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Which One of Should and Had Better: A Corpora-based Analysis

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Abstract.

The ultimate goal of this paper is to provide a frequency analysis of *should* and *had better* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the British National Corpus, the Time Magazine Corpus, the Hansard Corpus, and the Corpus of Historical American English. The COCA clearly indicates that *should* may be the preferable type for Americans in eight genres, whereas *had better* may not. From the overall frequency of *should* and *had better*, it is clear that Americans tend to avoid *had better* since there is always a danger or problem if the hearer does not follow the advice. The BNC clearly shows that as in the case of the COCA, *should* is the preferable type for British people in seven genres. This may imply that the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* by British people. When it comes to the TMC, it is interesting to note that the type *should* was the preferable type for educated Americans. It is significant to note that the type *should* may have been the most preferred by educated Americans in the 2000s, but it may have been the most undesired type in the 1920s. With respect to the HC, it is worth noting that the type *should* was preferred by British politicians for 200 years from 1800 to 2000. From the overall frequency of *should* and *had better* in the HC, it is clear that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians for 200 years. Finally, as for the COHA, it is noteworthy that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by Americans from 1810 to 2000. The frequency of *should* reached a peak in 2000, but *should* had the lowest frequency in 1810. This in turn suggests that the type *should* was the most preferred by Americans in 2000, but it was the least preferred among Americans in 1810.

Keywords: token, type, should, had better, COCA, BNC, TMC, HC, COHA.

1. Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to provide a detailed frequency analysis of *should* and *had better* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the British National Corpus, the Time Magazine Corpus, the Hansard Corpus, and the Corpus of Historical American English. As pointed out by Murphy (2016), *had better* is similar to *should* but not exactly the same. "With *had better*, there is always a danger or problem if you don't follow the advice" (Murphy (2016: 66). On the other hand, *should* only means "it is a good thing to do" (Murphy 2016: 66). Let us observe the following sentences:

(1) It is a great movie. You **should** go and see it. (but no problem if you don't)

(2) The movie starts at 8:30. You**'d better** go now, or you'll be late.

In (1), there is no danger or problem even if the hearer does not follow the advice, whereas in (2), there is a problem if the hearer doesn't follow the advice. In (2), if the hearer doesn't follow the advice, he or she will be late. This paper aims to answer the following main questions: Why do *should* and *had better* show the difference in their frequency? What are the main characteristics of the genre frequency in the COCA and BNC? What does the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the COCA, BNC, TMC, HC, and COHA indicate? What are the key differences in the COCA and BNC? What are the main differences among the TMC, HC, and COHA? This paper is organized as follows. In section 3.1, we argue that *should* may be the preferable type for Americans in eight genres, whereas *had better* may not. We further argue that Americans tend to avoid *had better* since there is always a danger or problem if hearers do not follow the advice. In section 3.2, we contend that as in the case of the COCA, *should* in the BNC is the preferable type for British people in seven genres. This may imply that the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* by British people. In section 3.3, we maintain that the type *should* was the preferable type for educated Americans. We contend that *should* may have been the most preferred by educated Americans in the 2000s, but it may have been the most undesired type in the 1920s. In section 3.4, we argue that the type *should* was preferred by British politicians for 200 years from 1800 to 2000. From the overall frequency of *should* and *had better* in the HC, it is clear that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians for 200 years. This may imply that the advice without a problem or danger was favored over the advice with a problem or danger in the British Parliament for 200 years. In section 3.5, we maintain that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by Americans from 1810 to 2000. The frequency of *should* is much higher than that of *had better* in the COHA. Noteworthy is that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in 2000, but *should* had the lowest frequency in 1810. This in turn suggests that the type *should* was the most preferred by Americans in 2000, but it was the least preferred among Americans in 1810. On the other hand, the frequency of *had better* reached a peak in 1880. This may imply that the type *had better* may have been the most preferred by Americans in 1880.

2. Methodology

This paper aim to provide a detailed analysis of the frequency of *you should* and *you had better* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), the Time Magazine Corpus (TMC), the Hansard Corpus (HC), and the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). If we consider the frequency of *should* and *had better* with second person, we can figure out linguistic performance between the speaker and the hearer. This paper centers on answering the following main questions: Why do *should* and *had better* show the difference in their frequency in the COCA, BNC, TMC, HC, and COHA? Which type is the preferred one in the COCA, BNC, TM, HC, and COHA? What is the main difference between the frequency of the COCA and that of the BNC? What are the main characteristics of the TMC, HC, and COHA?

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. A Frequency Analysis of the Corpus of Contemporary American English

Table 1 shows the use and frequency of *should* and *had better* in the COCA (1990-2019):

Table 1 the Genre Frequency of *Should* and *Had better* in the COCA

Type	All	Blog	Web	TV/M	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Academic
should	78,971	11,617	10,707	31,917	7,014	8,231	6,438	2,219	828
had better	575	105	97	113	45	120	46	28	21

A question that naturally arises is which type is the preferred one of the two types? The COCA clearly illustrates the fact that the type *should* is the preferable type of the two types. That is to say, the overall frequency of *should* is 78,971 tokens and the overall frequency of *had better* is 575 tokens. This in turn indicates that *should* may be the preferable type for Americans compared to *had better* since *should* is wildly used in eight genres. On the other hand, *had better* may not be the preferable type for Americans as compared with the type *should*. Why do *should* and *had better* show the difference in their frequency? We wish to argue that speakers in America try to avoid *had better* since there is always a danger or problem if hearers do not follow the advice. Thus, the use of *had better* can be a burden to the hearer, which may result in the infrequency of *had better*. On the other hand, speakers can employ *should* as much as they can since there is no danger or problem if hearers do not follow the advice. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that Americans prefer using *should* to using *had better*.

Now a question to be asked is "in which genre is the type *should* the most widely used among eight genres?" The COCA clearly indicates that the type *should* is the most frequently used one in the TV/movie genre. That is to say,

the TV/movie genre has the highest frequency (31,917 tokens) and the highest proportion. Then why does it have the highest frequency among eight genres? We wish to argue that the speaker can willingly give the hearer a piece of advice in the TV/movie genre since there is no danger or problem even if the hearer does not follow the advice. However, it does not mean that the speaker can willingly give the hearer a piece of advice in daily conversation (the spoken genre) since it may be impolite even though there is no danger or problem. It is interesting to note that *had better* is the most frequently used type in the fiction genre among eight genres. That is, it has the highest frequency (120 tokens) and the highest proportion. Then why does *had better* obtain the highest frequency in the fiction genre among eight genres? We wish to argue that the use of *had better* can give readers an impact since language performance with *had better* accompanies a problem or danger on the hearer's side. Again, however, it does not mean that the type *had better* can be used frequently in daily conversation. It is reasonable to conclude that the type *should* is the most frequently used one in the TV/movie genre among eight genres, whereas *had better* is the most widely used one in the fiction genre. This in turn indicates that the type *should* is the most preferred by Americans in the TV/movie genre among eight genres, whereas *had better* is the most preferred by Americans in the fiction genre.

Now attention is paid to the academic genre. Interestingly, both *should* and *had better* have the lowest frequency and the lowest proportion. Why do *should* and *had better* have the lowest frequency in the academic genre? We argue that the academic genre is closely related to a fact or truth. That is to say, the academic genres convey something true to learners and thus both *should* and *had better* obtain the lowest frequency in the academic genre among eight genres. As a matter of a fact, the advice has nothing to do with something true. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that for this reason, *should* and *had better* obtain the lowest frequency in the academic genre among eight genres.

Now let us turn our attention to the blog genre. A blog is "a website where an individual person, or people representing an organization, write regularly about recent events or topics that interest them, usually with photos and links to other websites that they find interesting" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries). In the blog genre, *should* is the commonly used one (11,617 tokens), whereas *had better* is not much used (105 tokens). The reason why *should* rather than *had better* is preferred by bloggers may be that they can freely write about recent events or topics by giving readers the advice, but the advice has no a problem or danger on the readers' side. Thus, the type *should* may be much used in the blog genre. However, the opposite can be said of the type *had better*. The reason why *had better* may be not preferred by bloggers may be that it carries the advice which has a problem or danger.

Now let us consider the spoken genre. The frequency of the type *should* in the spoken genre is 7,014 tokens, and that of *had better* is 45 tokens. This clearly indicates that *should* may be the preferable type for Americans, whereas *had better* may not. Why does this happen? We wish to argue that the reason why *should* is the preferable type for Americans may be that they may prefer using *should* to using *had better* since *had better* has the connotation of a problem or danger. This in turn indicates that speakers may prefer the type *should* which has no a problem or danger in daily conversation.

Now let us turn to the magazine genre. It is interesting to note that *should* (6,438 tokens) may be the preferable type for magazine journalists, whereas *had better* (46 tokens) is not. A question that naturally arises is "why does this happen?" Magazines contain articles, ads, etc. Especially magazines deal with commercial ads and thus magazine journalists encourage readers to buy goods. For this reason, *should* is suitable for encouraging readers to buy goods since the magazine journalists can give readers the appropriate advice which has no problem or danger on readers' side. However, it may not be appropriate to use *had better* in order for the magazine journalists to encourage readers to buy goods.

Now let us consider the web genre. The web is "a system for finding information on the internet, in which documents are connected to other documents" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries). It is worth noting that the type *should* is the preferable type for Americans in the web genre, whereas the type *had better* may not. More specifically, the frequency of *should* in the web genre is 10,707 tokens, whereas that of *had better* is 97 tokens. This indicates that the type *should* in the web genre is preferred over *had better* by Americans. An important question to be asked is "why does this happen in the web genre?" We wish to argue that the purpose of the web is to convey information to people and thus to give them the objective advice which has no problem or danger is necessary. Thus, the type *should* may be suitable for conveying information to people. Note that *had better* always involves a problem or danger, which results in the infrequency of *had better* in the web genre.

Finally, attention is paid to the newspaper genre. It is worth pointing out that the frequency of *should* is 2,219 tokens in the newspaper genre and that of *had better* is 28 tokens. This indicates that the type *should* in the newspaper genre is the preferable type for Americans, but the type *had better* may not. Then why is *should* preferred by Americans, but why is *had better* not? The reason why *should* may be the preferable type for Americans in the newspaper genre may be that *should* rather than *had better* may be suitable for conveying

something true to readers since it carries the advice which has no problem. On the other hand, to use *had better* in the newspaper may invoke a worry and thus *should* may be favored over *had better* in the newspaper genre. We thus conclude that the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* by Americans in all genres.

3.2. A Frequency Analysis of the British National Corpus

In what follows, we examine the use and genre frequency of *should* and *had better* in the British National Corpus. Table 2 shows the use and frequency of the types *should* and *had better* in the BNC:

Table 2 the Genre Frequency of *should* and *had better* in the BNC

Type	All	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Non-Academic	Academic	Misc
should	5,185	996	1,289	482	159	458	174	1,627
had better	83	3	50	7	0	9	1	13

It is worthwhile pointing out that as in the case of the COCA, in the BNC, *should* is the preferable type for British people in all genres. This may imply that the type *should* rather than the type *had better* may be preferred by British people. As observed earlier, the type *should* rather than the type *had better* may be preferred by Americans in eight genres.

Now let us observe the spoken genre in the BNC, comparing the COCA and BNC. The frequency of *should* in the spoken genre ranks third among seven genres, whereas that of *had better* ranks fifth among seven genres. An important question to be asked is "why does this happen in the spoken genre?" The reason why *should* may be favored over *had better* in the UK may be that just as in the case of Americans, British people may prefer using the advice without a problem or danger to using the advice with a problem or danger. It seems that in daily conversation, the advice without a problem is preferred by Americans and British people.

Now let us turn our attention to the fiction genre. The frequency of *should* in the fiction genre is 1,289 tokens, but that of *had better* is 50 tokens. Note that the type *had better* in the fiction genre obtains the highest frequency among seven genres. From this it can be inferred that writers are fond of using the type *had better* in the fiction genre. Then why do they prefer the type *had better* in the fiction genre? We wish to argue that writers will use many strategies in order for them to encourage readers to have a wow finish. In the end, it may lead to the best-seller novel. One of writers' strategies may be to use the type *had better* in the book, which can provide an impact for readers. Such a strategy can invoke readers' interest and curiosity. Additionally, it is interesting to note that in the fiction genre, Americans and British people show the same pattern. Simply put, the type *should* may be the most preferred by American and British authors among all genres.

Now let us turn our attention to the magazine genre. The frequency of the type *should* in the magazine genre is 482 tokens, whereas that of the type *had better* is 7 tokens. More specifically, *should* ranks third among all genres, whereas *had better* ranks fourth. This indicates that *should* in the magazine genre is the preferable type for British people, but *had better* may not. Then why do British people prefer using the type *should* to using the type *had better* in the magazine genre? If we consider the goal of magazines, we can have a guess. The so-called magazine is a periodic publication containing articles and ads. Magazine journalists try to encourage people (readers) to buy the magazine and thus they need to give readers the advice without a problem, which conforms to the meaning of the type *should*. Thus, journalists will not use the type *had better* for readers since this may offend their feelings, which may lead to the infrequency of the type *had better* in the magazine genre. It is significant to note that Americans and British people show the same pattern in this respect. That is to say, the type *should* may be favored over the type *had better* in the magazine genre.

Now let us consider the newspaper genre in the BNC. The frequency of the type *should* in the newspaper genre is 159 tokens, whereas that of the type *had better* is 0. This indicates that *should* may be preferred by British people, but *had better* is not. Then why is *should* is the preferable type for British people, but why is *had better* not? Newspapers contain articles and ads and they are used to convey information to readers. Thus, their information is supposed to be true or something true. Thus, journalists tend to give readers the true advice without a problem or danger, which conforms to the meaning of the type *should*. This is why the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* in the newspaper genre.

Finally, attention is paid to the academic genre in the BNC. The frequency of the type *should* in the academic genre is 174 tokens, whereas that of the type *had better* is 1 token. Again, *should* is favored over *had better* in the academic genre. Why does this happen in the academic genre? The academic genre is meant to be something academic including humanities, sciences, and engineering. It is used to convey factual information to students, which has nothing to do with the type *had better*. Again, note that *had better* is bound to have the meaning of the advice with a problem or danger. On the other hand, *should* can be used to convey academic information to students since it denotes the advice without a problem or danger. It is worth noting that both Americans and British people in the academic genre prefer using the type *should* to using the type *had better*. We thus conclude that the type *should* is preferred over the type *had better* by Americans and British people in all genres.

3.3. A Frequency Analysis of Should and Had better in the Time Magazine Corpus

This section centers on examining the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the TMC. Table 3 shows the use and frequency of the types *should* and *had better*:

Table 3 Frequency of Should and Had better in the TMC

Type	All	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
should	999	55	71	102	146	99	89	78	143	216
had better	79	7	12	13	9	12	11	4	3	8

An immediate question to be asked is "which type was preferred by educated Americans?" The TMC clearly indicates that the type *should* was the preferable type for educated Americans. That is to say, the type *should* may have been preferred over the type *had better* by educated Americans. The overall frequency of *should* from the 1920s to the 2000s was 999 tokens, whereas that of *had better* from the 1920s to the 2000s was 79 tokens. From this it can be inferred that educated Americans preferred using the type *should* to using the type *had better* from the 1920s to the 2000s. When it comes to the type *should*, there was a steady increase in its frequency from the 1920s to the 1950s. More specifically, there was an increase of 91 tokens from the 1920s to the 1950s. After this period, there was a gradual decline in the frequency of *should* from the 1950s to the 1980s. That is to say, there was a gradual decrease of 68 tokens from the 1950s to the 1980s. After this period, there was a sudden increase in the frequency of *should*. There was an increase of 138 tokens from the 1980s to the 2000s. Noteworthy is that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in the 2000s. The frequency of *should* was 216 tokens in the 2000s, which in turn suggests that the type *should* was the most preferred by educated Americans in that period. It is worthwhile pointing out that *should* may have been the most undesired type in the 1920s since it had the lowest frequency in that period. Simply put, the type *should* may have been the least preferred among educated Americans in the 1920s.

Now let us turn our attention to the type *had better*. There was a steady increase in the figure of *had better* from the 1920s to the 1940s. After this period, there was a sudden decline in its frequency from the 1940s to the 1950s and then there was an increase of 3 tokens in the 1960s. After the 1960s, there was a gradual decline in the frequency of *had better* (from the 1960s to the 1990s). There was a sudden increase in the figure of *had better* in the 2000s. In a word, there were slight fluctuations in the figure of *had better* from the 1920s to the 2000s. It is significant to note that the frequency of *had better* reached a peak in 1940s, which in turn suggests that *had better* may have been the most preferred by educated Americans in that period. This may imply that educated Americans were fond of giving people the advice with a problem in the 1940s. It is worth noting that *had better* may have been the most undesired type in the 1990s. That is, the type *had better* may have been the least preferred among educated Americans in the 1990s. We thus conclude that educated Americans were fond of using *had better* in the 1940s, whereas they avoided it in the 1990s.

3.4. A Frequency Analysis of Should and Had better in the Hansard Corpus

In what follows, we aim to examine the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the Hansard Corpus. Table 4 shows the use and the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the HC:

Table 4 Frequency of Should and Had better in the HC

Type	should	had better
1800	47	1
1810	39	3
1820	65	11
1830	227	10
1840	483	25
1850	546	26
1860	452	18
1870	342	16
1880	621	44
1890	749	49
1900	944	50
1910	2,588	110
1920	1,706	85
1930	1,664	91
1940	827	68
1950	433	69
1960	596	87
1970	666	66
1980	680	67
1990	518	56
2000	220	11
Total	14,413	963

An important question to be asked is "which type was preferred by British politicians?" The HC clearly indicates that the type *should* was preferred by them for 200 years from 1800 to 2000. The overall frequency of *should* in the HC was 14,413 tokens, whereas that of *had better* was 963 tokens. From this, it is clear that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians for 200 years. This may imply that the advice without a problem or danger was favored over the advice with a problem or danger in the British Parliament for 200 years. As for the type *should*, there was a gradual rise in its figure from 1800 to 1850 except for 1810. More specifically, there was an increase of 499 tokens from 1800 to 1850, which indicates that the type *should* became the preferable type for British politicians. On the other hand, when it comes to the type *had better*, there was a slight increase in its figure from 1800 to 1850 except for 1830. Specifically, there was an increase of 25 tokens from 1800 to 1850, which implies that *had better* might have been not the preferable type for British politicians as compared with *should*. In this respect, *should* may have been preferred over *had better* by British politicians from 1800 to 1850. More interestingly, there was a sudden fall in the figure of *should* from 1850 to 1870. That is, there was a decrease of 204 tokens from 1850 to 1870. Similarly, there was a steady decline in the figure of *had better* from 1850 to 1870. In a word, there was a decreasing preference for *should*, but we cannot say that there was a decreasing preference for *had better* since there was a fall of 10 tokens. It is interesting to note that there was a dramatic increase in the frequency of both *should* and *had better* from 1870 to 1910. More specifically, in the case of *should*, there was a sudden rise of 2,246 tokens and in the case of *had better*, there was a sudden increase of 84 tokens. In addition, the figure of *should* and that of *had better* reached a peak at the same time in 1910. This in turn suggests that both *should* and *had better* were the most preferred by British politicians in 1910. It must be noted, however, that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians in 1910. It should be noted that there was a dramatic fall in the figure of *should* from 1910 to 1950, whereas there were slight fluctuations in the figure of *had better* in the same period. In the case of *should*, there was a sudden decline of 2,155 tokens from 1910 to 1950. Again, this may indicate that there was a decreasing preference for the type *should* for 40 years. Despite this, the type *should* may have been preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians. Simply put, *should* may have been the preferred type in the British Parliament. It is noteworthy that there was a steady rise in the figure of *should* from 1950 to 1980, whereas there were slight fluctuations in the figure of *had better* from 1950 to 2000. In the case of *should*, there was a rise of 247 tokens from 1950 to 1980. After 1980, there was a sudden decline in the figure of *should* from 1980 to 2000. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the type *should* may have been the most undesired type in 1810 and the type *had better* may have been the most undesired type in 1800 since *should* had the lowest frequency (39 tokens) and *had better* also had the lowest frequency (1 token). This in turn suggests that *should* may have been the least preferred among British politicians in 1810 and *had better* may have been the least preferred among them in 1800. We thus conclude that both *should* and *had better* were the most preferred type in

the British Parliament in 1910, but *should* and *had better* were the least preferred among British politicians in 1810 and 1800.

3.5. A Frequency Analysis of Should and Had better in the Corpus of Historical American English

In this section, we aim to provide a frequency analysis of *should* and *had better* in the COHA. Table 5 shows the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the COHA (1810-2000):

Table 5 Frequency of Should and Had better in the COHA

Type	should	had better
1810	43	12
1820	242	42
1830	423	87
1840	467	133
1850	511	145
1860	523	128
1870	610	226
1880	538	255
1890	632	181
1900	749	151
1910	646	120
1920	655	107
1930	709	75
1940	767	80
1950	810	44
1960	860	42
1970	999	58
1980	1020	41
1990	1469	19
2000	1594	27
Total	14,267	1,973

A question that naturally arises is "which type was preferred by Americans for 190 years from 1810 to 2000?" The COHA clearly indicates that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by Americans from 1810 to 2000 since the overall frequency of *should* is 14,267 tokens, whereas that of *had better* is 1,973 tokens. That is to say, Americans preferred using *should* to using *had better* from 1810 to 2000. With respect to the type *should*, it is interesting to note that there was a dramatic rise in its figure from 1810 to 1870. More specifically, there was an increase of 567 tokens in the same period, which may imply that *should* may have been the preferable type for Americans. With regard to the type *had better*, it noteworthy that there was a steady increase in its figure from 1810 to 1850. That is to say, there was a rise of 133 tokens for 40 years. This does not mean, however, that *had better* may have been the preferable type for Americans since there was a slight rise in the frequency of *had better*. When it comes to the type *should*, there was a gradual increase in its figure from 1870 to 1900 except for 1880 (a rise of 139 tokens). As for the type *had better*, there was a steady increase in its figure from 1850 to 1880 except for 1860. More specifically, there was a rise of 110 tokens from 1850 to 1880. This in turn suggests that the advice without a problem or danger may have been favored over the advice with a problem or danger. It is must be noted that there was a slight fall in the frequency of *should* from 1900 to 1920 and there was also a gradual decline in the frequency of *had better* from 1880 to 1930. Additionally, it is significant to note that there was a dramatic increase in the frequency of *should* from 1920 to 2000. That is, there was a rise of 1,139 tokens from 1920 to 2000. On the other hand, it is worth noting that there was a steady fall in the frequency of *had better* from 1940 to 2000 except for 1970 (a decline of 53 tokens). Finally, noteworthy is that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in 2000 (1,594 tokens), which indicates that the type *should* was the most preferred by Americans. Conversely, *should* had the lowest frequency in 1810 (43 tokens), which implies that the type *should* was the least preferred among Americans. On the other hand, the frequency of *had better* reached a peak in 1880 (255 tokens), which may imply that the type

had better may have been the most preferred by Americans. However, *had better* was the least preferred among Americans in 1810 (12 tokens). We thus conclude that the type *should* may have been preferred over the type *had better* by Americans for 190 years from 1810 to 2000.

4. A Comparative Analysis of Should and Had better in the COCA, BNC, TMC, HC, and COHA

To begin with, let us compare the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the COCA and that of *should* and *had better* in the BNC. The COCA and BNC have one thing in common. *Should* may have been the preferable type for Americans and British people. This in turn indicates that the advice without a problem or danger is preferred over the advice with a problem or danger by Americans and British people. The TMC also indicates that *should* may have been the preferable type for educated Americans. The same can be said of the HC. The type *should* may have been favored over the type *had better* in the British Parliament. Likewise, the COHA clearly indicates that Americans preferred using the type *should* to using the type *had better*. Thus, it may be reasonable to conclude that *should* may have been the preferred type in America and the UK.

Now let us turn our attention to the spoken genre in the COCA and BNC. As observed earlier, the frequency of *should* is higher than that of *had better* in the COCA and BNC. This may imply that *should* may be favored over *had better* in America and the UK. This may happen due to the fact that in daily conversation, the advice without a problem or danger is preferred over the advice with a problem or danger by Americans and British people. It must be noted that the frequency of *should* in the spoken genre ranks fifth among eight genres in the COCA, whereas that of *should* ranks third among seven genres in the BNC.

Now attention is paid to the newspaper genre in the COCA and BNC. It is interesting to note that the frequency of *should* in the newspaper genre in both COCA and BNC is higher than that of *had better*. This in turn suggests that *should* rather than *had better* may be suitable for conveying something true to readers since it carries the advice which has no problem or danger. Thus, the type *should* may be preferred over *had better* by American and British journalists.

Now let us observe the magazine genre in the COCA and BNC. Again, the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* by Americans and British journalists since the frequency of *should* is higher than that of *had better*. Why does this happen? In order for magazine journalists to encourage people (readers) to buy the magazine, they try to give them the advice without a problem, which conforms to the type *should*. In this respect, American and British journalists show the same pattern.

Now let us consider the frequency of *should* and *had better* in the TMC, HC, and COHA. It should be noted that the overall frequency of *should* in the TMC, HC, and COHA is higher than that of *had better*. This may suggest that educated Americans, British politicians, and Americans preferred using *should* to using *had better*. With respect to the TMC, it is noteworthy that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in the 2000s. This may indicate that the type *should* was the most preferred by educated Americans in the 2000s. Also, it is worth noting that *should* may have been the most undesired type in the 1920s since it had the lowest frequency in that period. Thus, the type *should* may have been the least preferred among educated Americans in the 1920s. On the other hand, when it comes to *should* and *had better* in the HC, their figure reached a peak in 1910. This in turn indicates that both *should* and *had better* were the most preferred by British politicians in 1910. Yet, it must be emphasized that the type *should* is preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians. As for the frequency of *should* and *had* in the HC, *should* was the most undesired type in 1810, whereas *had better* was the most undesired type in 1800 because *should* obtained the lowest frequency (39 tokens) and *had better* also obtained the lowest frequency (1 token). From this, it seems clear that *should* was the least preferred among British politicians in 1810 and *had better* was the least preferred among them in 1800. With respect to the frequency of *should* in the COHA, it is significant to note that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in 2000 (1,594 tokens). From this it can be inferred that *should* may have been the most preferred by Americans. On the other hand, *should* was the most undesired type in 1810 (43 tokens) since it had the lowest frequency in that period, which indicates that *should* may have been the least preferred among Americans. Additionally, it must be noted that the frequency of *had better* reached a peak in 1880 (255 tokens). It is clear that *had better* may have been the most preferred by Americans in that period. Conversely, *had better* had the lowest frequency in 1810 (12 tokens). This in turn suggests that it was the least preferred among Americans. We thus conclude that the type *should* may have been preferred over the type *had better* by Americans, British people, educated Americans, and British politicians. This may happen due to the fact that the type *should* carries the advice which has no problem or danger.

Finally, the advantage of this paper is that we can answer the following questions: Why is *should* favored over *had better* in America and the UK? Why is *should* favored over *had better* in all genres? Why is *should* favored

over *had better* in the COCA, BNC, TMC, HC, and COHA? We wish to argue that *should* may be preferred over *had better* by Americans and British people in all genres since in the case of *had better*, there is always a danger or problem if the hearer doesn't follow the advice, whereas in the case of *should*, there is no danger or problem even though the hearer doesn't. This is why *should* may be preferred over *had better* by both Americans and British people in all genres. Exactly the same can be said of the TMC and HC. Educated Americans and British politicians preferred using *should* to using *had better*. This may have happened due to the same reason. That is, this depends on whether or not there is a problem or danger on the hearer's side.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, we have provided a frequency analysis of the types *should* and *had better* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the British National Corpus, the Time Magazine Corpus, the Hansard Corpus, and the Corpus of Historical American English. In section 3.1, we have argued that *should* may be the preferable type for Americans in eight genres, whereas *had better* may not. We have further argued that Americans tend to avoid *had better* since there is always a danger or problem if hearers do not follow the advice. In section 3.2, we have contended that as in the case of the COCA, *should* in the BNC is the preferable type for British people in seven genres. This may imply that the type *should* may be preferred over the type *had better* by British people. In section 3.3, we have maintained that the type *should* was the preferable type for educated Americans. It is noteworthy that *should* may have been the most preferred by educated Americans in the 2000s. It is worthwhile pointing out that *should* may have been the most undesired type in the 1920s since it had the lowest frequency in that period. This indicates that the type *should* may have been the least preferred among educated Americans in the 1920s. In section 3.4, we have argued that the type *should* was preferred by British politicians for 200 years from 1800 to 2000. From the overall frequency of *should* and *had better* in the HC, it is clear that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by British politicians for 200 years. This may imply that the advice without a problem or danger was favored over the advice with a problem or danger in the British Parliament for 200 years. In section 3.5, we have maintained that the type *should* was preferred over the type *had better* by Americans from 1810 to 2000. The frequency of *should* is much higher than that of *had better* in the COHA. It is noteworthy that the frequency of *should* reached a peak in 2000. This indicates that the type *should* was the most preferred by Americans. Conversely, *should* had the lowest frequency in 1810, which implies that the type *should* was the least preferred among Americans. On the other hand, the frequency of *had better* reached a peak in 1880. This may imply that the type *had better* may have been the most preferred by Americans. However, *had better* was the least preferred among Americans in 1810.

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