

## A real-time study of future temporal reference in spoken Ontarian French

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Hawkesbury, Ontario, is a unique francophone community in Canada. Despite its location in a predominantly English speaking province, French enjoys the status of majority language in this community. As such, Hawkesbury is particularly interesting for the study of language change.

This study presents a real-time variationist account of the expression of future temporal reference in Hawkesbury. Two variants are considered, the periphrastic future (PF), in (1), and the inflected future (IF), in (2):

- (1) **Je vas avoir** le temps de changer d'idée. (H2-09)  
 1PERS go-PR.SG to-have-INF the time of to-change of idea  
 "I'll have the time to change my mind."
- (2) Tu **seras** pas servi en français. (H2-30)  
 2PERS be-FUT NEG served in French  
 "You won't be served in French."

Several researchers have studied the future variable in Laurentian varieties of French (Poplack & Turpin, 1999; Emirkanian & Sankoff, 1985; Deshaies & Laforge, 1981). Grimm & Nadasdi also studied the variable for majority and minority francophones in Ontario. This body of research has concluded that sentential polarity plays a striking role with respect to choice of future form.

The Mougeon & Beniak 1978 corpus of Ontarian French revealed a categorical distribution of the future forms in Hawkesbury, e.g. the IF occurred exclusively in negative phrases (Grimm & Nadasdi). New data from the Mougeon, Nadasdi & Rehner 2005 corpus make it possible to study the future variable in real-time. Initial GoldVarb analyses indicate that, while polarity continues to remain a strong predictor regarding variant choice, the IF in negative phrases has decreased. Furthermore, the overall use of the IF has decreased from 13% (1978) to 10% (2005). This number is no less than 20% elsewhere in Canada.

In the presentation I will discuss the changes observed in Hawkesbury and relate my findings to the greater context of majority French spoken in Canada.

### References

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