how well does “frequency of mention” correlate with quantifiable aspects of culture?

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names

• are names getting easier to remember?
The Increase In Perplexity of US Given Names 1880-2010

(until 1750, english names were as easy to remember as korean names)
• does that mean that people now talk about forgetting names more often?
nope
age

• are populations getting older or younger?
older

U.S. Population Ages 65 and Older, 1950 to 2050

Source: PRB analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau.
Percent of U.S. Population in Selected Age Groups, 1970 to 2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under Age 18</th>
<th>Ages 18-64</th>
<th>Ages 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRB analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau.
SO

• does that mean that people now talk about old people more often?
Cumulative collocations frequencies (per million) for person words (man, woman, folks, etc) following old, 1970-2010. **A** 10 most frequent collocates in 3 word window following ‘old,’ **B** In 30 words immediately following ‘old.’ (Counts taken from COHA)
Collocation rates \( \text{frequency (old man) / frequency (man)} \) for the most frequent old – person word pairs in 1970s vs 2000s. (Counts taken from COHA)
nope
“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”?

• what are the facts?
  – names are getting harder to remember

• what are the frequencies?
  – we have become less likely to talk about forgetting names
“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”?

• what are the facts?
  – the population is getting older

• what are the frequencies?
  – we have become less likely to talk about old people
“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”? 

• why do people talk?

  – and what does “frequency of mention” tell you about what they care about?