



## Review Article

# I will I am going to, and I am -ing: A Corpora-based Approach

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**Abstract:** The ultimate goal of this paper is to provide an in-depth analysis of the frequency of the types *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* within five corpora (the Corpus of Contemporary American English (1 billion, US, 1990-2019), the British National Corpus (100 million, British, 1980s-1993), the Corpus of Historical American English (400 million, US, 1810s-2000s), the Hansard Corpus (1.6 billion, British Parliament, 1800-2000), and the Time Magazine Corpus (100 million, US, 1923-2006)). The COCA clearly indicates that Americans prefer using the type *I will* to using the types *I am going to* and *I am -ing* in six genres except for the blog genre and magazine genre. In the other two genres, the type *I am -ing* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by the type *I will* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. On the other hand, the BNC clearly shows that the type *I will* was the most preferred by British people in three genres, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by them in the other four genres. The COHA shows that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for Americans from 1810 to 2000, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. When it comes to the HC, it is worth noting that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by British politicians from 1800 to 2000. Americans and British people preferred talking about a new idea or something new to talking about what they have arranged to do or what they have decided to do. On the other hand, British politicians preferred talking about what they have arranged to do to talking about a new idea. As for the TMC, it is worthwhile noting that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by educated Americans from the 1920s to the 2000s. They were fond of talking about what they have arranged to do, but they were not keen on talking about what they have decided to do. Finally, it is significant to note that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for Americans and British people, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable one for educated Americans and British politicians.

**Keywords:** Corpus, token, type, COCA, BNC, COHA, HC, TMC, I will, I am going to, I am -ing.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to provide a detailed frequency analysis of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* within five corpora (the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) [1], the British National Corpus (BNC) [2], the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) [3], the Hansard Corpus (HC) [4], and the Time Magazine Corpus (TMC) [5]). Let's start by observing the difference among *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing*. John is talking to Mary:

(1) John: Let's have a party.

Mary: That's a great idea. We **will** invite lots of people.

(Murphy 2016: 44) [6]

As pointed out by Murphy [6], "we use *will* when we decide to do something at the time of speaking. The speaker has not decided before. The party is **a new idea**" [6]. Later that day, Mary meets Tom:

(2) Mary: John and I have decided to have a party. We're **going to** invite lots of people.

(Murphy 2016: 44) [6]

As pointed out by Murphy [6], “we use *be going to* when we have already decided to do something. Mary had already decided to invite lots of people before she spoke to Tom” [6]. On the other hand, according to Murphy [6], “we use *I am doing* when we say what we have arranged to do-for example, arranged to meet somebody, arranged to go somewhere” [6]:

(3) **I’m leaving** tomorrow. I already have my plane ticket.

(Murphy 2016: 38) [6]

When it comes to “*I am going to do something*, I have decided to do it, but perhaps not arranged to do it” [6].

(4) The windows are dirty. Yes, I know. I **am going to wash** them later.

(=I have decided to wash them, but I haven’t arranged to wash them.)

(Murphy 2016: 38) [6]

In this paper, we attempt to provide a detailed frequency analysis of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* within five corpora. We aim to answer the following main questions: Which type is the most preferred by Americans and British people in all genres? What properties does the frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* show in five corpora? What does the frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in five corpora stand for?

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2.1, we show that Americans prefer using the type *I will* to using the types *I am going to* and *I am -ing* in six genres except for the blog genre and magazine genre. In the other two genres, the type *I*

*am -ing* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by the type *I will* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. In section 2.2, we argue that the type *I will* was the most frequently used one of the three types in three genres in the UK, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most commonly used one in the other four genres. In section 2.3, we maintain that the type *I will* was the most preferred by Americans from 1810 to 2000, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. In section 2.4, we contend that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable type for British politicians from 1800 to 2000. Americans and British people preferred talking about a new idea or something new to talking about what they have arranged to do and what they have decided to do. On the other hand, British politicians preferred talking about what they have arranged to do to talking about a new idea. In section 2.5, we maintain that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by educated Americans from the 1920s to the 2000s. They were fond of talking about what they have arranged to do, but they were not keen on talking about what they have decided to do. Finally, we argue that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for Americans and British people, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable one for educated Americans and British politicians.

**A Frequency Analysis of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing**

**Genre Frequency of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the COCA**

In the following, we consider the genre frequency of the types *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the COCA (1990-2019). Table-1 indicates the genre frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the COCA:

**Table-1: Genre Frequency of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the COCA**

Type	All	Blog	Web	TV/Movie	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Academic
I will	81,477	15,405	12,923	23,612	10,341	9,473	2,800	2,744	4,179
I am going to	5,953	1,564	1,103	1,242	778	513	281	266	206
I am -ing	61,083	18,048	12,689	11,599	4,728	5,913	3,131	2,524	2,451

Table-1 clearly indicates that *I will* is the most preferable type for Americans. The type *I will* has the highest frequency (81,477 tokens) and the highest proportion (54,86%). When it comes to *I am -ing*, it ranks second (61,083 tokens) among the three types, whereas as for *I am going to*, it ranks third. An immediate question to be asked is “why is the type *I will* the most preferred by Americans among the three types?” We wish to argue that the type *I will* is mainly used to convey something new and something unexpected to the hearer/reader. The speaker or writer employs the type *I will* in order to convey a new idea, what he or she has not

decided before. Note that the speaker uses *I will* when he or she decides to do something at the time of speaking. The speaker/writer has not decided before. What he or she is talking about is a new idea, which attracts a lot of attention. This may be why the type *I will* is the most preferable type for Americans. The reason why the type *I am -ing* ranks second among the three types may be that the hearer/reader is very much interested in the speaker’s (writer’s) plan. The speaker/writer employs the type *I am -ing* in order to convey what he or she has arranged to do, which may interest the hearer/reader. Note that we use *I am doing* when we

say what we have arranged to do. However, what the speaker or writer has decided to do may not be that interesting, as compared to the meaning of *I will* and *I am -ing*. To use the type *I am going* to may attract attention, but not so much as the types *I will* and *I am -ing*.

What is interesting is that the type *I am -ing* is the most frequently used one of the three types in the blog genre. Why does this happen? A blog is a shared on-line journal where people write something about their personal experiences and hobbies. The blog readers share their stories and create awareness. More than anything else, they are very much interested in the blogger's plan, namely what the blogger have arranged to do. This may let the blog readers know what the blogger was doing, which creates awareness. On the other hand, the blog readers are interested in the blogger's thought and thus they want to know what the blogger is thinking about. Thus, a new idea the blogger provides by using the type *I will* can be interesting enough to draw the blog readers' attention. Note, however, that the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency and the lowest proportion (4,46%) among the three types in the blog genre. An important question to be asked is "why does this take place?" We wish to argue that what the blogger have already decided to do may be interesting, but not so much as a new idea or what the blogger has arranged to do.

Now attention is paid to the web genre. Which type is the most preferred by Americans in the web genre? Table 1 clearly indicates that the type *I will* is the most widely used one among the three types in the web genre. This may take place because the type *I will* provides a new idea, and the web genre conveys new information and factual information, which is in accordance with a new idea *I will* provides. It must be noted, on the other hand, that the type *I am -ing* ranks second in the web genre. The reason why the type *I am -ing* is less preferable than *I will* may be that the latter provides a new idea or something new which might interest web readers, but the former does not. As expected, the web is supposed to convey new and factual information to web readers.

Now let us turn our attention to the TV/movie genre. Exactly the same can be said of the TV/movie genre. Again, the type *I will* is the most commonly used one of the three types in America. The reason why this takes place may be that TV/movie audience is keen on seeing something new and interesting. That is to say, a new idea or something new which the type *I will* provides may interest and excite TV/movie audience. TV/movie audience may want to know what celebrities are thinking about.

Again, the type *I will* is the most frequently used one in the fiction genre. More specifically, the type *I will* has the highest frequency (9,473 tokens) and the highest proportion (59,58%), whereas the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency (513 tokens) and the lowest proportion (3,22%). Why does this take place? We wish to argue that a new idea or something new draws readers' attention and arouses their curiosity. It is interesting to note that the type *I am -ing* ranks second among the three types. The reason why the type *I am -ing* is the most preferred by Americans in the fiction genre after the type *I will* is that what a protagonist or antagonist has arranged to do may interest and excite readers. This advances an event and let readers expect the result of the event.

Now let us consider the newspaper genre. An important question to be asked is "which type is the most widely used one of the three genres in the newspaper genre?" Table 1 clearly indicates that the type *I will* is the most preferred by Americans in the newspaper genre. More specifically, the type *I will* obtains the highest frequency (2,744 tokens) and the highest proportion (49,58%), whereas the type *I am going to* obtains the lowest frequency (266 tokens) and the lowest proportion (4,80%). A question to be asked is "why is the type *I will* the most preferred by Americans in the newspaper genre?" We wish to argue that newspapers which contain news, articles, and ads provide a lot of information for readers and the biggest concern for readers is new information, which corresponds closely with a new idea the type *I will* provides. It must be noted, however, that the type *I am going to* is the most undesired type of the three types in the newspaper genre. This may be due to the fact that what journalists have decided to do may not be in accordance with the general tenor of newspapers.

Finally, let us observe the academic genre. It is worth pointing out that *I will* is the most frequently used type in the academic genre. More specifically, the type *I will* ranks first among the three types, whereas *I am going to* ranks third. The academic genre is supposed to provide new and factual information, which correspond to not the meaning of the type *I am going to* but that of the type *I will*. Note that the type *I will* involves a new idea, but the type *I am going to* does not.

We thus conclude that Americans prefer using the type *I will* to using the types *I am going to* and *I am -ing* in six genres except for the blog genre and magazine genre. In the other two genres, the type *I am -ing* is the most commonly used one in America, followed by the type *I will*, and the type *I am going to*, in that order.

### Genre Frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the BNC

In this section, our aim is to provide the genre frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the BNC (1980s-1993).

**Table-2: Genre Frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing*, in the BNC**

Type	All	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Non-acad	Academic	Misc
<i>I will</i>	3,489	622	1,192	168	262	274	302	669
<i>I am going to</i>	283	32	94	19	30	25	19	64
<i>I am -ing</i>	3,306	254	905	312	399	331	267	838

As alluded to in Table-2, the type *I will* was the most preferred by British people, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. Why does this take place? We wish to argue that the type *I will* is preferred over the types *I am -ing* and *I am going to* since the type *I will* provides a new idea or new information. People tend to be very much interested in a new idea or new information, which results in the highest frequency (3,489 tokens) of the type *I will*.

Now why does the type *I am -ing* ranks second among the three types? We intend to argue that what others did in the past may interest people. That is, people want to know what others did in the past and what they have arranged to do. This may be why the type *I am -ing* ranks second among the three types. It must be noted, however, that people tend to be very much interested in what others will do in the future. This may be why the type *I will* is favored over the type *I am -ing*. More interestingly, Americans and British people showed the same pattern with respect to the use of the three types. That is, the type *I will* was the most frequently used one in America and the UK, followed by *I am -ing* and *I am going to*, in that order. This in turn suggests that Americans and British people read other people's thoughts at the time of speaking. It is interesting to note, however, that the type *I am going to* was the most undesired type of the three types in America and the UK. This may be due to the fact that the type *I am going to* does not involve a new idea or something new, which leads to the infrequency of *I am going to*, compared to what the type *I will* provides.

Now attention is paid to the spoken genre. Table-2 clearly indicates that the type *I will* was the most commonly used one of the three types. More specifically, the type *I will* was the most preferred by British people in the spoken genre, followed by *I am -ing* and *I am going to*, in that order. This indicates that British people showed all the same characteristics of Americans with respect to the use of the three types. An question that naturally arises is "why was the type *I will* the most preferred by British people?" This may be because the type *I will* involves a new idea or something new that the

hearer thinks of as important. This may be why the type *I will* is favored over the types *I am -ing* and *I am going to*. Then why was the type *I am going to* the most undesired type of the three types? We intend to argue that what the speaker has already decided to do may not be interesting enough to draw the hearer's attention, thus resulting in the infrequency of the type *I am going to*.

Now let us turn our attention to the fiction genre. Just as in the case of the COCA, the type *I will* was the most frequently used one of the three types in the BNC. More specifically, the type *I will* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. A question to be asked is "why was the type *I will* the most preferable type for British authors in the fiction genre?" We wish to argue that what the speaker decides to do is a new idea and that it attracts the reader's attention. In addition, a new idea a protagonist or antagonist provides is a clue of an event. It may let readers to finish up the novel. It is interesting to note that just as in the case of the COCA, *I am going to* was the most undesired type of the three types in the BNC. It has the lowest frequency (94 tokens) and the lowest proportion (4,29%) among the three types. An immediate question to be asked is "why was the type *I am going to* the most undesired type of the three types?" We wish to argue that what a protagonist or antagonist has already decided to do may not interest general readers as much as the types *I will* and *I am -ing*.

Now attention is paid to the magazine genre. It must be noted that the type *I am -ing* was the most widely used one of the three types in the UK. More specifically, the type *I am -ing* has the highest frequency (312 tokens) and the highest proportion (62,52%), whereas the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency (19 tokens) and the lowest proportion (3,80%). It is worth pointing out that the COCA and BNC show the same pattern with respect to the frequency of the three types. More specifically, the type *I am -ing* was the most commonly used one of the three types in the COCA and BNC, followed by the type *I will* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. Why did this happen? Magazines provides

articles and ads for readers and they have to be proactive in attracting readers. Thus, journalists tend to appeal to readers by using the type *I am -ing*. Note that the progressive indicates something dynamic [7] and what people have arranged to do. This effect may drive readers to subscribe and buy magazines.

Now let us turn our attention to the newspaper genre. Noteworthy is that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by British people, followed by the type *I will* and the type *I am going to*. More specifically, the type *I am -ing* has the highest frequency (399 tokens) and the highest proportion (57,74%), whereas the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency (30 tokens) and the lowest proportion (4,34%). Notice that the type *I am -ing* was the most frequently used one of the three types in the UK, whereas the type *I will* was the most commonly used one in America. This clearly indicates that British journalists tend to write about something dynamic and what they have arranged to do in the newspaper, whereas American journalists tend to write about a new idea. It is noteworthy that American and British journalists have one thing in

common. They did not like writing about what they have decided to do (*I am going to*) in the newspaper.

Finally, let us consider the academic genre. It is worth noting that the type *I will* was the most widely used one of the three types in the UK. Exactly the same can be said about the COCA. In the COCA, the type *I will* is the most frequently used one of the three types. An important question to be asked is “why was the type *I will* the most preferred by British people and Americans?” The academic genre and the type *I will* have one characteristic in common. Simply put, both of them provide new information. We thus conclude that the type *I will* was the most frequently used one of the three types in three genres, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most commonly used one in the other four genres.

**A Frequency Analysis of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the COHA**

In the following, we aim to examine the frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the COHA (1810-2000):

**Table-3: Frequency of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the COHA (1810-2000)**

Type	I will	I am going to	I am -ing
1810	418	4	31
1820	1,677	31	279
1830	2,826	43	411
1840	3,485	50	434
1850	3,657	151	775
1860	3,169	160	938
1870	3,949	203	1,103
1880	4,028	294	1,357
1890	3,821	280	1,413
1900	3,437	470	1,886
1910	2,244	385	1,756
1920	2,099	438	1,940
1930	1,342	169	1,259
1940	1,453	122	1,021
1950	1,518	149	1,034
1960	1,238	154	1,092
1970	1,371	138	1,071
1980	1,655	107	941
1990	1,474	109	1,110
2000	1,662	98	1,032
All	46,523	3,555	20,883

An important question to be asked is “which type was the most frequently used one of the three types in America from 1810 to 2000?” Table-3 clearly indicates that the type *I will* was the most commonly used one of the three types for 190 years. More specifically, the type *I will* was the most preferred by Americans from 1810 to 2000, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am*

*going to*, in that order. This indicates that Americans were fond of talking about a new idea or something new, but they were not fond of talking about what they have decided to do.

The figure of the type *I will* continued to increase to 3,239 tokens from 1810 to 1850. That is, there was a dramatic increase (3,657 tokens in

1850) in its figure from 1810 to 1850. After this period, there was a decline of 468 tokens from 1850 to 1860 and then there was a gradual increase in the figure of the type *I will* from 1860 to 1880. After 1880, there was a steady decline in the frequency of the type *I will* from 1890 to 1930. After this period, there were slight fluctuations in its figure from 1940 to 2000. It is significant to note that *I will* was the most undesired type in 1810. This indicates that it was not the preferable type for Americans in 1810. Also, it is interesting to note that the frequency of the type *I will* reached a peak in 1880 (4,028 tokens). This in turn suggests that the type *I will* was the most preferred by Americans in 1880. Finally, noteworthy is that the type *I will* was the most commonly used one of the three types in America from 1810 to 2000.

Now let us observe the frequency of the type *I am going to* in the COHA (1810-2000). There was a gradual rise in the frequency of the type *I am going to* from 1810 to 1900. There was an increase of 367 tokens from 1810 to 1900. After this period, there were slight fluctuations in the figure of the type *I am going to* from 1910 to 1930 and then there was a sudden decline in its figure from 1930 to 1940. After 1940, there was a gradual decrease in the frequency of the type *I am going to* from 1960 to 2000. It is worthwhile noting that *I am going to* was the most undesired type in 1810. That is, the type *I am going to* had the lowest frequency (4 tokens) in 1810, which in turn indicates that it was the one Americans least preferred. Additionally, it is

significant to note that the figure of the type *I am going to* reached a peak in 1920. This indicates that the type *I am going to* was the most preferred by Americans in 1920. Note, however, that it ranks third among the three types.

Now let us consider the frequency of the type *I am -ing* in the COHA. It must be noted that there was a dramatic increase (1,886 tokens in 1900) in the frequency of the type *I am -ing* from 1810 to 1900. After this period, there were slight fluctuations in the frequency of the type *I am -ing* from 1910 to 1940. Again, there were slight fluctuations in its figure from 1950 to 1970. After this period, there was a steady increase in the frequency of the type *I am -ing* from 1980 to 2000. There was an increase of 91 tokens from 1980 to 2000. It is noteworthy that *I am -ing* was the most undesired type in 1810. This in turn indicates that the type *I am -ing* was the one Americans least preferred. Additionally, it should be noted that the figure of the type *I am -ing* reached a peak in 1920 (1,940 tokens). This in turn suggests that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by Americans in that period. We thus conclude that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by Americans in 1920, but it was the most undesired type in 1810.

**A Frequency Analysis of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the HC**

In what follows, we examine the frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the HC (1800-2000).

**Table-4: Frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the COHA (1800-2000)**

Type	I will	I am going to	I am -ing
1800	324	5	76
1810	382	1	42
1820	904	9	147
1830	2214	30	362
1840	3,703	71	633
1850	3,736	67	712
1860	4,527	104	902
1870	4,222	92	890
1880	11,083	343	2,586
1890	12,320	434	3,373
1900	12,307	625	5,207
1910	23,959	2,435	16,473
1920	20,347	2,966	20,457
1930	23,232	2,714	25,343
1940	25,198	2,382	27,785
1950	28,676	2,217	34,221
1960	32,862	1,879	38,178
1970	23,257	1,388	37,431
1980	13,458	1,071	32,523
1990	15,242	568	25,816
2000	9,309	401	12,088
All	271,262	19,802	285,245

A question that naturally arises is “which type was the most frequently used one of the three types in the British Parliament?” As indicated in Table-4, the type *I am -ing* has the highest frequency (285,245 tokens) and the highest proportion (49,49%), whereas the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency (19,802 tokens) and the lowest proportion (3,43%). This in turn indicates that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable type for British politicians from 1800 to 2000. More interestingly, as alluded to in Table-1, Table-2, and Table-3, the type *I will* was the most preferred by Americans and British people. That is, Americans and British people preferred talking about a new idea or something new to talking about what they have arranged to do and what they have decided to do. Conversely, British politicians preferred talking about what they have arranged to do to talking about a new idea. Simply put, British politicians were fond of talking about their plan, what they have arranged to do.

As illustrated in Table-4, the frequency of the type *I will* continued to increase from 1800 to 1860. There was an increase of 4,203 tokens from 1800 to 1860. After this period, there was a decline of 305 tokens in 1870 and then there was a dramatic rise in the frequency of the type *I will* from 1880 to 1900 (12,320 tokens in 1890). After 1890, there were slight fluctuations in the frequency of the type *I will* from 1900 to 1920. After this period, there was a gradual rise in its figure from 1930 to 1960 and then there was a steady fall in its figure from 1970 to 2000 except for 1990. A major point of the type *I will* in the HC is that it was the most undesired type in the British Parliament in 1800. It obtained the lowest frequency (324 tokens) and the lowest proportion (0,11%), which in turn suggests that it was the one British politicians least preferred. A further point to note is that the frequency of the type *I will* reached a peak in 1960, which in turn suggests that it was the most preferable type for British politicians in that period.

As indicated in Table-4, there was a steady rise in the frequency of the type *I am going to* from 1800 to 1840 except for 1810. After 1840, there were slight fluctuations in the figure of the type *I am going to* from 1850 to 1870. After this period, there was a gradual rise in its figure from 1880 and 1920. Most importantly, there was a dramatic increase in the figure of *I am going to* from 1910 and 1920 (2,966 tokens in 1920). After 1920, there was a steady decline in the figure of the type *I am going to* from 1930 to 2000. This implies that British politicians did not like talking about what they have decided to do. It is noteworthy that the type *I am going to* had the lowest frequency (1 token) and the lowest proportion (0,005%) in 1810, which indicates that it was the most undesired type in the British Parliament. Additionally, it should be emphasized that the frequency of the type *I am going to* reached a peak (2,966 tokens) in 1920, which in turn suggests that it was the most preferable type for British politicians.

As alluded to in Table-4, the frequency of the type *I am -ing* continued to increase from 1800 to 1860 except for 1810. In 1810, the type *I am -ing* obtained the lowest frequency (42 tokens) and the lowest proportion (0,014%), which indicates that it was the one British politicians least preferred. After 1860, there was a dramatic rise in the figure of the type *I am -ing* and the figure of the type *I am -ing* reached a peak in 1960 (38,178 tokens). This in turn indicates that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by British politicians. After this period, the figure of *I am -ing* continued to decrease from 1970 to 2000. We thus conclude that *I am -ing* was the most preferable type for British politicians in 1960, but it was the most undesired type in 1810.

**A Frequency Analysis of I will, I am going to, and I am -ing in the TMC**

In this section, we provide a frequency analysis of the types *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the TMC (the 1920s to the 2000s).

**Table-5: Frequency of *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* in the TMC (1920s-2000s)**

Type	I will	I am going to	I am -ing
1920s	279	54	309
1930s	316	68	411
1940s	330	64	404
1950s	406	60	395
1960s	285	46	306
1970s	225	25	209
1980s	164	31	193
1990s	169	11	116
2000s	115	6	90
All	2,289	365	2,433



An immediate question to be asked is “which type was the most commonly used one of the three types in America?” Table-5 clearly indicates that the type *I am -ing* was the most frequently used one in America from the 1920s to the 2000s. More specifically, the type *I am -ing* has the highest frequency (2,443 tokens) and the highest proportion (47,82%), whereas the type *I am going to* has the lowest frequency (365 tokens) and the lowest proportion (7,17%). This in turn suggests that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by educated Americans. In other words, educated Americans were fond of talking about a plan, what they have arranged to do, but they were not keen on talking about what they have decided to do. It must be noted that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for Americans and British people, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable one for educated Americans and British politicians.

As illustrated in Table-5, there was a gradual increase in the figure of the type *I will* from the 1920s to the 1950s. There was a rise of 127 tokens in that period. More interestingly, the figure of the type *I will* reached a peak (406 tokens) in the 1950s, which in turn indicates that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for educated Americans in that period. After the 1950s, there was a steady decline in the figure of the type *I will* from the 1960s to the 2000s. It is worth noting that the type *I will* had the lowest frequency (115 tokens) and the lowest proportion (5,02%) in the 2000s, which suggests that it was the one educated Americans least preferred.

When it comes to the type *I am going to*, its frequency continued to increase to 14 tokens from the 1920s to the 1930s. After this period, there was a steady fall in the figure of the type *I am going to* from the 1940s to the 2000s except for the 1980s, which implies that educated Americans did not like talking about what they have decided to do. It should be noted that the figure of the type *I am going to* reached a peak (68 tokens) in the 1930s, which implies that *I am going to* was the most preferable type for educated Americans in the 1930s. It should be emphasized, on the other hand, that *I am going to* was the most undesired type in the 2000s, which suggests that it was the one educated Americans least preferred.

As for the type *I am -ing*, its figure continued to increase to 102 tokens from the 1920s to the 1930s. After this period, there was a gradual fall in the figure of the type *I am -ing* from the 1940s to the 2000s. It is important to note that the figure of the type *I am -ing* reached a peak (411 tokens) in the 1930s, which implies that the type *I am -ing* was

the most preferable type for educated Americans. Note, however, that the type *I am -ing* was the most undesired one (90 tokens) in the 2000s. We thus conclude that the type *I will* was the most preferred by educated Americans in the 1950s, that the type *I am going to* was the most preferred by them in the 1930s, and that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by them in the 1930s.

Finally, it is significant to note that Americans and British people preferred talking about a new idea or something new to talking about something they have arranged to do or something they have decided to do, whereas educated Americans and British politicians preferred talking about something they have arranged to do to talking about a new idea or something they have decided to do.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed frequency analysis of the types *I will*, *I am going to*, and *I am -ing* within five corpora (the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), the Hansard Corpus (HC), and the Time Magazine Corpus (TMC)). In section 2.1, we have argued that Americans prefer using the type *I will* to using the types *I am going to* and *I am -ing* in six genres except for the blog genre and magazine genre. In the other two genres, the type *I am -ing* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by the type *I will*, and the type *I am going to*, in that order. In section 2.2, we have maintained that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for British people in three genres, whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable one for them in the other four genres. In section 2.3, we have shown that the type *I will* was the most preferred by Americans from 1810 to 2000, followed by the type *I am -ing* and the type *I am going to*, in that order. In section 2.4, we have contended that *I am -ing* was the most preferable type for British politicians from 1800 to 2000. We have argued that Americans and British people preferred talking about a new idea or something new to talking about what they have arranged to do and what they have decided to do. We have further argued, on the other hand, that British politicians preferred talking about what they have arranged to do to talking about a new idea. In section 2.5, we have contended that the type *I am -ing* was the most preferred by educated Americans. They were fond of talking about what they have arranged to do, but they were not keen on talking about what they have decided to do. Finally, we have maintained that the type *I will* was the most preferable type for Americans and British people,



whereas the type *I am -ing* was the most preferable one for educated Americans and British politicians.

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