

*Anglophone, Peewee, Two-four...:*  
Can Canadianisms be Acquired by Learners of English in Canada?

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This paper examines how learners of English studying in Ontario acquire Canadianisms. Canadianisms refer to the lexical items that are peculiar to the variety of English in Canada, such as *Anglophone*, *peewee* and *two-four*. There are at least four variables that affect the acquisition of Canadian English: (1) the relevance of Canadianisms to the life of learners; (2) their length of stay in Canada; (3) their level of English; and (4) the resources they use to study English. Accordingly, we propose four respective hypotheses. Firstly, the more generally relevant a Canadianism is to life in Canada, the more likely it is that a learner will acquire it. In other words, degrees of usefulness exist in Canadianisms, and we expect learners to acquire them in a sequential order. Secondly, the longer a learner stays in Canada, the more likely he or she is to be exposed to a larger number of Canadianisms and to acquire them. Thirdly, the factor of the learner's English level will somewhat affect the acquisition of Canadianisms although the two variables are not expected to correlate perfectly. Last but not least, we think it possible that English learners in Canada do not have adequate resources for a systematic exposure to Canadianisms. These hypotheses will be tested by means of a lexical survey on over 100 learners of English in Kingston, Ontario. The results we have obtained partly substantiate our hypotheses, and also indicate the role of another factor in the process: the motivations of ESL learners for learning Canadianisms. This study is significant in that it sheds some light on the acquisition of culture-specific words by ESL learners, and offers insight into ESL vocabulary teaching design and dictionary compilation.