15 Recent Changes in the Modal Area of Necessity and Obligation – A Contrastive Perspective[1]

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Introduction

Recently we have witnessed a lively discussion about modal changes in contemporary English. Leech et al. (2009) have for instance shown, on the basis of corpora from different periods, that the modal auxiliaries in general and *must* in particular have declined in frequency over the relatively short period between 1960 and 1990. The changes affect both the epistemic and deontic meaning but have been particularly drastic for deontic *must*.

There are still many questions in the air; for example what do speakers use to compensate for the loss of the modal auxiliary (if anything). This question has given rise to the hypothesis that the disappearance of *must* is counterbalanced by the emergence and growth in the frequency of other modal elements in particular semi-modals. However the range of alternatives which have been studied has been fairly restricted.

The aim of my paper is to contribute to the discussion of the decline of the modal auxiliary *must* by a comparison with its Swedish cognate *måste* which has not undergone the same semantic developments. We can study both when *must* is chosen as a translation and when a different lexical item or construction is preferred. This approach can provide a rich panorama of expressions of obligation and necessity. Translations can also confirm hypotheses which have been suggested on the basis of monolingual corpora.

The structure of my paper is as follows. I will first discuss my methodology and the use of a parallel or translation corpus. I will then

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[1] With many thanks to Bengt Altenberg for excellent comments on an earlier version of the article

analyse the translation paradigms with *must* and alternative realisations of obligation or necessity. The translations will also provide the raw material for a qualitative analysis contrasting the functions of *must* and its most frequent competitors. I will then compare the translation paradigms in fiction and non-fiction texts in order to look for text-type specific differences. My paper will end with a summary and a discussion of the advantages of using data from a parallel corpus.

2. Methodology

The data for the present study are taken from the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) (see Altenberg and Aijmer 2001). The corpus contains roughly comparable original texts in English and Swedish with their translations, altogether 2.8 million words. The Swedish and English texts have the same size and represent the same genres namely fiction and non-fiction texts. (see Table 1).

The relationship between *måste* or *must* in the original texts and their correspondences in the target texts can be exhibited as a translation paradigm showing how often *must* and *måste* correspond to each other in translation. The translations also show what the alternatives are when *must* and *måste* are not translated into each other.

3. The frequency of *must* and of *måste*

I became interested in the on-going restructuring of the English modality system through the observation that English *must* seemed to be much less frequent in English than its cognate *måste* in Swedish. There were 544 examples of *must* in the English originals in the corpus. There were more than twice as many examples of *måste* in the Swedish original texts (1104 examples). The difference in frequency is found both in fiction and non-fiction (See Table 2).

The smaller number of examples of *must* in the English original texts compared with Swedish *måste* is interesting against the background of

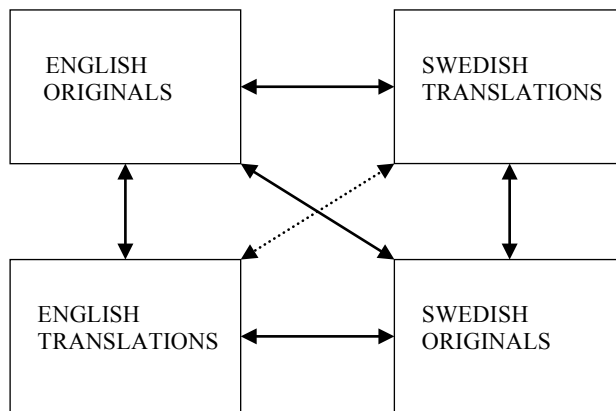**Table 1.** Size of the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus.

	Number of words
Fiction	1,328,929
Non-fiction	1,475,582
Total	2,804,511

Table 2. *Must* and *måste* in the English and Swedish original texts. Normalized figures to 10,000 words in parentheses.

	English originals ('*must*')	**Swedish originals ('*måste*')**
Fiction	210 (1.58)	454 (3.42)
Non-fiction	334 (2.26)	650 (4.41)
Total	544 (1.94)	1104 (3.4)

what has been claimed about the decline of *must* in English and the emergence of competing variants.

The English-Swedish Parallel Corpus is designed as a bidirectional corpus which can be used to study translations between languages in two translation directions:

Figure 1. The structure of the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus.

We can therefore use the corpus to test the hypothesis that *must* is disappearing in the translation. *Must* and *måste* are cognates and 'favoured' correspondences in a translation perspective. According to Gutknecht and Rölle (1996: 237), 'modals should preferably be rendered by modals, because they correspond to each other in terms of various kinds of non-specificity.' If *must* is avoided in the translation this may therefore suggest that it is losing out in the competition with other grammaticalizing elements.

Correspondences between languages can be established by studying translations and sources. If *must* is in the process of disappearing we would also expect it to be less frequent in English sources of *måste* (going from Swedish translations to English originals).

4. Epistemic and deontic *must*

At the outset, a distinction needs to be made between deontic and epistemic meanings of *must*. Epistemic meaning has been defined in terms of a judgment by the speaker: 'a proposition is judged to be uncertain or probable in relation to some judgment' (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 81).

With *must* the speaker represents a situation as relatively certain:

1. "That's Davina Flory." I guessed it <u>must</u> be," Burden said quietly. (RR1)

Must can also be deontic. Deontic modality "identifies the enabling or competing circumstances external to the participant as some person(s), often the speaker, and/or some social or ethical norm(s) permitting or obliging the participant to engage in the state of affairs" (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 81).

2. I put a finger to his mouth: "Don't bring it up again. You must allow me this chance in Provence to make up my mind." (BR1)

4.1 Epistemic meaning

The epistemic meanings of *must* are generally infrequent. Only 109 examples (25%) of the examples of *måste* (454 examples) were epistemic and 328 (75%) deontic. Moreover when we compare Swedish *måste* in the epistemic meaning and English *must* we find a fairly high correspondence (Table 3).

Must dominated in the translations of Swedish epistemic *måste* (78.9%) and in the sources (83.5 %). The mutual correspondence between *måste* and *must* (based on the translations in both directions) is 81.2%.[2] Epistemic *must* seems to be stable. In diachronic terms it is not threatened by semi-modals which belong to the area of deontic modality (*have got to* was only found three times). (See further below.) In non-fiction texts (not shown in the table) epistemic *must* was even more infrequent than in fiction (24 examples) and the translations did not contain any alternatives.

The translations consist of modal auxiliaries (besides *must*) such as *could, might, will, would.* Other alternatives are adverbs (*obviously,*

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[2] Mutual correspondence refers to 'the frequency with which different (grammatical, semantic and lexical) expressions are translated into each other (Altenberg 1999: 254).

Table 3. The English Translations (SO->ET) and sources of Swedish *måste* (ST <-EO). Epistemic meanings. Fiction only.

Translation	Correspondence	Sources	Total
must	86 (78.9%)	91 (83.5%)	177 (81.2%)
surely	0	5	5
would (maybe)	1	3	4
have got to	2	1	3
(you) can be sure	2	0	2
could (perhaps)	2	0	2
will	0	2	2
I suppose	1	0	1
maybe	1	0	1
presumably	1	0	1
obviously	1	0	1
perhaps would	1	0	1
doubtless	1	0	1
sounds like	1	0	1
might	1	0	1
must surely	1	0	1
may	0	1	1
of course	0	1	1
I suppose	0	1	1
it is certain to	0	1	1
omission	6	0	6
other	1	2	3
Total	109	109	211

presumably, doubtless, maybe, perhaps) or verbs and adjectives (*you can be sure, I suppose, sounds like*).

4.2 Deontic modality

Deontic modality (obligation/necessity) is a more complex semantic field than epistemic modality. As shown by its translations deontic *must* has many competitors or what Leech et al. (2009) describe in diachronic terms as the present-day beneficiaries of *must*'s decline. For this reason I will focus on the deontic *must* and its competitors in the domain of obligation and necessity (Table 4).

Table 4. The English translations and sources of Swedish *måste* (SO ->ET and ST<-EO). Deontic meanings. Fiction only.

Correspondence	Translations	Sources	Total
have to	91 (27.7%)	91 (30.5%)	182 (29.1%)
had to	91 (27.7%)	81 (27.2%)	172 (27.5%)
must	78 (23.8%)	38 (12.6%)	116 (18.5%)
(have) got to	14 (4.3%)	19 (6.4%)	33 (5.3%)
need to	8	9	17
should	5	3	8
need (main verb)	2	4	6
will/would	2	4	6
is to/was to	4	1	5
ought to	4	0	4
imperative	1	3	4
be going to	1	2	3
had better	2	1	3
make sb do sth	3	0	3
it meant -ing	0	3	3
be due to	1	1	2
NP modification	0	2	2
formulaic	0	2	2
can't wait to	0	2	2
be in need of	1	0	1
be expected to	1	0	1
it was natural for X to	1	0	1
couldn't possibly	1	0	1
necessarily	1	0	1
past tense	1	0	1
could not help	1	0	1
it does not necessarily follow that	1	0	1
emphatic do	1	0	1
it's time	1	0	1
be required	0	1	1
want	0	1	1
be forced to	0	1	1

Table 4. Continued

Correspondence	Translations	Sources	Total
inevitably	0	1	1
know to do something	0	1	1
be obliged to	0	1	1
I don't mind	0	1	1
could only	0	1	1
omission	4	1	5
other	7	23	30
Total	328	298	626

The percentages are based on 328 examples in the translations and 298 examples in the sources. In all there were 39 different translation alternatives. There is a low degree of mutual correspondence between *måste* and *must*. The mutual correspondence of *must* was 18.5% to be compared with *have to* which had a mutual correspondence of 29.1%. The higher frequency of *must* in the English translations than in sources may be induced by the high frequency of 'måste' in the Swedish original; cf Johansson (2007: 32–33) a 'translation effect'. The translator uses a cognate even when a more 'idiomatic' translation is available. *Have to* was used in translations (27.7%) and in sources (30.5%). The frequency of *have to* would have been even higher if I had included *had to*. However *had to* has been used as an alternative of *must* for syntactic reasons. It was used in roughly 23% of the examples (both in translations and sources) as a past tense form mainly in narrative contexts. *Had better* is associated with weaker obligation than *have to* and it only occurred three times as a correspondence. *Need to* was more frequent than *should* but not as frequent as *have got to*.

The translations draw attention to the fact that *must* has a large number of co-players in the domain of obligation/necessity. Many different grammatical categories are represented in the translations (see Table 5).

Other modal auxiliaries than *must* are *should, ought to, will/would*. A difference between English and Swedish is that English can express deontic modality by means of semi-modals. ' " Semi-modals" are not full modals but are verb constructions (…) which have been moving along the path of grammaticalization and have gradually acquired an

Table 5. Grammatical categories of deontic modality.

modal auxiliaries	must, should, ought to, will/would
semi-modals	have to, need to, have got to, be to, be due to, had better
modal adverbs	necessarily, inevitably
modal adjectives	it was natural for X to
modal nouns	be in need of
lexical verbs	be required, be forced to, be obliged to
idioms	I cannot wait to do, I don't mind doing
imperative	let us VP
NP modification	three points to consider
emphasis	emphatic do, prosodic stress

auxiliary-like function' (Leech et al. 2009: 91). The semi-modals with the meaning of obligation/ necessity mostly contain *have. Have to, have got to, had better* are all semi-modals. Less frequent semi-modals are *be to, be due to*. In addition we find modal adjectives and adverbs (*it was natural for X to, necessarily, inevitably*), verbo-nominal expressions of modality (*be in need of*), lexical verbs (*be obliged, forced, compelled*). More idiomatic translations are for example *I cannot wait to do*. The deontic *must* also shares directional force with the imperative as shown by the translations. *Three points to consider* can be paraphrased 'three points which need to or must be considered'. The translation is an example of NP modification. There is also a close association between deontic modality and emphasis.

4.3 Summing up deontic modality in fiction

Grammaticalization and change are lurking in the background when we interpret the translation correspondences. The frequency of a certain translation can reflect its status as a 'substitute' of the declining *must*. In view of the diachronic findings about the decline of *must* it is not surprising that *have to* is more frequent than *must* in translation. The increase of *have to* in fiction is remarkable compared to other studies. Biber et al. (1999: 489) have compared the frequencies of modals and semi-modals in different registers. *Must* and *have to* had the same frequency in fiction but *have to* was more frequent in the conversational data.

4.4 Competition between *must* and *have to*

The translation paradigms only provide the raw material for the semantic analysis. The meanings range from strong obligation or necessity (represented by *must* and *have to*) to weaker elements such as *should* or *need to*. *Have to* and *must* differ semantically. *Have to* (unlike *must*) refers to what van der Auwera and Plungian (1998:81) have described as participant-external necessity. Participant-external necessity makes reference to the circumstances that are external to the participants and make a state of affairs necessary.

> 3. För att hålla mig igång krävs inte mer än ett par 1,5 volts fickbatterier. Jag omsätter samma <u>mängd</u> energi som en 20-wattslampa. Vattenlösningen, som jag vilar i, måste vara helt steril. (PCJ1)
> To keep me going requires nothing but a couple of 1.5-volt batteries. I consume no more energy than a 20-watt bulb. The aqueous solution in which I rest <u>has to</u> be absolutely sterile. (PCJ1T)

In this example the source is clearly not the speaker but the properties of the aqueous solution.

If *must* is declining and *have to* is increasing in frequency we would expect the boundaries between them to be drawn up differently. The translations can be the basis for a deeper and more detailed analysis of the variation between *have to* and *must*. A factor such as the person of the subject has the advantage that it can be compared in the translations.

In the English Swedish Parallel Corpus *have to* was more frequent than *must* with an impersonal subject (e.g. generic *you*) than with the 'direct' *you*. It was also frequent with *we* as the subject (collective *we*)

Table 6. Variation between *have to* and *must* with different subjects.

Type of subject	must	have to
I	44	28
you generic	4	37
you direct	19	11
animate subject	32	44
we collective	8	17
non-animate subject	4	13
passive	2	15

or with the passive. *Must* on the other hand was more frequent with a first person subject and with the 'direct' *you* (Table 6).

The use of *have to* with a generic subject is illustrated in the following example:

4. Man <u>måste</u> lära sig ta skydd. (JMY1)
You <u>have to</u> learn how to take cover. (JM1T)

We can also be used impersonally:

5. Nu när det är krig <u>måste</u> man hjälpa varandra. (JMY1)
"Now that the war is on we <u>have to</u> help each other." (JMY1T)

Have to is used in an abstract way to make a recommendation (if something is favourable) or an instruction formulated in general terms.

The following example illustrates that *must* can have a strong emotional meaning urging the hearer to do something. According to Smith (2003: 259) such insistence can however sound odd in present-day English: 'Even where MUST is used with no obvious hint of speaker-imposed deontic meaning. …, in Present Day English it is liable to be perceived as off, perhaps because it sounds unduly insistent'.

6. Ja, faster <u>måste</u> förstå mej: det är en ära att få arbeta ihop med ett sånt snille. (ARP1)
"Yes. You <u>must</u> understand me, Auntie. It's an honour to be allowed to work with such a genius." (ARP1T)

Moreover *have to* unlike *must* can be softened and is therefore used when more politeness is required:

7. Då <u>måste</u> du stanna hemma från skolan och passa henne. (GT1)
"Then you <u>ll have to</u> stay home from school and take care of her." (GT1T)

8. Då <u>måste</u> jag sätta mig hos ålen. (KE1)
Then <u>I 'll have</u> to sit with the eel. (KE1T)

Other examples of softening are illustrated by *would have to* and *might have to* (mitigating an inconvenience): The speaker's staying for a month may involve an inconvenience for the hearer:

9. Kanske <u>måste</u> jag stanna hos er en hel månad. (KOB1)
"<u>I might have to</u> stay with you for a whole month." (KOB1T)

Checking in with the concierge involves some extra effort for the visitor:

> 10. A visitor <u>would have</u> to check in with the concierge. (FF1)
> En besökare <u>måste</u> anmäla sig hos portvakten. (FF1T)

5. Non-fiction translations

By including non-fiction in the study of *must* and its competitors we can get a more detailed and richer picture of the expressions of obligation and necessity. The number of examples is higher in non-fiction than in fiction texts. There were 526 examples in translation of *måste* and 412 examples in sources (deontic examples only). There were 41 different competing forms (most of them occurring only once or twice). See Table 7:

Table 7. English translations and sources of Swedish 'måste'.

Correspondence	Translations	Sources	Total
must	295 (56%)	177 (43%)	472 (50.3%)
have to	63 (12%)	100 (24.3%)	163 (17.4%)
need to	27 (5.1%)	47 (11.4%)	74 (7.9%)
should	48 (9.1%)	16 (3.9%)	64 (6.8%)
had to	17 (3.2%)	44 (10.7%)	61 (6.5%)
need main verb	7	5	12
mean V-ing	1	5	6
ought to	4	1	5
to be -ed	4	0	4
require	3	0	3
it is necessary	2	1	3
to-modification	1	2	3
would	2	1	3
oblige to	1	2	3
have got to	1	2	3
was made to	2	0	2
will inevitably	2	0	2
(what may happen is) for X to V	2	0	2
it is essential	2	0	2

Table 7. Continued

Correspondence	Translations	Sources	Total
will be to	1	1	2
should like to	2	0	2
be bound to	0	2	2
was compelled to	1	0	1
I have no choice but	1	0	1
I cannot help but	1	0	1
agree on the need to	1	0	1
appreciate the need to	1	0	1
be of the need to	1	0	1
to be compelled to	1	0	1
I would note	0	1	1
subject to	0	1	1
was to	0	1	1
entail the need	0	1	1
I regret to say	0	1	1
I'm sorry to tell you	0	1	1
embarrassed to speak to me	0	1	1
forced to	0	1	1
recognize the necessity of	0	1	1
necessarily	0	1	1
other	16	25	41
ø	11	2	13
total	526	412	938

Måste was translated into 'must' in 56% of the examples and in the examples with English sources it was found in 50.3% of the examples. *Have to* was chosen less often. *Need to* and *should* are also among the most frequent correspondences. It is interesting to make comparisons with fiction where the percentages of the most frequent variants are quite different. The ranking of the most frequent variants in fiction and non-fiction is shown in Table 8 (percentages only).

Must was more frequent both in translations and in sources in non-fiction reflecting the fact that *must* has not declined in frequency to the same extent as in fiction. *Have to,* on the other hand is less frequent in non-fiction where it is ranked below *must*. *Had to* is more frequent

Table 8. Ranking of the most frequent variants in fiction and non-fiction texts.

	Non-fiction	Fiction
must	50.3%	18.5%
have to	17.4%	29.1%
need to	7.9%	17 (2.7%)
should	6.8%	8 (1.3%)
had to	6.5%	27.5%
(have) got to	0.32	5.3%

in fiction reflecting the fact that it is associated with narrative contexts. *Have got to (gotta)* was rare in non-fiction. On the other hand. *need to, should (*and *ought to)* were strikingly more frequent in non-fiction than in fiction.

5.1 Text-type specific correspondences

Certain correspondences are text-type specific. *Have to, need to* and *should* function as rhetorical devices in non-fiction texts (for example EU regulations) imposing an obligation also when no specific individual is mentioned. The following example uses *have to* (and *must*).

> 11. Den andra faktorn är att <u>vi måste</u> se till att skaffa en utbildning som går att använda under lång tid när vi skaffar **oss** en utbildning. <u>Det måste</u> vara en bred grundutbildning, eftersom samhället förändras i allt snabbare takt. Det går inte att ha snabba utbildningar. Vidare <u>måste det</u> också vara ett livslångt lärande. (EAND1)

> The other factor is that <u>we must ensure</u> that when we obtain an education we obtain one which can be used for a long time. <u>There has to be</u> a broad basic education, because society is changing ever more rapidly. It is not possible to have a quick education. Furthermore, <u>there has to also be</u> life-long learning. (EAND1T)

The reference is to a situation in the future when *have to* is used. The speaker envisages a broad basic education for everyone. The obligation is only weak since no individual is under the obligation to do something. *Must* in the same sentence implies greater imposition (we must ensure that we obtain a broad discussion even in the face of resistance).

Should is weaker than *have to* or *must*. It merely expresses that the situation referred to is favourable to the speaker, the hearer or to people in general:

12. Det viktigaste <u>måste</u> väl ändå vara Sveriges ekonomi och dess förmåga att kunna 'platsa' i sällskapet när det gäller inflation, ränte-villkor osv. (EAND1)

The most important aspects <u>should</u> still be Sweden's economy and its eligibility for a place in the club in terms of inflation, interest rates and so on. (EAND1T)

When *should* and stronger deontic forms are used in the same con-text they overlap semantically. The ordering between *must* and *should* could be changed without any difference in meaning:

13. Särskild vikt <u>måste</u> läggas vid tidig förvarning och tidigt ager-ande i konfliktlösning. Förebyggande diplomati måste ytterligare stärkas. (LHW1)
There <u>must</u> be a particular focus on early warning and early action in conflict resolution. Preventive diplomacy <u>should be</u> further strength-ened. (LHW1T)

Need to is particularly frequent in non-fiction texts. However it is not used with its basic meaning of internal necessity or compulsion but in a more abstract sense imposing an obligation on a non-specific individual. Because of its basic meaning *need to* ('having a need') is especially appropriate to express that something is a desirable goal or in the hearer's best interest. Like *should* and *have to* it was frequent with the collective *we* or with a following passive. The combination *we need to* was used as a correspondence (as a translation and as a source) in 34 examples or almost half of the examples of *need to* (also when the Swedish original did not contain 'we') and *need* with a fol-lowing passive verb in 25 examples. When the subject was not *we* it was for instance 'Countries of the European Union' or 'Swedes living and working abroad'. Leech et al. (2009: 111) emphasise the strate-gic or manipulative function of *need to:* 'Here a double mitigation of imperative force occurs: not only is obligation represented as in the best interests of 'us', but by referring to 'we' rather than 'you' as the people with the need, the writer imposes a collective obligation on an often rather vague community of people including the addresser and the addressees'. [3]

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[3] Nokkonen (2006: 48) also points out cases where 'we need' is used in an imper-sonal, 'strong' way. She finds examples of this use in informative genres in the FLOB corpus.

14. Det <u>måste</u> bli en omprövning av de traditionella attityderna gent-emot äldre och de roller som man vill ge dem. Speciellt gäller detta på arbetsmarknadsområdet. (EISC1)

We <u>need to</u> review our traditional attitudes towards senior citizens and rethink the roles we expect them to play in society. This applies particularly to the world of work. (EISC1T)

Rather than saying 'you must' (which is strongly impositive), the more polite *we need to* is used strategically as a way of urging an individual or the community in general to do something.

With a passive following *need* and a third person subject no direct reference is made to the speaker and hearer:

15. Flexibiliteten för medlemsstaterna <u>måste</u> matchas av en grupp indikatorer som skall identifiera behovet. (EMCC1T)

The flexibility for Member States <u>needs to</u> be matched by a range of indicators to identify need. (EMCC1)

The use of *need* conveys that the action (matching the flexibility of EU member states by certain criteria) is judged to be favourable (needs to be done). The imposition is only expressed weakly since it is not directed to a special individual.

There is a great deal of overlap between *need to* and other markers as indicated by examples where they are used in the same neighbourhood:

16. Alla bidrag för att nå Kyotomålen <u>måste</u> användas, men man <u>måste</u> också ha deras inbördes relationer klara för sig;. (EVIR1)

<u>Maximum efforts should be made</u> to meet the Kyoto targets, but <u>we still need</u> to keep a sense of proportion.

Should and *need* are used in a similar way. Their ordering can therefore be exchanged without a difference in meaning.

6. Conclusion

The present study can be seen as a complement to comparative historical corpus studies of *must* and its changes over time. The developments and changes in the area of modality which have taken place between 1960 and 1990 are at least to some extent visible in translations. Translations can therefore confirm observations which have been made on the basis of monolingual corpora about the decline of *must* and the emergence of semi-modals and other variants.

- The translations confirm the observation that *must* has declined above all in the area of deontic modality

- The translations also confirm the hypothesis that semi-modals are becoming more frequent to fill the gap left by *must*
- The translations also confirm the proposal that other modal auxiliaries such as *need to* and *should* compete with *must* and *have to*

The translations also showed that:
- *must* was more frequent than *have to* in non-fiction suggesting that the decline of *must* has made less progress there
- *should/ought to* and *need* were more frequent in non-fiction than in fiction
- *have got to* was infrequent in non-fiction

Translations also have certain advantages over monolingual corpora. In a monolingual corpus the range of forms with obligation/necessity meanings competing with *must* is not apparent. Monolingual studies have mainly discussed the rivalry between *must* and a few selected semi-modals.

Translations on the other hand provide a large number of variants of *must*. They may therefore add something to the picture of who the players are in the semantic domain of obligation and necessity. As an extra bonus they can also contribute to the discussion of the factors motivating the choice of a particular form. Leech et al. (2009: 114) used the term 'ecology' to capture the idea that each form [in the same field of meaning] 'evolves its own niche in the expression of modality, expanding, contracting or maintaining its "habitat" in relation to other, partially competing, forms'. The translations show that obligation and necessity can be expressed in many different ways and that there are conventions for how the different forms are used. In fiction *have to* (unlike *must*) was generally used with generic or impersonal subjects to make recommendations or to give instructions. The area of semantic overlap between *must* and *have to* is therefore restricted to certain contexts. *Have to* was used as a mitigator unlike *must* which was insistent and emotional.

In non-fiction texts *have to*, *should* and *need to* were typically used as rhetorical strategies when the speaker addresses a vague community of individuals. They were for instance used with a similar function in contexts with the passive or *we* as the subject. However the high frequency of *need to* and *should* may also have to do with their basic meaning to refer to what is beneficial or the right thing to do.

References

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