

## **Patterns of sociolinguistic change and situational variation in Ontario French: The case of causal conjunctions.**

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Our study examines use of full and contracted causal conjunctions (*à cause (que)* (non-standard) versus *parce (que)* (standard) ‘because’ in Labovian interviews conducted in 1978 and 2005 among Francophone adolescents in Hawkesbury, Ontario. Another corpus, collected in 2005, consists of the in-class speech of some of these adolescents and their teachers. Finally, questionnaire data from first year university students tap the self-reported frequency of (*à cause (que)*) in various (in)formal situations according to sex and place of birth.

The interview data show the sharp rise of (*à cause (que)*) from 1978 to 2005 is led by UMC **male** adolescents. Further, a phonological constraint influencing *que* deletion in *parce que* is apparent at both points in time. Also, the lexical choice between (*à cause (que)*) and *parce (que)* is more socio-stylistically marked than the choice between the full and contracted forms of either one. The classroom data reveal an association of (*à cause (que)*) and *parce* with younger teachers, school subjects other than French, and a negative association with ‘giving instructions’ to the class. The questionnaire data reveal that Ontario and Quebec students report using (*à cause (que)*) always or often with friends, family, teachers, and electronically, while students from abroad do not. Further, Ontario female students report **greater use** of (*à cause (que)*) than do males when speaking with friends, family, and electronically, but **less frequent** when speaking to teachers or in written school work.

In discussing our findings we examine, among other things, the theoretical and methodological implications of the fact that the female speakers use (*à cause (que)*) more often than the male speakers in the most **informal** situations and that, conversely, the male speakers use (*à cause (que)*) more often than the female speakers in the more **formal** situations (including the Labovian interview).

### **References**

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