

# **'We're done our project' or 'We're done with our project': Investigating the [be done X] and [be done with X] constructions in Canadian English**

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This study investigates two similar constructions in Canadian English (CE): *be done X* [bdX], as in *I'm done my homework*, and *be done with X* [bdwX], as in *I'm done with the project*, where X is a noun phrase. While both constructions are common in Canadian English, [bdX] is not present, and is considered highly unacceptable, in American English (Yerastov 2012; Hinnell 2012). We adopt a Construction Grammar (CG) approach (Fillmore, Kaye & O'Connor 1988; Goldberg 1995, 2006; Kemmer & Barlow 2000), which assumes that linguistic meaning is a property of both lexical items and grammatical constructions. This approach allows us to explore similarities and differences in the distributional behaviours of these related constructions. We explore their distributional patterns using two statistical methods: Distinctive Collexeme Analysis (DCA; Gries 2007) and Naive Discriminative Learning (NDL; Baayen 2011).

We gathered our data from Canadian blogs using WebCorp ([www.webcorp.org.uk](http://www.webcorp.org.uk); 1999-2012), an online interface for gathering linguistic data from the internet. We coded approximately 1500 concordance lines for a variety of syntactic and semantic variables, such as person and number of the subject, type of determiner in the X noun phrase, and the semantic domain of X.

Our first analysis investigated which nouns collocate with each construction. We utilized the DCA, a tool designed to investigate the interaction of lexemes and the grammatical constructions associated with them. This method computed the degree of attraction or repulsion of nouns occurring in the [bdX] and [bdwX] constructions. The results show that WORK- or EDUCATION-related nouns (e.g., *work*, *homework*, *degree*, *term*) tend to collocate with [bdX], whereas more ABSTRACT nouns or demonstrative pronouns (e.g., *this*, *that*, *one*, *thing*, *process*) tend to collocate with [bdwX]. Our second analysis utilized the NDL, a statistical model based in cognitive computational modelling. The NDL modelled different combinations of variables to explore which grammatical and semantic properties are most associated with each construction. Through this process it determined the most distinctive exemplars for each construction. For example, [bdX] tends to associate with third person nominal subjects (e.g. *now that Erin is done her school term*), whereas [bdwX], tends to associate with pronominal subjects (e.g. *are you done with that Florida thing*).

This study extends the research of Hinnell (2012), who presents a construction analysis of the two variants based on corpus frequency data, and Yerastov (2012), who analyzed the [bdX] variant through grammaticality judgment tasks. The two statistical methods employed here provide further empirical evidence that [bdX] and [bdwX] have distinct constructional profiles, as well as shed light on their usage patterns.

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