A Corpora-Based Analysis of I Regret To And I Regret -Ing

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The ultimate goal of this article is to provide an in-depth analysis of the frequency and collocation of the *types I regret to* and *I regret –ing* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), and the Hansard Corpus (HC). The COCA clearly indicates that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for Americans and that the types *I regret to and I regret –ing* were the most widely used ones in the TV/movie genre. The BNC clearly shows, on the other hand, that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre except the misc genre and that the type *I regret –ing* was the most frequently used one in the fiction genre. With respect to *I regret* in the COCA, it is worth noting that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, and *I regret telling,* in that order. With regard to *I regret to* in the COCA, it is also worth pointing out that *I regret to say* is the most preferable collocation for Americans, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, *I regret to announce*, and *I regret to see*, in that order. When it comes to *I regret –ing* in the BNC, it is significant to note that the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most preferred by British people and followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting*. As for *I regret to* in the BNC, it is noteworthy that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferable for British people, followed by *I regret to inform*, and *I regret to advise*. Additionally, it is interesting to note that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by British politicians. Finally, this paper argues that the colloaction *I regret to say* was the most preferred by Americans and British people and that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans, British people, and British politicians.

KEYWORDS: I regret to, I regret –ing, COCA, BNC, HC, corpus, type, token

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Murphy (2016), "I **regret doing** something =I did it and now I am sorry about it", whereas "I **regret to say/to tell** you/**to inform** you=I am sorry that I have to say" (Murphy 2016: 108). The so-called corpus is a large database of authentic texts. "It can be general or specialized, depending on what kinds of texts are included in the corpus" (Cotos 2017: 249). The main goal of this article is to provide a detailed analysis of the frequency and collocation of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), and the Hansard Corpus (HC). The organization of this article is as follows. In section 3.1, we argue that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for Americans from 1990 to 2019. We further argue that the types *I regret to and I regret –ing* were the most widely used ones in the TV/movie genre. In section 3.2, we contend that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre except the misc genre. We also contend that the type *I regret –ing* was the most frequently used one in the fiction genre. In section 3.3, we maintain that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, and *I regret telling,* in that order. On the other hand, we maintain that *I regret to say* is the most preferable collocation for Americans, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, *I regret to announce*, and *I regret to see*, in that order. In section 3.4, we argue that the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most preferred by British people and followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting*. We further argue that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferred by British people, followed by *I regret to inform* and *I regret to advise* and *I regret to add*. In section 3.4, we maintain that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British politicians. That is, British politicians preferred using *I regret to* to using *I regret –ing*. In section 4,

we also maintain that the type *I regret to say* was the most preferred by Americans and British people and that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans, British people, and British politicians.

II.   METHOD

The main purpose of this article is to provide an in-depth analysis of the frequency and collocation of *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*. For this, we adopt the COCA (1.0 billion words, American, 1990-2019), BNC (100 million words, British, 1980s-1993), and HC (1 billion words, British, 1803-2005). We aim to answer the following questions: Which type is the preferred one in the COCA, BNC, and HC? Which type is the preferred one in the eight genres of the COCA? Which type is

the preferred one in the seven genres of the BNC? Which gerund is the most commonly used one along with the type *I regret to*? Which verb is the most widely used one along with the type *I regret*? What is the main collocational characteristic of *I regret to* and *I regret -ing*?

III.   A FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF I REGRET TO AND I REGRET –ING IN THREE CORPORA

3.1. The Results from the COCA

In what follows, we aim to consider the genre frequency in the COCA (1990-2019). Table 1 shows the use and genre frequency of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*.

Table 1 The Frequency of the Types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the COCA

Types	All	Blog	Web	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
I regret to	277	24	19	87	38	66	19	16	8
I regret -ing	238	42	39	57	42	26	11	18	3

A question that naturally arises is "which type is the preferred one in the COCA?" Table 1 clearly indicates that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for Americans from 1990 to 2019. This in turn suggests that 'I regret to say (tell, inform)' rather than 'I regret doing something' was preferred by Americans. An important question is "in which genre was the type *I regret to* the most frequently used one in the COCA? Table 1 clearly indicates that in the TV/movie genre, the type *I regret to* was the most widely used one in the COCA. More specifically, the type *I regret to* has the highest frequency (87 tokens) and the highest proportion (31%) in the TV/movie genre. This implies that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by Americans in the TV/movie genre among eight genres. Why was *I regret to* the most widely used one in the TV/movie genre? The type *I regret to* indicates sadness associated with something wrong done or some disappointment. In addition, we say *I regret to* when we feel sad about the loss or absence of something. The reason why in the TV/movie genre, the type *I regret to* was the most widely used may be that it is the most suitable for conveying such feelings to TV/movie audience. Note that 'I regret to say' is interpreted as "I am sorry that I have to say" (Murphy 2016:108).

It is worth pointing out that the type *I regret to* ranks second in the fiction genre. More specifically, the frequency of the type *I regret to* is 66 tokens in the fiction genre, which indicates that it was the most preferred by Americans after the TV/movie genre. Now an immediate question is

"why does the type *I regret to* ranks second among eight genres? We wish to argue that it is suitable for conveying protagonists or antagonists' sadness associated with something wrong done or some disappointment to readers. It is noteworthy that the type *I regret to* is favored over the type *I regret –ing* in the fiction genre. This in turn implies that as the appropriate type in the fiction genre, *I regret to* may be the preferable one for American writers.

It is worth noting that the type *I regret to* ranks third in the spoken genre. More specifically, the frequency of the type *I regret to* is 38 tokens in the spoken genre, whereas that of the type *I regret –ing* is 42 tokens. This indicates that in the spoken genre, the type *I regret –ing* is favored over the type *I regret to*. From this, it is clear that the type *I regret –ing* is the preferable one for Americans in the spoken genre.

It is interesting to note that *I regret to* ranks fourth in the blog genre. A blog is a shared one-line journal where people write something about their personal experiences and hobbies. As illustrated in Table 1, bloggers often employ the type *I regret to* when they write something about their personal experiences and hobbies. It is worthwhile noting that the type *I regret –ing* was preferred over the type *I regret to* in the blog genre. This in turn suggests that the bloggers often committed mistakes and now they are sorry about them.

Now let us turn our attention to the type *I regret –ing*. 'I regret doing something' means 'I did it and now I'm sorry about it'. An important question is "in which genre was the type *I regret –ing* the most

commonly used one in the COCA?" Table 1 clearly shows that the type *I regret –ing* was the most widely used one in the TV/movie genre. The type *I regret –ing* has the highest frequency (57 tokens) and the highest proportion (23%), whereas it has the lowest frequency (3 tokens) and the lowest proportion (1%) in the academic genre. Then why was the type *I regret –ing* the most frequently used one in the TV/movie genre? Celebrities and entertainers in TV shows and characters in the movies often say that they regret doing something. They often say that they did something and now they are sorry about it. This may be why the type *I regret –ing* was the most commonly used one in the TV/movie genre.

Now let us consider the blog and spoken genres with the frequency of the type *I regret –ing* in mind. It is important to note that the type *I regret –ing* was the most widely used one in the blog and spoken genres after the TV/Movie genre. The frequency of the type *I regret –ing* is 42 tokens (it ranks second) in two genres. The reason why the type *I regret –ing* ranks second in the spoken genre among eight genres may be that the speaker often say that he or she regrets doing something. That is to

say, the speaker says that he or she did something and now he or she is sorry about it. The same can apply to bloggers. They often use the type *I regret –ing* in order to indicate their feelings about their personal experiences and hobbies. They often say that they committed mistakes and now they feel sorry about them.

Now let us observe the frequency of the type *I regret -ing* in the web genre. It is worth pointing out that the type *I regret –ing* ranks fourth in the web genre. The frequency of the type *I regret –ing* is 42 tokens in the web genre. The web is computer network consisting of a collection of internet sites that offer text and graphics and sound and animation resources. The web genre provides a lot of factual and new information, which may not be in accordance with the gist of the type *I regret –ing*. This is why the type *I regret –ing* has the low frequency in the web genre.

3.2. The Results from the BNC

In the following, we aim to consider the frequency of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the BNC (1989s-1993). Table 2 shows the use and frequency of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*.

Table 2 The Frequency of the Types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the BNC

Types	All	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Non-academic	Academic	Misc
I regret to	41	7	8	2	3	5	2	14
I regret -ing	8	0	4	2	1	0	0	1

Now an important question is "which type was the preferable one for British people? Table 2 clearly indicates that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* in the UK. More specifically, the overall frequency of the type *I regret to* is 41 tokens, whereas that of the type *I regret –ing* 8 tokens. This in turn indicates that British people preferred using the type *I regret to* to using the type *I regret –ing*. It is noteworthy that Americans and British people show the same pattern in this respect. Table 1 clearly shows that just as in the case of British people, the type *I regret to* was favored over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans. As alluded to in Table 1 and Table 2, Americans and British people were fond of saying the type *I regret to* rather than the type *I regret –ing*.

Now let us turn to the type *I regret to* in the BNC. An immediate question is "in which genre was the type *I regret to* the most frequently used one? Table 2 clearly shows that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre (8 tokens) except the misc genre. Here we do not consider the misc genre since it is the mixture of

all genres. Then why was the type *I regret to* the most widely used one except the misc genre? We wish to argue that the type *I regret to* is suitable for conveying characters' feelings to readers. The characters' feelings are 'I am sorry that I have to say'.

Now let us turn to the spoken genre in the BNC. It is worth emphasizing that the type *I regret to* ranks third in the spoken genre. More specifically, the overall frequency of the type *I regret to* is seven in the spoken genre. It is interesting to note that the type *I regret to* ranks third in the spoken genre in both COCA and BNC. This in turn suggests that Americans and British people often say that they are sorry that they have to say. A major point of the spoken genre is that there is no frequency of the type *I regret –ing*. Why does this happen? We wish to argue that British people rarely say 'I regret doing something'. 'I regret doing something' means "I did it and now I am sorry about it" (Murphy 2016: 108). This implies that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by British people. On the other hand, Americans show the opposite. As

illustrated in Table 1, the type *I regret –ing* was favored over the type *I regret to* by Americans. This indicates that Americans preferred using the type *I regret –ing* to using the type *I regret to* in the spoken genre. We thus conclude that the type *I regret –ing* was the preferable one for Americans, whereas the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British people.

Now let us turn our attention to the academic genre. It is worth pointing out that the type *I regret to* ranks sixth in the academic genre. Why does the type *I regret to* have the low frequency (2 tokens)? The academic genre is supposed to provide facts that have been verified or factual information. Thus, this is not compatible with the gist of the type *I regret to*, which leads to the infrequency of *I regret to*.

Now let us observe the frequency of the type *I regret –ing* in the BNC. It is interesting to note that the type *I regret –ing* was the most frequently used one in the fiction genre. Why did this take place? We wish to argue that the type *I regret –ing* is suitable for conveying characters' feelings to readers. Main characters could say that

they did something and now they are sorry about it. This can excite readers and pull them into the novel. It is significant to note, however, that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by British people in the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British people in the fiction genre. Interestingly, American and British people show the same pattern with respect to the use of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the fiction genre. That is to say, the type *I regret to* was the preferable type for both Americans and British people. This in turn indicates that American and British writers were fond of using the type *I regret to* rather than the type *I regret –ing* for their novels. We thus conclude that American and British writers liked employing the type *I regret to* rather than the type *I regret –ing* in the fiction genre.

3.3. The Collocation of the Types I regret -ing and I regret to in the COCA
In the following, we aim to examine the collocation of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the COCA.

Table 3 Collocation of the types I regret –ing and I regret to in the COCA

Number	Collocation of I regret -ing	Frequency	Number	Collocation of I regret to	Frequency
1	I regret having	41	1	I regret to say	127
2	I regret doing	17	2	I regret to inform	101
3	I regret saying	13	3	I regret to report	21
4	I regret making	12	4	I regret to tell	12
5	I regret telling	10	5	I regret to announce	5
5	I regret leaving	10	6	I regret to see	2
7	I regret being	9	6	I regret to ask	2
8	I regret getting	5	8	I regret to state	1
8	I regret going	5	8	I regret to recall	1
10	I regret spending	4	8	I regret to learn	1
10	I regret using	4	8	I regret to hear	1
10	I regret talking	4	8	I regret to cut	1
13	I regret wasting	3	8	I regret to advise	1
13	I regret voting	3	8	I regret to admit	1
13	I regret talking	3			

A question that naturally arises is "which gerund is the most commonly used one along with the type *I regret*? Table 3 clearly shows that the gerund *having* is the most commonly used one along with the type *I regret*. More specifically, the collocation *I regret having* is the most frequently used one, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, *I regret telling*, *I regret leaving*, *I*

regret being, *I regret getting*, and *I regret going*, in that order. This in turn suggests that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, and *I regret telling*, in that order. The type *I regret having* has the highest frequency (41 tokens) and the highest proportion (28%) and it is the most preferable collocation for Americans. Additionally,

it is interesting to note that the collocation *I regret doing* ranks second, which implies that it is the most preferred by Americans after *I regret having*. It should be noted that the overall frequency of *I regret saying* is 13 tokens and it ranks third. The overall frequency of the collocations *I regret leaving* and *I regret going* is 10 tokens and 5 tokens, respectively. The frequency of these types is not high, but they are the preferable ones for Americans. When it comes to *I regret talking*, its frequency (3 tokens) is not high, but it ranks tenth, which in turn implies that it is still the preferred type in America.

An important question is "which verb is the most frequently used one along with the type *I regret to*?" Table 3 clearly indicates that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most commonly used one, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, *I regret to announce*, *I regret to see*, and *I regret to ask*, in that order. This in turn suggests that *I regret to say* is the most preferable collocation for Americans, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, *I regret to announce*, and *I regret to see*, in that order. The type

I regret to say has the highest frequency (127 tokens) and the highest proportion (45%), which indicates that it is the most preferred by Americans. It is interesting to note that the collocation *I regret to ask* ranks sixth (2 tokens), whereas the collocation *I regret to hear* ranks eighth (1 token). The frequency of these types is low (not much used), but they are still the preferable ones for Americans. Additionally, it is worthwhile noting that the type *I regret to* is preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans. More specifically, the frequency of *I regret to say* and *I regret to inform* is 127 tokens and 101 tokens, respectively, whereas the frequency of *I regret having* and *I regret doing* is 41 tokens and 71 tokens, respectively. This leads to the assumption that Americans prefer using the type *I regret to* to using *I regret –ing*. Simply put, Americans prefer the type *I regret to*, but they do not prefer the type *I regret –ing*. We thus conclude that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, whereas the collocation *I regret to say* is so by them and that the type *I regret to* is preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans.

3.4. The Collocation of the Types I Regret -ing and I Regret to in the BNC
In what follows, we aim to consider the collocation of the types *I regret –ing* and *I regret to* in the BNC.

Table 4 Collocation of the types I regret –ing and I regret to in the BNC

Number	Collocation of I regret -ing	Frequency	Number	Collocation of I regret to	Frequency
1	I regret being	2	1	I regret to say	31
1	I regret having	2	2	I regret to inform	3
3	I regret losing	1	3	I regret to advise	2
3	I regret interrupting	1	3	I regret to add	2
3	I regret holding	1	3	I regret to report	2
3	I regret dragging	1	6	I regret to note	1
Total		8	Total		41

An important question is "which gerund is the most widely used one with the type *I regret* in the BNC?" Table 4 clearly indicates that *being* and *having* are the most commonly used ones with the type *I regret*. More specifically, the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most widely used ones and followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting*. This in turn indicates that the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most preferred by British people and followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting*, in that order. In America, the collocation *I regret having* is the most frequently used one, whereas in the UK, the collocation *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most commonly used ones. It is interesting to note that the collocation *I regret being* ranks the first

in the UK, but it ranks seventh in America. On the other hand, the collocation *I regret having* ranks first in America and the UK. That is to say, the COCA and BNC do not show the same pattern with respect to the collocation of *I regret to –ing*.

Now let us turn our attention to the collocation of the type *I regret to* in the BNC. An important question is "which verb is the most frequently used one along with the type *I regret to* in the BNC?" Table 4 clearly shows that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most commonly used one, followed by *I regret to inform*, and *I regret to advise* and *I regret to add*, in that order. This suggests that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferable one for British people, followed by *I regret to inform* and *I regret to advise* and *I regret to*

add, in that order. In the case of *I regret to say*, it ranks first in America and the UK. More specifically, the frequency of the collocation *I regret to say* in the COCA and BNC is 127 tokens and 31 tokens and it ranks first in America and the UK. It is noteworthy that the collocation *I regret to inform* ranks second in America and the UK. This suggests that Americans and British show the same pattern with respect to the use of the collocation of *I regret to say* and *I regret to inform*.

Finally, it is worthwhile noting that the type *I regret to* is preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by British people. More specifically, the overall frequency of the type *I regret –ing* in the BNC is 8, whereas that of the type *I regret to* is 41. This in turn implies that British people prefer the type *I regret to*,

but they do not prefer the type *I regret –ing*. As observed earlier, Americans also prefer using the type *I regret to* to using the type *I regret –ing*, which is in accordance with the result from the BNC. We thus conclude that Americans and British people show the same pattern with respect to the use of the type *I regret to*, but they show the difference in that of the type *I regret –ing*.

3.5. The Frequency of the Types I regret to and I regret –ing in the HC

In the following, we examine the frequency of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*. Table 5 indicates the use and frequency of *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the Hansard Corpus (1800-2000).

Table 5 Frequency of the Types I regret to and I regret –ing in the HC

year	Frequency of I regret to	Frequency of I regret -ing
1800	1	0
1810	1	0
1820	10	0
1830	60	4
1840	101	4
1850	143	6
1860	162	2
1870	156	3
1880	363	8
1890	436	7
1900	437	7
1910	678	21
1920	569	27
1930	675	34
1940	736	59
1950	829	69
1960	995	105
1970	1,244	116
1980	1,236	135
1990	1,158	132
2000	541	43
All	10,531	782

An immediate question is "which type was the preferred one in the British Parliament?" Table 5 clearly shows that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British politicians. That is, British politicians preferred using *I regret to* to using *I regret –ing*. They tended to prefer "I am sorry that I have to say" rather than "I did something and now I am sorry about it" (Murphy 2016: 108).

There was a steady increase in the figure of the type *I regret to* from 1800 to 1910 except 1870. More specifically, there was a rise of 677 tokens for one hundred and ten years from 1800 to 1910. This

in turn implies that the type *I regret to* became the preferable one for British politicians. After 1910, there was a sudden fall in the figure of the type *I regret to* from 1910 to 1920. After this period, there was a dramatic increase in the figure of *I regret to* (1920-1970). It is significant to note that the type *I regret to* had the highest frequency (1,244 tokens) and the highest proportion (11%) in 1970. This in turn implies that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British politicians. Interestingly, there was a steady decline in the figure of the type *I regret to* from 1970 to 2000. Finally, a major point to note

is that the frequency of the type *I regret to* was one in both 1800 and 1810. This may imply that the type *I regret to* was the most undesired one in the British Parliament.

There was a slight increase in the figure of the type *I regret –ing* from 1800 to 1850. After 1850, there were slight fluctuations in the figure from 1850 to 1880. After this period, there was a gradual rise in the figure of *I regret -ing* from 1890 to 1980. More specifically, there was an increase of 128 tokens. It is significant to note that the figure of the type *I regret –ing* reached a peak (135 tokens) in 1980, which in turn suggests that the type *I regret –ing* was the most preferable one for British politicians. After this period, there was a sudden decrease in the figure of *I regret –ing* from 1990 to 2000. More importantly, the type *I regret –ing* had no frequency from 1800 to 1820. This may imply that British politicians avoided the type *I regret –ing*. Finally, a major point of the frequency of the types *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* is that the former was preferred over the latter from 1800 to 2000. This may imply that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British politicians from 1800 to 2000.

4. A Comparative Analysis of the Frequency of the Types I regret to and I regret –ing in Three Corpora

In the following, we aim to provide a comparative analysis of the frequency of *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*. It is worth noting that the type *I regret to* between two types was the preferable one for Americans, British people, and Bristish politicians. More specifically, 'I regret to say (tell, inform)' rather than 'I regret doing something' was preferred by Americans, British people, and British politicians. In the COCA, the overall frequency of *I regret to* is 277 tokens, whereas that of *I regret –ing* is 238 tokens. On the other hand, in the BNC, the overall frequency of *I regret to* is 41 tokens, whereas that of *I regret –ing* is 8 tokens. In the case of the HC, the overall frequency of *I regret to* is 10,531 tokens, whereas that of *I regret –ing* is 782 tokens. In a word, the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans, British people, and British politicians.

Now let us turn our attention to the genre frequency of *I regret to* and *I regret –ing*. It is important to note that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by Americans in the TV/movie genre. On the other hand, the type *I regret to* was the most preferable one for British people in the misc genre. If we do not consider the misc genre which is the mixture of all genres, the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre. It is worth pointing out that the type *I regret –ing* was the most preferable one for Americans in the TV/movie genre. The COCA clearly shows that the type *I regret –ing* was the most widely used one in the TV/movie genre. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the type *I regret –ing* was the most preferable one for British people in the fiction genre. The following graphs show the percentage of the genre frequency of *I regret to* and *I regret –ing* in the COCA and BNC:
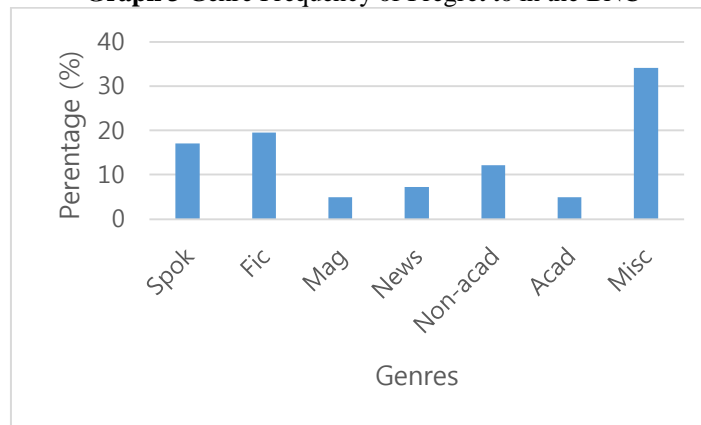
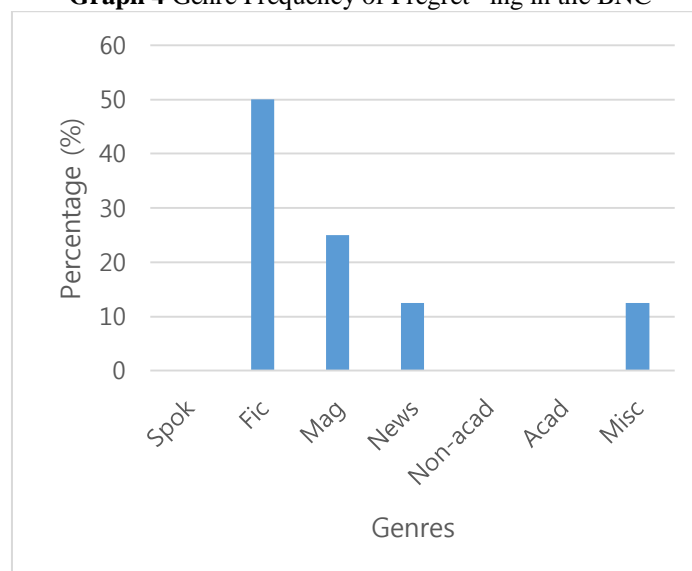**Graph 1** Genre Frequency of I regret to in the COCA
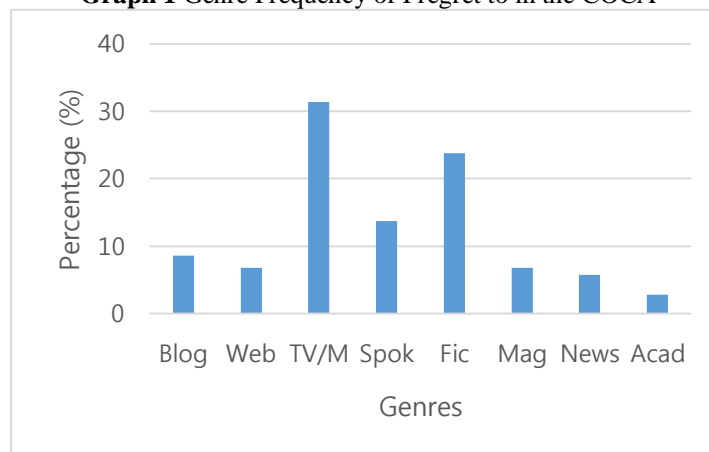
Graph 2 Genre Frequency of I regret –ing in the COCA
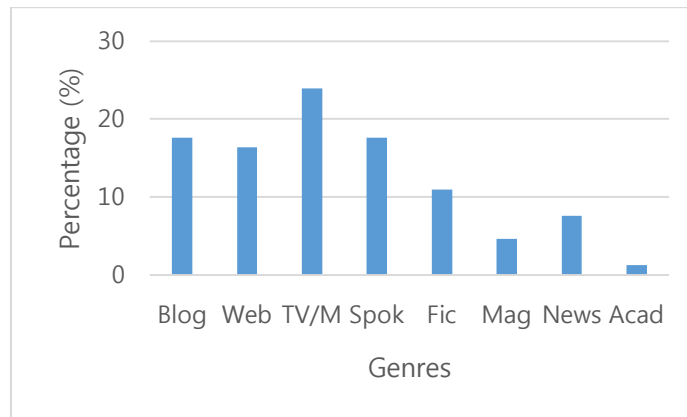
Graph 3 Genre Frequency of I regret to in the BNC

Graph 4 Genre Frequency of I regret –ing in the BNC

Now let us turn our attention to the collocation of *I regret –ing* and *I regret to* in the COCA. The COCA clearly shows that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, and *I regret telling*, in that order. On the other hand, the COCA shows that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferable one
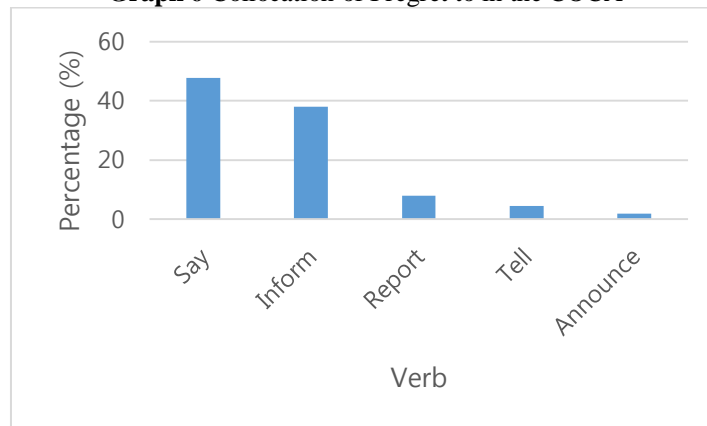
for Americans, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, and *I regret to announce*, in that order. We calculated the percentage in the top five:

Graph 5 Collocation of I regret –ing in the COCA
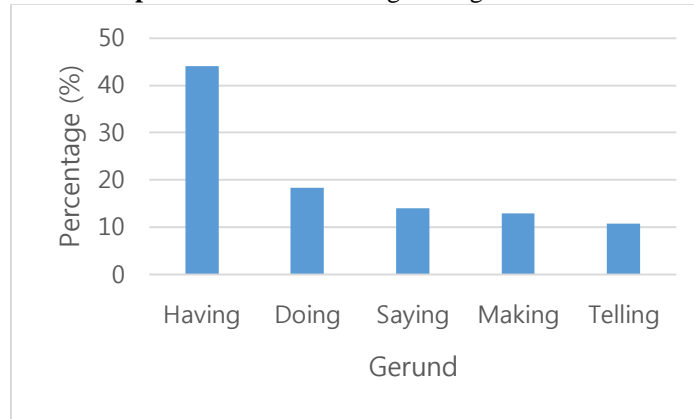
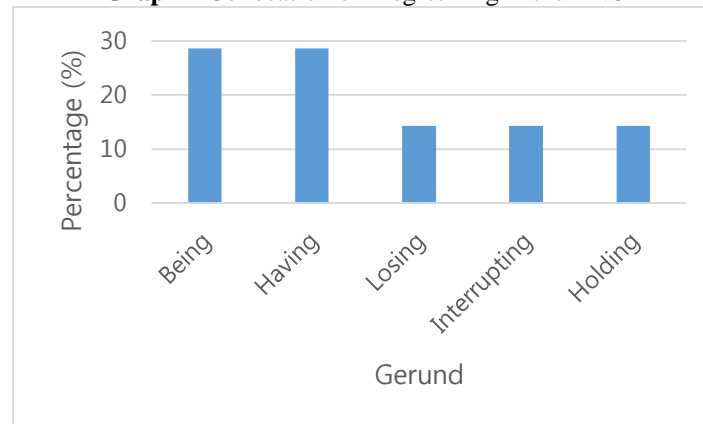**Graph 6** Collocation of I regret to in the COCA

Now attention is paid to the collocation of *I regret-ing* and *I regret to* in the BNC. The BNC clearly indicates that the collocation *I regret being* was the most preferred by British people, followed by *I regret having and I regret losing*, *I regret interrupting*, and *I regret holding*, in that order. On the other hand, the BNC shows that the collocation *I regret to say* was the most preferable one for British people, followed by *I regret to inform* and *I regret to advise*, *I regret to add*, and *I regret to report*, in that order. The following graphs show the percentage of the collocation of *I regret –ing* and *I regret to* in the BNC, respectively. Again, we calculated the percentage in the top five:
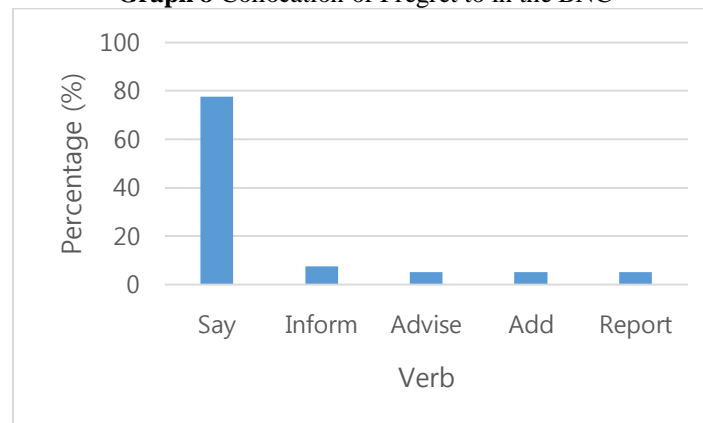
Graph 7 Collocation of I regret –ing in the BNC

As indicated in Graph 7, the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* was the most preferable ones for British people, followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting* and *I regret holding*.

Graph 8 Collocation of I regret to in the BNC

In Graph 8, the percentage was calculated in the top five. As alluded to in Graph 8, the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferred by British people and followed by *I regret to inform*. We thus conclude that the type *I regret to say* is the most preferred by Americans and British people and that the type *I regret to* is preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans, British people, and British politicians.

IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, we have provided a detailed analysis of the frequency and collocation of the *types I regret to* and *I regret –ing* within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), and the Hansard Corpus (HC). In section 3.1, we have argued that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for Americans from 1990 to 2019. We have further argued that the types *I regret to and I regret –ing* were the most widely used ones in the TV/movie genre. In section 3.2, we have contended that the type *I regret to* was the most preferred by British people in the fiction genre except the misc genre. We have also contended that the type *I regret –ing* was the most frequently used one in the fiction genre. In section 3.3, we have maintained that the collocation *I regret having* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *I regret doing*, *I regret saying*, *I regret making*, and *I regret telling,* in that order. On the other hand, we have maintained that *I regret to say* is the most preferable collocation for Americans, followed by *I regret to inform*, *I regret to report*, *I regret to tell*, *I regret to announce*, and *I regret to see*, in that order. In section 3.4, we have argued that the collocations *I regret being* and *I regret having* are the most preferable ones for British people and followed by *I regret losing* and *I regret interrupting*. We have further argued that the collocation *I regret to say* is the most preferred by British people, followed by *I*

regret to inform and *I regret to advise*. In section 3.4, we have maintained that the type *I regret to* was the preferable one for British politicians. The type *I regret to* was favored over the type *I regret –ing* by British politicians. In section 4, we have also maintained that the type *I regret to say* was the most preferred by Americans and British people and that the type *I regret to* was preferred over the type *I regret –ing* by Americans, British people, and British politicians.

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