

19th Century Grammar Books on Mandative Subjunctive

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My previous studies on the mandative constructions on American English covered materials from 1800 to 1998 and showed that after the words with mandative force in the main clause, periphrastic construction with auxiliary verbs like “should” is most commonly used in the following dependent clause until about 1900, while subjunctive construction becomes so prevalent later that it has come to be regarded one of the features of American English. (Mima: 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013) This subjunctive construction starts to occur more and more in the latter half of the 19th century. Since there was a great influx of immigrants around this time, it was assumed that some influence of foreign languages was at work, but my study showed that this was not the case. (Mima: 2015).

A possible cause for this should be sought somewhere else. One area where this can be sought is in the teaching of English grammar. It is well known that the 19th century America saw a great number of English grammar books, especially school grammar textbooks. In the following, thirteen such school grammar books are taken up and analyzed to see how subjunctive mood is explained and used by the writers in connection with mandative construction. The works used here are:

Rev. Rufus William Bailey. *English Grammar: A Simple, Concise, and Comprehensive Manual of the English Language. Designed for the Use of Schools, Academies, and as a Book for General Reference in the Language.*
1853

William Balch. *A Grammar of the English Language: Explained According to the Principles of Truth and Common Sense, And Adopted to the Capacities of All Who Think. Designed for the Use of Schools, Academies, and Private*

- Learners*. 1839
- Gould Brown. *The Institute of English Grammar Methodically Arranged: With Forms of Parsing and Correcting, Examples for Parsing, Questions for Examination, False Syntax for Correction, Exercises for Writing, Observations for the Advanced Student: Five Methods of Analysis, And a Key to the Oral Exercise: to which are added Four Appendixes. Designed for the Use of Schools, Academies, and Private Learners*. 1861
- James Brown. *The American Grammar*. 1831
- Rev. Peter Builions. *The Principles of English Grammar: Comprising the Substance of the Most Approved English Grammars Extant. With Copious Exercises in Parsing and Syntax, for the Use of Academies and Common Schools*. 1845
- Andrew Burtt. *A Primary Grammar of the English Language, designed for the use of schools and private learners*. 1873
- Stephen W. Clark. *A Practical Grammar in which words, phrases, and sentences are classified according to their offices, and their relation to each other. Illustrated by a Complete System of Diagrams*. 1851(1847)
- Jeremiah Greenleaf. *Grammar Simplified; or, an Occular Analysis of an English Language*. 1823
- Simon Kerl. *A Common-School Grammar of the English Language*. 1873
- Samuel Kirkham. *English Grammar in Familiar Lectures, accompanied by a compendium: embracing a new systematic order of parsing, a new system of punctuation, exercises in False Syntax, and a System of Philosophical Grammar in Notes: to which are added An Appendix and a key to the Exercises, Designed for the Use of Schools and Private Learners*. 66th ed. 1835
- T. S. Pinneo. *Pinneo's Primary Grammar of the English Language for Beginners*. 1854(1849)
- Roswell C. Smith. *English Grammar or the productive System: method of instruction recently adopted in Germany and Switzerland*. 1847
- Charles W. Smythe. *Our Own School Grammar, designed for our schools and academies, as a sequel to the "Primary Grammar"*. 1862

These works are written for elementary learners as the titles show. They are

mostly popular and Samuel Kirkham's book used here, for example, went through many editions and is the 66th edition. Though they are targeted at beginners, they can clearly teach us what English grammar was like at this time, especially the mandative construction we are interested in.

When we go over all these works, we will notice immediately that the classification of the parts of speech varies and is different from that of what we have now, that is the number of the parts of speech varies from two to six among the grammar books as follows:

- James Brown (2): noun(or independent), adjective (or dependent)
- Burttt (2): indicative, potential
- Balch (3): indicative, imperative, infinitive¹
- Clark (3): indicative, potential, subjunctive
- Kerl (4): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative
- Smythe (4): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative
- Bailey (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive
- Builions (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive
- Gould Brown (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive
- Greenfield (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive
- Kirkham (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive (conditional), imperative
(commanding), infinitive (unlimited)
- Smith (5): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive
- Pinneo (6): indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, infinitive, participle

Ten have a subjunctive mood as a part of speech. Burttt and Balch employed the term "subjunctive" but, in actuality, consider it as one form of indicative mood, not as a separate part of speech. For example, Burttt gives the list of subjunctive forms of the verb BE in indicative mood. James Brown explains the English grammar based on his own dependent/independent or added/unadded classification, not on the so-called parts of speech.

In this way, the classification of the parts of speech is neither uniform nor established among the 19th century grammar books, however, those that have subjunctive mood in their classification all define it in the similar way

as seen as follows:

The Subjunctive mood expresses action, passion, or being in a doubtful or conditional manner; or, when a verb is preceded by a word that expresses a condition, doubt, motive, will, or supposition, it is in the subjunctive mood ... (Kirkham: 133)

In other words, a subjunctive mood is 1) used to indicate uncertainty, and 2) is preceded by a conjunction that introduces uncertainty. The following two sentences meet these two conditions.

- A. If he is poor, he is respected.
- B. If he be studious, he will excel.

According to Smith (p.63), A is a common form of subjunctive mood, for the verb changes depending on the subject and it talks about the present, while B talks about the future and its form does not change and is called a subjunctive form of subjunctive mood. Interesting is that he says "... when the verb is in the subjunctive form some auxiliary verb is always understood." (p.64). The idea of an auxiliary being understood is also seen among other grammarians (Kirkham, p.145; Kerl, p.133; Smith, p.63; Greenleaf, p.26).

With this knowledge, we will observe how a mandative construction is construed among these 13 grammar books. Since mandative construction per se is not discussed or referred to directly, we need to look for the instances of mandative construction that is used by the grammar writers, either to illustrate subjunctive mood or some other points. The mandative construction under consideration here consists of a word with mandative force in the main clause and a noun clause which can be divided into four types:

1. that + subjunctive
2. Φ + subjunctive
3. that + auxiliary

4. Φ + auxiliary

In the thirteen grammar books, there are 84 instances of mandative construction (we counted as two when there are two verbs in the noun clause and when there are two noun clauses that have a verb in each.), and they all fall into one of the four types of construction above, except eleven instances as follows:

It is necessary to the application of this rule, that the words connected refer to the same thins. (Builions, p.76)

The verb form “refer” can be in indicative or subjunctive mood and cannot be determined which it is on the base of the form itself. This is an ambiguous type and there are more such ambiguous instances. When all these ambiguous instances are excluded, the total number of instances that should be used for the analysis of mandative construction is 73. Each writer’s usage of the construction types is summarized as follows:

	that + subj	Φ + subj	that + auxiliary	Φ + auxiliary
Pinneo	0	0	1 (1)	0
Kerl	3 (1)	0	11 (2)	0
Burtt	0	0	0	0
Clark	2 (1)	0	2 (2)	0
Bailey	3 (3)	0	8 (5)	0
Balch	0	0	3 (1)	0
Builions	2	0	3 (2)	0
J. Brown	1 (1)	0	8 (3)	0
Smith	0	0	4 (1)	1 (1)
Kirkham	1 (1)	0	0	0
Greenleaf	4 (3)	0	4 (2)	0
G. Brown	5 (2)	0	4 (1)	0
Smythe	1	0	5	0
Total	20 (12)	0	52	1 (1)

(*The number in the parentheses is the number of occurrence of passive voice.)

What is most noteworthy here is the scarcity of a construction without a conjunction “that.” Of all the 73 instances, there is only one:

Some grammarians assert, the phrases, as appear, .. should,
therefore, be confined to the singular number. (Smith, p.124)

For this, we can see that the conjunction “that” at this period was always required and had a very important function, thus its absence was very irregular. This may be seen in Smythe, who says, “The subjunctive mode is used to express future contingency after the conjunctions *if, though, whether, &c.*; also after *lest* and *that* joined to a command; and *that* denotes a wish.” (p.200). The conjunction “that” is treated just as other conjunctions here and since the absence of these other conjunctions leads to ungrammaticality, so does the absence of “that” and thus “that” is required all the time.

Another thing that is interesting is the great popularity of the type 3. There are 52 instances of this type and it accounts for more than 70% of all the mandative constructions. The auxiliaries employed are various but the most common is “should” (38 instances) and occupies more than 70% of all auxiliary mandative constructions. The auxiliary appears in all the grammar books surveyed except that of Clark and Kirkham. Auxiliaries other than “should” include “may” (6 instances), “must” (4), “shall” (2), “will” (1), and “would” (1).

The subjunctive mood does not occur very much. It accounts for mere 27% of all the mandative constructions surveyed. This is very curious when we think of its prevalent employment in present American English. More curious is that, as mentioned briefly above, there are some who doubt the existence of the subjunctive mood as saying:

... you may perceive that when the verb is in the subjunctive form,
some auxiliary verb is always understood... (Kirkham, p.64)

The form of the present tense of the subjunctive mood, is frequently

used to express future time, the auxiliary being suppressed.

(Greenleaf, p.27)

So, to these people, the so-called subjunctive form does not exist but it is the result of the deletion of an auxiliary verb. This comes from an idea shared by the grammar teachers at the time that “subjunctive of all verbs takes the form as the indicative, preceded by the conditional particle. This is the approved use of the present day.” (Bailey, p.90) and “The blundering and contradictory teaching of grammarians in regard to this mood have caused the public to discard it almost altogether.” (Kerl, p.317)

The voices used in these constructions need to be mentioned. Out of 73 instances, 46 are in the passive voice and this accounts for more than 60% of all constructions. The high percentage may be due to the nature of the books where these appear. The subject of a noun clause after the mandative word in the main clause are expected to be the one who reads the grammar book, so “you” or “reader” may be most appropriate, but addressing to the readers this way would appear too informal, so to make the book appear more impersonal and formal, the active voice with personal subject is changed to a passive voice with impersonal subject.

The short observation of the grammar books in the 19th century above gives us some important insights. First, the 19th century did not have a very uniform idea about parts of speech, thus the number of the parts differs among the works surveyed. Second, many grammar books above list subjunctive mood as one of the parts of speech and almost all of them give the same definition as a mode denoting doubt, condition, or wish. Third, this period prefers mandative construction with auxiliary verbs, especially “should”, and a conjunction “that” is always present in this construction. Accordingly, the subjunctive usage is very low and some writers state that “subjunctive construction” is actually a construction where an auxiliary verb “should” is understood or deleted. Thus, to the grammar teachers of this period, the mandative construction is the construction with auxiliary verb “should” being deleted. In other words, type 1 construction is a subtype of type 3, since it is the result of the deletion of an auxiliary verb of the type 3.

The students who learned English from these textbooks and teachers naturally are expected to learn to use an auxiliary verb in the mandative constructions, but from about 1850 on the subjunctive construction occurs more and more frequently, so the influence of the grammar teaching does not explain again the later influx of subjunctive mood in the mandative construction in American English and more researches need to be done.

Notes:

1. Balch says: "...there's another form of the verb used to explain a wish or a prayer of one person," and implies a "subjunctive" but what he is saying is "a form" and not "a part of speech." (p.77)
2. Smythe states: "They (i.e., modes) must be limited to forms that assert, thus excluding the infinitives and participles, which are properly verbal nouns and adjectives." (p.21)

Primary source: (retrieved from [//www.archive.org/](http://www.archive.org/))

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論文要旨

19世紀学校文法における義務の構成と仮定法現在

三間 晶生

1850年頃を境として、アメリカ英語は命令等を表す義務の表現構文において、“should”など法助動詞を使う用法から仮定法を使う傾向へと徐々に変わってくる。その原因の一つとして19世紀の文法教育があるのではないかと推察し、その当時の学校文法書を取り上げ、そこにおける仮定法の説明あるいは作者自身の英語に見られる義務の表現構文を調査したが、この時期における学校文法書は“should”など法助動詞を使う構文が「正統」であり、仮定法の用法は法助動詞が省略された形であるとし、後にアメリカ英語の特徴とまでなる仮定法の構文の萌芽は見られなかった。