"You can just Google it up"
Patterns of variation in particle placement in North American English

Melanie Röthlisberger & Sali A. Tagliamonte

**AIM:** To explore how variation in particle placement patterns socially and cognitively in a single variety of English, Ontario English, from a hitherto under-researched variationist perspective.

**PARTICLE PLACEMENT**

**SPLIT VARIANT:** (1) Oh yeah, I used to pick *verb* people *direct object* up *particle*.

**JOINED VARIANT:** (2) And I went to the store to pick *verb* up *particle* something *direct object*.

**DATA**

6,047 particle tokens were extracted from the Ontario Dialects project with a focus on six communities:
- Toronto
- North Bay
- Temiskaming Shores
- Kirkland Lake
- Timmins
- Thunder Bay

**METHODOLOGY**

Demographic factors annotated:
- sex: male vs. female
- age
- education: less vs. more educated
- occupation: blue collar, white collar, student
- community: Toronto, North Bay, etc.

Cognitive factors annotated:
- length of direct object in characters

**RESULTS**

1. Change in progress: The joined variant increases in frequency

2. Variation is socially conditioned: by place, age and occupation (glmmer)

3. Homogeneity of patterns: Cognitive constraints are cross-regionally stable in their effect

[Map of Canada with regions highlighted: Toronto, North Bay, Temiskaming, Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Thunder Bay]

[Examples of usage]

(...) don’t be stupid and *take your hat off* or something when it’s forty below zero. (hsmith, m, 88, thunder bay)

She took off her skates so I took off my skates ‘cause my feet were sore too. (tmancini, f, 11, toronto)