

Mandative Constructions in American English of 1850

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This is the fourth series of the studies of mandative construction in American English. The previous studies surveyed the types and frequency of constructions in the bestselling books (both fictions and non-fictions) of the years of 1998, 1948 and 1900.① All these studies show common features as to the usage of mandative constructions. The first feature is that infinitive construction is employed most frequently. The second is that while the construction type of V + that (Φ) + should is rare in 1998 and 1948 but in 1900 it is very high in occurrence. The construction with a verb in the subjunctive mood after a main word with mandative force, namely V + that + subjunctive or V + Φ + subjunctive, is the second most common construction in 1989 and 1948 but very rare in 1900.② The findings of 1998 and 1948 go with the comment often made about American English, that is that American English prefers a subjunctive to a "should" construction in the mandative construction, but the low occurrence of this construction in 1900 is very curious.

In this study, the books that were written by American writers and published in 1850 were chosen and surveyed to see whether or not fifty years have seen any change in preference of the type of mandative construction in American writers. In the previous studies, the bestseller lists

were used for sampling books of respective years, but a bestseller list was not available for the years prior to 1900. Therefore, the books selected for the year were random. There are seven novels and one essay by American writers. To see the usage in British English, Wilkie Collins' *Antonina, or the Fall of Rome: A Romance of the Fifth Century* Vol. I, II, III, published in 1850, was also used. As in the previous studies, all the books were read by the present writer and each instance of mandative construction was recorded by him.

The mandative constructions contain main words that have mandative force, and they are verbs, adjectives and nouns. The following are such words used in the books surveyed this time:

admonish, advise, agree, arrange, ask, beg, beseech,
 command, condition, counsel, crave, decide, declare,
 decree, determine, dictate, direct, demand, desire,
 enjoin, entreat, forbid, propose, recommend, request,
 require, speak, stipulate, suggest, tell, will, would,
 want, warn

better, best, desirable, desirous, fitting, important,
 indispensable, inevitable, natural, necessary, proper,
 reasonable, right, written

advice, articles, command, condition, decision, desire,
 direction, need, opinion, order, proclamation, request.

With these word, eight types of mandative constructions are construed:

- 1A: that + should
- B: Φ + should
- 2A: that + subjunctive
- B: Φ + subjunctive
- 3A: that + periphrastic
- B: Φ + periphrastic
- 4: infinitive
- 5: gerund

In addition to these types, there are constructions that cannot be easily classified into any of these types. For instance, "I lay my commands upon you, whenever the like questions may be asked again, that you answer simply according to what I have to tell you, without any explanation or addition." (Susan Warner) is such an instance. After the word of mandative force, "command", the verb in the noun clause "answer" is expected to be construed with "should", or in subjunctive or indicative mood. The verb form "answer" in this case can be in either indicative or subjunctive mood and the mood of the verb cannot be determined just by means of the form itself. Since it cannot be determined by itself whether it is in indicative or subjunctive mood, this type of mandative construction is said to be an ambiguous type and in this study this ambiguous type of constructions are excluded from the analysis here.

A similar case is seen in "Come to me after noontide prayer, and say, 'We implore the ambassador of God that he counsel his followers to return us our wine and children; and we implore his followers that they intercede with him in our favor.'" (Washington Irving) The verb form "intercede" is ambiguous and its mood can be either indicative or subjunctive. However, immediately before this construction there is another mandative construction

with a main verb "implore" and a noun clause with a verb "counsel". Since "counsel" is construed with the subject "he", it is clear that the verb is not an indicative mood, for if so, the verb form should be "counsels". It is true that the verb form "intercede" can be interpreted to be in the subjunctive mood from the immediately preceding construction of "... that he counsel ...", but the construction per se cannot tell it is so, thus this "intercede" is here considered to be of an ambiguous type of construction and excluded from the analysis.

There is another interesting case. It is quoted here, though long:

The articles of surrender were drawn up in writing by Omar, and served afterwards as a model for the Moslem leaders in other conquests. The Christians were to build no new churches in the surrendered territory. The church doors were set to be open to travelers, and free ingress permitted to Mohametans by day and night. The bells should only toll, and not ring, and no crosses should be erected on the churches, nor shown publicly in the streets. The Christians should not teach the Koran to their children. (Washington Irving)

Two things should be seen in the passage above. One is that the content of the "command" is expressed in independent sentences, not in an embedded noun clause. The other is that there is a mixture of mandative constructions, that is, the content of the "command" is expressed by a periphrastic construction type and a "should" construction type. In this type of the mixed constructions, each instance of construction is counted as one instance.

In the surveyed books there are 422 instances of eight types of

mandative constructions. As mentioned above, there are instances of an ambiguous type and the total of instances of such type are only five. Naturally these cases are not included in this number of 422 instances. Of these 422, the infinitive construction has 225 instances and it occupies 53.3% of the total construction instances. The infinitive construction is the most preferred construction type and this preference is the same in other periods. As suggested in my previous studies, the infinitive construction is short and simple and thus felt to carry less formality, i.e., more smoothness and conversational tone, and not to give readers a stylish heaviness. While he uses nine noun clause constructions to express a mandative content, Francis Edward Smedley uses an infinitive construction only four times in his *Frank Fairleigh; Or Scenes From the Life of a Private Pupil*. The book itself is a series of philosophical reflections of the main character and the content is formal and very serious and heavy. Thus it is thought that the writer preferred to employ more formal construction type of a noun clause, rather than an infinitive construction.

Of these 225 infinitive constructions, more than 88% are the active voice (199 instances) and more than 90% are the affirmative constructions. The fewer cases of passive voice construction are on a par with previous

	Infinitive	
	American writers	Wilkie Collins
active voice	199	32
passive voice	26	2
affirmative	208	34
negative	17	0

studies. A reason why a passive voice is not used in the content of the

"command" may be found in the nature of a command, that is to say what is ordered or commanded to do. When you are ordered to do something, it is more than often that you must do the action rather than receive the action, thus the action should be expressed in the active. The fewer cases of the negative construction can be partly explained by the constructions of such verb as "forbid", which has in itself a negative force in the content of what is "commanded" and makes it simple and smooth. Wilkie Collins, here considered as a representative of British English, shows the same preference for the infinitive construction. Though his work is of three volumes and very voluminous, there are not as many mandative constructions as expected. The total number of the mandative constructions is only 54, of which 34 are infinitive constructions. Infinitive construction occupies more than 60%. Like American English, active voice is very dominant in British English (32 instances) and there is not found any negative construction.

The second most frequent mandative construction is the type 1A, namely a construction with a mandative word followed by a noun clause that contains "should" and a connective "that", as in "But his mother insisted that Ellen should stay where she was." (Susan Warner) or "... our right worthy captain commanded that we should bathe and cleanse him." (William Gilmore Simms) This type has 146 instances and occupies 34.6% of all the

1A type	
active voice	100
passive voice	46
affirmative	137
negative	9

instances. This is a very interesting result, since the 2A type, namely the

mandative construction with subjunctive, has been observed very dominant in the previous studies of American English of 1998 and 1948 and, as a result, is often said to be one of the features of American English. It is true, of course, that this 2A type, however, is very low in occurrence in the findings of 1900, and this low occurrence of this type is also observed in the present survey. There are only two following instances: "Come to me after noontide prayer, and say, 'We implore the ambassador of God that he counsel his followers to return our wine and children.'" (Washington Irving) and "Speak to your people that these piles be complete" (William Gilmore Simms) They are both in active voice and affirmative.

2B type, a subjunctive construction without a connective "that", is not popular at all, either. There is no such construction at all found in the books surveyed here. Thus the total number of the subjunctive construction with and without a "that" connective is only two. It is also curious that a connective "that" is almost always expected in the "should" construction. There are 170 instances of a noun clause with the connective "that" (1A, 2A and 2B types) (93%) while there are only 15 instances without the connective (1B, 2B and 3B types) (7%). This may mean that the absence of the connective is an exceptional usage in this period and that it is the

"that" connective" in noun clauses

with "that"	without "that"
1A 146	1B 11
2A 2	2B 0
3A 22	3B 4
total 170 (93%)	total 15 (7%)

norm that the connective is used in the noun clause. This also goes against

the findings of the previous studies of mine. The absence was thought to be a way of showing a colloquial speech and was abundantly used. This preference of "that" in a noun clause is very similar to the British usage as seen in Wilkie Collins. He has 17 instances of noun clause constructions and all of them are of 1A type. We cannot generalize from his usage, but it is possible that since his books were very popular, his English can be said to represent the English type favorably accepted by the British readers. In the period surveyed here, the dominant mandative clause construction is the "should" construction in American English. This is a very curious finding. As expected, Wilkie Collins does not seem to show preference for subjunctive construction of 2A and 2B types, and actually have no such instance at all. The reason why American

"that" connective in noun clause in Wilkie Collins

with "that"		without "that"	
1A	17	1B	0
2A	0	2B	0
3A	0	3B	0

English at this period shows a preference for subjunctive constructions like in 1900 and not as in other periods surveyed in the previous papers is not clear. If the content of the story is about England, it is naturally expected that the speech of the story follows the British English and thus so-called typical British mandative construction that employs "should" is predominant. Mostly the stories of the books surveyed are not related to the scenes of England, however. It is not clear that the British influence was strong in the American literary world around this time and American writers followed the British style of the language. It may be possible that the great immigration

wave in the latter half of the 18th century has something to do with this. 70,000 English people are said to have "emigrated between 1760 and 1775 alone and most of them settled in the 13 colonies that became the United States"^③ and British convicts were banished to the colonies and the number of such convicts goes up to as high as 50,000.^④ This great mass of British immigrants may have given influence on the usage of English in America.

Just like the subjunctive constructions (2A and 2B), the periphrastic constructions are not very popular, either. There are 26 instances in total. The construction with the connective "that" has 22 instances and one without "that" has only four. The auxiliary words used in these types are: must, shall, may might, had better, will and be to. All these auxiliaries are used to connote a different shade of force of the command as in:

"It was requested that a battalion which Melendez had brought along shore with his provisions, and which as now safely moved beside the eastern banks, might be sent to bring them over. " (William Gilmore Simms)

"... but Mr. John left particular orders that I was to go with Miss Ellen whenever it pleased her to ride."
(Susan Warner)

"Mr. Marshman told her she must give him a large place in her hear." (Ibid.)

Of these auxiliaries, "might" and "may" are preferred most. They are employed eleven times. Since the total number of instances of the auxiliary

employment is 26, this number must be said to be very significant. It may be because these auxiliary words indicate "obligation" and "necessity" and that thus these meanings go well as a performing word of the "command". Active

	(3A type)	3B type
active voice	12	4
passive voice	10	0
affirmative	21	3
negative	1	1

voice and passive voice are used in the same frequency and there is no preference as regards the voice. On the other hand, a negative sentence is observed very rarely (only one instance). This result goes with the general usage of other construction types. The low occurrence of a periphrastic construction is also seen in British English of Wilkie Collins¹. There are only two such instances: "... he was told that he must forget all that he had left behind him at Rome." and "But, it is my desire that the garden, and all that it contains, shall remain entirely at the disposal of Numerian and his daughter." Both these instances are of 2B type, i.e., V + that + periphrastic, and they are in the active voice and the content of the "command" is affirmative. Here again, the similar usage is observed in American English and British English.

Finally, the gerund construction is found not to be very popular, either. The total number of instances is mere eleven and is about 2.6% . This is mainly due to the number of the words that can take this gerund construction. In this present analysis, only two verbs are found: "insist on (upon)" and "propose" and there is not much variety at all. "Insist on (upon)" is used eight times and is popular. Curious is the fact that "propose" is used three times and that they are all used by Caroline Lee

Hentz. This is perhaps because the context required of the polite form of suggestion or proposal. Thus the degree of the force of the command is naturally different between "insist" and "propose" and the softness and indirectness of the command is indicated very nicely by "propose". When we look at the British usage, we can see Wilkie Collins shows a similar tendency as to the gerund construction. He does not employ a gerund type much. He has only one instance: "... by which he had insisted on being addressed during his interview with the fugitive landowner." One out of the total 54 instances must be considered very low in occurrence and it can be said that this construction is very unpopular in British English, too.

As to the voice, an active voice is used predominantly (10 out of the total of 11 instances) and there is found only one passive voice instance. In addition to the reason suggested above why a passive voice is not employed frequently, it may also be due to the fact that a passive gerund is a rather recent development.^⑤ The construction itself may also have been felt clumsy and complicated. Most of the instances have "V + -ing" as in "They insisted on halting, to rest and to bait their horses." (Washington Irving) and there are instances of "V (+ on/upon) + pronoun in the genitive case + gerund" as in "... her husband insisted on her not rising." (Susan Warner) and "She proposed, as the only alternative, their passing the night at Marshall's." (Caroline Lee Hentz). One more thing needs to be mentioned as to the gerund construction type. It is that a negation of the content of the "command" is not found much. There was only one such instance: "Her husband insisted on her not rising." (Susan Warner) This low occurrence of the negation of the content of the "command" is already discussed above.

From the above survey, some interesting things have been found as to the mandative constructions in American English of the year of 1850. That an infinitive construction is the most preferred construction is not new.

It is the same with other periods. This may be because of the simpleness and smoothness of this construction. The most important is, however, the fact that a subjunctive construction (2A and 2B types), which is said to be a typical American English pattern and is the second most preferred construction in my studies of American English of 1998 and 1948, turns out to be very low in occurrence just like in 1900. It appears that after around 1900 the typical American mandative construction type has changed. It is not clear why this is so, but it may be sought in the historical fact. The latter half of the 18th century saw a great influx of the immigrants from Britain, and the number of these people is so huge that the English used in the colonies at this period was influenced by the English these immigrants brought to the new soil.

Another curious finding is the usage of a connective "that." In my previous studies, a noun clause after a word of mandative force was found to have a tendency to be without the connective and this absence was more remarkable in a quoted speech rather than in a narrative. It was suggested, therefore, that this absence represents the smoothness and the conversational tone. In the present study, however, "that" is almost always present in a quoted speech and its presence seems to have become almost a norm and its absence an exception. Low occurrence is also seen in a periphrastic construction. It is true that this construction does not stand out so high in occurrence in other periods, either, but the lowness of the frequency of this period is very noteworthy.

Notes

1. Masao Mima, "Mandative Subjunctive in American English: the usage in the 1998 bestselling fictions and non-fictions," in *International Studies* (Faculty of International Human Studies, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart

University) 10 (2004), 105-120, "Mandative Subjunctive in American Bestsellers of 1948," in *International Studies* 13 (2007), 101-116, "Mandative Constructions in American Bestsellers of 1900," *International Studies* 16 (2010), 77-91.

2. Φ indicates an absence of a connective "that".
3. Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers. *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration*. 4th ed. Columbia University Press 1999, p. 12.
4. Ibid.
5. Cf. Kazuo Araki (editor in chief). Hayashi Ono and Hiroyuki Ito. *A History of the Development of Modern English*. Introductory English Linguistics Series vol. 6 . Eichosha, p. 146

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