



## POSUDEK VEDOUcíHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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

Název práce: **Polysemy in English modal verbs**

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### Short characteristics of the thesis

The thesis deals with polysemy in English modal verbs. As modal verbs may express different types of modality, the aim of the work is to quantify the frequency of these types of modality in individual modal verbs on a sample of sentences taken from both written and spoken corpora. The obtained data are then critically evaluated.

The work first deals with modality in language, defines the different types of modality in modal verbs, and explains their polysemous nature. In the second major part of the thesis, the author analyses the use of individual modal verbs in both corpora, discusses prototypical examples, and provides the frequencies of the types of modality in tables and graphs. The results are then discussed and evaluated.

### Overall assessment

In my opinion, the work fulfils its main objective. The work is logically structured starting with the general issues connected with the topic which leads to the actual analysis.

However, the work still demonstrates some shortcomings. The introductory chapters are vague in some respects. Firstly, it is not clear what the purpose of the first chapter (pp. 10-11) is, whether it is the difference between mood and modality or a description of various moods. For example, from the description it is not clear what the relationship between imperative and modality is. Also, it is not clear why the author claims that deontic modality is "more complicated" (p. 15) or on what basis he states that "in American English, frequency of usage of the verb *can* is rising" (p.20).

It would also require further clarification what the difference of the purpose of Chapter 1.3 Types of modality and Chapter 2 Modality in the form and its meaning is, as the two chapters seem to overlap and some of the information is repeated. It seems that the issues discussed in the two chapters could be covered in one chapter only.

My major comment is connected with Chapter 4 Modal verbs (pp. 27-31). I believe this chapter would deserve a clearer explanation and illustration of the types of modality in individual modal verbs. For example, the explanation of the intrinsic modality in *must* that it "deals with consequences" (p. 28) does not seem to be sufficient. I believe if these categories were discussed in more detail, it would have been easier for the author to carry out the subsequent analysis and classification of the data and more clearly set the boundaries between the types. I am referring to his comment that the "boundaries are rather unclear" (p. 34).

Also, some explanations seem to be misleading. Is *may* really intrinsic if it "suggests that someone is allowed to do something" (p. 36)? Or, can epistemic *must* really "be



demonstrated by a reformulation of the sentence with the use of a phrase *it is necessary*" (p. 28)?

The results seem to clearly suggest the overall tendencies in the use of modal verbs in English.

The language of the thesis is rather heavy, in some cases we can feel the overuse of the passive, with occasional mistakes.

For the defence of the thesis I suggest that the author prepares a presentation of clearer delimitations of the types of modality in modal verbs.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**

30.5.2019

Datum

Podpis