



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **The evolution of progressive verb forms within the language system from late Middle English to Early Modern English**

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Short characteristics of the thesis

The thesis addresses the topic of the occurrence and development of progressive verb forms in the English language from about 1400 to 1700. The texts have been selected in order to be close to the authentic spoken language, since literary texts usually follow traditional writing conventions. Therefore, non-literary texts, such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies, have been chosen for the analysis. Authors of these texts have been women because their education was not very formal at the time, so their expression is more spontaneous and bears the features of the spoken language. The theoretical part of the thesis focuses on language typology, on the stages in the development of the English language, and on the morphology of the verb in Middle and Modern English. The empirical part consists of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of selected texts, which are all available in the Appendix and tagged for progressive verb forms. The actual findings are summarised in the Conclusion.

Overall assessment

The topic of the development of progressive verb forms is interesting but also quite difficult. It must be appreciated that the author of this thesis has opted for it. However, her overall presentation and treatment of this topic leave much room for improvement.

The introductory chapter of the theoretical part focuses on a short description of language typology, providing an important springboard not only for the research but also for the explanation of changes occurring in the English language during its development. Chapter three briefly describes the four stages (Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, Modern English) in the development of the English language. While interesting, the chapter is, nevertheless, based on one theoretical source only (Petrlíková 2009). There is a number of other relevant sources to be discussed.

The most problematic part of this thesis is Chapter four dealing with the morphological development of the English verb. In general, it is very confusing and far from systematic. The explanation of the issue is too condensed to the detriment of clarity, hence very difficult to follow even for an expert reader. The text could be made more



comprehensible by adding illustrative examples so that the potential reader could refer to something more specific to understand the explanation better.

Another problem regarding this chapter is that the research of this thesis focuses on one aspect of the verbal system only, the progressive verb forms. It thus seems unnecessary to describe the verbal system of Middle and Modern English as a whole and in such a detailed manner. Instead, it would have been more useful to concentrate on features of the verbal system relevant to the research, while the other features could have been outlined only briefly. On the other hand, what could have been described in more detail is the typological change the English language underwent from Middle to Early Modern English and the formal stabilisation of progressive verb forms.

For her analysis, the author compiled a very valuable corpus of non-literary texts (letters, diaries, and autobiographies) written by nine women in all who come from higher social strata and the ruling class. The style of these texts ranges from semi-formal to informal. Concerning the research and analysis of progressive verb forms, they are presented in Chapter six and in the Appendix. Especially the Appendix makes it apparent that the author devoted considerable effort to the analysis and worked very hard and meticulously. However, almost all this effort has been lost in the discussion of the results of the analysis. The author comments on the results very briefly so the discussion appears partial and incomplete. Moreover, she should have compared progressive verb forms used in Middle English and in Early Modern English in more detail. The quantitative analysis seems rather questionable as well, given that only raw counts of progressive verb forms are indicated in the tables in Chapter six. To make the analysis more transparent and accurate, the occurrence of the -ing forms should have been expressed as a percentage.

The language of the thesis leaves much to be desired. There is a high number of grammatical mistakes, especially in the use of articles, the word order is occasionally wrong, and punctuation is frequently missing altogether. Furthermore, the stylistic level of the thesis is not balanced.

To sum up, this thesis has had enormous potential to become a work of high quality. However, to achieve it, the thesis would require major revisions. In particular, Chapter four needs substantial changes and should be related to the research more, adding illustrative examples. The analysis in Chapter six ought to be completed, and, of course, the whole thesis would require proof-reading and a language revision. All these objections should be addressed and explained during the defence thoroughly.

Notwithstanding these considerable reservations, I do recommend that this thesis be admitted to a defence.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace:

dobře

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Datum

Podpis