

## *They danced the night away*

### A corpus-based analysis of the TIME-away construction

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This study focuses on the TIME-away construction as exemplified in (1) and (2). This is a very peculiar and uncanonical type of construction which is, as Jackendoff (1997) argues, distinct from resultative or a *way*-constructions.

- (1) Bill slept the night away.
- (2) We're twisting the night away.

Indeed, the construction has a complex set of syntactic and semantic properties, i.e., the time expression *the night* behaves in the manner of a NP that covers the syntactic position of the direct object, even though it is not canonically licensed by the intransitive verbs *sleep* or *twist*. Moreover, *away* is a particle, indistinguishable in syntax from an ordinary verb particle. The aim of our research is to illustrate how this construction works in terms of syntax and semantics, but also to give a view of its application in authentic corpus data.

Drawing on data from the COCA, we retrieved all attestations of the TIME-away constructions with a predefined set of time expressions in order to see which verbs – both transitive and intransitive – occurred in the verb slot of this construction. We then classified the verbs for semantic categories, which revealed on the one hand that for the most part synonyms of *sleep* and verbs indicating a movement can be found. On the other hand, there are also other semantic groups to be found, such as communicative verbs. Most conspicuously, we find cases that in Jackendoff's study are marked as ungrammatical, an observation that shows that the TIME-away construction has extended its range of applicability and is more flexible than hitherto assumed.

#### References:

- Jackendoff, Ray (1997) "Twistin' the night away". *Language* 73(3): 534-559.
- Kim, Mija (2010). "On the Time Away Construction: A Corpus-Based Approach." *Linguistic Research* 27(1): 121-136.