

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Ivona Jelínková

Title: The Competition of Modal Auxiliary CAN /COULD and its Periphrastic Form TO BE ABLE TO...

Text Length: 30

<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents an overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below

8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See below
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Final Comments & Questions

The work starts with a simple, but still fairly clear Introduction.

The Theoretical part is marked by an effort to proceed logically from the most general concepts to the most specific ones, and thus, as a whole, the chapter is fairly understandable. However, sometimes the explanations are disorganized, e.g. there is discrepancy between successive statements in the first paragraph: "A verb is a word that expresses an action..., an event..., or a state. A verb is ... the most important word in a sentence because it describes an action. In syntax a verb is described as an action."

Verbs do not have three tenses (p. 8), but only two: present and past. Future is expressed by means of those two tenses, e.g. present progressive for the planned future, or "going to" for inevitable future, or present form of modal "will" for simple predication, etc.

Some statements are not fully clear, but rather chaotic, or stylistically inappropriate: p. 8: "...the epistemic moods on verbs and non-grammatical (*what?*) through modal verbs...". P. 26: "Nevertheless, for possibility meaning it is not possible to use the periphrastic form *to be able* to when it is spoken about possibility."

Another problem occurs on p. 13: "In grammatical tenses, except past and present tense and infinitive, it is necessary to use periphrastic form *to be able to*." Why infinitive? This statement is later followed by an example where the form of infinitive confirms the necessity of the use of periphrastic form ("It is good to be able to speak English."). The last paragraph of p. 13 (mainly as a result of wrong grammar) is almost incomprehensible.

The chapter omits some other phenomena which I consider fairly relevant, especially with regard to the level of this academic writing: this is not a seminar paper but an undergraduate thesis. What I miss, e.g., is a special subchapter on the use of modals for epistemic / deontic modality in the past, as in, e.g.: "You must have been mistaken." / "You should have told me."

In the Analysis chapter a fairly good introductory subchapter on the methods of the research is given. On p. 24, the author gives examples of deontic modality of the verb *can / be able to* ("She can sing." ...). My question is: What is the difference between the meaning of those examples and the example on p. 8, where dynamic modality is described? In my opinion, the examples given on p. 24 illustrate the dynamic rather than deontic modality. A relevant example could be, e.g.: "You can join us for the trip." or "He could be more polite." I am not sure whether the author fully understands the (slight) semantic differences of the types.

On the other hand, the chapter, as a whole, is acceptably written; the results of the research are presented quite clearly.

The Conclusion chapter restates the main tasks of the research and brings brief answers to the questions. This is actually a sort of statistics of frequency but nothing more. I would expect a more profound and more informative summary of the research. It is one of the most important parts of the work.

As for the use of language and style, the work seems rather weak: there are frequent grammatical problems, one of the most serious being the word order (e.g. p. 8: "Here it is expressed their approach about..." "Here it is given permission..." "Here it is described a factual situation." Other problems are the use of articles and prepositions ("in the purpose to..."), concordance of the subject and verb, spelling ("categories"), print mistakes (p. 13 "auxiality" ???). There are constant problems with graphology throughout the whole work (italics used for the common text on the one hand, but frequently not used for the analyzed / illustrative words or sentences, on the other hand). Also, the use of the same style and font for the main chapters and some subchapters is rather confusing, as far as the organization of the work is concerned.

Despite all the objections described above, the work still contains some interesting points and therefore I consider it acceptable.

The evaluation recommended: "good".

Supervisor/Reviewer: PhDr. Naděžda Stašková, PhD.

Date: 18 August 2014

Signature:

