



Democratisation in the South African parliamentary Hansard? A study of change in modal auxiliaries



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ABSTRACT

Parliaments are a primary site where political and social democratisation can be seen in action, making parliamentary discourse, as represented in the Hansard of Commonwealth countries, a particularly relevant source of linguistic evidence for the effects of democratisation on language change. South Africa offers an exemplary case of social change which may influence language use. This paper first outlines the historical trajectory of democratisation in the South African parliament. It subsequently sets out to explore patterns of mutual influence between these socio-political changes and changes in the use of English modal auxiliaries of obligation and necessity in a specialised corpus consisting of the South African parliamentary Hansard, sampled at 10-year intervals from 1900 to 2015. The South African data are compared with data from comparable diachronic corpora of the Australian and British Hansard. We interpret our findings in the frame of possible linguistic democratisation aligned with social and political democratisation. Changes in the frequencies of *must*, *should*, *HAVE to*, *(HAVE) got to*, *need* and *NEED to* across the three varieties are reported first, before turning to the semantics of the modals *must*, *should*, *HAVE to* and *NEED to*. Our findings demonstrate how ongoing language change is receptive to local contexts of use. The data from the South African, Australian and British Hansards show signs of changes similar to the overall changes observed across native varieties of English, such as the gradual decline in the frequency of all modals together, and the increase in frequency of quasi-modals. However, where the British and Australian Hansards match the global trends more closely, the South African data show more signs of deviations from these patterns, which appear to be closely associated with not only demographic changes in parliament, but also the dynamics of conciliation in the broader framework of political democratisation and new patterns of political contestation.

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1. Introduction

Democratisation as an explanation for language change covers cases where linguistic usage demonstrates increasing avoidance of forms that cue unequal relations between people (Fairclough, 1992; Leech et al., 2009; Farrelly and Seoane, 2012). Changes in the use of modal verbs, especially the increasing avoidance of using modals in a way that imposes face-threatening obligations or relies on a hierarchically stratified view of human relations, have been adduced as evidence of such linguistic democratisation (e.g. Myhill, 1995; Leech, 2003; Millar, 2009). This change in modal usage (as part of a general decline in the frequency of modal auxiliaries) has been recorded across native varieties of English (Collins, 2009), with the

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exception of South Africa, where core modals like *must* have not been in decline to the same degree in the variety spoken natively by descendants of the nineteenth-century settlers (Wasserman and van Rooy, 2014).

The idea that democratisation accounts for language change is rooted in the assumption that, as societies become more egalitarian, language comes to reflect those changes (Hiltunen and Loureiro-Porto, 2020). Democratisation, here, has a generalised meaning. In political science, however, democratisation specifically denotes extension of franchise and parliamentary participation to the broader public; for example, the inclusion of women and other previously disenfranchised groups (Farrelly and Seoane, 2012; Spirling, 2016). Parliaments are thus a primary site where such democratisation can be seen in action, making parliamentary discourse, as represented in the Hansard¹ of Commonwealth countries, a particularly relevant data source of linguistic evidence where the linguistic and political meet. South Africa, our primary focus in this paper, offers an exemplary case of societal change, which translated in changes in parliament, which in turn raises the question of possible shifts in parliamentary language resulting from these social and political changes.

In this article, we start by reviewing overall changes in modal verbs across varieties of English, before focussing on modals as an important resource in parliamentary discourse (Simon-Vandenberg, 1997; Vukovic, 2014). We then turn our attention to a historical trajectory of democratisation in the South African parliament. We subsequently trace changes in the use of modal auxiliaries of obligation and necessity over a period of more than 100 years, using a corpus of parliamentary debates from Australia, Britain and South Africa. Our focus is on South Africa, but we compare trends in South Africa with Australia and Britain, since they have ties through shared ancestry of language and parliamentary institutions, but are sufficiently different in terms of the evolution of their democracies to allow for insight into the interaction between language change and democratisation. Specifically, we trace changes in the use of modal auxiliaries, as possible evidence for linguistic democratisation aligned with social and political democratisation. We report changes in the frequencies of the modals of obligation and necessity *must*, *should*, *HAVE to*, *(HAVE) got to*, *need* and *NEED to* across the three varieties, and discuss in more detail changes in the semantics of the modals *must*, *should*, *HAVE to* and *NEED to*.

2. Changes in modal verbs across varieties of English

2.1. Brief overview

Short-term diachronic changes in the use of modal auxiliaries in British and American English are well documented. For example, Leech (2003) and Leech et al. (2009), using the Brown family of corpora, conclude that there is a general decline in the frequency of core modals from the 1930s to the 1990s across various written registers, and a slow rise in the frequency of semi-modals. Millar (2009), using the large TIME corpus with data from every calendar year, finds against the overall pattern of decline, although Leech (2011) points out that such changes may be particular to the TIME magazine and not counter-evidence to the overall trend of decline in frequency. In his response to Millar (2009), Leech (2011) draws on data from COHA and the extended Brown family of corpora, which share with the TIME magazine corpus the finer temporal resolution and expanded period of time that were not available at the time of Leech (2003). Particular modals are singled out as demonstrating distinct patterns of change: the least frequent modals (like *shall*, *ought to* and *need*) decline extensively, whereas mid-frequency modals like *may* and *must* decline somewhat in frequency. The most frequent modals (*will*, *would*, *can* and *could*) remain relatively stable (Mair and Leech, 2006; Leech et al., 2009). Some semi-modals like *(HAVE) got to* remain relatively infrequent in written registers; however, *NEED to* and *HAVE to* both demonstrate substantial increases in frequency (Leech et al., 2009; Millar, 2009; Collins et al. 2014). A further finding from existing research is that, at the semantic level, there is a trend for the most dominant meaning of a modal to gradually become more dominant over time, “pushing out” secondary or marginal meanings. Over time, modals thus become less polysemous. For example, in the case of *may*, the epistemic meaning has become more dominant over the root (deontic) meaning of permission (Leech, 2003: 233).

There is less research on diachronic changes in modal verbs in varieties of English beyond British and American English. Dollinger (2008) reports similar patterns in Canadian English, going back further in time than most studies of British and American English. In Australian English, Collins and Yao (2014) also find largely similar trends to those in British and American English, though Australian English is somewhat advanced in the extent of change. Collins et al. (2014) consider modal usage in Philippine English, and find that it demonstrates a slower overall rate of decline in modal frequency than either British or American English – a finding that they interpret as either reflecting “colonial lag”² (Trudgill, 2004), or the endonormativity of Philippine English. They also find some distinctive patterns in Philippine English at the level of individual modals, but in other cases they find what appears to be an adherence to the norms of American English.

Pertinent to our analysis is the work of Rossouw and van Rooy (2012), van Rooy and Wasserman (2014), and Wasserman and van Rooy (2014), on White and Black South African English (WSAfE and BSafE, respectively). As far as the native strand of WSAfE is concerned, they find (in a written corpus spanning the period 1820 to the 1990s) similar changes to those in other

¹ The Hansard is the substantially verbatim official record of parliamentary proceedings, including speeches, debates, question time, and other parliamentary business. The Hansard tradition has its origin in Britain, and was transplanted to other countries in the course of colonial expansion.

² Hundt (2009) makes the point that there is no fundamental generality to the claim that colonial varieties necessarily display lag in relation to their parent varieties. They display conservative, innovative and other more complex patterns, if a comprehensive comparison of divergent changes is made. The biological metaphors that are invoked as explanation for the presumed trend in colonial varieties do not withstand scrutiny. She proposes the more neutral term “extraterritorial conservatism” (Hundt, 2009: 32) for cases where an older form is retained in the colonial variety.

native varieties, but with some exceptions. The most striking difference from other varieties is that in WSAfE the modal *must* does not decline in frequency, compared with its sharp decline in other varieties (Rossouw and van Rooy, 2012), which they ascribe to contact with Afrikaans and its cognate modal *moet/moes*. Wasserman and van Rooy's (2014) semantic analysis demonstrates that this is also accounted for by the fact that WSAfE is innovative in that *must* and *should* become increasingly polysemous, and overlapping in their expression of both strong and median obligation³ – in contrast to the trend towards monosemy in other varieties. They conclude that WSAfE *must* expresses median obligation far more than strong obligation, also confirming Bowerman (2004) observation that *must* carries less “social force” in WSAfE.

BSAfE reveals a different trend: van Rooy and Wasserman (2014) find that from the 1950s to the 1990s BSAfE shows an increase in modal frequency (rather than a decrease as in other varieties). It does not, however, share the semantic changes of WSAfE, instead demonstrating little semantic movement and remaining closer to the older British norm in reserving *must* for strong obligation and *should* for median.

2.2. Reasons for changes in modal frequencies

The most common reasons proposed for changes in modal frequencies are (potentially interrelated) general trends at the intersection of society and language: colloquialisation and democratisation. Colloquialisation is understood in terms of the increased orality of texts, which Biber and Finegan (1989: 489) explain as an “underlying pattern of drift towards more ORAL linguistic characterizations” (emphasis in original). More specifically, colloquialisation can be defined as the process through which lexicogrammatical features associated with informal spoken interaction increasingly occur in more formal written or spoken genres (Collins and Yao, 2013: 480). Mair (2006: 88) explains colloquialisation as resulting from the promotion of an “egalitarian and informal communicative culture ... which has brought the norms of writing closer to the norms of spoken usage”. This links up with the notion of democratisation. Fairclough (1992), for example, sees the increasing informality of discourse as reflecting the increasingly egalitarian and democratic nature of contemporary societies (or at least the appearance of such egalitarianism) (see Myhill, 1995; Leech, 2003). The increase in semi-modals (associated with spoken language) is a clear effect of colloquialisation. Furthermore, Smith (2003: 259) points out that changes in usage patterns specifically for modals of obligation and necessity may be linked to democratisation:

It seems probable that *MUST* is a casualty of a changing society where increasing emphasis is being placed on equality of power, or at least the appearance of equality of power, and the informality of discourse found in private conversation is becoming more acceptable, even usual, in official types of discourse (cf. Fairclough, 1992: 201–205). Just as these conditions are likely to disfavour the use of *MUST*, they should correspondingly favour other forms which express obligation less directly.

Language-internal factors are also important. Grammaticalisation no doubt plays a role, and the decline of *must* can be linked to competition from semi-modals like *HAVE to*, which emerged through grammaticalisation processes (Krug, 2000). In addition, the rise of *HAVE to* may at least in part be ascribed to the fact that it can be used in syntactic contexts where *must* cannot, such as past tense contexts and in combination with other modals (e.g. Myhill, 1995; Leech, 2003). However, Dollinger (2008: 269) finds that the changes where *HAVE to* replaces *must* in the expression of deontic obligation in Canadian English did not originate in the syntactically restricted contexts, but rather that the social change (i.e. democratisation) in Canada must have been the central cause of the change.

Where these patterns of change are not found (e.g. in second-language or L2 varieties of English), this is usually ascribed to conservative adherence to external norms, to extraterritorial conservatism, or to the effects of formal school instruction (see Collins et al., 2014; van Rooy and Wasserman, 2014). Millar (2009: 215) makes another proposal, arguing that “socio-political or socio-historical factors may play a role in the types of modality being expressed and this may be reflected in fluctuations in the frequencies of particular modals”. This is the proposal we set out to explore in this paper, focusing on a specialised genre, the Hansard, across three varieties of English (British, Australian, South African), and a period of more than a century.

3. Parliamentary discourse and Hansard: adversariality, cooperation, performance – and its representation in writing

Parliamentary discourse is a specialised subset of political discourse, as explained by Ilie (2003: 73):

Parliamentary debates presuppose, on the one hand, a spirit of adversariality, which is manifested in position claiming and opponent-challenging acts, and, on the other hand, a spirit of cooperativeness, which is manifest in joint decision-making and cross-party problem-solving processes in order to reach commonly acceptable goals regarding future policies and suitable lines of action at a national level.

There is also a performative or histrionic element to parliamentary discourse (see Ilie, 2015). Ilie (2010: 890) argues that a characteristic feature of parliamentary discourse is that “the political power is on display for a very diverse onlooking and

³ We follow Huddleston's (2002: 175–177) distinction of modal strength on a scale from strong to median to weak. Prototypically, *must* conveys strong obligation or necessity, signalling the strength of the speaker's commitment to the factuality (logical necessity) or actualisation (obligation) of the situation, whereas *should* prototypically conveys a weaker degree of commitment, although it does not approach weak strength, which would rather be conveyed by *may*. See examples (1) to (6) for illustration of the strength contrast.

overhearing audience”, including both the narrower audience of visitors to the gallery, fellow MPs, and reporters, and the wide audience of television viewers and the public. Thus, “by offering their own personal representations of institutional people, ideas or events, MPs want to affect the mental processes and to (re)shape the attitudes and beliefs of a wide audience of both political insiders and outsiders” (Ilie, 2010: 890).

How politicians use various types of linguistic resources to accomplish these goals has been the subject of various studies, ranging from discourse-analysis studies of how topical issues are construed in parliament (Häkkinen and Kaarkoski, 2018), to cross-cultural parliamentary discourse studies (Bayley, 2004), to studies more specifically investigating features of parliamentary discourse, such as the use of forms of address or politeness strategies (Ilie, 2010; Archer, 2017). In other areas of linguistic research, diachronic Hansard materials have been used to investigate (socio)linguistic variation and change at various levels of grammar, lexis and discourse (e.g. Macalister, 2006; Spirling, 2016; Kruger and Smith 2018; Kruger et al., 2019a; Hiltunen et al., 2020).

To the best of our knowledge, large-scale corpus-based research on how modals are used in parliamentary discourse is extremely limited. Simon-Vandenberg (1997) highlights the importance of modal certainty in political discourse, using a small sample of British political interviews; Vukovic (2014) presents a more extensive analysis of strong epistemic modality in a small corpus of British House of Commons debates from 2010. In this paper, therefore, we expand the scope of investigation into modal usage in large diachronic corpora of parliamentary debates as reflected in the Hansard, spanning roughly a century, and across three varieties of English.

One point that should be noted is that the Hansard is, of course, an edited written representation of debates, and existing research demonstrates considerable divergence between the spoken and written discourse, often altering the spoken discourse in the direction of more formal and more normative usage (see Kruger et al., 2019b; Mollin, 2007). This is a fact we keep in mind: in other words, changes in modal usage do not necessarily only reflect changes in the usage of parliamentarians, but also in editorial practices in rendering spoken usage in writing.

In the South African context, Hibbert (2003, 2016) has specifically commented on the fact that after 1994, not only did the language profile of members of parliament change dramatically (bringing a dominance of BSAfE speakers to parliament for the first time), but editorial practices also underwent substantial changes. She points to the then speaker Frene Ginwala's explicit suggestions that Hansard should reflect the true flavour and diversity of English in South Africa, rather than being straightjacketed by conservative colonial norms. In 1999, English-language editing of Hansard was almost wholly done by native English speakers; however, the policy was to accommodate the diversity of English usage in South Africa as closely as possible without adjusting to normative notions of the standard language (Hibbert, 2003). However, what this means in practice is somewhat less clear. Hibbert's (2003) analysis, based on four debates from 1998, finds that substantial corrections are made (in the direction of more standard and more formal usage) by editors insofar as prepositions, conjunctions, articles and progressives are concerned – though some nonstandard uses and creative forms are accepted.

4. A brief history of social and parliamentary changes in South Africa

Modern South Africa has gone through various major political restructurings since the beginning of its colonial history. The first permanent colonial settlement was made by the Dutch from 1652 onwards. The Dutch occupation was characterised by a form of commercial government, run by the Dutch East India Company, with no parliaments or other forms of participatory government, and thus left no record of parliamentary debates.

In 1806, the British annexed the Cape of Good Hope on a permanent basis. In 1853 the bicameral Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope was established (House of Assembly and Legislative Council) (Van Wyk, 2010). The Cape parliament continued to operate until it was amalgamated into the Union of South Africa in 1910. The second major British colony that gained a measure of self-government was the colony of Natal, with Durban as the centre of its development. Occupation started in the mid 19th century, and a parliament was established in 1893. The Natal parliament established its own Hansard division that continued to operate until this colony too was amalgamated into the Union of South Africa in 1910 (Van Wyk, 2010). The franchise and eligibility for election was limited to male property owners, by and large white emigrants from Britain, with some representation of the descendants of Dutch colonists in the Cape of Good Hope. A very small number of indigenous black South African men and descendants of emancipated slaves also gained the vote after they satisfied property requirements, but none of them was ever elected to the parliament.

From the second quarter of the 19th century, a large group of Dutch colonists migrated inland, away from British rule, and eventually established a number of nominally independent republics, two of which were eventually recognised by the British from 1851 onwards – the Transvaal and Orange Free State (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007). These republics kept parliamentary records in Dutch, although more a record of decisions than a record of parliamentary debate. By the end of the 19th century, the British also annexed these territories, which gave rise to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. After the war, self-governing parliaments were established in 1903 in these provinces. In 1910, a major political reorganisation happened when the Union of South Africa was established out of the four provinces, and a single parliament was established, with its seat in Cape Town. The Union of South Africa declared itself independent of the British Crown and became the Republic of South Africa in 1961.

Prior to 1910, political parties played a relatively limited role in parliamentary politics. While recognisable groupings existed, representing a more imperialist and a more liberal orientation in the Cape and Natal, and a “Dutch” faction in Transvaal and Orange Free State, with some visibility also in the Cape, parliamentarians were largely elected on the basis of individual contests and seats were not contested through organised political parties (Venter, 1989: 21–44). This changed with the establishment of the Union of South Africa. A grand attempt was made to foster unity between the English and Dutch

Table 1
Composition of the diachronic comparable Hansard corpus.

Sampling points	Years	British House of Commons	Australian House of Representatives	South Africa – lower house
Circa 1901	1900			87,573 (Cape)
	1901	407,852	321,855	119,030 (Natal)
	1902			97,233 (Cape)
	1903			110,539 (Transvaal)
1935	1935	556,791	403,724	179,754
1965	1965	594,082	374,718	184,940
1995	1995	657,534	879,385	148,140
Circa 2015	2014			182,277
	2015	896,289	897,550	79,251
		3,112,548	2,877,232	1,188,737

colonists through the establishment of the South African Party (SAP) in 1910. Its main opposition in the first half of the 20th century came on the right from early precursors to the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, and from the left by labour/communist parties. Franchise was initially extended to all men of European descent, while non-Europeans (both indigenous men and men of slave descent) retained their vote under strict requirements in the Cape and Natal (see [Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007: 229–244, 283–305](#)).

The SAP and its descendant, the United Party (emerging from a renewed attempt to unify the SAP faction with the Afrikaner Nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s) governed the Union of South Africa until 1948. The SAP/United Party was largely in favour of maintaining ties with the British Empire, voted in favour of participation on the British/Allied side in the two World Wars, and gradually adopted a slightly more inclusive attitude towards economic and social opportunity for indigenous South Africans, although at no stage did they envision an open, non-racial government with equality of representation ([Esterhuysen, 1981: 30–40](#)).

From the 1920s, Afrikaner Nationalism gradually developed as a major political school of thought ([Esterhuysen, 1981: 30–33](#)). White women gained franchise in 1930 ([Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007: 265](#)). The National Party (NP) broke away from the United Party in the late 1930s and established itself as an opposition that advocated for the economic emancipation of the Afrikaners, the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the Dutch colonists. Their political view was also characterised by a much stricter view of segregation of the races and a policy of preferential economic and social opportunity for Europeans ([Roberts and Trollip, 1947](#)). The NP won the majority of seats in the election of 1948, and governed South Africa until 1994.

The NP as governing party set about to implement the policy of apartheid, which resulted in complete racial segregation and the marginalisation of black South Africans from participation in positions of control in politics, law, commerce and industry. This led to the break-away from the United Party in 1959 of the Progressive Party, later the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), as a small but articulate voice against apartheid in parliament, and from 1974, their representation grew until the end of apartheid ([Suzman, 1993](#)). The United Party continued to decline and eventually disbanded in 1977. As the NP started to adjust its policy towards a more inclusive approach to participation from the early 1980s, under pressure in the first instance of liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), supported by the international community, a new right-wing opposition party, the Conservative Party, was established in 1982, and quickly became the largest parliamentary opposition ([Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007: 375–376](#)). By 1990, it became clear to the NP that the road towards fully inclusive parliamentary politics was unavoidable, and by 1994, the franchise was at last changed completely to include all adult South Africans.

In the 1994 elections, the ANC won a majority of seats and has been the governing party ever since, which led to a radical reconstitution of the demographic make-up of parliament, with speakers of BSAFe in the majority. To its right, the NP gradually declined and after the 1999 elections merged with the successor to the PFP to form the Democratic Alliance, which has steadily increased its representation to approximately 20%. The Zulu Nationalist party, called the Inkatha Freedom Party, was initially relatively successful in gaining votes, at around 10% in 1994, but has since then declined to a much smaller party, which often finds common cause with other political parties to the right of the ANC ([Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007: 403–422](#)).

To the left, older liberation movements like the Pan African Congress and the Azanian People's Organisation disappeared, but in their place a much more radical, and youthful, Africanist party in the form of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was established in 2013, and won 6% of the total national vote in the following year. When the EFF entered parliament in 2014, they introduced a new brand of in-your-face confrontational politics, shouting down political opponents and preventing them from speaking, or raising points of order to the extent that parliamentary proceedings often come to a standstill. [Mbetse \(2015\)](#) points to the disruptive style of the EFF's brand of populism, which includes coarse language and a persistent challenge to the established order, including the conventions of parliamentary conduct.

5. Method

5.1. Corpus design

The corpus used in this article forms part of a 7.2-million word diachronic comparable corpus of the British, Australian, and South African Hansards of the proceedings of the lower house, taken at five sampling points (approximately 1901, 1935, 1965, 1995 and 2015). The composition of the corpus is shown in [Table 1](#). For each of the calendar years, the last or last two days of sitting of every calendar month were included in the corpus, depending on the number of months of sitting in that year (if

Table 2
South African diachronic Hansard corpus with 10-year sampling intervals.

1900–1903	414,375
1925	127,230
1935	179,754
1945	139,837
1955	131,363
1965	184,940
1975	72,884
1985	74,616
1995	148,140
2005	130,908
2014–2015	261,528
Total	1,865,575

fewer months, then more than one day per month was sampled), and on the amount of text on the final day, which was sometimes very little, thereby necessitating a sample from the second last day. In South Africa, there were a number of different “provincial” parliaments at the beginning of the twentieth century, and not all of them held sittings in 1901, thus a slightly expanded window was used, and samples from three of those provincial parliaments were included, as shown in Table 1. South African records from 2015 were also incomplete at the time of sampling, and were therefore extended backwards to include the final months of 2014 as well.

For this article, we extended the South African data beyond the five sampling frames, to include samples in 10-year intervals⁴ – in line with the suggestion of Millar (2009) that year-on-year variability is considerable, and fewer sampling points may give a skewed view of change. The full South African corpus used in the study, amounting to roughly 1.8 million words, is shown in Table 2. This corpus was compared to the British corpus (3.1 million words) and the Australian corpus (2.9 million words) shown in Table 1.

For the South African corpus, only material produced originally in English was included. Over time, different approaches were followed to accommodate the (initial) Dutch/Afrikaans and English bilingual official language policy, and, after 1994, the multilingual policy. For this study, all material in other languages, or translated material, was excluded. Not currently captured in the metadata for the corpus is mark-up for speaker background (native English, Afrikaans, or indigenous African languages), nor for political affiliation. The contributions made by parliamentarians speaking in English up to 1975 represent mainly the United Party, who were the ruling party until 1948, but their support and number of public representatives declined sharply after 1948. From 1959 the Progressive Party is well represented in the English speech. The third major party represented in the data was the National Party, whose public representatives mainly spoke in Afrikaans. Their senior representatives, especially the Leader (Prime Minister, and from 1982 State President) and Ministers, from the 1970s onward, contributed more in English as they came to alternate between Afrikaans and English in longer speeches, as well as some replies to English-speaking parliamentarians. However, it should be noted that in the period 1948 to 1994, the English parts of the parliamentary discourse underrepresent the Afrikaner Nationalist views and their rhetorical styles, as these politicians mostly chose to speak in Afrikaans.

5.2. Methodology

The group of modals we focus on are from the semantic group that conveys meanings of deontic obligation, epistemic necessity and a set of dynamic meanings where the requirement to pursue a course of action is necessitated by the situation or a need that arises in the speaker or subject of the sentence. For our basic quantitative analysis we investigate the normalised frequency of *must*, *should*, *HAVE to*, *(HAVE) got to*, *need* and *NEED to*, over a period of more than a century in the British, Australian and South African Hansard. We focus on the South African Hansard, and consider possible socio-political and cultural reasons, framed by notions of democratisation, for changes in frequency, particularly where these diverge from British and Australian usage. The verbs were selected because of their functionality in parliamentary discourse, but also because they have been shown to have changed in unique ways in South Africa, compared to the pattern of change in other varieties (Wasserman and van Rooy, 2014). Extraction was done in WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2018), using both the contracted and full forms of the modals, and all the different inflected forms of the verbs *HAVE* and *NEED*. The semi-modals were manually inspected in full to ensure that only valid instances were included, to exclude cases such as those where *need* was used as noun.

We supplement this by more detailed semantic analyses of *must*, *should*, *HAVE to* and *NEED to* in the South African data, based on random samples of 500 cases of each modal. For *must* we consider not only the main semantic classifications of deontic, epistemic and dynamic meanings, but also the modal strength in terms of the parameters of analysis developed by Wasserman and van Rooy, (2014), focussing especially on the contrast between strong and median obligation. We describe the semantics of the four modal auxiliaries in terms of proportional frequency over time. Given the focus on a single genre, we were able to uncover rather specific nuances in the various senses of the modals, which we set out with reference to typical examples.

⁴ No Hansard was produced during the First World War and the years immediately thereafter.

As far as **deontic meanings** are concerned, parliamentarians attempt to impose obligations on the government to pursue a particular course of action, very typical of making policy proposals in parliament, as in example (1).⁵

- (1) We have tended to neglect this aspect and it is something that we have to attend to. I believe we must promote better use of mother tongue education. (16 November 2005)⁶

It is also possible that the obligation arises in a different sphere of government, where the obligation is imposed by another body, such as “the board” in example (2), where the first obligative modal is *HAVE to*, while the second modal *must* carries an even stronger obligation in terms of the force of that obligation.

- (2) ...once the board decides that a certain amount of butter has to be exported, it must be exported despite the fact that a shortage may be facing us. (30 April 1935)

In some cases, this obligation is imposed on the collective of parliamentarians, where it performs the function of achieving intersubjective coordination in the terms of Verhagen (2005), rather than the policy decision itself, for example highlighting the obligation to be fair (example 3) or to consider facts from a particular point of view (example 4).

- (3) I submit that a certain amount of confidence is still lacking in this system of publications control. I think we must be absolutely fair in putting this point. (30 April 1975)
 (4) On the facts I have mentioned, I think one would be justified in saying that it should be made as soon as possible. But other factors have to be considered, and here we have to look at the matter from the point of view of our general census policy. (30 January 1935)

In other cases, especially in the most recent data, some parliamentarians, especially from the EFF, also attempt to impose obligations on their parliamentary colleagues and especially on the speaker, to conduct the debate in particular ways, in a more adversative style, as in example (5).

- (5) So, can we be allowed to read the motion? He is just afraid of what he calls filibustering. That is part of politics. You must sit down and chill. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. (27 November 2014)

The modal *should* is also used in an obligation sense, often with a weaker sense of obligation than *must* and *HAVE to*, as illustrated by example (6).

- (6) But I think that a house should be provided for this gentleman, and I think there was a recommendation by the Advisory Board to that effect. (30 May 1901, Natal Hansard)

Epistemic meanings are conveyed by modals when they assess particular facts, either as a conclusion from other evidence, as in example (7) where the man’s way of argumentation serves as evidence for the conclusion, or as an inference from the situation, without spelling out the basis of argumentation explicitly, as in example (8).

- (7) All I can presume is that a man who argues like that must look at the service as a house of refuge from the turmoil he suffers elsewhere. (28 February 1935)
 (8) I think that it is time we took a closer look at ourselves in a historical perspective. We must know that the gap between White and Black is a historic thing and cannot be eliminated simply by waving a wand. (3 February 1975)

Dynamic meanings are evident when there is a need that arises from a situation, as illustrated by example (9), a circumstantial need that does not follow from an obligation imposed by a deontic source (Huddleston, 2002: 185). The speaker in this example makes a prediction based on his analysis of the situation, without specifically imposing an obligation on the minister, which distinguishes this use from a deontic use. It is also not epistemic, as it does not weigh the evidence and draws a conclusion about a logical necessity.

- (9) I therefore am sure that the Minister will find we will not need to use this Bill very much. (28 February 1955)

A related dynamic necessity meaning identified by Huddleston (2002: 185) is where the need arises from the disposition of the speaker, which is related to the dynamic ability meaning conveyed by *can*. This type of meaning did not occur very often in the data, but a related sense of dynamic necessity, somewhere between the personal disposition and a need arising from a situation is where a situation is to be viewed in a particular way because of some inherent moral judgement about the situation. This is illustrated by example (10).

- (10) The decent people to-day believe that there are other lesser evils than slavery that have to be abhorred, evils such as semi-forced labour, unfair rates of remuneration, the prevention of a man developing to the best of his ability and skill, both to his own benefit and to the benefit of the country, simply on the ground of his colour, and other measures of that nature which are really the continuation of a form of slavery. (31 March 1955)

⁵ In this context, it is possible that usage of *must* may demonstrate distinct patterns based on speakers’ affiliation with the government or opposition. This is an aspect foreseen as an avenue for future investigation.

⁶ All corpus extracts are from the South African Hansard corpus.

The dynamic meanings in the data are encoded by *HAVE to* and *NEED to*, but *must* and to a very limited degree *should*, all contribute to the expression of dynamic necessity, as also claimed for the expression of dynamic necessity more generally by Huddleston (2002: 206). There were a good number of borderline cases, where we applied the guidelines in Huddleston (2002: 175–177, 205–208), read in conjunction with the analysis of Wasserman (2014). In general, where a modal source could be identified for an obligation, the classification was made as deontic obligation, but where such a source was absent and it was sufficiently clear that some need to pursue a course of action arose out of the situation, the classification of dynamic necessity was adopted. Classifications were initially made by the second author (because of prior experience with this type of research), but the first author reviewed a sample of the classifications, and also reviewed each case flagged as borderline by the second author.

6. Findings and discussion

6.1. *Must*

As already discussed, *must* demonstrates a considerable decline in frequency across varieties of English – with the exception of WSAfE where it does not decline to the same degree. In the specialised register of parliamentary debate, somewhat different trends can be observed, with parliamentary debates in the three countries taking different trajectories over time (see Fig. 1). The decline in Australian English is clear and largely linear: from 1.16 per 1000 words in 1901 to 0.50 in 2015, echoing the trend in Collins and Yao's (2014) analysis of fiction. British English shows an increase in frequency from 1901 to 1965, after which a gradual decline sets in. However, the overall trendline is in the direction of a very gradual increase. In the South African Hansard, the larger number of sampling points demonstrates clear variability over time; however, the trend is towards an increase over time – from 0.9 per 1000 words in 1901, to almost 2 in 2015. At several points on the timeline, the frequency of *must* far exceeds the 1965 peak in British English (of 1.59 per 1000 words), most notably in 1985, 1995 and 2015.

There are several interpretations for the trend of an increased frequency of *must* over time in South African parliamentary debates. This finding is in line with that of Rossouw and van Rooy (2012) and Wasserman and van Rooy (2014), though even stronger confirmation that *must* continues to thrive in South African English. It is likely that contact with Afrikaans is part of the explanation. Afrikaans *moet* together with its preterite form *moes* is the second most frequent modal in both written and spoken Afrikaans (Wasserman and van Rooy, 2014: 41). Erasmus's (2019) diachronic corpus analysis shows that *moet* starts at a frequency of more than 6 per 1000 words in the 1910s, and then increases sharply to more than 10 per 1000 words by the 1940s, before it gradually declines in frequency, but still maintains a frequency of 8 per 1000 words by the 2000s, considerably higher than English *must*. Contact with Afrikaans, and the way parliamentarians used the modal *moet* in the Afrikaans contributions may in part explain the higher frequency in WSAfE. However, it may also be that Afrikaans parliamentarians who previously spoke Afrikaans increasingly started speaking English in parliament (perhaps accounting for the spikes in 1985 and 1995), transferring preferences for Afrikaans *moet* to their L2 English. The predominance of BSAfE speakers in parliament after 1994 also no doubt is part of the explanation, as in BSAfE modals (including *must*) tend to show an increase rather than decrease over time (van Rooy and Wasserman, 2014).

In British and American English, it has generally been found that *must* declines in its expression of (strong) deontic meaning (Smith, 2003; Leech et al., 2009; Kranich et al., this issue). In the framework of democratisation, this is usually accounted for by the avoidance of its strong encoding of power differentials and face threat. As a collateral effect, *must* has been moving toward

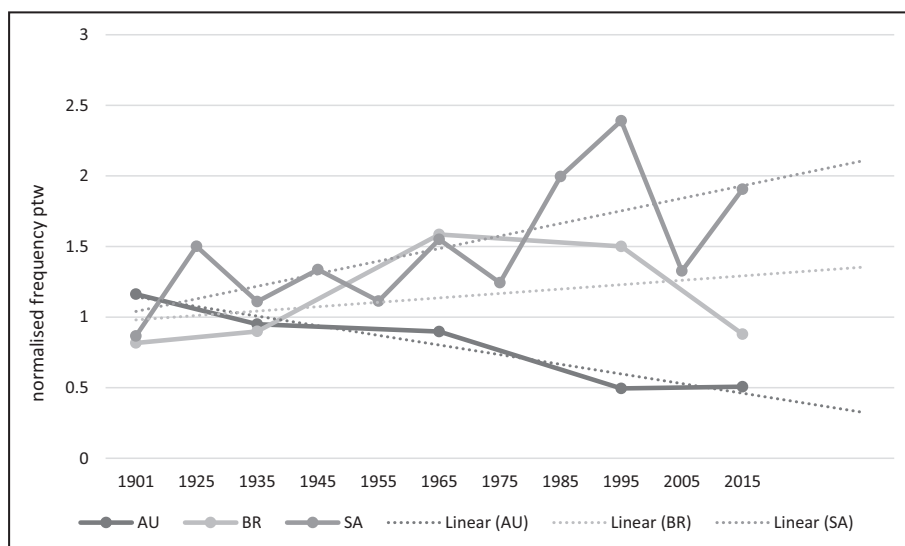


Fig. 1. Normalised frequency of *must* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard. Dotted lines in this and similar graphs show trendlines; for the interpretability of trends, linear trendlines using the least squares method to seek the slope and intercept coefficients are used.

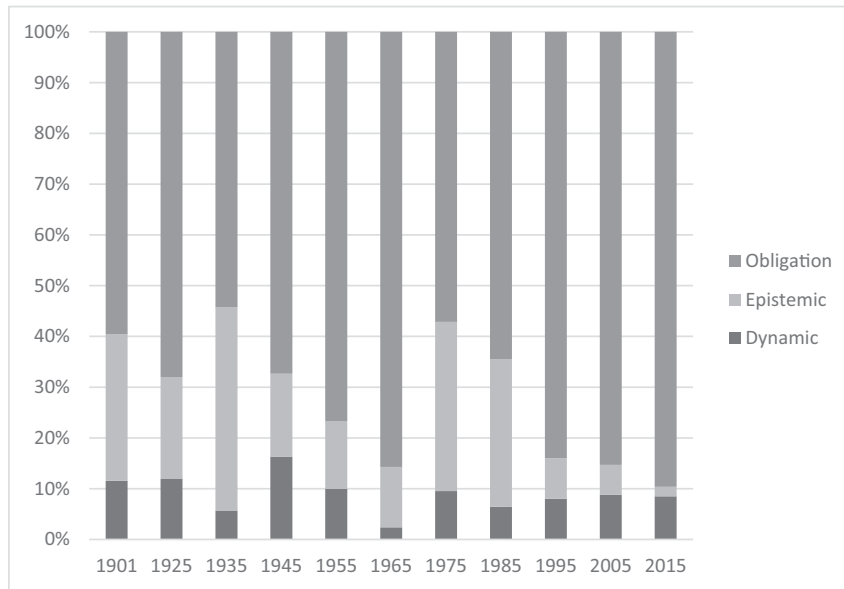


Fig. 2. Main semantic classification of *must* from 1901 to 2015 in the South African Hansard.

expressing epistemic necessity, whereas *should* experiences a decline in its epistemic meaning as a result – partially taking over the expression of deontic obligation from *must* (Leech et al., 2009: 115–116). A semantic analysis of *must* in South African parliamentary debates (Fig. 2) demonstrates that the dominant meaning of *must* in South African parliamentary discourse remains deontic, contrary to general trends observed for other varieties, but consistent with the finding of Wasserman and van Rooy (2014) for native SAfE. It also appears that trends in the South African parliament are linked to major political changes: after major regime changes (in 1948 and 1994) the obligation meaning strengthens in the data for 1955 compared to 1945, and in 1995 compared to 1985, counteracting trends in directly preceding periods where epistemic *must* seems to be gaining somewhat of a foothold. The disappearance of epistemic meanings in favour of obligation meanings after 2005 (and particularly in 2015, after the entry of the EFF) is very striking. Changes in the demographics of parliament may also, of course, play a role in this respect, with larger numbers of Afrikaans and BSAfE speakers increasing the likelihood of deontic *must*. The development towards a dominant deontic meaning of obligation in parliamentary discourse matches the semantics of Afrikaans *moet*, which also encodes overwhelmingly a deontic obligation meaning according to Erasmus (2019: 218). Erasmus (2019: 266) also shows how in general, Afrikaans and South African English are very similar compared to other Englishes and Dutch, the modern-day sibling of Afrikaans, based on data from a range of corpus studies (see Fig. 3).

While the increasing number of Afrikaans speakers speaking English in parliament is no doubt part of the explanation, the dramatic change in 2014/2015, compared even to the earlier periods in the post-1994 parliament, points to the need to consider further factors. We believe that the entrance of the EFF to the parliament in 2014, with their new style of politics that is much more confrontational and robust than before, is a key factor. The examples analysed in our random sample show a disproportionate representation⁷ of EFF speakers, with uses as in example (11), which are largely unheard of in any period prior to the most recent period.

(11) The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Please take your seat. Let me tell you. The member is introducing...

Mr JS MALEMA: No, but Deputy Speaker, before you respond - you said he was debating. If he is giving the report, he must then correct his statement when he said the committee agreed that Baleka must not appear before the committee. He must correct that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Malema, this is the second time that I have to remind you that you must call a member "hon". As the House, members call each other "hon". You are calling the hon Baleka Mbete by her name. This is a requirement of the Rules, our conduct in the House and its conventions. (27 November 2014)

The target form in the random sample is underlined in the speech turn of Mr JS Malema, the leader of the EFF, but the speech turn contains two further relevant examples of the speaker directly obliging individuals to perform certain speech acts, not addressing the deputy speaker who chairs the session. The deputy speaker then admonishes Mr Malema for his unprocedural style of contributing, but as the data reveal, this did not seem to have much of an effect, as Mr Malema and his colleagues from the EFF continue to employ this style of expression, as shown by more examples from other members of the EFF (example 12–14).

⁷ While the samples for detailed analysis were drawn randomly, using a function in WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2018), it turned out that a much larger proportion of the sample were words uttered by representatives of the EFF. Thus, by inference from the random sample, the representatives of the EFF use the word *must* disproportionately more often than the other parliamentary groupings.

- (12) The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You raise your hand.
Mr MQ NDLOZI: You will not be able to show me in the Rules, Deputy Speaker, that I must raise my hand, and none of the ANC people ever raise their hands. (27 November 2014)
- (13) Mr NF SHIVAMBU: It is not in the rules that the Minister can delegate the Deputy Minister. It says in the Minister's absence he speaks.
<0>interjections</0> If the Minister is here he must keep quiet and sit down. <0>interjections</0>
The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Shivambu, please don't talk back to me. I have ruled on this matter. (24 February 2015)
- (14) Mr JA MNGXITAMA: The point of order is: This hon member is misleading the House. <0>interjections</0> He is actually lying. There is no law that he has mentioned that deals with the land question. Why is he misleading this House? <0>interjections</0> He must sit down now! Nothing he said is true. <0>interjections</0> (30 October 2014)

However, at the same time, there is a general consistency with the finding of [van Rooy and Wasserman \(2014: 61\)](#) on BSAfE, namely that strong obligation meanings account for more than two thirds of all instances of use of *must* in their diachronic corpus of BSAfE representing the middle of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The changing demographics of parliament may therefore also more generally account for the significant rise in obligation meanings.

The analysis of the modal strength of *must* indicates that *must* is never used with weak obligation in the South African parliamentary data, but only median or strong obligation. Example (15) shows median strength, with the epistemic hedge "we believe", and the conjunction with "should not" in the second clause indicating that the speaker tones down the force of the obligation, without doing it to the extent that this becomes a mere suggestion.

- (15) We believe that you must provide a magnet to draw people there and that one should not use the big stick as is being done here. (19 June 1975)

By contrast, example (16) shows a definite temporal window within which the obligation must be discharged, and the choice of the verb "agitate" itself is not a semantically neutral option. Other indications of why the course of action is urgent and demands action follow in the two adjacent sentences to further support the reading of strong obligation.

- (16) What value are we adding to a society to change the lives of our people for the better? We must agitate for the economic freedom of our people in our lifetime. Political freedom without economic freedom is meaningless. (24 February 2015)

As shown in [Fig. 4](#), over time *must* tends to express strong rather than median obligation proportionally more often, with evident peaks in 1955 (after the National Party came to power) and 2015 (after the ascendancy of the EFF as opposition force in parliament). After 1994, there is also a clear increase in the dominance of *must* expressing strong obligation. The increased strength of obligation is more consistent with the semantics of the use of *must* in BSAfE ([van Rooy and Wasserman, 2014](#)), and less so with the gradual decline in strong obligation observed for WSAfE by [Wasserman and van Rooy \(2014\)](#) and for Afrikaans by [Erasmus \(2019\)](#). In all likelihood the dominance of strong obligation for *must* in South African parliamentary debates is a combination of changing demographics, drawing in strong obligation for *must* from Afrikaans in earlier periods, and from BSAfE in later periods. However, the nature of debates in times of political change no doubt also plays a role.

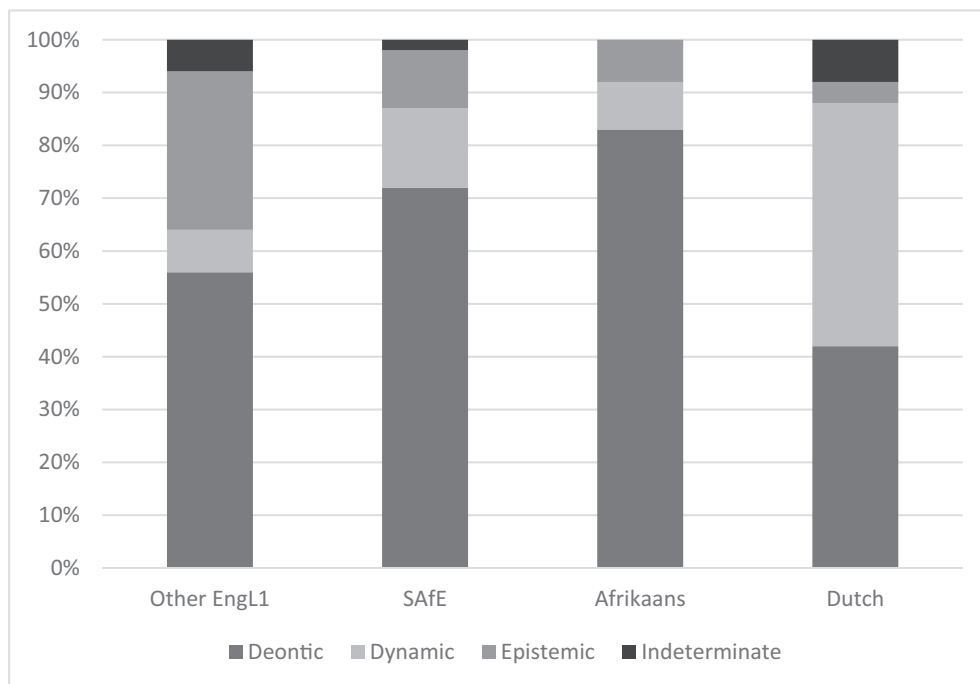


Fig. 3. Comparison of main semantic classification of *must* and *moet(en)* in Afrikaans, Dutch, South African English and other L1 Englishes (from [Erasmus, 2019](#)).

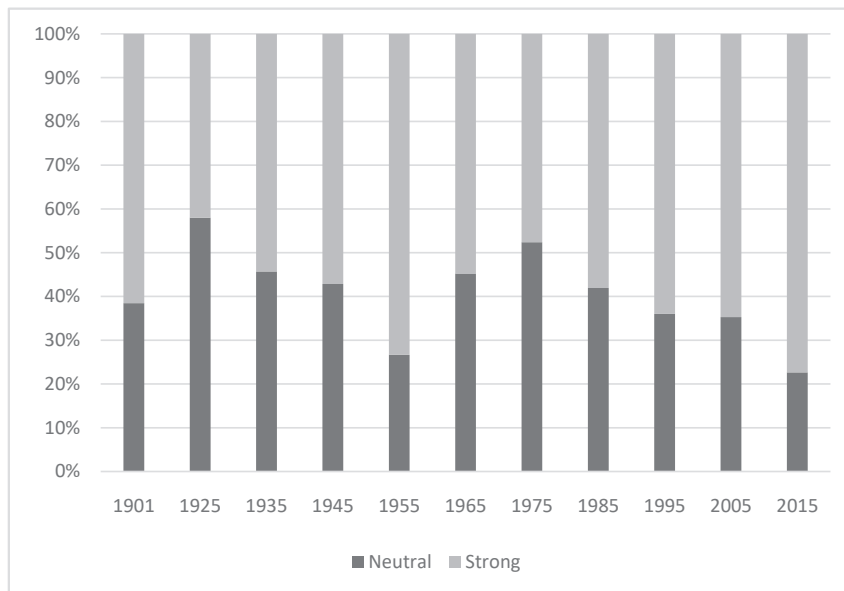


Fig. 4. Classification of modal strength for *must* from 1901 to 2015 in the South African Hansard.

6.2. *Should*

The frequency of *should* declines across all three varieties, though least so in British English (from 2.6 per 1000 words in 1901, to 2.0 in 2015), as shown in Fig. 5. It is evident that the frequency patterns for *must* and *should* are very similar in British English – with an increase from 1901 until 1965, and a gradual decline from then on. In Australian parliamentary debates, the decline of *should* is strikingly linear over slightly more than a century: from 3.7 per 1000 words in 1901 to 1.0 in 2015. In South African parliamentary debates it also declines notably over time: from 4.4 per 1000 words to 1.65 – though with more deviation from a linear pattern, with dips and peaks similar as for *must*. This perhaps lends further credibility to interpretations of how political changes have influenced parliamentary discourse, rather than just changing demographics.

The semantic analysis (Fig. 6) indicates that the main shifts in meanings over time occur in the categories of prediction/desirability meanings (where *should* can be paraphrased with *would*), suggestion meanings (the weaker deontic meaning), and obligation meanings (the stronger deontic meaning). It is in the latter two meaning categories where *must* and *should* compete. It is evident that *should* in parliamentary debates in South Africa increasingly takes on a deontic meaning as well, and particularly a meaning of (stronger) obligation – just as *must* does. This trend is particularly evident after 1994, with the

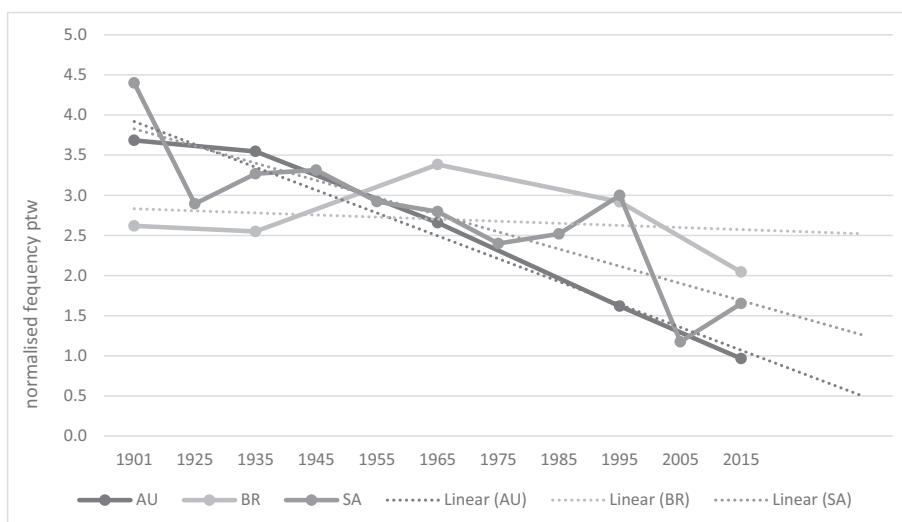


Fig. 5. Normalised frequency of *should* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard.

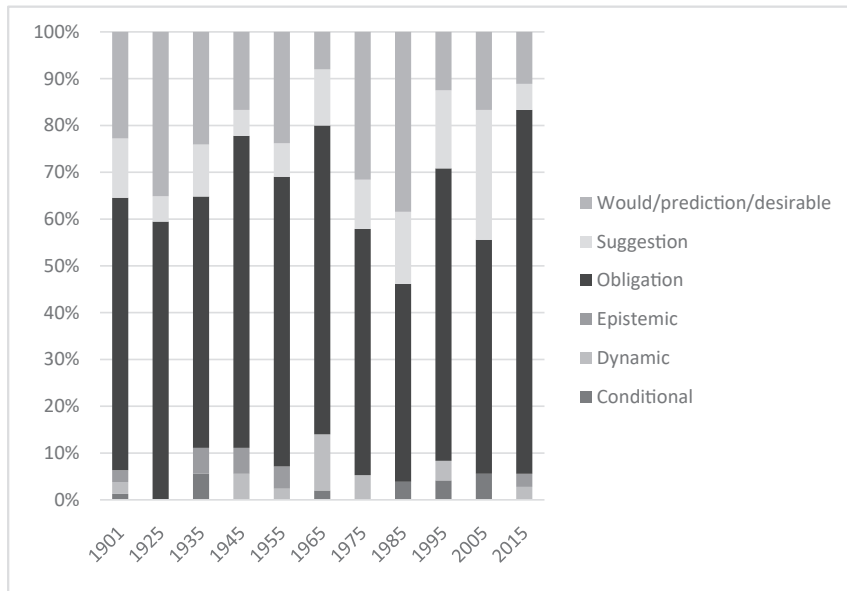


Fig. 6. Main semantic classification of *should* from 1901 to 2015 in the South African Hansard.

start of a democratic parliament and dominant representation of BSAfE speakers. The rise of strong obligation meanings is particularly striking in 2015, for similar reasons as already discussed for *must*.

6.3. *HAVE to and (HAVE) got to*

Two quasi-modals are commonly seen as gradually taking up territory of *must* and *should*: *HAVE to* and *(HAVE) got to*. *HAVE to* tends to express general root modality of obligation and is becoming less face-threatening, accounting for its ascendancy. In all three Hansards, the frequency of *HAVE to* changes less dramatically over time than either *must* or *should* (see Fig. 7). In Australian parliamentary debates, it shows a slow decline, echoing the clear general decline of modals of obligation evident for *must* and *should*. It seems clear that over time, parliamentary debate in Australia has become increasingly less likely to use the expression of obligation to frame persuasion (see also Kruger et al., 2019a). In British parliamentary debates, in contrast, the general trend is one of slow increase, suggesting that *HAVE to* may be taking over some of the functions of the decline in *must* and *should* – particularly evident after 1995, when *HAVE to* increases slightly as *must* and *should* decline.

The South African data shows a great deal of variability, but the overall trend remains largely steady. *HAVE to* is least frequent in 1975, 2005 and 2015, with peaks in 1945 and 1985.

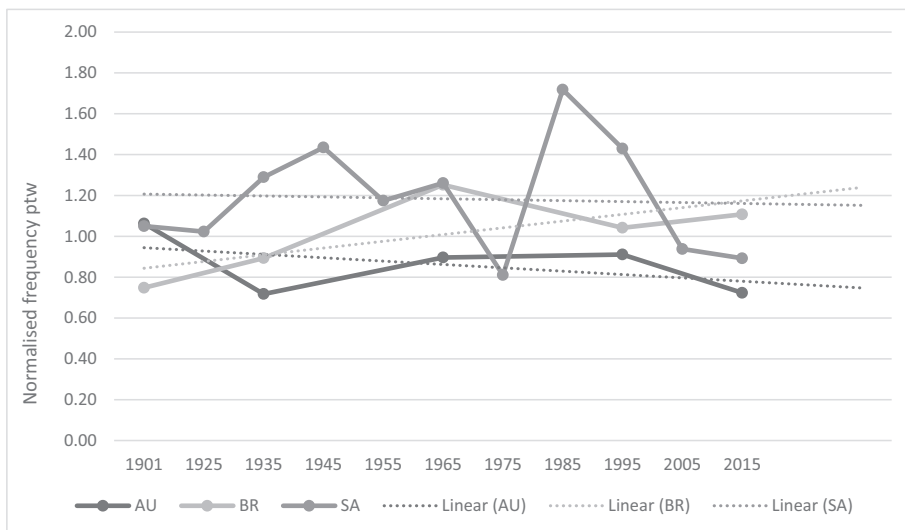


Fig. 7. Normalised frequency of *HAVE to* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard.

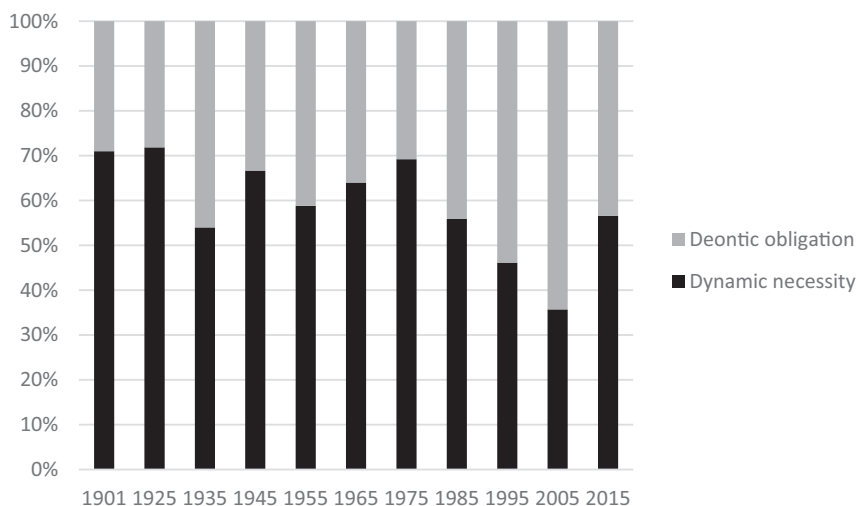


Fig. 8. Main semantic classification of *HAVE to* from 1901 to 2015 in the South African Hansard.

An analysis of the semantics of *HAVE to* in the South African Hansard (Fig. 8) shows a departure from the general expectation that *HAVE to* most frequently encodes obligation. Throughout the entire period of the data, the meaning of dynamic necessity is the dominant one, with deontic obligation less frequent, except in 1995 and 2005, which corresponds to the results for *must* and *should*, which also saw an increase in strong obligation meanings in 1995 in particular. However, by 2015, the dynamic meanings again become more prominent in the use of *HAVE to*. Thus, in the South African Hansard, the semi-modal *HAVE to* carries the load of dynamic meanings throughout the period under investigation, which are quite infrequent for *must* and *should*. There are no clear cases of epistemic meaning conveyed by *HAVE to* in the sample extracted for analysis.

(*HAVE*) *got to* hardly occurs without *HAVE* in the parliamentary debates. The three varieties show different trajectories for this semi-modal (see Fig. 9). In British English its frequency remains very low, and at a fairly constant level. In contrast, in the Australian parliamentary debates, it is on a slow rise after 1965, confirming the general trend towards colloquialism observed for Australian English. In the South African data, (*HAVE*) *got to* is always more frequent than in the other two varieties, until 1985 when convergence becomes evident. From 1995 onwards the frequency approaches 0, as in British English.

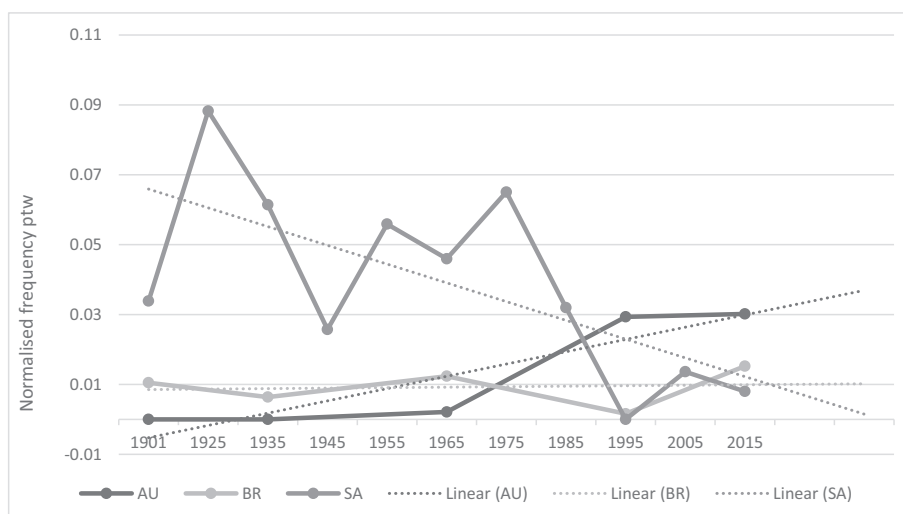


Fig. 9. Normalised frequency of (*HAVE*) *got to* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard.

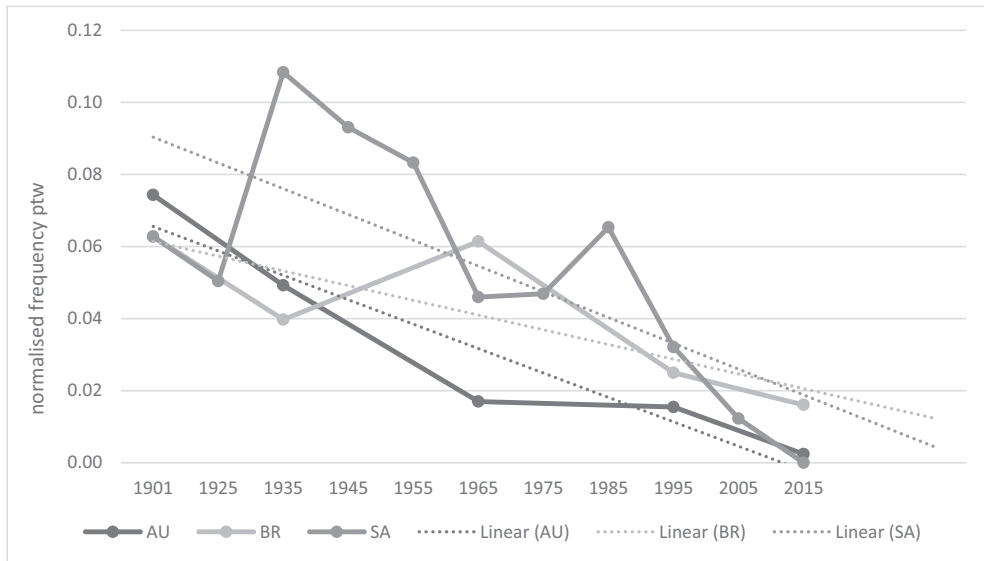


Fig. 10. Normalised frequency of *need* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard.

6.4. *Need* and *NEED to*

As expected, *need* shows a gradual decline in all three varieties, approaching 0 by 2015 (see Fig. 10). The Australian Hansard leads this change, and after 1965 the British Hansard follows suit. Modal *need* lingers at higher frequencies in the South African Hansard, particularly perceptible in the period 1925 to 1955. However, these frequencies are so low that they are likely to be accounted for by sampling variance.

NEED to shows the most consistent and most dramatic increase of all the modals investigated across all three varieties – from 0 in 1901 to 1.07, 0.90 and 0.81 per 1000 words in 2015, in the British, South African and Australian Hansard, respectively (see Fig. 11). The Australian parliamentarians lead the increase from 1965 onwards, but are overtaken by the British in 2005. Usage in South African parliament lags behind, only showing an incipient frequency increase in 1985, but then jumping dramatically to 0.76 per 1000 words in 1995.

A semantic analysis indicates that *NEED to* almost without exception is used with a dynamic meaning – from its earliest highly infrequent uses to its highly frequent uses after 1995. The sudden rise in 1995 (after the first democratic parliament was established) may simply be part of South African English following global trends, but is also suggestive of parliamentarians' strategy of relying on a necessity inherent in the situation to frame persuasive strategies after the dramatic

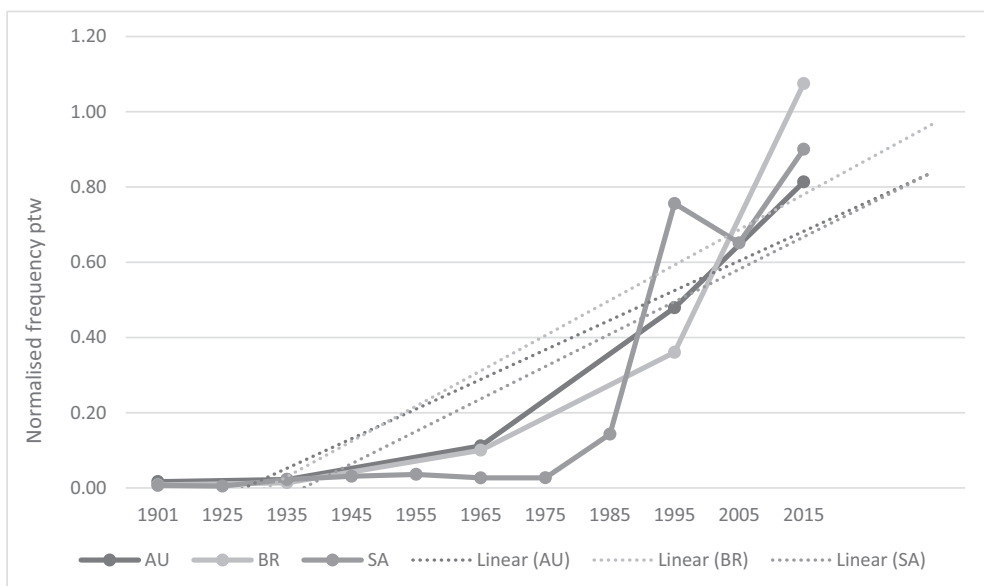


Fig. 11. Normalised frequency of *NEED to* (per 1000 words) from 1901 to 2015 in the South African, Australian and British Hansard.

democratic transition of 1994. *Need to* frames the source of an obligation as something inherently compelled by a shared situation, rather than something imposed by a person or entity. There is often a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation underpinning these usages, also evident in the frequency of first person plural pronouns, as evident in example (17) to (19).

- (17) I hope that our Department of the Public Service and Administration can continue to build and cultivate this culture so that we produce an outstanding generation of public servants that will sustain our democracy, even when it comes to political advice on the things that need to be done, to sustain the Constitution and therefore the democracy. (24 June 2014)
- (18) We have to put the past behind us - there is no question about that - but the past needs to be properly accounted for. (23 January 1995)
- (19) As part of our second phase of democratic transition, we need to accelerate growth and intensify our programme for radical socioeconomic transformation by decisively overcoming the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. (24 February 2015)

The findings for *NEED to* should be considered in conjunction with those for *HAVE to*. *NEED to* enters into much the same semantic space as *HAVE to* insofar as the dynamic meanings are concerned. As argued in Section 6.3, dynamic meanings are encoded by *HAVE to* all along, but by 1995, the modal *NEED to* becomes a very important resource in the set of available options to express that meaning, while *HAVE to* shows a dip in its expression of dynamic meanings in 1995 and 2005. The rise of *need to*, with its dominantly dynamic meaning, across varieties of English in itself (and in parliamentary debates in particular) may well reflect democratisation processes in providing a resource for recasting or reframing obligation as a need held in common by participants in a collectively shared context (see also Mair, 2006: 108). This is potentially an extension of *NEED to* to straddle a boundary between dynamic and deontic meaning. This allows for expressing some form of obligation, but from a persuasive frame of alignment, solidarity and equality in a shared situation, rather than opposition and hierarchical power relationships.

7. Conclusion

The investigation of modal auxiliaries of obligation and necessity presented in this article provides an important illustration of how ongoing language change is receptive to local contexts of use. Most obviously, it highlights that modals demonstrate distinct usage patterns related to register, and the unique nature of parliamentary debates discussed in Section 3, related to the complex interplay of persuasion, performativity, adversariality and cooperativity, no doubt shapes the use of resources for expressing modality. Our findings thus serve as a reminder of the caution that should be exercised in making generalised claims about change in linguistic usage, without consideration of the variability of language use across registers, in agreement with the finding of Kranich et al. (2020). The data from the South African, Australian and British Hansards show signs of overall changes observed across native varieties of English, such as the gradual decline in the frequency of all modals together, and the increase in frequency of quasi-modals. However, where the British and Australian Hansards match the global trends more closely, the South African data show more signs of deviations from these patterns.

The most striking feature of modal usage in South African English emerging from previous research is the resilience of the modal *must*, which does not follow other varieties in its frequency decline. In parliamentary discourse, *must* does not become less face-threatening and less obligative, as observed by Wasserman and van Rooy (2014) for general WSAfE. Also, unlike in other varieties, the epistemic meanings do not occupy a larger share of the use of *must*, but the deontic meanings are the ones that become even more dominant. The single most striking change is observed in the last period of the data, where a new, militant, political party, the EFF, enters parliament and dominates a large portion of the discourse to state the case for those who feel angry at not having had their voices heard in the past. Social and political democratisation therefore has an unexpected linguistic effect here, in that it does not lead to the avoidance of face-threatening deontic *must*, as might be expected, but rather bolsters this usage as politicians who view themselves as the voice of the disenfranchised leverage linguistic resources expressing strident and overt opposition. This rhetorical motivation for the strong presence of deontic *must* in South African parliamentary data finds a foothold in the more general continued higher frequency of *must* in South African Englishes, as a consequence of, amongst other factors, language contact with Afrikaans. The nature of parliamentary debates within the South African context also accounts for the finding that both *must* and *should* show an increase in deontic meanings over time, with little evidence of an interdependency between *must* and *should* in expressing epistemic versus deontic meanings (see Section 6.1). As is evident from example (11) and (14), the style of debate by EFF members is rather more colloquial too; they often do not adhere to the traditional formal conventions of parliamentary discourse. This type of colloquialism is consistent with the political democratisation of South Africa, but not with the expectation that linguistic democratisation will lead to more collaborative and less face-threatening use of language.

The trends for *should* and *HAVE to* are relatively more similar across the three varieties investigated, although local peaks in the South African Hansard, that correspond to similar peaks in the frequency of *must*, are observed. These coincide with changes in the composition of parliament, especially around major shifts of power. Both *HAVE to* and *NEED to* are important resources for expressing dynamic necessity within the framework of parliamentary debates, and the rise of *NEED to* after 1994 seems in part to be in line with other Englishes, but the dynamic meaning, while remaining dominant as Huddleston (2002) observes for English in general, is supplemented by a meaning that straddles the border between dynamic and deontic, in that an obligation is derived not from some internal deontic source, but from a need that arises in the situation. This is particularly

prevalent in the combination with the plural pronoun *we*, and indicates a style of reconciliatory discourse that was introduced with the new democratic parliament, where political and linguistic democratisation do go hand in hand. This underlying trend is often overrun by more robust and aggressive argumentation, but it does not disappear altogether.

The findings of this study therefore suggest a more complex picture of the relationship between political and social democratisation and linguistic democratisation, where the former may not only lead to the avoidance of forms that cue unequal relations between people and a concomitant preference for forms that frame interaction and decision-making as participatory and collective, but may also lead to previously disenfranchised and marginalised groups claiming face-threatening forms in asserting themselves (see Mbete, 2015). In the extension of political participation to the previously marginalised, the colloquialism may not necessarily lead to the expected avoidance of language that cue hierarchical relationships, especially if those hierarchies of inequality continue to remain in society. These complex processes also need to be considered against the general linguistic backgrounds of speakers, which in themselves are shaped by complex social dynamics, and which create the necessary conditions for particular rhetorical choices to develop and become entrenched in the context of parliamentary discourse.

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