Must and *Should* in Cameroon English[1]

DANIEL A. NKEMLEKE
University of Yaounde I, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

Modals have been thought to be fairly homogeneous in terms of usage throughout the English-speaking world. However, corpus-based studies (e.g. Coates 1983; Katikar 1984; Krogvig & Johansson 1991; Collins 1988) have established that these verbs indeed vary according to region and to a certain extent register. This study examines the degree of such variation in Cameroon English by comparing frequency occurrences of *must* and *should* in the Cameroon English database with findings of similar corpus-based investigation in British English as reported in Coates (1983) and Johns (1991).

Findings reveal notable semantic and stylistic variations in Cameroon English (compared with British English). For example, root meanings of these modals are very frequent and for the most part they are used in very 'restrictive' ways. Furthermore, certain elements of context that normally mark spoken informal English occur freely in Cameroon English ; making the distinction between formal and informal usage blurred.

Keywords: modals, meaning, usage, Cameroon English

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the seemingly simple uses of the modals to make requests, offers or express obligation and necessity etc., their semantic complexities have presented a challenge to both semantic theory (see for example the different approaches of Boyd & Thorne 1969; Halliday 1970; Marino 1973) and descriptive grammar (Hermerén 1978; Palmer 1979; Coates 1983). In addition to their semantic complexity, the modals display a significant degree of regional variation (as noted by Trudgill & Hannah 1982) and register variation (Coates 1983; Collins 1988) in standard English. This paper explores the nature and extent of such variation with *must* and *should* in Cameroon English by using British English databases as native English reference.

The basic assumption underlying this investigation is that grammatical correctness according to international standards appears to be highly valued throughout the English-speaking world. And differences between varieties would normally relate to frequencies of occurrences of forms and stylistic values rather than the categorical presence or absence of individual features. This impression is confirmed in Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) where differences between British English and American English are mentioned in less than 10% of the sections and

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[1]   This study is part of a large-scale corpus-based investigation (for a Doctorate Degree) into the uses of the modal verbs in Cameroon English and British English. See Nkemleke (2003).

most of these statements are in footnotes referring to marginal or very special features (also cf. Algeo 1988).

2. SURVEY OF RECENT RESEARCH

Several comparative studies have been undertaken on British, American, Australian and Indian differences in the use of the modal verbs from a corpus perspective. A survey of some of these studies is in place here.

2.1 BRITISH AND AMERICAN DIFFERENCES

Coates and Leech (1980) investigate the modals in British and American English as they occur in the 1,000,000 words Brown corpus of American English, and a matching Lancaster university corpus of British English. This study investigates the modals quantitatively in relation to:(1) contextual features (i.e., co-occurring syntactic/semantic features of the text); (2) British and American English; (3) differences of genre or style. The first of these factors is an essential part of the investigation, since the interdependence of modal meanings and contextual features such as aspect, agentivity and negation has been assumed (but largely on intuitive grounds) in many studies. The relevance of the last two factors derives from the fact that a major difficulty of modal description is undoubtedly variation in usage between different varieties of English. Apart from a few studies (e.g. Lebrun 1965; Brown and Miller 1975), such variation has been neglected although its existence has been widely acknowledged.

Findings of this study reveal that a compensatory relationship exits between British and American usage with respect to the following pairs of modals: *should/ought, must/have to, shall/will, can/may.* The American use of root *should* was balanced by the equivalent British use of root *ought*; the American use of epistemic *have to* corresponded to the British use of epistemic *must*; the American use of epistemic w*ill* was counterbalanced by the British use of epistemic *shall*; the American use of root *may* was balanced by the British use of root *can.* The general conclusion of Coates and Leech (1980) is that in American English *shall* and *ought* are rare and apparently obsolescent, their main senses being expressed by *will* and *should* respectively. Moreover, American English tends to categorise the modals in formal-informal terms, leading to specialisation, particularly in the case of *shall,* and *may.* On the other hand, British English preserves a more general use of the modal auxiliaries, with each modal covering more ground, both semantically and stylistically.

No single issue has received more attention in discussions of British/American differences than the use of *shall* and *will.* It has been taken up in general descriptions (of American English), such as Krapp (1925), Mencken (1936), Fries (1940), Zandvoort (1968), Forgue and McDavid (1972), and Švejcer (1978) but without any clear-cut statements because the semantic complexity of

the modals makes them notoriously difficult to describe. The topic has been dealt with in usage books (e.g. Fowler 1965), grammars (e.g. Quirk et al. 1972), and articles and monographs dealing with the English verb (e.g. Joos 1964; Leech 1971). To be adequate, studies of such nature need to specify text types preferably with a broad representation of comparable text types This is basically what Krogvig and Johansson (1991) have done. The study compares *shall, will, should* and *would* in American and British English as they occur in the Brown and Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB) corpora respectively. This comparison is based on text type, grammatical person, and clause type. The investigation shows that the main difference between American and British English lies in the use of *shall* and *should*, with the latter being more marked than the former. The two modals are further more represented in the LOB corpus than in the Brown corpus. *Will* and *would* are much more frequent in both corpora than *shall* and *should* but there is no appreciable difference between the two corpora in the use of *will* and *would*.

In relation to text type, *shall* is mainly a feature of informative prose (i.e., categories A-J). The main difference is found in imaginative prose (i.e., categories K-R), where the LOB corpus, at least in two categories (K: General fiction, P: Romance and love story), has a strikingly higher frequency of *shall*. *Should* is more frequent in the LOB corpus and its over-representation is found in all the text categories apart from D (Religion), where the figure in the American material is slightly higher. In both corpora the largest proportion of the occurrences is found in informative prose. The most conspicuous differences between the relative frequencies of *should* in the two corpora are found in categories A (Press: reportage), B (Press editorial), E (Skills, trade and hobbies) in the informative prose section, while K (General fiction) and N (Adventure and Western fiction) show the most notable differences in the imaginative prose section.

Grammatical person (of the subject) is usually said to influence the choice of modals (*shall* versus *will*, *should* versus *would*), and it is often pointed out that usage in British and American English differs in this respect. *Shall* occurs more frequently with the first person subject in the LOB corpus and in the second and third persons the occurrences in the two corpora are very close. However, the majority of the examples of *shall* are found with first person subject in the British material and most of the examples in the American material are in the third person.

Beyond text type and grammatical person, Krogvig and Johansson (1991) also establish that modals occur in different frequencies depending on clause type. In this respect, their findings show significant variation between American and British English with reference to independent declarative clauses, question clauses, and subordinate clauses. In summary the study establishes that the use of these modals between the two corpora is clearly genre-bound with differences more marked with *shall* and *should*.

Nakamura (1993) has used the same databases, though with a different methodology, and arrives at similar results. *Ought* is included in the category of *shall* and *should* in this study, and this is because the scope of the study goes

beyond the four modals in Krogvig and Johansson (1991). Consequently, in Nakamura (1993), *shall*, *should,* and *ought* show a significantly visible dichotomy in the two corpora as far as the two main divisions of imaginative and informative prose are concerned, allowing for differences with respect to the individual categories. This dichotomy is, however, indicated in relation to the overall frequency comparison between the LOB corpus and Brown corpus.

The second dimension of Nakamura's (1993) finding is the distribution of modals in the two corpora independently and according to the main divisions of imaginative and informative prose. In the LOB corpus, genres are neatly separated between these two divisions except for one case, that is, Genre G (Belles letters, biography, essays), which is located in the negative region along Axis I[2] where the genre of imaginative prose is located. This genre, in fact, is the closest to the origin of co-ordinates, indicating that it does not show much preference for or against the use of modals. Here the modals, which characterise imaginative prose, are: *dare, could, used, might, ought,* and *would,* and those for informative prose include: *may, can, shall, need, should,* and *will. Must* is quite neutral in the LOB corpus indicating that many genres in this corpus do not show much preference for or against the use of this modal.

In the Brown corpus, the distribution into imaginative and informative divisions is quantitatively significant; but there is a third category – those modals that do not show a strong tendency to either side. They include *can, must* and *should*. Their distribution along the Axis is in the negative domain (Nakamura 1993: 39) indicating that they are oriented a little towards informative prose but not very much. The typical neutral modal here is *will*. The other group of modals: *would*, *used, ought, might*, and *dare, need, may, shall, could*, are imaginative-prose-oriented and informative-prose-oriented respectively.

It might be safely said that the major factor, which determines the use of modals across genres, may be attributed to the imaginative versus informative dichotomy. This dichotomy has always been the principal one whether from the point of view of the distribution of pronouns as attested in Jacobson (1962) or from the perspective of the distribution of grammatical tags as attested by Nakamura (1993). In all, the use of some of the modals does differ in a significant way between American and British English as revealed by the findings of Krogvig and Johansson (1991) and Nakamura (1993).

2.2 AUSTRALIAN, BRITISH AND AMERICAN DIFFERENCES

Collins (1988) investigates *must, should, ought, need*, *have to* and *have got to* in Australian, British, and American English. The Australian corpus used for this

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[2]   The methodology used in the study (Hayash's Quantification Method Type Three) assigns modal occurrences in texts along three different Axes, where quantities are plotted from a three-dimensional the behaviour of the different modals in texts and corpora.

investigation is 225,000 words. British English figures are from Coates (1983) and those for American English are taken from two sources: Francis and Kučera's (1982) frequency analysis of the Brown corpus and Hermerén (1978). Put together, the five modal forms have lower frequencies in Australian English than in the other two varieties. However, the forms, which are discussed at great length, are *must*, *should,* and *have (got) to*.

In Australian English, epistemic *must* is five times more frequent than root *must*. In the American data the figures for root *must* dominate the epistemic ones. British English figures are fairly balanced in terms of the two meanings. With respect to *should*, the figures for root meanings in Australian and American English are fairly the same, exceeding those for British English. However, epistemic meanings occur more frequently in Australian and British English than in American English. The most outstanding finding here is that of the quasi-subjunctive *should* where no corpus example occurs in the Australian database (see Collins 1988: 160). This meaning, however, occurs in no small number in the British and American corpora.

2.3 BRITISH AND INDIAN DIFFERENCES

Katikar (1984) investigates the modal verbs in Indian English as they occur in the one-million-word corpus of the Kolhapur corpus. The study takes a cue from similar studies on the Brown and LOB corpora. Katikar's (1984) findings indicate that modal usage in Indian English conforms to modal usage in the native varieties. However, regarding differences, the contracted forms like *'ll* and *'d* for *will* and *would* are used frequently in Indian English for conveying determination. With respect to form-wise frequencies, the study shows an overall predominance of the past forms in Indian English as compared to frequencies in the LOB. *Shall* is also reported in this study to have a higher frequency in the Kolhapur corpus. A comparison of the frequency figures of the modals in this corpus and LOB shows that the modality of 'futurity' and 'hypothesis' have a low frequency in Indian English whereas the modality of 'certainty' has a higher frequency. What stands out clear from these frequencies is that there are few marked differences between the modals in Indian English and British English.

2.4 THE PRESENT STUDY

The studies reviewed in the preceding sections (2.1 – 2.3) are common in one important respect: they all use a computer corpus to try to quantify occurrences of the modals and linguistic features collocating with them. By analysing extended naturally-occurring texts, these studies make statements on the behaviour of the modal verbs in all possible contexts of usage revealing patterns and tendencies that traditional descriptive frameworks are normally not able to address. These

attempts at using modern computer corpora as a basis for linguistic investigation, especially in the area of the modals, are very recent developments in the 'Outer Circle' (Kachru 1984). In fact, corpus linguistic projects are relatively new in Africa[3]. Clearly, there is still a great deal of work to be done in this region and in this area of the verb. For example, what is the behaviour of the modals in a non-native English setting like Cameroon, Nigeria, or Kenya? It may be interesting to compare these verbs as they occur in native and non-native databases. It is within this perspective that this paper hopes to make a contribution.

3. DATA

The Cameroon English data used for this study is taken from the one-million-word corpus of Cameroon English (hereinafter, CCE) printed texts located at the department of English of the University of Yaounde I. The corpus was compiled between 1992 and 1994 by a team of local researchers and the distant academic and technical support of the School of English of the University of Birmingham, and later the University of Liverpool. The corpus is made up of text categories comprising a wide range of Cameroon English: fiction, non-fiction, popular, scholarly, and literary texts. The composition of the overall corpus is presented in Table 1, and Table 2 indicates the sample figure for each modal used for the study.

Table 1. Number of Texts and Words per Text Category in the CCE

	Text categories	N° of texts	N° of words
A	Official Press (OP)	183	250,000
B	Students' Essay (SE)	116	130,760
C	Miscellaneous (MI)	32	122,569
D	Novels and Short Stories (NS)	21	104,458
E	Private Press (PP)	50	81,860
F	Government Memoranda (GM)	14	74,692
G	Private Letters (PL)	222	69,347
H	Tourism (TR)	8	30,188
I	Religion (RE)	14	15,839
J	Official Letters (OL)	44	10,632
K	Advertisement (AD)	10	4,547
11	Total	714	1,000,451

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[3]   Very few countries in Africa have corpus linguistic on-going projects (see Schmied 1989 for East Africa, Tiomajou 1993 for Cameroon, and Akere 1996 for Nigeria).

Table 2. Sample Figures for *must* and *should* Use for the Study

Text types	OP	SE	MI	RE	NS	PP	GM	PL	TR	OL	AD	Total
Must	26	3	104	21	11	2	19	11	2	–	1	200
Should	30	7	57	42	8	8	15	26	2	5	–	200

The source of information on the modals in British English used here is Coates (1983), the first full-length account of modal semantics to be based on an adequate corpus. Coates corpus comprised over a million and a half words (1,000,000 from the LOB corpus of written British English and 545,000 from the spoken and non-printed written sections of the Survey of English Usage corpus). From this database Coates extracted a 'representative sample of each modal' (1983: 2), each sample consisting of approximately 200 cases. However, when comparison is made in this study between Cameroon English (i.e., CCE) findings and those of British English (i.e., LOB), two sources of non-comparability between the two need to be borne in mind. Firstly, the text components of the two corpora are not the same although it can be concluded that the two reflect a broad view of the language in each situation. Secondly, there is a chronological gap between the two corpora. The CCE was compiled between 1992 and 1994, while the LOB corpus was compiled many years back. In the study references are also made to one other database – that is, the corpus of the Survey of English Usage corpus (hereinafter SEU) and the Birmingham corpus. The former is largely made up of spoken material, and unprinted written material such as private letters and diaries and the latter is made up of British English written texts. While the texts of the LOB and Birmingham corpora are taken to represent formal written English, those of the SEU are not.

4. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

An appropriate model of modal meanings must synthesize six orientations: mono-semantic, poly-semantic, categorical, non-categorical, logical, and pragmatic. The two central notions in modal logic are 'possibility' and 'necessity' and I will begin by distinguishing two kinds of 'possibility' and 'necessity' known as 'epistemic' and 'deontic'. However of all the kinds of modality, only epistemic modality is generally distinct, both syntactically and semantically from the other kinds. It is for this reason that scholars (including Sweetser 1982) have simply made a two-fold distinction of epistemic and non-epistemic (root) modality, a pattern used in this study.

4.1 EPISTEMIC AND ROOT MODALITY

The epistemic/root distinction is interpreted as follows. Epistemic modality imputes a state of belief to the speaker/writer regarding the truth of some proposition x, such that a statement of epistemic 'necessity', for example, takes the form: 'circumstances constrain the speaker to believe that "x".' In the case of root modality, x refers not to a proposition, but to a phenomenon (an event, state, or set of events), the occurrence of which is influenced by some other phenomenon. Therefore the form of a statement of root 'necessity' can be generalised as follows: 'circumstances constrain the occurrence of x'. Paraphrase criteria, backed up by other criteria distinguished epistemic and root meaning as follows:

a) *Epistemic meaning*
      'x may y' = 'it is possible that x [will] y' = 'perhaps x [will] y'.
      'x must y' = 'x must necessarily y' = 'it must be that y'.

b) *Root meaning*
      'x can y' = 'x may y' = 'it is possible for x to y'.
      'x must y' = 'it is necessary for x to y'.

These paraphrases are subject to various restrictions and reservations, but illustrate the categorical nature of the epistemic/root distinction. The fact that the items *possible* and *necessary* occur in both epistemic and root paraphrases also provide a basis for using the semantic labels 'possibility' and 'necessarily' in both categories.

      The contrast between 'permission'/'obligation' and 'possibility'/'necessity' is often assumed to be categorical, but it is sometimes more accurate to describe it in terms of a cline of restriction (see Coates and Leech 1980). At one end of the scale the nature of the determining or constraining circumstances is unrestricted, while at the other end they belong to a restricted world of man-made freedoms and obligations. It is here that a paraphrase such as 'x is permitted to y' becomes more appropriate than 'it is possible for x to y'. The postulation of such a cline would not be necessary but for the existence of intermediate 'unclear cases', for which neither type of paraphrase is adequate. Coates and Leech (1980: 25) use this example to illustrate: 'it's too damn busy in here. We *can't* expect him to leave his customers'. And explain that neither 'it is impossible for us to expect…' nor 'we are not permitted to expect…' would capture the sense of *can't* here. The use of *can* is not unrestricted in that the event referred to, is clearly possible, in an absolute sense, but is forbidden by a man-made code of 'reasonable behaviour'. On the other hand, it is not fully restricted, in that the prohibition cannot be attributed to a particular human agent or agency, as it can in clear cases of 'permission'.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 MUST

Two main meanings are associated with *must* in the CCE: a root meaning ('obligation/necessity') and an epistemic meaning ('logical/confident' inference). The figures for the two types of meanings in the CCE and LOB corpus are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of *must* in the CCE and LOB Corpus

	Root	Epistemic	Indeterminate	Sample
CCE	128	41	31	200
LOB	153	74	9	236

Root and epistemic meaning: Root modality is typically fuzzy, with examples extending from strong to weak obligation. In other words, it ranges from cases, which can be paraphrased 'it is imperative/obligatory' to cases where the paraphrase 'it is important' is more appropriate. Despite this range of meaning, a basic meaning can be identified which is common throughout; roughly 'it is necessary for….' Epistemic modality on the other hand is much more easy to characterise. In its most normal usage, epistemic *must* conveys the speaker's confidence in the truth of what he/she is saying, based on a logical process of deduction from facts known to him/her (which may or may not be specified).

To discuss these facets of meanings, I will further break down root/epistemic *must* into 'instruction', 'exhortation', 'intention', 'necessity', and 'logical certainty'/'necessity'. A statistical representation of these meanings is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. A Breakdown of Root/Epistemic *must* in the CCE

Root				Epistemic
Instruction	Exhortation	Intention	Necessity	Logical certainty/Necessity
22	31	25	50	41

Instruction: One of the functions which *must* serves in the CCE is that of giving instructions. Twenty-two cases are reported in the corpus. These examples share one important characteristic, namely that of the writer's involvement in the statement. Palmer (1987) calls this 'discourse orientation' and Lyons (1977) refers to it in terms of subjectivity. The meaning of *must* comes close to that of an imperative, paraphrasable as 'I order you to x'. These cases are typical of the 'core' referred to as 'strong obligation' by some linguists (see for example, Sweetser 1982). The following examples illustrate the point.

> (1) *…needs to carry out restitution. You must act at once or face the consequences…(RE 14)*
> (2) *…anything to Massa Kurt. You must come and see me. (NS 504)*
> (3) *…safety and treating physician. You must declare to the National Social Insurance Fund…(MI 544)*
> (4) *…first year in secondary school, you must do your assignments, revision exercise every evening. (PL 565)*
> (5) *…and employment opportunities. You must find this out yourself. Draw up a plan of study…(MI 623)*

These examples correspond to the native speaker's psychological stereotype of root *must* (Wells 1979). If we analyse them, we find that they have the following features:

(i)   subject is animate;
(ii) main verbs is activity verb;
(iii) writer is interested in getting subject to perform the action;
(iv) writer has authority over subject.

In other words, *must* in the above examples is essentially performative. Lyons (1977) states that such examples are rare in the language (cf. Wells 1979), and this is statistically confirmed in Coates (1983); where they constitute only 1/14 of all root examples in the LOB corpus.

In accounting for performative stereotype, Wells (1979) states that from the earliest stages of language, children use root *must* as a performative ('You are obliged to do x because I say so') and root *must* expressing 'strong obligation' ('You are obliged to do x') frequently. In the light of this observation, he hypothesised that in the language of children, performative *must* would predominate. The only context where performative root *must* occurs in the LOB corpus is where there is a clear universally acknowledged authority structure (e.g. the home: mother to child; or the school: teacher to pupil, etc.), and Coates (1983) comments that apart from a few rare contexts like the law courts, performative root *must* is rare in British English because people are either seen as equals or are treated as such, since to do otherwise would be impolite, and often counter-productive.

The use of performative *must* in Cameroon English is generalised. That is, it goes beyond the contexts specified for British English above. Most of the examples are from Religious Texts, Private Letters, and Students' Essays. This suggests that the art of polite speaking/writing is not realised in the same way in Cameroonian usage.

Exhortation and Intention: Must is also constantly used in Cameroon English for 'self-exhortation' and to express 'intention'. In the former case, the writer urges himself or herself and another person(s) to do something. All the examples for self-exhortation in the corpus occur with the impersonal pronoun 'we' and 'one'. The following are some examples for illustration:

(6) …the specific cause of an event or situation, then one must accept that it is in the nature of creation that is should…(MI 18)

(7) But we must admit that to study and preserve over 200 different languages…(MI 18)

(8) …such a new policy. It may sound ambitious, so be it; we must accept that for the progress of our society. (MI 7)

(9) …sector, to insure and encourage them to work harder. One must also think of the rapidly achieved diversification of Cameroon's…(MI 38)

Lyons (1977) refers to them as 'pseudo-exhortations' and states that they are typically common in spoken language. This appears to be statistically true for British English where Coates (1983) states that such examples are typical of lectures, sermons and other forms of oratory. In the CCE this usage is not restricted to any particular text category, although it appears to be more frequent in miscellaneous texts.

Intention: Must is also frequently used in Cameroon English to express 'intention'. Twenty-seven cases occur in the corpus. Some of the examples are as follow:

(10) …in the process of taking pictures of these 'gems' I must add too that warts or no warts, (PN Yaounde) continues…(MI 16)

(11) Perhaps that was his opinion on the subject. But I must assure you that the Nigerian system of federalism has not…(PP 62)

(12) …thank God he has asked to be baptised. I must baptise him quickly before he thinks of something else. (RE 68)

(13) This is my best time I am talking like this. I must say she spoil me for those few days. The first day I got there…(PL 57)

(14) …five months without receiving my pension. This is why I must come to Yaounde. Coming here is an ordeal because we spend…(PP 50)

Apart from examples (12) and (14) which express an 'intention' yet to be accomplished, the rest are used holophrastically. Huddleston (1984) states that such examples are odd in that the speaker/writer is seen to be performing what he/she is in the act of urging him/herself to do. For example; 'I must add' means 'I add', 'I must say' means 'I say' etc. in examples 10 and 13 respectively. These examples constitute 75 per cent of all occurrences of *must* recorded as expressing 'intention' in this study. This particular use of *must* is also frequent in British English, but occurs only in the SEU, especially in what Coates (1983: 36) refers to as 'private spoken language'. Nearly a third (11 out of 38 cases) of the use of *must* to express 'intention' is of this type.

The two corpora differ in terms of the type of verbs that co-occur with the use of *must* to indicate 'intention'. In the LOB corpus, they occur with a limited set of verbs such as 'say', 'admit', 'confess', and 'warn'; with 'I must say' being the most frequent. In Cameroon English, apart from 'I must say', which occurs once in the corpus, all other cases occur with verbs other than those stated above. The

following are the various forms of *must* used holophrastically in the CCE. Frequency figures are given in parentheses:

I must say	(1)
I must add	(5)
I must assure	(3)
I must keep	(3)
I must end	(3)
I must hit	(1)
I must congratulate	(1)
I must be ashamed	(1)
I must furnish	(1)
I must do	(1)

Necessity (root and epistemic): About 45.5 per cent (i.e., 91 out of 200) of all the occurrences of *must* in the CCE are used to state that something is necessary or that it is a necessity. There are two ways in which this is expressed:

[I]   that something is a necessity in an unavoidable sense and must be the case – paraphrasable as 'it is imperative/it is important…', and;

[II] that something is logically the case; in this sense, the 'necessity' is logical – expressing the writer's confidence in the truth of what he/she is writing or saying based on a logical process of deduction from facts known to him/her (which may, or may not, be specified).

In the first case, *must* is root and in the second case it is epistemic. The following are some illustrations:

(15) The one who renounces all that he has must ask the Lord to supply his needs and not his wants and luxuries. (RE 57)

(16) …an absentee landlord. The treasurer of a football club must as a duty take instructions only from the President General. (OP 55)

(17) The Cameroon civil servant to serve the nation well he must be both independent and impartial and on the other hand… (MI 95)

(18) I received your letter, which you send through male 2. I know you must be very worried for what is going on between us. (PL 285)

(19) …after a few minutes he said: something unpleasant certainly must have happened, and he suspected that…(NS 704)

(20) …turning his back to him. Ah: it must have been at this moment that Satan deceives them…(PP 759)

The first three cases are examples of root *must*. The writer is not directly involved, but he states an 'obligation'. Examples (18), (19), and (20) are epistemic. In (18) and (19) the writer's confidence is overtly expressed (and include the harmonic phrase 'I know' and the harmonic word 'certainly') and the reasons for this confidence are implicit. Example (20) is an objective case meaning: 'in the light of what is known, it is necessarily the case that x …'. Cases of this nature are extremely rare in the LOB corpus and as Coates (1983: 42) states, 'they are

unusual in normal everyday language'. Only 4 examples are reported in her sample. However, in the CCE, 39 per cent (i.e., 16 out of 41) of the epistemic examples of *must* are of this type.

Epistemic *must* in the CCE frequently occurs with harmonic combinations *and hedges*. Lyons (1977: 807) introduces the term 'modality harmonic' to describe those combinations of modal auxiliary and another word where both modal forms express the same degree of modality. Two harmonic forms are said to be 'mutually reinforcing' (Halliday 1970: 331). For example, 'He will certainly come' (PL). We shall use the term 'harmonic' slightly more loosely to cover all combinations of modal and another word or phrase which expresses the same degree of modality.

Epistemic *must* occurs with different modally harmonic combinations, ranging from certainty to probability in the CCE. The following 6 examples with their varying frequencies were found in the sample. The corresponding British English figures are all from the Survey material (Coates 1983: 46).

	CCE	SEU
I am sure	1	4
I was sure	1	–
Surely	1	3
I know	2	–
Sure	3	–
Certainly	1	–
Certain	–	1
	9	8

Epistemic *must* in the CCE is also frequently found with hedges. These underline the fact that epistemic modals are essentially subjective, that is, for the most part they focus on the writer's attitude to the proposition expressed in the main predication. Eleven cases were found in the CCE and 6 in the Survey sample. The following are the different forms and their frequencies:

	CCE	SEU
I think	3	15
I presume	3	–
I imagine	2	–
I hope	2	–
I feel	1	–
I suppose	1	2
It would appear	1	–
I mean	–	3
I fancy	–	1
I take it	–	1
I would guess	–	1
	13	23

With respect to the use of harmonic forms and hedges, one thing stands out clearly – that these forms are characteristic of spoken English in the British context. This means that they are constantly used in informal speech. It is, however, of particular interest to note that these are common with written English in the context of Cameroon. Although 4 of these forms are from a text category that is marked by informality (i.e., Private Letters), the rest of the 18 forms (89 per cent) are distributed among other text categories such as Novels and Short stories (NS), Private Press (PP) and Official Press (OP). The following are examples from the sample:

(35) *Live education. I am sure you must have heard about my results. I had 7 papers and …(PL 760)*

(36) *…now manageable as I presume you must have packed into your house at Ngousso…(PL 720)*

(37) *…opinion on the subject, which I am sure, must be the Nigerian system. It is best… (PP 62)*

(38) *I imagined at once that she must be the lady of the house. She was…(NS 256)*

(39) *…even though that channel. It would appear they must be failures with the system of…(OP 211)*

5.2 SHOULD

In the CCE, *should* is used in four different ways. It has a root meaning (giving or laying obligation), an epistemic meaning (making assessment of possibility), it functions as a quasi-subjunctive (commands/wishes), and it is used in making hypothetical statements. The frequency figures for the CCE and LOB corpus are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of *should* in the CCE and LOB Corpus

	Root	Epistemic	Quasi-subjunctive	Hypo-thetical	Past of Shall	Indeter-minate	Sample
CCE	141	8	29	8	–	14	200
LOB	117	28	38	20	2	24	229

Should frequently expresses a root meaning in the CCE, accounting for 70.5 per cent of the sample figure. As with *must, should* displays a gradience of meaning ranging from strong to weak. The following examples illustrate the cline:

(40) *…what Cameroonians want and I say we should all give our support for a leader who would lead us out of the crisis. (PL 21)*

(41) *…thus be acquired. The disciple maker should also give the young disciple a scheme of work. (RE 30)*

(42) *…introduce jangali taxes at the rural level, it should be obligatory for the citizens to pay. (OP 37)*

(43) *Please I am proposing that you should always make arrangements with males of Buea when you want to send things to us. (PL 58)*

(44) *...the Lord. Mr. Edzoa advised that it should be solved so as to avoid nightmares for... (OP 117)*

(45) *...projects underway. Ministers should, as a priority, earmark the appropriate funds before exploring ways to improve services at... (GM 71)*

These examples reveal two co-existent but independent elements of meaning; subjective/strong and objective/weak (cf. Lyons 1977; Coates and Leech 1980). At its strongest, *should* takes on the meaning of moral obligation or duty (defined in moral or legal terms). Examples (40), (41) and (42) are of this type. The first two cases state that something is an obligation or duty in moral terms, and the third is a good example of an obligation or duty stated in legal term. At its weakest, *should* merely offers advice, if subjective (see example 43 and 44), or describes correct procedure if objective (see example 45). Out of the 141 instances of *should* in the sample, 95 cases (67 per cent) are the strong and subjective type. Objective cases are, therefore, not very frequent in the CCE. In Coates' study on the contrary, the majority of examples with subjective elements are found in the spoken component of her data, constituting 71 per cent. In the LOB corpus, only seven cases (3 per cent) of the use of *should* are subjective.

Root should and Why-clauses : Statistically, *should* in the context of "why-clauses" is rare in the CCE. Four examples occur in the corpus. It was found to occur frequently in the LOB and Birmingham samples (Coates 1983; Johns 1991). These represent an idiomatic usage, and despite the interrogative form of such statements, they are essentially statements asserting that some state of affairs is not necessary. In other words, they are rhetorical questions, which convey the writer's impatience with a supposed obligation. The following are the cases registered in the Cameroonian material:

(46) *...he escaped. The fact is clear why should a first class criminal be left loose? (OP 3)*

(47) *...apply Isaac? Interrupted Ondoa. Why should a civil servant himself apply for decisions... (NS 4)*

(48) *...administration close to the people. Why should any body assume that bringing administration near will solve... (OP 65)*

(49) *...of fate but a befitting result of carelessness. Why should we contribute to someone whose carelessness att... (OP 132)*

The main difference between *should* in the context of "why-clauses" in Cameroon English and British English is the occurrence of preceding adjectives and nouns such as 'puzzling', 'not clear', and 'a mystery' in the British examples (Johns 1991: 10–11). Other contexts found in the citations for *should* in "why-clauses" in British English include 'probe into why' and 'reason(s) why'. The following examples are from the Birmingham corpus of British English texts:

> *(50) …equivalent lafflce sites, so there is no reason why change should be transferred between them. Consequently, in a static diamond …*
> *(51) There seems to be no particular reason why he should propose solutions to the question he implies about the use of.*
> *(52) It is puzzling why Jeffreys should choose to appear in a court of York.*
> *(53) …tallations Inspectorate that it sees no reason why the PWR should not receive a licence for construction and operation in the UK.*

Factivity and root should: Root *should* normally refers to an event in the future. Future time reference is subtly bound up with modality, and it is an essential component of personal directives (Lyons 1977: 745), including commands, requests, warnings, recommendations, and exhortations. One of the felicity conditions for making such a directive is that the speaker believes that the action or state referred to in the main verb has not yet been done or achieved. Thus, in such examples, the writer is referring to something which has not happened or is not happening, but which, if the writer's opinion is taken, will happen in the future. Futurity is inevitably linked with non-factivity. A non-factive statement is one in which the writer is not committed to either the truth or the falsehood of the proposition expressed in the main predication. Since the future is by definition unknown, and since a speaker or writer cannot assert either the truth or the falsity of what is still unknown, then statements with future time reference are non-factive.

Factive *should* in the CCE and LOB corpus occurs in quite different contexts. For example, in the LOB and Birmingham corpora, Coates (1983) and Johns (1991) report that factive *should* is frequent, occurring mostly in the context of "that-clauses" evaluated with adjectives such as "appropriate" or with any evaluative predicative. Examples (54) and (55) from the British corpora are those of evaluated "that-clauses".

> *(54) It is surprising that there should be this relationship…*
> *(55) It is strange that birds should want to increase their active sleep…*

These contexts are extremely rare in the CCE. However, there are cases of factive *should* in the CCE in a different context – that is, the "IT *should* BE + V-ED + THAT…" contexts:

> *(56) …order of valour and order of merit. It should be noted that, the latter part of the ceremony was intense. (OP 136)*
> *(57) …Muslims have increased to 1.200. It should be noted that Fundung Sub-division has a large Muslim population. (OP 139)*
> *(58) …that victims are arrested. It should be noted that Mrs Joyce is a pregnant woman. (OP 142)*
> *(59) …their Chairman also mentioned. It should be recalled that last year's National Assembly was… (OP 147)*

Fifthteen cases of factive *should* is found in this context in the CCE. The following are the frequencies of the various patterns found in the sample.

It should be noted	(6)
It should be remarked	(2)
It should be recalled	(2)
It should be remembered	(2)
It should be stated	(1)
It should be pointed	(1)
It should be mentioned	(1)

This writing style seems to be characteristic of newspaper reporting in Cameroon. Eleven of the occurrences stated above occur in the Official Press category, making 73 per cent of the factive examples of *should* in the corpus.

Root should + HAVE + EN: The disparity between the frequency figures for root *should* + HAVE + EN constructions in Cameroon English and British English is much. These examples occur 23 times out of the 141 citations of root *should* in the CCE (i.e., 16 per cent). It occurs 4 times in the LOB corpus and 10 times in the Survey material (see Coates 1983: 62–63).

This construction (*should* + HAVE + EN) is used to express what was advisable in the past. Since the past, unlike the future, is known, the speaker/writer can indicate his/her commitment to the truth or falsity of the main predication. The construction is nearly always used contra-factively, that is, in contexts where it is clear that the subject did not take the course of action recommended by the speaker/writer (cf. Palmer 1979: 125–126). However, there are two examples from the British data (one from LOB corpus, and one from the SEU) that are not used contra-factively (e.g. (60)). All the Cameroonian examples in the sample are contra-factive (e.g. (61)).

(60) */by the age of sixteen # "/anybody who is: going to be an academic #/should have done their general! Reading # (S.l. 2B. 5)*

(61) *…ings in about CFA 3.200 million without which the CDC should have gone into liquidation or should have been…" (OP 181)*

In the British example above (60), the construction *should* + HAVE + EN construction is factive. The speaker means 'it would be advisable for anyone who is going to be an academic to have done their general reading by the age of sixteen'. The aspect of the main predication here is habitual rather than punctual. In the Cameroon example (61), the aspect of the main predication is punctual and suggests that, the said thing (liquidation) did not happen.

Root should and Negation: Examples of root *should* with a negative NOT occur 7 times in the CCE sample. They all have references to the present, and the writer's commitment to the falsity of the proposition expressed in the main predication is explicit. The following examples illustrate this point:

(62) *In the final analysis they should not have the power to stop any legislation (MI 10044)*

(63) *…must be subjugated to ordinary market forces and should not be made reliant on any state subsidies (MI 046)*

> (64) *… may even discourage him. An ideal curriculum vitae should not be more then two pages. (PL 271)*

When these examples are compared with those from the LOB corpus, two things stand out clearly; firstly, the number of cases of *should* + Negation in the LOB sample far exceed the figure for the CCE (12 per cent, i.e., 14 cases for LOB, compare 3 per cent, i.e., 7 cases for the CCE). Secondly, some of the examples from the LOB corpus actually have future time reference and are clearly non-factive. For example,

> (65) *the/second thing is this #. And I / think we should never forget it # the/only ! physical immortality we : have in this : world # is the / spark of life which we : can hand on to our children # (T.s.2.44)*
>   *(subjective + medium strong = it is essential)*
> (66) *"They [beggars] shouldn't be allowed to go about like that" (Lancé-158)*

Epistemic meaning: In its most normal usage, epistemic *should* expresses a tentative assumption, an assessment of probability, based on facts known to the speaker/writer. Epistemic *should* stands in the same relation to epistemic *must* as root *should* to root *must*. Core examples of root *must* express strong 'obligation', while core examples of root *should* express a weak sense of 'obligation'. Core examples of epistemic *must* express confident assumption, while core examples of epistemic *should* express a less confident assumption. Where the writer using epistemic *must* says in effect, 'I am sure', the writer using epistemic *should* says 'I think it's probable'. Typical examples from the CCE are:

> (67) *…and frequency of the BCG injections. Ultimately, we should be able to personalise treatment for every patient. (OP 167)*
> (68) *…in a permanent manner. Between January and June, we should be able to prepare the administrative side of the… (OP 198)*
> (69) *How is life in ((PN MBO)) since I left, everything should be very well and okay. When I come here I really…(PL 002)*
> (70) *…so because if my memory is not letting me down, this should be my third letter to you this school year. (PL 004)*
> (71) *…absolute minimum. In the future the aim should be to recruit people to fill positions left by those going…(MI 155)*

These examples combine subjectivity (the expression of the writer's attitude to the main proposition) with logical assumption (the proposition expresses what is inferred from facts known to the writer). Example (71) is the only case with a future time reference ('…the aim will be to recruit people…'). In the LOB corpus, 18 out of the 28 epistemic examples (i.e., 64 per cent) have future time reference (see Coates 1983: 65). What is distinctive with epistemic *should* in the CCE is the fact that it is rare. Only 8 instances of this usage (4 per cent) occur in the sample.

Table 6. Word Classes Preceding "that-clauses" in the Context of *should* in the CCE and LOB Corpus

Word class	CCE (28 cases)	LOB (38 cases)
Nouns	home (1) honour (1) importance (1) problems (1) night (1) dignity (1) becky Ndive (1) centre Province (1) a site (1)	basis (1) condition (1) danger (1) determination (1) idea (2) notion (1) wish (1) suggestion (2)
Verbs	stated (1) said (1) stated (1) accepted (1) advised (1) wanted (1) recommended (2) received (1) thinking (1) require (1) praying (1) pray (1) noted (1) wish (1)	decided (3) ask (2) agree (1) think (1)
Adjectives	obvious (1)	necessary (4) natural (2) appropriate (2) sat (1) wrong (1) amazed (3) fitting (1) shameful (1) funny (1) undesirable (2) keen (1) legitimate (2)
Adverbial/conjunction	so (1) so late (1) but (1)	–

Quasi-subjunctive should: *Should* is also used in the CCE to state a 'command' or a 'wish'. This usage occurs in subordinate "that-clauses" and has traditionally

been referred to as quasi-subjunctive (see Quirk et al. 1972; Thomson and Martinet 1980). The subjunctive is one of the moods that a verb can take in English. In contrast to the indicative and the imperative moods, the subjunctive is usually used to express wishes, hopes, and doubts, etc. With respect to the relative frequencies of this usage in the two samples (28/200 in the CCE, 14 per cent; 38/229 in LOB, 17 per cent), it can be concluded that both corpora do not exhibit any significant differences. However, the disparity lies elsewhere, namely in the word range that precedes "that-clauses" in the context of *should*. Table 6 above specifies the different words that are found on the left context of "that-clauses" in the two samples. Frequencies are given in parentheses:

These figures reveal important contrasts between Cameroon English and British English: Firstly, the fact that no adjectives are found to precede "that-clauses" in the context of *should* in CCE; and secondly, the unavailability of adverbials/conjunction in the British material in this context. Three examples are registered in the Cameroonian sample data though not all free from solecism (e.g. 72):

(72) *…keyed all of them inside the room so that his wife should not expose what had happened to the neighbours. (OP 53)*

(73) *I receive it so late that I should also reply late. (PL 78)*

(74) *…residing in the town but that they should attend the Launching ceremony of the above project. (PL 218)*

Nouns and verbs to a lesser extent, seem to occur with almost equal frequency with *should* in the context of "that-clauses" in both corpora. However, the choice of word selection within these two classes of words is salient. None of the nouns or verbs that occur in this context in the CCE is found to repeat itself in the same context in the LOB corpus. On the basis of these differences, and on the general absence of adjectives in this same context in the CCE, one may conclude that the Cameroonian users of English lack flexibility in the way they use *should* as a quasi-subjunctive. It seems to be the case that this view cuts across all other uses of the modal verbs, where for the most part, the general unmarked meanings tend to dominate the other meanings.

Hypothetical meaning : hypothetical *should* is very rare in the CCE sample. It occurs 8 times accounting for 4 per cent of the sample. The LOB figure is 20, being 9 per cent of the sample. Apart from the fact that it is virtually restricted to first person subjects, hypothetical *should* is very similar to hypothetical 'epistemic' *would*. It should be noted that, hypothetical *should* never expresses root meaning; that is, there is no unreal form for *shall* = 'Intention'. When *should* is used to express hypothetical meaning in unreal condition, it is characterised by a negative implication. These two examples from the CCE illustrate this meaning:

(75) *…if we admit this, then we should admit that when we talk of an Anglophone writer we mean those who use authentic Anglophone experience. (SE 13)*

(Negative implication = 'we have not admitted this, so an Anglophone writer is not only he who uses authentic Anglophone experience')

(76) *…having that bit of honour which he should at least have been preserving. (NS 79)*

(Suppressed condition = 'if he did something…')

(Negative implication = 'he has no bit of honour, so he is not preserving any')

Seven citations of hypothetical *should* (out of 8 in the sample) are of this type and this is where the difference between Cameroon English and British English lies. Only a minority of hypothetical *should* is reported in Coates (1983: 221), that is, 8 examples, and the other 12 are used pragmatically to express politeness or tentativeness. One instance of pragmatic use occurs in the CCE sample. There is no negative implication when *should* is used in this manner:

(77) *If there is no teaching in the Local Assembly, he should give the disciple a good book that treats the subject. (RE 70)*

(Polite version = '[please] give a good book to the disciple if there is no teaching in the Assembly')

Table 7 sets out the distribution of examples of *should* in the two corpora (LOB figures in parentheses).

Table 7. Distribution of hypothetical *should* in the CCE and LOB corpus

	Condition expressed	Condition not expressed	Total
Genuine Hypothetical	2 (3)	5 (5)	7 (8)
Pragmatic	1 (2)	– (10)	1 (12)
Total	3 (5)	5 (15)	8 (20)

6. CONCLUSION

The use of *must* and *should* as modal forms to express different shades of meanings related to 'obligation' and 'necessity' so far discussed displays major semantic and stylistic peculiarities in Cameroon English (CCE). For example, (a) *must* and *should* are frequently used to express root meanings; (b) very little difference is made between formal written language and informal usage with respect to the use of *must* and *should*. This is seen in the frequent association of modally harmonic expression with *must*, and the frequency of subjective/strong use of root *should* – all of which are features of the spoken form of the language in the native (British English) context; (c) the word range that collocates with *should* in the context of "why clauses" is relatively 'restricted' and quantitatively less frequent.

The significance of this study to language teaching and learning lies essentially in the philosophy of the corpus-based approach. One of the distinguishing features of this approach is its reliance on naturally occurring quantitative data and such data especially from diverse sources (as it is the case with the database used for this study), may provides a rich source of language input for both language teaching and learning activities. Practising teachers, textbook writers and other material designers would find this study useful in that, those features of *must* and *should* that are less frequently used, or do not occur in the texts of the corpus at all, can be adequately selected, graded, and presented in a manner that facilitates teaching, learning, and mastery.

Several advantages of the corpus-based approach are suggested by the present study. The requirement that all tokens, no matter how recalcitrant be accounted for, has necessitated the use of a methodology capable of handling the range of *must* and *should* in Cameroon English. The exploitation of a Cameroonian corpus has made it possible for relative statements to be made on the quantitative distribution of the two modal forms across a variety of texts. The future availability of a large, up-to-date corpus, particularly that incorporating spoken language material, will undoubtedly facilitate further studies of this kind on Cameroon English.

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About the author: Daniel Nkemleke is lecturer in English Syntax and TEFL in the Department of English of the teachers' training college (ENS), University of Yaounde I in Cameroon. He recently completed a PhD Thesis on the use of the modal verbs in Cameroonian written texts. His research interest includes text linguistics and the teaching of writing. He is currently involved in a project to design an expository writing course book for use in teacher training, and in the English department of the University of Yaounde I.