

Ethnolinguistic Variation in Toronto English: Possession and Deontic Modality

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VARIABLES AND VARIANTS*

(1) Possession:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| a. Toronto has everything you could ever want. | (70:5) ¹ |
| b. I mean, Toronto 's got it all. | (20:37) |
| c. I got a lot of favourite foods. | (6:28) |

(2) Deontic modality:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| a. You don't have to do everything in the store. | (24:9) |
| b. He 's gotta know English. | (63:17) |
| c. You gotta do everything. | (73:18) |
| d. You must get married. | (101:4) |
| e. We need to put away the vacuum now. | (22:12) |

SOCIAL FACTOR GROUPS

- *Speaker* (N = 69)
- *Speaker Sex*
- *Ethnic Background (+ Age-Group)*: Older British/Irish (40+), Younger British/Irish (18-30), Chinese, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi

LINGUISTIC FACTOR GROUPS

(3) Polarity

not-Negation

- | | |
|--|---------|
| a. And they <u>don't</u> have to worry. | (55:28) |
|--|---------|

no-Negation

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| b. You got no choice. | (88:21) |
|------------------------------|---------|

never

- | | |
|---|---------|
| c. You <u>never</u> have weekends to yourself. | (74:11) |
|---|---------|

(4) Sentence Type

Declarative

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| a. She 's got a boyfriend. | (4:1) |
|-----------------------------------|-------|

Interrogative

- | | |
|---|---------|
| b. Do people have dual citizenships? | (63:21) |
|---|---------|

(5) Type of Subject

Noun Phrase

- | | |
|--|--------|
| a. <u>Your brother's</u> got one. | (16:4) |
|--|--------|

Personal Pronoun

- | | |
|---|--------|
| b. <u>He</u> has an apartment there. | (77:5) |
|---|--------|

Generic Pronoun

- | | |
|---|---------|
| c. I guess <u>you</u> gotta really love chili. | (77:24) |
|---|---------|

(6) Abstractness of Object (possession only)

Concrete

- | | |
|--|---------|
| a. You have uh- <u>your own pig</u> . | (76:25) |
|--|---------|

Abstract

- | | |
|--|---------|
| b. We have a very liberal <u>immigration policy</u> . | (20: 4) |
|--|---------|

(7) Specificity of Object (possession only)

Specific

- | | |
|---|--------|
| a. My mom's cousin has a <u>nephew</u> . | (12:3) |
|---|--------|

Generic

- | | |
|--|--------|
| b. Everyone 's got <u>worries</u> . | (6:10) |
|--|--------|

(8) Temporal Boundedness (possession only)

Temporary

- | | |
|--|---------|
| a. I 've got like cat hairs in my nose. | (25:23) |
|--|---------|

Permanent

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| b. I have um a child. | (67:9) |
|------------------------------|--------|

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¹ Examples are identified by speaker number in the Toronto English corpus (Hoffman & Walker 2010) and page number in the transcription.

Table 1: Overall distribution of variants.

	POSSESSION	DEONTIC MODALITY
Total N:	2,182	1,202
<i>have</i>	86%	59%
<i>have got</i>	6%	3%
<i>got</i>	8%	13%
<i>must</i>	—	5%
<i>need to</i>	—	20%

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL FACTORS

Table 2: Contribution of social factors to the occurrence of three variants (with speaker as a random effect).

	POSSESSION		DEONTIC MODALITY	
	<i>have</i>	<i>have to</i>	<i>need to</i>	
Input:	.933	.594	.148	
Ethnic Background				
British/Irish, older	.29	.59	.27	
British/Irish, younger	.44	.54	.53	
Chinese	.79	.79	.33	
Greek	.67	.47	.57	
Italian	.28	.43	.33	
Portuguese	.54	.29	.73	
Punjabi	.49	.36	.74	
Range:		51	50	47
Speaker Sex				
Female	.66		.41	
Male	.34		.58	
Range:		32		17

Not selected as significant:

Speaker
Sex

ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FACTORS

Table 3: Contribution of linguistic factors to the occurrence of three variants.

	POSSESSION		DEONTIC MODALITY	
	<i>have</i>	<i>have to</i>	<i>need to</i>	
Input:	.870	.592	.187	
Polarity				
Negative	.56	.61	.69	
Positive	.40	.36	.47	
Range:		16	25	22
Subject Type				
Generic	.34		.43	
Pronoun	.53		.53	
NP	.64		.64	
Range:		30		21
Specificity of Object				
Generic	.61			
Specific	.48			
Range:		13		
Abstractness of Object				
Abstract	.54			
Concrete	.45			
Range:		9		
Not selected as significant:		Temporal Boundedness		Subject Type

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Hoffman, M.F. & J.A. Walker. 2010. Ethnolects and the city: Ethnic orientation and linguistic variation in Toronto English. *Language Variation and Change* 21: 37-67.
- Tagliamonte, S. 2006. 'So cool, right?': Canadian English entering the 21st century. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 51: 309-31.
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