

Have you doubts or do you have doubts when to use do-support with possessive have?

Possessive *have* (cf. (1) - (7)) exhibits a syntactic two-face nature, engaging in “auxiliary behaviour under certain circumstances and lexical behaviour elsewhere” (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 40). “[A]uxiliary behaviour” means post-verbal negation (cf. (3) and (4)) and subject-verb-inversion in interrogatives (cf. (2) and (4)). “[L]exical behaviour” signifies *do*-support (cf. (5) - (7)). Perfective *have* and the semi-modal *have to* exhibit no such variation (cf. (8) and (9)).

- (1) *I have a pretty nose / a good book / a little sister / a splitting headache / a big problem.*
- (2) *Have they any money?*
- (3) *They haven't any money.*
- (4) *Why haven't they any money?*
- (5) *Do they have any money?*
- (6) *They don't have any money.*
- (7) *Why don't they have any money?*
- (8) *I have (not) read this book. / Have I read this book?*
- (9) *I (do not) have to go. / Do I have to go?*

The large reference grammars mention this variable use of possessive *have*, but provide contradictory information (cf. e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 160-163, 216; Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 113; Quirk et al. 1985: 131-132). For example, Huddleston & Pullum assert that in American English (AE), *do*-support (cf. (5) - (7)) is always used and deem the variant without *do*-support (cf. (2) - (4)) to be on the decline in British English (BE) and to sound “relatively formal or old fashioned” by now (2002: 113). However, Biber et al. (1999: 161-163, 216) observe that this variant does occur occasionally in AE and quite frequently so in BE. Most studies concerned with the variable usage of possessive *have* contrast it with *have got* (cf. e.g. Tagliamonte et al. 2010). Trudgill et al. (2002), the only study available focussing on possessive *have* with and without *do*-support, is restricted to the regional aspect. Thus, the interplay of regional, syntactic, semantic as well as cognitive factors underlying the distribution of possessive *have* with and without *do*-support is yet to be explored.

Addressing this research-gap, the present paper tests the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Possessive *have* without *do*-support does occur in AE.
- H2:** It is not restricted to formal and antiquated use, neither in BE nor AE.
- H3:** Genre-specific preferences in BE and AE are roughly parallel.
- H4:** *Do*-supported possessive *have* in BE is more frequent in negations than in questions, while this is reversed in AE (cf. Jankowski 2005: 16).
- H5:** Pronominal subjects occur more frequently with the *do*-less variant than non-pronominal subjects.
- H6:** The complexity principle (cf. e.g. Rohdenburg 1996: 151, 2003; Mondorf 2009) influences variable *do*-support with possessive *have*, in that *do*-support precipitates predominantly in contexts ranking high in cognitive complexity.

Preliminary results obtained from the BNC and COCA (Davies 2004-, 2008-) show that the *do*-less variant occurs more frequently in informal settings, counter to Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 113). Moreover, AE appears by no means intolerant of possessive *have* without *do*-support, supporting Biber et al. (1999: 162). The present paper empirically investigates whether the *do*-less variant is best characterised as a largely non-American, colloquial phenomenon and whether the syntactic variation of lexical *have* is further influenced by genre, syntactic factors (e.g. modifying elements or subject/object type) as well as general semantic and cognitive predictors, such as definiteness, animacy, and abstractness of possessor or possessum. Finally, differences observed between BE and

AE corpora may support or challenge Trudgill et al.'s (2002 13-16) verdict that *do-less have* constitutes both colonial lag and colonial innovation simultaneously.

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