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**Grammatical Change in British and American English: a Case Study with
Evidence from the Bank of English Corpus**

Consider the sentences in (1a-b):

- (1) a. ... that inveterate foxcatcher, Captain Ronnie Wallace, is
 accustomed to wind up his season by taking the Heythrop hounds on a
 visit to Exmoore, ... (LOB E15)
 (b) ... I am an artist, accustomed to studying the physical body.
 (Brown N18)

In (1a) the adjective *accustomed* selects a *to* infinitive complement, and in (1b) it selects what is here called a *to -ing* complement.

A major discovery in recent work has been the realization that the variation observed in (1a-b) is part of a larger systematic set of changes that have been going on in English in recent centuries and are still going on today, called the Great Complement Shift (Rohdenburg 2004). A major part of the Shift has been the spread of the *to -ing* pattern at the expense of the *to* infinitive pattern in sentential complements (cf. Rudanko 1998; Rudanko 2000, chapters 2, 3, and 4).

The paper argues that in addition to the framework of the Great Complement Shift, it is also helpful to identify more local factors bearing on the Shift, as either promoting or slowing it down. The paper reviews such factors, using the change affecting complements *accustomed* as the basis of the discussion. The paper also examines the progress of the Shift and the advance of the *to -ing* pattern in complements of *accustomed*, drawing on the full resources of the Bank of English Corpus. These resources make it possible to gain a fuller picture of the current situation with respect to regional variation between British and American English than has been the case in earlier studies. The study thus also sheds light on the question of which regional variety is in the vanguard of grammatical change in this case.

References

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