

Suasive Verbs and Their Complements: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

This article deals with the use of finite complements of three persuasive verbs (to suggest, to insist, to recommend) in mandative contexts. The data analysis attempts to demonstrate whether the choices of finite complements show similar patterning in non-past tense and past tense contexts. Also, it discusses whether the conclusions regarding the usage in affirmative contexts may be extended to negative contexts. Finally, it concludes that British English is converging with American English in the use of subjunctives but diverging in the use of indicatives. Nevertheless, this option, traditionally considered as a Britishism, is not excluded from American usage as it is well-established in negatives.

Keywords: finite complements, the indicative, mandative uses, modal periphrasis, the subjunctive, persuasive verbs

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1. Introduction

Suasive verbs are a group of verbs that show semantic variety, as well as complexity in their distribution of complementation patterns. These verbs may take mandative meanings implying that somebody “wants a particular action to be taken or a certain event to happen” (Crawford 259). As Poldauf puts it in *The third syntactical plan*, the content of the clause that these verbs govern is related to the individual, the speaker (Poldauf 242), who proposes a potential course of action (Biber 667). These verbs are, therefore, used

“for directive speech acts” (Peters 134), such as requests, demands, recommendations, as demonstrated in (1).

- (1) “*Personally, I’d recommend that he speak in public as soon as possible,*” said Toko Kanoh [COCA:2011:NEWS: WashPost]

In addition to these mandative uses, they may express non-mandative meanings, demonstrated in (2)–(3). As both examples show, there is no proposal of a potential course of action involved. The semantics of the verb *suggest* (2) are synonymous with *to indicate*, and in (3) the verb *insist* means *to say firmly*.

- (2) *The findings suggest^t that, in addition to decoding differences, these groups have distinctive narrative language* [COCA:2012:ACAD: Language Speech]

- (3) *No, I think in that case, I think the fact that he took those phone calls, and I talked to his people who insist that he wasn’t really strategizing with them, he wasn’t trying to help them, et cetera, et cetera, but all those denials not withstanding, it undercut the power of her critique in New York.* [COCA:2006:SPOK: MSNBC_Olbermann]

Apart from their semantic variety, these verbs also take a wide range of complementation patterns – non-finite complements (4), as well as finite complements, such as in (1), repeated in (5).

- (4) *If you would like to deter varmints from your bird feeder, I highly suggest using blackberry brambles* [COCA:2009:MAG: MotherEarth]
- (5) “*Personally, I’d recommend that he speak in public as soon as possible,*” said Toko Kanoh [COCA:2011:NEWS: WashPost]

This article deals with the distributional patterns of finite complements (thus, excluding non-finite ones) in mandative contexts (thus, excluding non-mandative ones). The following section summarizes in greater detail which complementation options are available.

2. Complementation Patterns of Suasive Verbs in Mandative Uses

As Övergaard (63) puts it, the mandative uses of the suasive verbs elicit a particular type of modality in finite complements. The repertoire of complementation options involves a subordinate verb occurring in the finite complement in the subjunctive mood, as demonstrated in (6), or with a modal verb, most commonly *should* (7).

- (6) *So I would like to suggest that there be one benefit plan for every American in this system.* [COCA:2009:SPOK: CNN_Misc]
- (7) *Therefore, the doctor suggested she should stop this medication.* [BNC:B30: W_ac_medicine]

To complete the list of options available for complementing mandative *suasive* verbs, one must mention another variant, often considered as a *Britishism* (Leech et al. 57). This complementation type involves a finite clause with a subordinate verb in the indicative mood, such as the verb *lies* in (8). The context plays a vital role here, as it helps to disambiguate mandative uses of the verb *insist* (8) from non-mandative ones, demonstrated in (3) and repeated in (9).

(8) *All I've really got is a very deep flesh wound. It's not that serious. 'Doctors insist that he lies low while his injuries heal.* [BNC:CH1: W_newsp]

(9) *No, I think in that case, I think the fact that he took those phone calls, and I talked to his people who insist that he wasn't really strategizing with them, he wasn't trying to help them, et cetera, et cetera, but all those denials notwithstanding, it undercut the power of her critique in New York.* [COCA:2006:SPOK: MSNBC_Olbermann]

In sum, examples (6)–(8) indicate that there is a whole range of patterns available for complementing *suasive* verbs in mandative meanings. The choices of individual complementation patterns are conditioned by a large set of linguistic and extralinguistic features.

First of all, regional and stylistic factors are considered to influence the distribution of individual complementation patterns. For example Poldauf comments on the usage of the mandative subjunctives as represented in literary works of the first decade of the 20th century, describing these forms of the verb mood as “loitering still notwithstanding their disappearance in everyday use” (84). Also, Quirk et al. state that this complementation pattern is “formal and rather legalistic in style” (157). It is supposed to be preferred in American English, while the indicative mood, such as in (8), is associated with informal spoken English in Britain (Leech et al. 55).

Also, the strength of the verb seems to have an influence on the choice of individual complementation patterns. According to Crawford (273), verbs that may occur in mandative and non-mandative uses (such as *suggest*, *insist*, etc.) represent weak triggers, whereas those verbs whose semantics are exclusively mandative (e.g. *recommend*) are so-called strong triggers. Crawford, using the British and American newspaper section of the Longman corpus, draws a conclusion that stronger triggers are more often used with the subjunctive, while weaker triggers co-occur with the modal verb (Crawford 273).

Considering the aforementioned criteria, this article attempts to determine whether there are any structural factors that could have a bearing on speakers' choices of particular complement types. Specifically, it will analyze two factors – the past tense of the matrix verb and the negative polarity of the subordinate verb. The analysis will show whether the conclusions reached for the use of a particular variant in affirmative sentences may be extended to negative contexts. Similarly, it will determine whether non-past tense contexts exhibit the same usage tendencies as past tense contexts. Such an approach, being sensitive to the complexity of regional, stylistic and structural factors, provides a more delicate picture of preferences for particular complementation patterns. Consequently, it yields interesting insights which challenge traditional preconceptions about the status of the subjunctive in British and American English.

2.1 Previous Research

Although the topic of complementation patterns of suasive verbs has attracted considerable attention from linguists, past and negative contexts have remained rather underexplored.

This may be related to Övergaard's study (1995), which represents one of the most comprehensive pieces of research on the distribution of complementation patterns of suasive verbs. Using LOB and BUC corpora², as well as her own compiled corpus, Övergaard shows diachronic developments in the use of subjunctives, modals and indicatives with mandative suasive verbs. Her area of interest does include past tense contexts and negative contexts. However, past tense contexts are not analyzed independently of the present contexts, so the data analysis shows overall results for both environments together. Therefore, one cannot reach conclusions exclusively for the past tense contexts. Furthermore, her analysis of negative contexts involves only small sets of data. For example, the whole 1900–1990 corpus of American English comprises a total of 10 negated subjunctives, 10 negated modals and no instance of a negated indicative (Övergaard 70).

Leech et al. (2009) also include data from negative and past tense contexts in their analysis. Their study deals with the mandative uses of the seventeen most common suasive verbs, nouns and adjectives (Leech et al. 53). The results of their data analysis are presented with respect to *text categories* in written and spoken texts (e.g. press, fiction, Leech et al. 58) in which the complementation patterns occur. Therefore, one cannot conclude to what extent past tense and present tense contexts exhibit similar tendencies in the usage of complementation patterns, nor can it be stated whether the conclusions reached for the use of a particular variant in affirmative sentences may be extended to negative contexts.

Similarly, Crawford's study (2009) illustrates distributional differences of clausal complements of suasive expressions³ in American and British English. The emphasis is put on the relation between the strength of a trigger (for this term, see 2) and the choice of a particular complement option. Moreover, the study analyzes contrasts "in how particular word classes or lexical items express mandates" (Crawford 257). On the other hand, the study does not provide any conclusions related to past and negative contexts as they are entirely excluded from the analysis.

2.2 Data

The analysis presented in this article involves three verbs, two of them representing weak triggers (*to suggest*, *to insist*), and one of them a strong trigger (*to recommend*). The range of the verbs is limited to three instances due to practical reasons. All analyzed usages needed to be manually sorted out to disambiguate mandative uses from non-mandative ones. Therefore, the analysis could not have been applied to a large amount of verbs unless using computerized research tools. Consequently, it may be argued that the number of verbs does not represent a sufficient sample to make generalizations about the morpho-syntactic behavior of all suasive verbs.

However, this article does not focus on drawing conclusions about the distribution of complementation patterns of a large group of suasive verbs. Instead, it attempts to outline the tendencies of possible complementations in those contexts where the usage may remain underexplored when applying computerized research tools. Past tense and negative

contexts definitely fall into such a category, as is shown in (10)–(11). These examples demonstrate that one has to read through the whole sentence or paragraph to disambiguate mandative uses of these verbs (10a) and (11a) from non-mandative ones (10b)–(11b), and this has to be done manually.

(10a) *This monologue went on throughout dinner, after which he **insisted** that we all went across the road to the village hall where he would show us his slides of the Lake District.* [BNC: CJH: W_misc]

(10b) *He **insisted** that he wanted to return to the church to sample some more of the atmosphere: commune with the spirit of the Levellers -- that sort of nonsense.* [BNC: H8T: W_fic_prose]

(11a) *Well, if you want to see a drag queen nun, that's the show to see! GIFFORD: If you are a devote Catholic, we **suggest** that you don't see it because it can be rough.* [COCA:2011:SPOK: NBC_Today]

(11b) *And for to us to **suggest** that they don't know that their opinions aren't valued equally as all other mothers as all other women is an outrage, and I think the White House, it's time for them to address this issue* [COCA:2012:SPOK: Fox_Baier]

The analysis of complementation patterns of the three verbs is based on data taken from the British National Corpus (BYU-BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Prior to proceeding to a detailed description of the queries, there are two methodological caveats that need to be mentioned.

The first issue is linked with the different profiles of the COCA and BYU-BNC corpora. The differences are in their sizes (100 million words in the BNC as opposed to 450 million words in the COCA). Second, there is a certain time shift in the data collection. While COCA includes the latest data, the BYU-BNC corpus comprises data up to 1993. This time gap needs to be taken into account, and one might expect that the current British usage of complementation patterns of persuasive verbs could show more similarities and converging tendencies with American English than the data from the BYU-BNC corpus reflect.

Keeping these discrepancies in mind, the following sections will present recent developments in the usage of complementation variants (i.e. modals, subjunctives and indicatives) of the three persuasive verbs, as represented in the BYU-BNC and COCA corpora. However, before proceeding to the detailed corpus analysis, it should be mentioned which ambiguities occurred in the analyzed texts and how they were resolved.

2.3 Resolving Ambiguities

The first type of ambiguity is connected with the semantics of the analyzed verbs. It has been mentioned earlier that the verbs *suggest* and *insist* occur both in mandative and non-mandative meanings. As may be expected, these verbs show non-mandative uses more frequently than the mandative ones. For example, the mandative verb *suggest* occurs in 23 examples involved in the sample of 300 random hits in the COCA, and there are 54 occurrences in the BYU-BNC corpus (see Table 1). Therefore, all the tables presented in

this article provide figures related to the subset of mandative uses, as well as to all uses that were manually sorted out to resolve potential semantic ambiguities.

query	all uses	mandative uses	all uses	mandative uses
	COCA	COCA	BYU-BNC	BYU-BNC
“suggest that”	300 random hits	23	300 random hits	54 ⁴

Table 1 COCA, BYU-BNC: Overall Figures of Mandative and Non-mandative Uses of the Verb to suggest

Another ambiguity is related to the form of two complementation variants – the subjunctives and indicatives. In certain contexts these two verbal moods are formally identical. This is demonstrated in example (12), in which the subordinate verb in the noun clause (*look*) may be either the indicative or subjunctive.

- (12) *I really don't know Emily because I've never even heard of the work and I suggest you **look** at it in the dictionary.* [BNC:KPY:S-conv]

To resolve this ambiguity, the analysis presented below deals only with contexts in which the two verbal moods take different forms (see also Leech et al. 2009). These environments are represented by non-past tense contexts with finite complements involving *he* or *she* subjects (13), past tense contexts (14) and negative contexts (15). The (a) versions demonstrate the verbs in the subjunctive mood, while (b) versions illustrate the uses of verbs in the indicative.

- (13a) *If your kid has electronics on his wish list, suggest that he **ask** Santa for rechargeable batteries.* [COCA:2009:MAG: Good Housekeeping]
- (13b) *All I've really got is a very deep flesh wound. It's not that serious. 'Doctors insist that he **lies** low while his injuries heal.* [BNC:CH1: W_newsp]
- (14a) *Though he excelled early in his academic career, a high school counselor suggested he **become** an auto mechanic.* [COCA:2011:NEWS: Denver]
- (14b) *This monologue went on throughout dinner, after which he insisted that we all **went** across the road to the village hall where he would show us the slides of the Lake District.* [BNC:CJH:W_misc]
- (15a) *I recommend that we **not** approve this letter.* [COCA:2005:SPOK:CNN_Showbiz]
- (15b) *If you go and see this film I recommend that you **don't** eat first.*

The findings related to the mandative uses of the verbs to suggest, to insist and to recommend in the aforementioned contexts are discussed in the following section.

3. Mandative Uses in Non-Past Tense Contexts⁵

Mandative uses of persuasive verbs are typically associated with the subjunctive mood in American English. This complementation variant is claimed to have been witnessing a resurrection, with American English “leading World English in a revival [of this verb mood category]” (Leech et al. 53). There have been predictions about its future development stating that this form will become an obligatory one in American English, ousting the other complementation variants (e.g. Övergaard 1995). Rather in contrast to this, Leech et al., comparing their findings from the Brown and Frown corpora, claim that the saturation point was reached in the 1960s when the subjunctive form represented 90% of mandative uses. Notwithstanding, their more recent data suggest that modal periphrastic alternants still represent a viable option (Leech et al. 54).

Our data presented in Table 2 below demonstrate that Övergaard’s conclusions may well be related to the non-past contexts. Although all complementation variants are represented to a certain extent, the subjunctive form is used in the majority of cases (84.6% with the verb *recommend* and roughly 93% with the verbs *suggest* and *insist*). On the other hand, indicatives, as may be assumed, are the marginal option for all three analyzed verbs, complementing the verbs *suggest* and *recommend* in three cases, and only two examples occurred with the verb *insist*.

COCA	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggest (that) he/she	178 (93.2%)	10 (5.2%)	3 (1.6%)	191	747
insist (that) he/she	80 (93%)	4 (4.7%)	2 (2.3%)	86	227
recommend (that) he/she	33 (84.6%)	3 (7.7%)	3 (7.7%)	39	40

Table 2 COCA: Representation of Complements (Subjunctives, Modals, Indicatives) in Affirmative Non-Past 3rd Person Singular Contexts

Furthermore, the data indicate that the distribution of subjunctives is not restricted to formal corpus genres. This complementation option occurs predominantly in newspapers and magazines, as Table 3 below demonstrates. Interestingly, the percentage rates for the occurrences within the individual corpus genres also show that the usage of subjunctives is more frequently represented in the spoken genre than in academic texts. Therefore, the results of the corpus analysis suggest that in American English subjunctives have been losing their formal connotations (see also Leech et al. 60).

COCA subjunctives	SPOKEN	NEWS/MAGAZINE	ACADEMIC	FICTION	TOTAL
suggest (that) he/she	22 (12.4%)	111 (62.3%)	6 (3.4%)	39 (21.9%)	178
insist (that) he/she	10 (12.5%)	36 (45%)	6 (7.5%)	28 (35%)	80
recommend (that) he/she	13 (39.4%)	17 (51.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (9.1%)	33

Table 3 COCA: Distribution of Subjunctives Across Corpus Genres

In British English, mandative uses of suasive verbs are traditionally associated with modal periphrastic variants (Quirk et al. 157). However, our data suggest a potential shift in speakers' preferences towards the indicatives. This complementation option was used in more than half of the examples (ignoring the low number of occurrences with the verb *recommend*, 56% with *suggest* and 58% with *insist* in Table 4 below). On the other hand, modals represent the least preferred option.

BYU-BNC	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggest (that) he/she	15 (30%)	7 (14%)	28 (56%)	50	183
insist (that) he/she	6 (31.5%)	2 (10.5%)	11 (58%)	19	40
recommend (that) he/she	1	1	1	3	4

Table 4 BYU-BNC: Representation of Complements (Subjunctives, Modals, Indicatives) in Affirmative Non-Past 3rd Person Singular Contexts

Unfortunately, the small size of the data set available in the BYU-BNC corpus makes it impossible to state whether the distribution of complementation options is determined by the corpus genres in which they appear or not. For illustrative purposes and to follow the ordering of the data presentation above, the figures of the distribution of subjunctives across the corpus genres are shown below in Table 5. It demonstrates that most usages occur in fiction (14 out of 22). Nevertheless, such small overall figures are not sufficient to conclude that British speakers feel free to use subjunctives in non-academic genres, as is the case in American English.

BYU-BNC subjunctives	SPOKEN	NEWS/MAGAZINE	ACADEMIC	FICTION	OTHER	TOTAL
suggest (that) he/she	1 (6.7%)	2 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	10 (66.7%)	2 (13.3%)	15
insist (that) he/she	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.65%)	4 (66.7%)	1 (16.65%)	6
recommend (that) he/she	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1

Table 5 BYU-BNC: Distribution of Subjunctives Across Corpus Genres

What the data from both corpora do reveal is that there still are regional differences in the usage of complementation options. Generally, British English exhibits preferences for indicatives in non-past tense contexts, while American speakers favour subjunctives in this environment. Moreover, the COCA data reveal that this complementation option is preferred in magazines and newspapers (including tabloids). Therefore, it may be concluded that the subjunctive has lost its stylistic colouring in American English. Yet, it remains open whether such conclusions are also applicable to past tense contexts. The following section attempts to outline whether or not the past tense of the matrix verb (i.e. *suggested*, *insisted*, *recommended*) may reshape the architectonic make-up of the mandative contexts.

4. Mandative Uses in Past Tense Contexts

The corpus analysis of the usage of finite complements in past tense contexts brings several interesting results. First of all, it shows that both varieties of English are diverging in the use of indicatives. This complementation option is not available in American English, as Table 6 below demonstrates (only 6 instances with the verb *insisted* and 4 with *recommended*), and this environment is again dominated by the subjunctives. In other words, in American English the patterning of choices of finite complements exhibit similar tendencies in past contexts as in the non-past environments.

COCA	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggested (that) he/she	669 (95.7%)	30 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	699	1383
insisted (that) he/she	404 (93.3%)	36 (8.3%)	6 (1.4%)	433	1175
recommended (that) he/she	135 (95%)	3 (2.1%)	4 (2.9%)	142	149

Table 6 COCA: Representation of Complements (Subjunctives, Modals, Indicatives) in Affirmative Past 3rd Person Singular Contexts⁶

Other similarities are found in the distribution of complements across corpus genres. The data only support conclusions drawn for the non-past tense contexts. Again, the percentage rates for the occurrences of subjunctives within the individual corpus genres indicate that this complementation type occurs predominantly in newspapers, magazines and fiction, as is shown in greater detail in Table 7. Hence, it may be stated that the hegemonic position of subjunctives is not affected by structural factors, such as the past tense of the matrix verb.

COCA subjunctives	SPOKEN	NEWS/MAGAZINE	ACADEMIC	FICTION	TOTAL
suggested (that) he/she	51 (7.6%)	348 (52%)	46 (6.9%)	224 (33.5%)	669
insisted (that) he/she	36 (8.9%)	142 (35.2%)	21 (5.2%)	205 (50.7%)	404
recommended (that) he/she	28 (20.7%)	82 (60.8%)	19 (14.1%)	6 (4.4%)	135

Table 7 COCA: Distribution of Subjunctives Across Corpus Genres

Interesting results are yielded from the BYU-BNC corpus analysis, presented in Table 8. It demonstrates that the complements form a more colourful pattern than in American English. On closer inspection it may be noticed that the preferences for subjunctives substantially increase and the preferences for indicatives significantly drop in past tense contexts. For example, subjunctives represent the most favourable choice for complementing the verbs *suggested* (52.3%) and *insisted* (61.8%). On the other hand, indicatives are the least preferable option with all three verbs. Therefore, the BYU-BNC corpus analysis suggests that British English exhibits converging tendencies with American English in the use of

subjunctives – yet not to such an extent that this complementation variant would oust other options, as is the case in American English.

BYU-BNC	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggested (that) he/she	81 (52.3%)	56 (36.1%)	18 (11.6%)	155	352
insisted (that) he/she	55 (61.8%)	20 (22.5%)	14 (15.7%)	89	235
recommended (that) he/she	7 (33.3%)	12 (57.2%)	2 (9.5%)	21	21

Table 8 *BYU-BNC*: Representation of Complements (Subjunctives, Modals, Indicatives) in Affirmative Past 3rd Person Singular Contexts

Furthermore, the data analysis shows that British English is moving closer to American English regarding the use of subjunctives outside the formal and legalistic style (contra Quirk et al. 157). The figures in Table 9 demonstrate that the subjunctive is used only once in academic texts and is less frequent in non-academic corpus genres than in fiction (ignoring the low occurrences of the verb *recommended*).

BYU-BNC subjunctives	SPOK	NEWS/MAG	ACAD	NON-ACAD	FICTION	OTHER	TOTAL
suggested (that) he/she	0 (0%)	24 (29.6%)	1 (1.2%)	11 (13.6%)	26 (32.1%)	19 (23.5%)	81
insisted (that) he/she	1 (1.8%)	7 (12.7%)	0 (0%)	7 (12.7%)	34 (61.8%)	6 (11%)	55
recommended (that) he/she	0 (0%)	4 (57.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (28.7%)	7

Table 9 *BYU-BNC*: Distribution of Subjunctives Across Corpus Genres

Naturally, the scarce representation of subjunctives in academic and non-academic genres can be linked to a wide range of factors. For example, it may be assumed that the verb *suggest* occurs in academic texts more frequently with inanimate subjects (e.g. “findings”, “data”, etc.), yielding the non-mandative interpretation, rather than with personal subjects *he* or *she*. Nevertheless, the frequent occurrences of subjunctives in fiction, newspapers and magazines may indicate that the formal connotations of this complementation variant have been fading away even in British English.

5. Mandative Uses In Negative Contexts

Negative contexts represent an environment which exhibits two idiosyncratic uses when compared to the previously discussed contexts. One of them is connected with American usage, the other with British usage.

As for American English, there is a striking difference between affirmative and negative contexts in the distribution of individual complementation variants. Table 10 summarizes the percentage rates of the three complements and shows that they are distributed more evenly than in affirmative contexts. Subjunctives are most preferred (at least with

the verbs *insist* and *recommend*), yet the other two variants are strong competitors. Interestingly, even indicatives, usually considered as a Britishism (Leech et al. 57), have found a habitat in negative contexts in American English. One might only speculate whether this complementation pattern will expand to affirmative past and non-past tense contexts, as is the case in British English.

COCA	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggest	29 (39.7%)	31 (42.5%)	13 (17.8%)	73	780
insist	29 (74.4%)	5 (12.8%)	5 (12.8%)	39	381
recommend	26 (59.1%)	1 (2.3%)	17 (38.6%)	44	107

Table 10 COCA: Representation of Complements in Negative Contexts

The other peculiarity of negative contexts is related to the British usage. The percentage rates of usages of all three complement variants are given in Table 11. It demonstrates that the presence of a negative marker has a bearing on the use of subjunctives in British English. While British speakers feel free to choose this option in non-past tense contexts, and moreover, they prefer it in the past tense contexts, they clearly avoid its usage in the negative contexts, as may be seen in Table 11. The question is whether this complementation variant, experiencing its revival in American English and in affirmative contexts also in British English, will push its way even into the negative environments.

BYU-BNC	subjunctives	modals	indicatives	all mandative uses	all uses
suggest	0 (0%)	15 (57.7%)	13 (42.3%)	26	321
insist	0 (0%)	5 (83.3%)	1 (12.8%)	6	38
recommend	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5	12

Table 11 BYU-BNC: Representation of Complements in Negative Contexts

6. Conclusions

In summary, this brief excursion into the finite complementation variants of three matrix verbs for mandative subjunctives (Peters 133) has shown that the architectonic make-up of the mandative contexts is shaped by a range of factors. Stylistic factors do affect speakers' choices of complementation patterns, yet the data analysis suggests that there is a greater deal of fuzziness than is traditionally believed to be the case. For example, subjunctives are more frequently represented in magazines, newspapers and fiction than in academic genres represented in both corpora. The data also demonstrate that structural criteria, predominantly the co-occurrence with a negative marker, play an important role in the choice of one or another complementation variant.

The corpus analysis dealing with non-past, past and negative contexts has revealed that both varieties are converging regarding the usage of (affirmative) subjunctives, and diverging in the use of indicatives. Nevertheless, this option, traditionally associated exclusively with British usage, has found its habitat also in American English, namely in negatives.

Notes

¹ All bold highlightings in corpus examples are mine, in order to mark the structures or verbs that are analyzed.

² Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English and the Brown University of Edited American English (Övergaard 11).

³ The study analyzes suasive verbs, adjectives and nouns.

⁴ The reason for the difference between the figures in both corpora may be linked to different representations of the corpus genres in the sample. The COCA involved more examples from the academic genre than the BYU-BNC corpus. This could have influenced the total number of mandative uses as the non-mandative *suggest* typically occurs in academic texts.

⁵ Non-past tense contexts involve present tense contexts and contexts in which the verb refers to the future (e.g. *going to/will suggest*).

⁶ Only complements with *he/she* subjects were analyzed, in order to make the search comparable to non-past contexts.

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