be from the verb *bí*, the past tense forms *bhí* (independent) vs. *raibh* (dependent). You can start a sentence with *bhí*, but you cannot start a sentence with *raibh*. You never see *raibh* without a verbal particle (*go*, *nach*, *a*) in front of it.

Independent forms can start a sentence, but dependent forms cannot. (Philosophically, one could perhaps argue that all verbs appear in both independent and dependent forms, which are generally identical, and that only a few irregular verbs have *separate* or *distinct* dependent forms. But that's rather splitting hairs, no? I just say, there are only a few dependent forms, listed below.)

You have to master them, because even though they are few, dependent forms occur in the most commonly used verbs (generally the ones, in any language, that are most likely to be irregular).

Remember The List . . .

Yup, that's what you have to do. You simply have to learn the dependent forms and what tenses they occur in, for the irregular verbs that have them.

Here they are:

Verb (root)	Tense	Independent Form	Dependent Form Examples
bí	present	tá	go bhfuil (níl)
	past	bhí	an raibh
déan	past	rinne	nach ndearna ní dhearna
faigh	future	gheobhaidh	go bhfaighidh ní bhfaighidh
	conditional	gheobhadh	go bhfaigheadh ní bhfaigheadh
feic	past	chonaic	a bhfaca ní fhaca
téigh	past	chuaigh	nach ndeachaigh ní dheachaigh