

On “Have To” II

“Have to” is a grammatically awkward pairing in English and other languages (Spanish *tener que*). It’s called a “quasimodal,” whatever that means. Lately, whenever I think of “have to,” I change it to how – I think – it was originally used, “have *an obligation* to”. That is what it means, after all, so why not? Now, when I hear, “You have to do this for me,” or something like it, I translate it to, “You have an obligation to do this for me.” This then forces me to think critically about exactly what obligations I have toward whoever’s making the claim. Clearer thinking usually results, which makes it much easier to decide on a course of action going forward. You just *have to* give it a try sometime! And that’s today’s two cents.

Skyler.