

A corpus-based study of *because* X in web-based language across three varieties of English

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The English conjunction *because* has attracted some attention in recent years, as it has been noticed that speakers of contemporary English use *because* + noun (e.g. *because science!*) or *because* + adjective (e.g. *because bored.*) innovatively thereby creating new constructions in which *because* can be used. Previous research revealed that before the 21st century, *because* was mostly followed by *of* or by a clause and that constructions in which *because* was followed by nouns, as in *because circumstances* (Bergs 2018: 43), or by adjectives, as in *because fat* (Bohmann 2016: 149), were extremely rare. While previous research focusing on the “new” *because* paid particular attention to the constructions in which it appears as well as to the semantics of *because* in these constructions, less has been said about its occurrence in different varieties of English.

The current paper aims to analyze the frequency of occurrence of *because* + noun and *because* + adjective in American, Canadian, and Australian English. We use the Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) to examine the frequency of the “new” *because* in these varieties. For the purpose of the study, we extracted all tokens of *because* X from the GloWbE corpus. This 1.9-billion-word dataset covers web and blog entries published between 2012 and 2013. The preliminary results suggest that *because* + noun and *because* + adjective are most widely used in American English.

References: • Bergs, Alexander (2018) “Because Science! Notes on a Variable Conjunction”. In Seoane, Elena; Carlos Acuña-Fariña and Ignacio Palacios-Martínez (eds.) *Subordination in English. Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives*, 43-60. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
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