

The work that I have submitted for consideration is my Honors thesis, “Investigating Language Variation and Change in Appalachian Dialects: The Case of the Perfective *Done*.” Though I am a Spanish major, I chose to write on this linguistics topic in preparation for the MA in Linguistics program I will begin in Fall 2021. Though there were no formal guidelines regarding the shape that my Honors thesis research had to take, I chose the most ambitious project that I was confident I could complete without formal training in linguistics—a literature review with a minimum of 30 sources.

The initial stages of the project were particularly challenging because I did not have prior coursework or discipline-specific research exposure to lean back on, nor could I find a faculty mentor with a background in linguistics. Instead, I started with the broader interest in Ozark English dialects that I have developed in appreciation of where I’m from—Southern Missouri. To find a worthwhile topic, I first looked to published conference proceedings to get an idea of ongoing inquiries within the area of study. One such resource indicated that the relationship between Ozarks and Appalachian dialect families is still uncertain and profiled a study on the use of double modals that has contributed to answering that question. Within the proceedings, it was recommended that other grammatical aspects be similarly examined for what they can say about the relationship between the dialect families.

I originally set out to accomplish this with my own research and chose the perfective *done* as the grammatical structure to investigate since it has not been given much attention in existing literature. However, as I began accumulating sources, I found that the amount of existing literature on the perfective *done* in Ozarks dialects was too limited to use in my study without doing additional fieldwork. Consequently, I shifted my focus away from Ozarks dialects to focus solely on Appalachian dialects, from variation between dialect families to variation within a

single dialect family. I also chose to limit my research to developments that have occurred in the past 50 years—an appropriate time frame when studying language variation. Doing so also narrowed my comprehensive review to a manageable scope such that I could conclude that I accounted for every source that included a quantitative record of the frequency of occurrence of the perfective *done* in the speech of native Appalachians.

In the initial stages of research, I referenced the Research Tools LibGuide to learn how to use Zotero. In compiling my bibliography, I used OneSearch and discipline-specific journals to identify relevant materials, including books, e-books, peer-reviewed journal articles, periodicals, master's theses and dissertations, speeches and presentations, encyclopedias and dictionaries, textbooks, and the aforementioned conference proceedings. Textbooks proved especially useful in catching me up to speed on linguistic theory and prominent figures in the subfield of language variation and change, in addition to giving me the basic vocabulary for framing my research, which in turn helped me refine and redefine my search terms. I also relied heavily on bibliographic entries in the sources themselves. Due to COVID-19 and the inability to access library materials and services in-person, a number of these sources were difficult to procure, but by making consistent use of Interlibrary Loans via Link+ and ILLiad and requesting materials by mail, I acquired every source that I identified as potentially useful.

The majority of my literature review is dedicated to evaluating the validity, reliability, and contributions of the studies that provide the quantitative data cited in my research. I also assessed the authority of these sources based on the reputability of their respective publications, as well as the authors' previous work in and overall contributions to the field of linguistics and their affiliated institutions or sponsoring agencies. Additionally, these key studies vary in rationale, methodology, claims, and findings, and my analysis reconciles these aspects in the

formation of its own conclusion. As for the other sources, I applied many of the same evaluation metrics before deciding to reference them in my paper. The majority of the literature I reviewed asserts that variation in use of the perfective *done* is indicative of a language change-in-progress, but my analysis demonstrates that there is not sufficient justification for this claim based on existing research.