

Mandative Subjunctive in American Bestsellers of 1948

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The previous paper of mine (1) took up 19 American bestselling fiction books and non-fiction books in the year of 1998 and attempted to investigate what kinds of mandative constructions are used in current American English. It showed that the infinitive construction with a main verb with mandative force was the most common type of mandative construction. The construction with a verb in the subjunctive mood after the main word with mandative force, namely, V + that + subjunctive, was the second most common construction. In the latter construction, the number of the instances with the connective *that* was almost the same as that of the instances without. Furthermore, in the non-fiction the occurrence of the connective *that* is much less frequent than in the fiction. Lastly, the construction with *should* in the noun clause was very infrequent.

In the following, the American bestselling fiction books and non-fiction books in the year of 1948 are taken up to see whether or not fifty years have seen any change in preference of the usage of mandative construction. As in the previous paper, the 1948 Bestseller List (2) was used again. The fact that these books appeared on the bestselling list of a specific year shows that they are really popular books of the year and have, in a sense, popular content as well as writing style and language which are easily accepted by the readers of the time and which represent the usage of the time. The List gives 10 bestselling fiction books and 10 bestselling non-fiction books in America. One of the non-fiction books, Winston S. Churchill's *The Second World War*, vol. 1. *The*

Gathering Storm, however, had to be excluded from the main analysis of the mandative constructions in American English. This is because, however popular and influential the book must have been in America, the writer is English and it was decided that it does not reflect the American usage of English. However, this book will be taken up as a reference to compare the American usage with British usage as regards the mandative construction employment. It is also hoped that, even if it is the only British English material, it may give light on a feature of American English.

All the twenty books listed in the List were read by the present writer and each instance in which a mandative force is expressed is recorded by him. In these books, the mandative force is expressed by the following words:

advise, agree, ask, caution, claim, command, declare, demand, desire, determine, direct, hold, indicate, insist, intend, order, persuade, plea, plead, prefer, propose, provide, recommend, reiterate, request, require, resolve, say, state, stipulate, suggest, teach, tell, urge, will

better, desirable, essential, fitting, imperative, important, inevitable, necessary, natural, proper, reasonable and logical, right, unnatural, urgent, willing

agreement, condition, insistence, instructions, opinion, order, proposal, requirement, suggestion, will

With these words eight types of mandative constructions are construed:

1. A. that + should
- B. 0 + should

2. A. that + subjunctive
B. 0 + subjunctive
3. A. that + periphrastic
B. 0 + periphrastic
4. infinitive
5. gerund

Besides these eight types, there are constructions that do not fall under any of the above patterns. For example, "I suggest that you ride up to the old De Ville plantation this very morning" (Frank Yerby) is such an instance. The verb form "ride" in this instance can be in either indicative or subjunctive mood and the mood of this verb form cannot be determined by means of the form itself in this case. We may call this type of construction an ambiguous type as we did in the previous paper (3). There is also another type of construction. As in "Red suggested that they didn't give him any more letter" (Norman Mailer) or "I'd also advise that you do not pull the window shades down" (Billy Rose), there is a construction type where a verb after the main word with mandative force is in indicative mood (4).

In all the surveyed twenty books, there are 2053 instances of mandative constructions. As indicated above, there is an ambiguous type and 92 instances belong to this type. The construction with indicative mood has five instances. In addition, the number of the instances found in Churchill is 201. Thus the total number of the instances taken up here to be analyzed as mandative constructions of American English is 1786. Since the number of the instances found in the previous study was 460, this number is more than three times as large as the total number of the instances in the 1998 bestseller books. This is partly explained by the fact that several of the 1948 books are much more voluminous than those of 1998. However, all these instances will be compared

by the actual number but will be considered in percentage so that we can compare the ratio of the use of each construction type.

Of the eight types, the type 4, that is to say the infinitive construction type, is the most common type and has 989 instances. Contrary to the finding in the previous study, this number is strikingly large. In the 1998 survey, there were 192 infinitive construction instances out of 460 total instances (about 42%), while in the 1948 survey there are 984 infinitives out of 1756 total instances (about 56%). In the fiction books of 1948, there are 389 instances out of the total number of 610 instances (about 64%) and in the non-fiction books the number is 600 out of 1146 (about 52%). The percentage is higher in the fiction books. This may show that the infinitive construction is preferred because in the fiction books there are many dialogs and the infinitive construction is short and simple and thus felt to carry less formality, i.e., more colloquialness, and not to give readers a stylistic heaviness. It indicates, of course, that the preference of the infinitive construction reflects the natural speech of the American English. The infinitive construction can be divided into four subtypes: active voice/passive voice and affirmative/negative. Of all the infinitive construction instances, there are only 16 passive constructions and only 33 negative constructions (See Figure 2 and Figure 3). In the fiction, the number of the passive construction is 10 and that of the negative 32, while in the nonfiction that of the passive is 6 and that of the negative is one. Thus, it can be said that the affirmative infinitive construction with active voice is the most common in American English of the year of 1948.

It might be interesting here to compare Churchill's usage of this type of construction. Out of the total number of 201 instances of mandative constructions, there are 63 instances in Churchill (about 31%) with six instances of passive voice and five affirmatives. In Churchill, this infinitive mandative construction is the second most common usage.

The second most frequent mandative construction is the type 2A, namely, a construction with a mandative word followed by a noun clause with a verb in subjunctive mood with a connective *that*, as in “Paulus suggested that he spend the night at the fort and leave in the cool of early morning” (Lloyd C. Douglas) or “(he) heard the minister suggest that all problems be dropped from the mind for one minute and that everyone turn his thoughts to God” (Norman Vincent Peale). This type has 359 instances in toto and occupies about 20% of all the mandative constructions. In the fictions there are 63 instances (about 10%) and in the non-fictions there are 296 instances (about 26%). As seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3, the total number of the passive voice is 168 with 18 for the fiction and 142 for the non-fiction, and that of the negative construction is 17 with 3 for the fiction and 14 for the non-fiction. The passive construction seems to be employed very frequently. It is not clear why this is so, but one of the writers, Robert E. Sherwood, stands out very much in his striking frequency of the usage. He discusses the Hopkins’ relationship with Roosevelt, often quoting politicians’ statements and orders and the decisions, policies and orders of the countries. This may explain the great number of the passive constructions in the book (111 instances of the passive construction). It also must be noted that he is the one who uses the 2A type construction most frequently (180 instances of the total number of 359).

Interestingly, Churchill has only four instances of the 2A type construction and these instances are all in the passive voice. This means that this construction occupies only 2% of all the instances of the mandative construction. Even though the number of instances is small, his usage is very unique. For example, he has, “He asked, ‘That the Fuehrer be informed as soon as possible.’ ” This is not a pure direct speech construction, because if this were a direct speech, it would be “He said ‘Let the Fuehrer be informed.’ ” This is not an indirect speech, either, because, if it were, it would not have a comma

after the main verb *asked* and there would not be quotation marks before *that* and after *possible*. This is a mixture of both a direct speech and an indirect speech. Another unique instance of his is:

The Admiralty recommends therefore ...

- (i) that shipyards in neutral countries be used, if necessary ...,
- (ii) that technical information of our methods of demagnetisation be supplied as and when necessary

Perhaps this construction has appeared because (i) and (ii) are quoted from a memorandum.

The third most common construction is 1A. It is a construction with a main word with mandative force followed by a noun clause that is introduced by the connective *that* and contains auxiliary *should* as in "He suggested that I should now wait for him here." (Al Capp) There are 196 instances of this construction type (about 11%). The passive voice in the noun clause appears 54 times and the negative construction 14 times. In the fiction books 54 instances appear with 9 passives and 1 negative and in the non-fiction books there are 142 instances with 45 passives and 13 negatives. The connective *that* seems almost mandatory when a noun clause follows a word with mandative force, because 1B type, namely, V + 0 + *should*, has very few instances (only 8 instances, with five in the fiction and three in the non-fiction). In the fiction the number of instances with the connective *that* is 54 and that of instances without is five. In the non-fiction the former is 142 and the latter three.

On the other hand, in Churchill the 1A type is the most common construction type. He has 119 instances with 52 passives and 4 negatives. It seems that approximately 45% of the mandative construction instances are of this type. It agrees with a common belief that in the British English the

mandative the notion is expressed by a construction with *should* in a noun clause after a mandative word. Churchill's useage supports this belief in a sense. The connective *that* does appear most of the time (119 times with *that* and twice without it) and this agrees with the mandative construction of this type in American English.

The fourth is the pattern in which a main word with mandative force is followed by a noun clause with the connective *that* and the verb in the noun clause is in the periphrastic. This type occupies approximately 20% of all the instances of mandative construction. The verbs in the noun clause are conjoined by many kinds of auxiliaries and other words except *should*, as in the following:

- ... the main requirement in the rector's wife would be that she must be socially eligible... (Agnes S. Turnbull)
- ... he was the one who had come awkwardly to Hilary to suggest that one young pair ought to get married. (Ibid.)
- ... the Constitution provides that the Vice President shall serve as President of of the Senate and that the powers and duties of the Presidency shall develop on him only in the event of the President's death. (Robert E. Sherwood)
- ... Soona came over to the *Enquirer* office to tell him that he had best come home at once. (Ross Lockridge, Jr.)

Besides these forms, *could*, *be to*, *might*, *had better*, *have to* are used. Each of these is used to express the varying strength of the mandative force. Thus the auxiliaries or periphrastic constructions show the subtle differences in the force of order or demand. In the fiction, there are 31 instances with six passives and six negatives and in the non-fiction there are 64 instances with 16 passives

and six negatives. The same construction without the connective *that*, i.e., the type 3B, has 18 instances in total. In the fiction there are 12 instances with three passives and three negatives and in the non-fiction there are six instances with one passive and one negative. Churchill does not use this type of construction very much (only 6% of all the instances of mandative construction) and if we consider his writing style a representative of the British English of the time, we may say that this type of construction is very characteristic of American English. (5)

The gerund is not a very popular mandative construction type. There are 69 instances of this type in the total. In the fiction there are 45 instances and there is neither passive nor negative construction. In the non-fiction there are 24 instances, of which there is one passive instance and six negative instances. The number of the words with mandative force for this construction is limited. According to the findings, there are only four words: *insist*, *insistence*, *propose*, *suggest*. Of these words, *insist* is the most common and is used 62 times. The number of the instances in which the verb takes *on* is 50 and the construction with *upon* appears 19 times. The passive form is found only once in Eisenhower: "... and insisted upon being constantly informed...." The infrequent occurrence of the gerund construction type may be due to the scarcity of the variety of the verbs that can take gerund construction, and therefore the writers avoid employing the same construction pattern with little variation of the main mandative words.

In the following the list of the types of mandative construction and the number of instances of respective types is given:

Figure 1. Types of Mandative Construction and Number of Instances

Construction type	Fiction number of instances	Non-Fiction number of instances	Churchill number of instances
1A V+that+should	54	142	119
1B V+0+should	5	3	2
2A V+that+0	63	296	4
2B V+0+0	11	11	0
3A V+that+periphrastic	31	64	10
3B V+0+periphrastic	12	6	1
4 infinitive	389	600	63
5 gerund	45	24	2
total	640	1146	201

Figure 1 also shows another difference of employment of grammatical construction types. In the fiction the number of the instances of the clauses (1AB, 2AB, and 3AB) is 175 and that of the phrases (4 and 5) is 434. In the non-fiction, on the other hand, that of the clauses is 522 and that of the phrase is 624. The reason that the large number of the instances of the phrase construction, especially the infinitive construction, in the fiction may be that the writers prefer shorter and simpler constructions, which are best suited to carry more colloquial and conversational tone in writing. In the case of the non-fiction, the number of the clauses and the phrases are almost the same. Some of the non-fiction writers such as Dale Carnegie and Joshua Liebman, however, prefer colloquial style and infinitive construction. However, the books that may be called "studies" tend to use more clause constructions as in *Roosevelt and Hopkins* by Sherwood and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* by Kinsey, Pompey and Martin. This becomes very clear with Churchill. In Churchill, the

number of the clauses is about twice as many as that of phrase constructions. It may be indicative of the formal and heavy tone of the English employed there.

Figure 2 shows the occurrence of passive voice.

Figure 2. Passive Voice in Mandative Subjunctive

	Fiction	Non-Fiction	Churchill
Construction type	number of instances	number of instances	number of instances
1A V+that+should	9	45	52
1B V+0+should	1 clause	0 clause	1 clause
2A V+that+0	18 38	142 204	4 62
2B V+0+should	1	0	1
3A V+that+periphrastic	6	16	5
3B V+0+periphrastic	3	1	0
4 infinitive	10 phrase	6 phrase	6 phrase
5 gerund	0 10	6 7	0 6
total	48	211	68

Figure 2 shows that the non-fiction books have many passive constructions and the V + that + *should* construction type has the largest number of occurrences. Most of these instances come from Sherwood (150 instances) and Eisenhower (35 instances). Churchill also employs passive constructions very often. It is not clear why these writers employ so many passive voice constructions but perhaps it has something to do with the content of the writing, that is to say, politics and war. Figure 2 also shows that the clauses have more passive voice constructions than the phrases.

An analysis of the sentences that are found to have mandative force also shows the low occurrence of the negative construction type. The total number

of the negative sentences is only 86 and this occupies merely 5% of all 1786 instances of mandative construction. In the fiction there are 32 instances of phrase construction and 13 instances of clause construction. In the non-fiction this is reversed, however. There are 34 instances of clause constructions and only 7 instances of phrase construction. It is not clear why the reversal of the preponderant distributions occur. The negative marker is almost always *not* and precedes a verb. There is sporadic usage of words

Figure 3. Negative in Mandative Construction

	Fiction	Non-Fiction	Churchill
Construction type	number of instances	number of instances	number of instances
1A V+that+should	1	13	52
1B V+0+should	0	0	1
2A V+that+0	3	14	4
2B V+0+0	0	0	0
3A V+that+periphrastic	6	6	0
3B V+0+periphrastic	3	1	0
4 infinitive	32	1	5
5 gerund	0	6	0
total	45	41	10

other than *not*. For example, Frances F. Keys has "I told them on no account to enter her room", and "...the doctors said nobody was to go in there." *No* is sometimes used to show the negative. For example, Eisenhower has "...my recommendation was that no operation should be undertaken...."

There is, of course, some interesting and irregular construction, as in "... who urged that a firm line be taken with the Japs and that under no

circumstances should Chinese position be compromised,” (Sherwood). In this sentence, two different types of mandative constructions are combined by one main word with mandative force. The first clause has a subjunctive verb form, *be taken*, but in the second clause a verb is preceded by *should*. Perhaps this mixture occurred because the writer was using memos from different sources and did not rearrange the styles. The following case, however, is difficult to understand why there are two kinds of verb forms: subjunctive form and *should* + verb:

He had directed that shipments up to the value of one billion dollars be Financed under Land Lease, that “no interest be charged on the indebtedness resulting from these shipments and that payments by the Soviet Government should begin five years after the war and continue over a period of the years thereafter.”

In this long sentence, one word with mandative force, *direct*, is followed by three noun clauses with the connective *that*. The first two *that*-clauses have a verb in the subjunctive mood, but in the last clause the verb is conjoined by *should*. Unlike the sentence above, there is no possible reason why the first two clauses have a subjunctive verb forms and the third one has a verb conjoined with *should*.

In addition, there seems to be arbitrariness in the writer’s choice of the mandative constructions. For example, Robert E. Sherwood employs the V + *that* + *should* construction in p. 589 (“Churchill suggested that Eisenhower should superintend the planning and organization of TORCH and that General Sir Harold Alexander should be in command.”) but in the next page he switches to the V + *that* + 0 construction (“Churchill suggested that he proceed on from there...”). It seems that the writers do not seem to follow any

rigidly fixed principle as regards the choice of mandative construction type. In order for the readers to see how each writer examined herein uses respective mandative construction types, the figure is given in the following.

Figure 4. Writers and Their Usage of Mandative Constructions

Fiction:

construction type Writers' Name	1A	1B	2A	2B	3A	3B	infinitive	gerund	subtotal
Al Cap	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0
A.J. Cronin	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	3(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	30(0/9)	4(0/0)	37
Lloyd Douglas	17(4/1)	22(4/1)	7(4/3)	1(0/0)	0(0/0)	5(1/1)	118(4/7)	6(0/0)	177
Elizabeth Goudge	9(0/0)	2(0/0)	3(1/0)	2(0/09)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	18(0/29)	2(0/0)	36
Frances Keyes	10(0/0)	3(0/0)	5(0/1)	1(1/0)	0(0/0)	3(0/1)	78(2/7)	9(0/0)	109
Ross Lockridge	8(0/0)	25(11/1)	5(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	33(0/5)	6(0/09)	77
Norman Mailer	3(2/0)	3(1/0)	3(0/0)	0(0/0)	5(1/0)	1(1/0)	43(1/1)	1(0/0)	59
Irwin Shaw	2(2/0)	4(1/1)	0(0/0)	1(0/0)	1(0/0)	3(1/1)	19(1/2)	6(0/0)	36
Agnes Trnbull	4(0/0)	3(0/0)	2(0/0)	0(0/0)	4(0/0)	0(0/0)	25(2/2)	6(0/0)	44
Frank Yerby	1(1/0)	1(1/0)	3(1/2)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	25(0/2)	5(0/0)	35
Subtotal	54	63	31	5	11	12	389	45	610

Non-Fiction:

Dale Carnegie	2(0/0)	6(0/0)	4(0/0)	0(0/0)	1(0/0)	0(0/0)	62(1/5)	6(0/0)	81
D.D.Eisenhower	38(10/2)	50(19/1)	7(2/3)	0(0/0)	1(0/0)	4(1/1)	81(2/1)	6(1/6)	186
A.C.Kinsey et al	19(8/2)	20(7/19)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	7(0/0)	1(0/0)	47
Joshua Liebman	6(1/0)	2(0/0)	1(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	18(0/0)	0(0/0)	27
Betty MacDonald	1(0/0)	7(0/0)	6(1/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	61(3/6)	0(0/0)	75
Norman Peale	4(0/1)	15(2/0)	2(0/0)	1(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	48(0/0)	0(0/0)	70
Billy Rose	0(0/0)	9(2/0)	0(0/0)	1(0/0)	4(0/0)	1(0/0)	45(0/1)	2(0/0)	62
R. E.Sherwood	71(26/8)	180(111/12)	43(13/2)	1(0/0)	6(0/0)	1(0/0)	242(0/13)	9(0/0)	553

Betty Smith	1(0/0)	7(1/0)	1(0/1)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	0(0/0)	36(0/8)	0(0/0)	45
W.S.Churchill	119(52/4)	4(4/0)	10(5/1)	2(1/0)	0(0/0)	1(0/0)	63(6/5)	2(0/0)	201
Subtotal	142	296	64	3	11	6	600	24	1146
	(261)	(300)	(74)	(5)	(11)	(7)	(663)	(26)	(1347)

*(/) is (passive/negative) and the number in the parentheses in the subtotal is the number which includes that of Churchill.

In conclusion, the following have become apparent from the analysis of the 1948 bestselling books. As was found with the bestsellers from 1998, it has also been found that the infinitive construction after a word with mandative force is the most common mandative construction in the books from 1948. This confirms the finding and observation on the use of subjunctive by Charles C. Fries.(6) Similarly, the V + that + subjunctive construction is also a common construction. However, the analysis of the 1948 bestselling books show that the V + that + *should* construction type is also frequent, contrary to the very rare appearance of this type in the 1998 bestsellers. This is a very interesting finding. Furthermore, the occurrence of the connective *that* is almost mandatory if you look at the number of occurrences of the connective. In the analysis of 1998 bestsellers, half the number of the instances had the connective *that*, but in the 1998 finding, the number of instances that have the connective is 783 while that of the instances with the connective is merely 50. This may mean that the presence of the connective *that* was “established” in the 1948 Thus, the span of fifty years has seen the change of the preference of the mandative construction types.

Notes:

1. Masao Mima, “Mandative Subjunctive in American English:the usage in the 1998 bestselling fictions and non-fictions,” *International Studies* (Faculty of International Human Studies, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart University) 10 (2004), 105-120.

2. "1900s Bestsellers," http://www.caderbooks.com/best_00.html//
3. Mima, p.109
4. This type of construction was also observed in my previous paper. Ibid., p.109.
5. Winston S. Churchill has 11 instances of this construction type, of which 10 instances are with the connective *that* and one without. It is not a very common type of the mandative construction with Churchill. It is merely about 6% of the all the instances of the total mandative construction.
6. Charles Carpenter Fries, *American English Grammar: The Grammatical Structure of Present-Day English with Special Reference to Social Differences or Class Dialects*. Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc. 1940, 103-106.

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