MODALS IN KENYAN ENGLISH:

A contrastive corpus analysis of modals in the ICE-K and the ICE-GB

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BNC   British National Corpus

ICE   International Corpus of English

ICE-EA   East African component of the International Corpus of English

ICE-GB   British component of the International Corpus of English

ICE-K   Kenyan component of the International Corpus of English

StE   Standard English

BrE   British English

KenE   Kenyan English

OALD   Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

ESL   English as a Second Language

LSWE   Longman Corpus of Spoken and Written English

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

1.   INTRODUCTION

When the British withdrew from their African colonies after these had gained independence, they left something very precious behind: their mothertongue English. Indispensable in many spheres of public life, the colonizer's language was often retained as an official language. However, the use of English by large groups of non-native speakers did not remain without consequences. New words were included in the language, pronunciation and grammar adapted to suit the needs of the speech community better. As a result, a different type of English, a non-native variety of English, evolved.

This present study is concerned with Kenyan English (KenE henceforth), the English that has been developing in Kenya, an ex-British colony, over the last decades. The aim is to investigate how far this New English has moved away from its ancestor variety British English (BrE) and whether it has established distinctive linguistic characteristics. Moreover, this research paper seeks to detect traces of Kenyan culture in the usage of English by Kenyans.

Only a few linguistic features of Kenyan English have so far been investigated. Among these are studies into the use of prepositions by Mwangi (2003) and idioms by Skandera (1999). This present study will focus on modal verbs. Modals are an interesting research topic for a number of reasons: Firstly, they are high frequency words in English. "Modal verbs typically constitute about 8 percent of all verb forms" (Kennedy: 2002: 73). In general, words used very often in a language fulfil important functions (Milan 2001: 6). Secondly, modals are by definition a limited group of words, which makes it easier to delimit the scope of the investigation. Modals can finally be considered as reflectors of cultural norms and customs, since they are used to express politeness or tentativeness.

The first part of this paper will give some background information English in Kenya including the history of English in this country and its present day sociolinguistic situation. Subsequently, what a modal is and what features characterize this grammatical item will be discussed. In addition, some approaches to the semantic of the modals will be introduced to sensitise the reader for the complexity of the subject. After a short explanation of the methodology applied, the main part will look into the usage of individual modals in KenE compared to BrE. The three aspects under scrutiny are the frequency of occurrence, the syntactic distribution and the semantic distribution of modals in two comparable language corpora: the ICE-K for Kenya and the ICE-GB for Britain, two components of the International Corpus of English.

2.   BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1.   English in Kenya

2.1.1. History and status of English in Kenya

English found its way to Kenya in the late 19th century (Sure 1991a: 245) with British missionaries, who taught a small African elite the language for the implementation of the British policy of indirect rule (Skandera 1999: 11). During Kenya's time as a British colony from 1920 onwards, English nonetheless remained the language of the white community and the government. After Kenya gained independence in 1963, English was kept as the official language and medium of instruction in schools, which facilitated a wider spread of the language within the population (Sure 1991a: 245). Concurrently, its role as the language of education, administration, commerce and modernisation increased in importance (Abdulaziz 1991: 393). In 1974 English was replaced by Swahili as the official language, but reintroduced as the language of parliamentary debates in 1979 (Mwangi 2003: 5).

Currently, the status of English is not unanimously described by scholars. Whereas some mention Kiswahili as the only official language, others argue that English is official, too. A third group of scholars cites English as having a co-official status (Skandera 1999: 11). Obviously, Kenya's constitution lacks a clear definition and leaves this issue open to interpretation. The importance of English in Kenya is however beyond all doubt. Far more revealing than a discussion about technical terms is thereby a look at the functions of English in Kenyan everyday life, where English plays a dominant role in the public sphere. Skandera (1999: 20) reports that "the use of English is functionally distributed over a number of domains, including parliament, high court, civil service, primary to tertiary education, radio, television, the press, creative literature, business, advertising, and traffic, vehicle, and shop signs." Looking at this long list, it is not surprising that Sure arrives at the evaluation that although English might be a minority language in terms of its number of speakers, it resembles a majority language in terms of its functions (1991a: 246).

2.1.2. Sociolinguistic situation in Kenya

English in Kenya can be categorized as second language variety. According to Görlach's widely accepted understanding (1984: 13), speech communities with English as a second language (ESL) use English

- in international functions,
- intranational functions, and
- have next to no native speakers of English.

English in Kenya fulfils all these three requirements. Indispensable in diplomacy, external trade or civil aviation, English is, first of all, the language of international communication (Sure 1991b: 133). Secondly, the broad range of functions cited above proves the importance of English in public life as medium of communication inside the country. In addition, English serves as a lingua franca among educated Kenyans of different language backgrounds (ibid.). Thirdly, regarding native speakers of English, language statistics give some supportive evidence: There are about 40 indigenous languages spoken, i.e. Kikuyu (22 percent), Luhya (14 percent), Luo (13 percent) and Kalenjin (12 percent) and others (38 percent) (Mwangi 2003: 9). In total, indigenous languages add up to 99 percent. Since indigenous languages are generally the first languages Kenyans acquire, the number of people with English as mother tongue is close to zero.

For the ordinary Kenyan, multilingualism is a reality. Most citizens are reported to have a command of 3 languages: their mother tongue, Swahili and English. Some even speak four or five languages (Schmied 1990: 220). Sure, however, observes that a good number of Kenyans are still monolingual (Sure 1991a: 246). Whereas mother tongues serve as languages of ethnic identity, Swahili is considered to be the language of social, cultural and business interaction between members of different ethnic and racial groups (Abdulaziz 1991: 392). Swahili can therefore be regarded as an intermediate language between English and the mother tongues (ibid. 396). It is not exactly known how many people can speak English. Estimates indicate figures between 10 and 20 percent, numbers which are likely to increase in future (Mwangi 2003: 7).

One of the most important and determining factors for the fate of a language in a country is the government's 'language in education' policy, because in an ESL country a second language is predominantly acquired through the education system. In Kenya, English is medium of instruction from year 4 onwards (Sure 1989: 56). There are

parallels discernable between the number of years a Kenyan spent in educational institutions and the proficiency achieved in the English language. The longer the period of formal education, the closer it approaches Standard English. As a result, a triglossic situation can be recognized for English in Kenya:

Figure 1 : Triglossic situation and level of education in Kenya
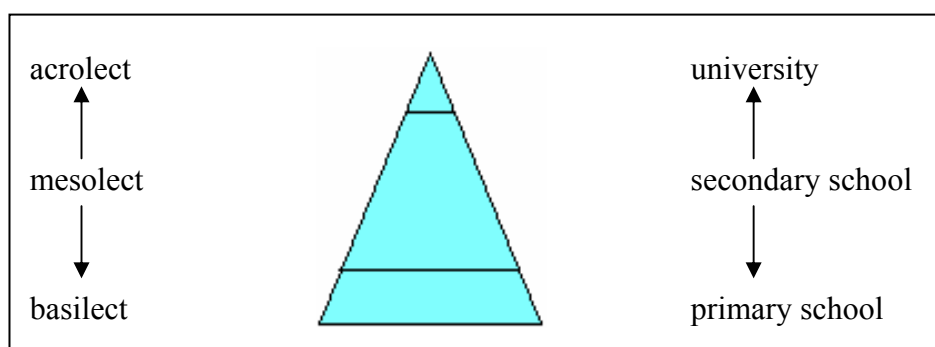
People graduated from university are almost undistinguishable from speakers of International English, except for their pronunciation. At first sight, lexical and grammatical features in general do not show conspicuous traces of deviance (Mwangi 2003: 7). This acrolectal variety is probably rare, since only 1 percent of the population has enjoyed tertiary education (Skandera 1999: 16). The majority of people speak English on a mesolectal level, which is intelligible but entails a lot of phonological and grammatical features of an indigenised English (KenE) (Mwangi 2003: 8). People who can be assigned to this group have usually attended secondary school. Nevertheless, there are Kenyans who have only finished primary school or have not attended school at all. Their exposure to English has then been extremely limited, which results in their speaking a basilectal variety of English, in other words 'broken English' (ibid. 7).

Another influential factor on the competence of English is a person's occupation, because job tasks dictate the quantity and quality of English necessary (Schmied 1991: 47). Furthermore, the geographical location is determinating. It has been observed that English proficiency of pupils attending a rural school differs markedly from pupils of urban areas. With a lack of qualified teachers in rural areas and a tendency to use the mother tongue there, rural pupils do not reach the same command of English as their urban counterparts (Mwangi 2003: 8). Finally, attitudes towards English have an influence on language learning. In Kenya, attitudes were found to depend on the perception of sociocultural and economic advantages a language can provide (Abdulaziz 1991: 400). Surveys have proved that primary, secondary as well as tertiary students

acknowledge the value of English in the work sphere. English is perceived as a gateway to success. Against this background, it is not surprising that attitudes towards English are generally positive (Sure 1989: 55, 1991a: 256).

2.1.3. English in Kenya – Kenyan English?

The fact that a large number of people are using English for intra- and international communication, does not automatically cause the development of a new variety of English. Görlach notes that "it is doubtful whether we are justified in speaking of local varieties of English having developed, or as emerging" (Görlach 1991: 141). In Kenya, however, various factors indicate that this is the case and it is possible to speak of Kenyan English. There are 4 characteristics which are essential for a new variety of English (Platt et al. 1984: 2 – 3). Three of these unquestionably apply to Kenyan English and have already been discussed above: Firstly, English has developed through the education system.[1] Secondly, it evolved in an area in which English is not a native language. Thirdly, English fulfils a wide range of functions and is used as a lingua franca among those speaking different indigenous languages.

The fourth criteria would entail that English has become localised and has developed some distinct language features of its own, for example sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, expressions and different rules for using language in communication. This last point turns out to be somehow problematic, because language features of KenE have not yet been sufficiently investigated. Skandera (1999: 222) reports that "research into the features of KenE and other East African varieties is still in its infancy". His view is shared by Abdulaziz (1991: 395) who is convinced that "a great deal of general research, in fact, still needs to be done on the linguistic features that distinguish East African English from both standard Southern British English and from other standard varieties of English." Thus, one could argue that a final evaluation about Kenyan English as a new variety is not yet possible.

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[1] The English taught in Kenyan schools is neither American nor British English, but likely to be an indigenised variety. This is due to the fact that teachers are not native English speakers, but Kenyans who were themselves educated locally by Kenyans (ibid. 58). Learning from (sometimes under-qualified) non-native teachers reinforces deviance from the standard and thus, facilitates the development of distinctive, stabilized linguistic features. This can, for example, be observed in South Africa, where a variety called Black South Africa English is emerging.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to say that nothing is known about Kenyan English, since a number of linguists dedicated themselves to the description of English in Kenya. Some of them are for example Hancock/Angogo (1982), Zuengler (1982), Okombo (1986), Sure (1989/1991) or Schmied (1986/1991). Results indicate that there are distinct features of KenE in the areas of phonology, vocabulary and grammar:

Reliable findings on phonological features were provided by Schmied (1991a). By means of a quantitative analysis, he showed for each phoneme to what extend Kenyan pronunciation varies from Standard English. As a result, his study proves that there are distinct national features of KenE, such as

- a levelling of differences between long and short vowels

- a lack of central vowels

- the monophthongization of diphthongs

It must however be acknowledged that these features are not unique for KenE, since they are prominent in almost all new varieties of English as, for example, Jamaican English or Black South African English. More distinct for Kenya are the following characteristics, which are specific to the four linguistic groups Central Bantu, Western Bantu, Kalenjin and Luo. They have been termed 'subnational features' (Schmied 1991a: 425-426) and are unlike national features stigmatised (Mwangi 2000: 2):

- the devoicing of voiced sounds and vice versa among western Nilotes and the Central Bantu,
    e.g.   /k/ vs. /g/ - *pen/ben, boy/poy*,
            /tʃ/ vs. /ʃ/ - *chair/share, wash/watch*

- the pronunciation of /l/ as /r/ sound by the Central Bantu,
    e.g.   *fry/fly, pray/play*

- the insertions or deletions of nasals before voiced stops by some Central Bantu,
    e.g.   **saland (salad),*
            *goond (good),
            *had (hand)

- the dropping of initial /h/ and its inclusion where it does not exist by some Central Bantu,
    e.g.   *hair/air, air/hair*

- the intrusion of vowels in consonant clusters,
    e.g.   **againist (against),*
            *filim (film)

A number of linguists have described some lexical peculiarities of KenE. Zuengler's 1982 study of published literary and newspaper texts, for example, provides a list of Kenyan words transferred into English. Some popular Kenyanisms in English are *matatu* (collective taxi) or *sufuria* (cooking pot). The first corpus-based study on a lexic-related topic was undertaken by Skandera (1999). He looked at the use of idioms in Kenyan English and proved that idioms reflect "African realities" (ibid. 209). Some expressions such as '*to take French leave'* have for instance been kept since colonial times in Kenya, although they have long become archaic in Standard English. Other idioms are loan translations from substrate languages: '*to look at sb/sth with bad eyes'* instead of '*to give sb the evil eye'* in Standard English (ibid. 181).

Some of the morphological and syntactic features observed by a number of scholars such as Okombo (1986), Zuengler (1982) or Hancock/Angogo (1982) are for instance:

- the use of the continuous tense with stative verbs, e.g. *understanding, belonging, liking*
- the pluralization of non-count nouns, e.g. *furnitures, equipments, beddings*
- article dropping or inclusion
- the use of *isn't it?* as universal question tag
- the lack of subject-auxiliary inversion in direct questions, e.g. *'You are coming?'*

In addition, two extensive corpus-based studies on grammatical aspects of Kenyan English were exercised. Hudson-Ettle (1998) examined different strategies of subordination in different text types and Mwangi (2003) gave a comprehensive analysis of prepositions in Kenyan English comparing their usage with British English. Mwangi's findings prove that there are differences between these two varieties with regard to frequencies with which certain prepositions are used and the collocational patterns in which they occur. She further exhibited semantic restrictions and expansions in the meanings of several prepositions (Mwangi 2003: 241).

Schmied has noted that "grammatical analysis is still underdeveloped" (Schmied 1990b: 259). The investigation of modal verb usage will add another study in this field. Whether there is a noticeable deviance from BrE remains to be shown. Whatever the result may be, the above findings from previous studies on features of Kenyan English do not leave any doubt that a new variety of English has already developed.

2.2. Modal verbs

2.2.1. Modality, mood and modals

As this paper is concerned with a comparative analysis of modal verbs, it is important to gain an idea of the overall concept of modality of which modals form a constituent part. Since there is no general agreement on what is to be understood by 'modality' and how it is related to 'mood', the first endeavour is to find suitable and workable definitions for both of these terms. Therefore, opinions of various linguists will be introduced and briefly discussed. On this basis, a diagram displaying essential expressions of modality will be elaborated and explained.

The concept of modality goes back to Aristotle and classical Greek philosophy (Davidsen-Nielsen 1990: 43). Not only has it been a point of interest for philosophers but also for logicians and linguists (Nehls 1986: 1). Since the times of Aristotle, it has however not been possible for linguists to consent on a common understanding and a widely accepted definition of modality. Hermerén (1978: 10) notes that "there seems to be no general agreement on how to define the terms modality and mood". Opinions differ mainly in two respects: Firstly, the question in which category modality falls into and secondly, what is comprised by the concept.

In the introduction to his book 'Mood and Modality', Palmer, for example, assumes that "it is possible to recognize a grammatical category, that of modality, which is similar to aspect, tense, number and gender". (1986: 1) In contrast to this, Huddleston understands modality as a semantic category, not a grammatical one. He classifies "'mood' as a category of grammar and 'modality' as a category of meaning" (1984: 166). Huddleston's view is in line with the traditional notion in which 'mood' is described as a morphosyntactic category and thus included in the concept of 'modality'. At the same time, 'modality' is referred to as the whole semantic field of modal expressions, whether they be realized grammatically, lexically or otherwise (Hoye 1997: 38). For the purposes of this paper, the traditional approach is adopted and modality understood as a semantic category.

The second controversy in literature is about the question what the term modality actually entails and what its fundamental characteristics are. Hermerén (1978: 12) moulds a definition in which he chooses modality "to comprise expressions of volition, ability, various degrees of likelihood (i.e. certainty – impossibility), obligation, wishes and permission". His understanding is quite concrete in its listing of several

specifications of the concept, which he also circumscribes as "modalities". The question is, however, whether a concept like modality is just the sum of the parts mentioned. Slightly more general is Lyons' (1971: 322) view of modality as "having to do with possibility or probability, necessity or contingency, rather than merely with truth or falsity." By his wording "having to do", and using vaguer terms, Lyons' definition is more open to individual interpretation. Palmer, in contrast, approaches modality from a different perspective. He regards subjectivity as an underlying feature of modality and does not list single specifications. He states that "modality could be defined as the grammaticalization of speaker's (subjective) attitudes and opinions" (1986: 16). Bybee et al. (1994: 177) comment on Palmer's definition saying that "recent cross-linguistic works [...] show that modality notions range far beyond what is included in this definition". Unfortunately, it is not revealed what is meant by "far beyond". What is however certainly missing in Palmer's understanding is the acknowledgement that modality can also be expressed by lexical or prosodic features, not only by grammatical ones. The following sketch is therefore an attempt to visualize different realizations of modality, a concept understood here in a very broad sense as having to do with subjectivity, possibility, necessity or a combination of these.

Figure 2: Forms of expressing modality
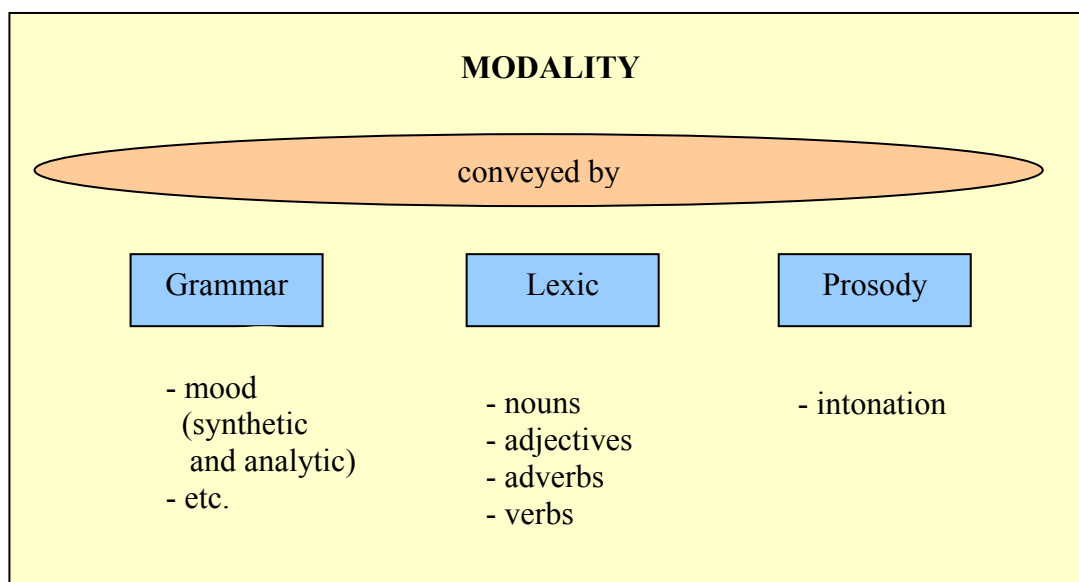
As shown in Figure 2, the ways to form a modal utterance are manifold. Grammatically encoded modality is usually named 'mood' and can be realized in two forms: either synthetically or analytically. In a synthetic system, mood is expressed by means of morphology, so for example with the subjunctive (*'So be it!', 'I insist that it be done.'*) or

imperative (*'Go!', 'Keep quiet!'*) (Davidsen-Nielsen 1990: 46). In both cases, the verb form appears with no inflection. Languages such as French or Spanish are more readily associated with subjunctives and a synthetic mood system. English, however, has been described as an analytic mood system (Huddleston 1984: 164), since modality is most commonly expressed by means of modal auxiliaries.

Lexical elements that can convey modality are nouns (1), adjectives (2), adverbs (3) and verbs (4) (Hermerén 1978: 10). Examples are given below:

(1)   Danger of toxicity aside, tuff eaters stand <u>a chance</u> of introducing parasites like worms into their system (ICE-K: ppnats-k.txt)

(2)   It is <u>likely</u> that the two friends understand each other pretty well [...]. (ICE-K: sch-brk.txt)

(3)   That, <u>perhaps</u> is a statement that talent takes precedence over training. (ICE-K: hum-k.txt)

(4)   I <u>believe</u> that songs serve certain purposes in different narratives. (ICE-K: sch-brk.txt)

A further linguistic feature which can be associated with modality is prosody. The intonation in which an utterance is expressed can indicate opinions or expectations of the speaker (Hermerén 1978: 11).

(5)   Your parent is here (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

Whereas the above sentence (5) spoken with a falling intonation is a mere factual assertion, a sharp rise at the end will bring across disbelief or surprise as if the speaker considers the fact to be impossible. Finally, it is worth noting that the aforementioned expressions of modality can be combined in one sentence and, as a result, reinforce each other:

(6)   It <u>may</u> <u>perhaps</u> be important to inform the western delegates that [...]. (ICE-K: sp-lectt.txt)

The perspective will now be narrowed down to examine one expression of modality in greater detail. The focus will shift to modal verbs in English.

2.2.2. Formal classification of modal verbs

So far, the term modal verbs has been used without a proper definition. Surprisingly, the number of lexical items described as modal auxiliaries vary from scholar to scholar, even though they are generally found to be a "clearly defined set" (Palmer 1990: 25) and "reasonably well-defined word class" (Hoye 1997: 73). Huddleston counts five plus

two central modals namely *may, must, can, will, shall*, and *need* and *dare* (1984: 165). In contrast, Palmer (1987: 26) also encloses *ought (to)* in his list and hence runs up to a number of eight modal verbs. Biber et al. (1999: 483) and Hoye (1997: 73) display a total of nine central modal auxiliary verbs, which are *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would* and *must*. Thus, it is profitable to have a closer look at the morphological and syntactic properties that are laid down to determine modal verbs.

Just like *be, do* and *have,* modals are first of all members of the group of auxiliary verbs, which share the subsequent characteristics: They can occur with 'negation', 'inversion', 'code' and 'emphatic affirmation'. Examples following Palmer (1987: 16ff.) are:

(1) <u>Negation:</u> Auxiliaries have a negative form and are used with a negative particle:
'I don't like that.'
'This can't be.'
Such expressions are not possible for full verbs:
*'She goesn't there regularly.'

(2) <u>Inversion:</u> Auxiliaries can occur before the subject in statements and questions.
'Is he here again?'
'Seldom have I been more exhausted than today.'

(3) <u>Code:</u> An auxiliary can avoid repetition by taking up a full verb and is used in question and answer.
'He can sing and so can I.'
'May I come in? - Yes, you may.'

(4) <u>Emphatic affirmation:</u> An accent can be placed on auxiliaries for emphatic affirmation of a doubtful statement or the denial of the negative.
'You cán do it.' (You are wrong in thinking that you can not)

Huddleston designated these characteristics as NICE properties, forming an acronym out of their first letters (Huddleston 1976: 333). Apart from these, modals show peculiarities that distinguish them from other auxiliaries and full verbs (see Hoye 1997: 74-75). Morphological criteria are:

- They do not occur in non-finite functions as, for example, infinitives or participles
* 'I like maying.'
- In third person singular of the present tense, they do not take an –*s*:
* 'She cans swim'.

With regard to syntax, the following criteria apply:

- They can only be the first element of the verb phrase
* 'They have might sold it already'.

- Modals do not take direct objects:
  * *'He can it.'*
- They are followed by the bare infinitive:
  * *'He can to leave soon.'*
- They do not co-occur in a verb phrase
  * *'She might will come round later on.'*

Modals furthermore exhibit abnormalities concerning tense and time:

- Although there are present and past tense forms such as *can/could*, *shall/should* or *may/might*, both can be used to refer to the present or the future.
  'He <u>could</u> arrive tomorrow.'

  Apart from that, it is worth noting that it is not possible to express past time with the past tense forms *might* and *should*:
  * *'We <u>might</u> spend our last year's holidays together.'*
  * *'Yesterday we <u>should</u> do our homework.'*

Taking the just mentioned properties as a yardstick, the set of modals comprises the nine modals cited by Hoye (1997) and Biber et al. (1999). Palmer reaches a different conclusion because he is treating the past tense form modals *could, would, should* and *might* as variants of their present tense forms. These past tense forms can, however, convey different or additional meanings compared to their present tense counterparts. Therefore, they are worth to be listed separately. Questionable is whether *need* belongs into the category of central modals on the grounds that it can also function as a main verb. *Ought*, in contrast, cannot occur as a full verb, but needs to be followed by *to* and an infinitive instead of the bare infinitive. It therefore only marginally fits into the list of modals.

There are many more verbs and constructs that share some of the above mentioned features and can function in a similar way to central modals. Among these are according to Quirk et al. (1985: 137):

- marginal modals (*dare, need, ought to, used to),*

- modal idioms *(had better, would rather/sooner, be to, have to, etc.),* or

- semi-auxiliaries *(be able to, be bound to, be willing to, etc.).*

For the purposes of this paper nine central modals will be recognized. These are *can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might* and *must*. Now that the considered set of modals is formally described via grammatical and syntactic characteristics, the next step is to explore these modals with a view to their meaning.

2.2.3. Epistemic vs. deontic uses of modals

Considering the following pairs of examples, it becomes evident that the central modals identified above can have two different types of meaning:

(1)   (a)   She <u>can</u> only be 14 the way she behaves.
        (b)   She <u>can</u> come with us if she likes.
(2)   (a)   You <u>must</u> be very happy now.
        (b)   You <u>must</u> be very quiet now.
(3)   (a)   You <u>may</u> win the lottery tonight.
        (b)   You <u>may</u> sit down.

In the (a) sentences the speaker utters assumptions and assesses possibilities against the background of available information or his own knowledge. Here, the speaker makes a "judgment about the truth of the proposition[2]" (Palmer 1990: 6). Language is used in a 'speculative' function (Mitchell 1988: 178) and the various modals help to express degrees of certainty, probability or doubt. This use of modals is called 'epistemic modality' (Coates 1992: 55).

In contrast, in the (b) sentences modals are used in a 'deontic' meaning. They deal with actions, states and events that somebody can control directly. With giving or refusing permission or imposing an obligation, the speaker seeks to exert an influence on the performance of actions. Deontic modality is therefore connected with the 'directive' use of modals (Mitchell 1988: 178).

Even though Palmer (1979) and many other linguists (e.g. Lyons 1977, Kennedy 2002 or Traugott 1997) distinguish 'epistemic' vs. 'deontic' modality, this designation is not unanimously shared by all scholars. Demonstrating that it is the negative counterpart of 'epistemic modality', 'deontic modality' is also called 'non-epistemic modality'. Coates (1983) refers to 'non-epistemic' modality as 'root' modality, whereas Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999) regard the terms 'intrinsic' vs. 'extrinsic' modality as most appropriate.

It is noteworthy that Palmer in a later publication on modals subdivides the 'non-epistemic' category into 'deontic' and 'dynamic' modality (1990), a terminology which is also adopted by Facchinetti (2002). 'Dynamic' modality as in '*Paul can speak German'* or *'Cigarettes can kill'* is concerned with the ability or volition of the subject of the sentence rather than the opinions (epistemic) or attitudes (deontic) of the speaker (Palmer 1990: 36). Therefore, the utterance could be evaluated as a neutral statement.

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[2] A modal sentence consists of a modal element and the proposition. Whereas the proposition determines what is said, the modal element determines how it is said.

Different descriptions can easily cause confusion. The diagram below will therefore give a brief overview over introduced terms. For the remainder of this chapter, the division 'epistemic' vs. 'deontic' will be adopted.

Table 3: Classifications of modality

Distinction of modalities			Authors (examples)
epistemic	vs.	non-epistemic	
epistemic	vs.	root	Coates (1983)
epistemic	vs.	deontic (broad sense)	Huddleston (1984)
epistemic	vs.	deontic (narrow sense) and dynamic	Palmer (1990)
intrinsic	vs.	extrinsic	Quirk et al.(1985)

Although 'epistemic' and 'non-epistemic' modal uses differ considerably in meaning, they have essential features in common. First of all, both can be expressed by means of the same modals as shown above. Secondly, both contain an element of subjectivity, because the speaker decides whether something is supposed to happen or how likely something is true or false (Mitchell 1988: 179). Thirdly, both uses deal with non-factuality, that is, what potentially could happen, as opposed to actual reality (Palmer 1986: 96).

The link between 'epistemic' and 'deontic' modality is drawn by possibility and necessity, which are central meanings of both types of modality (Palmer 1990: 9). 'Epistemic' modality can be paraphrased as '*it is possible/necessary that'* and 'deontic' modality as '*it is possible/necessary for'*. Hence, examples provided at the beginning of this chapter could be rephrased as:

> (1')   (a)   It is only possible that she is 14.
>   (b)   It is possible for her to come with us...

This close connection between these two types of modality sometimes leads to ambiguity, which means a sentence can be interpreted in either of the two senses. The following example will illustrate this:

> (4)   He <u>should</u> be clean in his record (ICE-K: br-intk.txt)

If the speaker were a friend or an ex-college, the sentence could be interpreted as '*It is likely/highly possible that he has a clean record'*. The speaker would give his personal evaluation in the light of what he knows. This use would then be 'epistemic'. If the speaker, however, was an employer searching for a new member of staff and setting his or her conditions, the interpretation would be completely different. In this case, the

utterance could be seen as a demand or obligation, which could be paraphrased as '*It is necessary for him to be clean in his record'*. In this situation, the above sentence is unquestionably 'deontic'. For such ambiguous sentences, the context usually reveals which interpretation is appropriate (Palmer 1990: 6).

In contrast to this, there are cases of indeterminacy, where an utterance can be understood in both senses at the same time. Since both interpretations are reasonable here, it is not possible to decide which reading is the most appropriate (Hoye 1997: 82). However, the reader does not need to choose between meanings, since they can process both (Coates 1995: 61) Consider the following example:

> (5)   A theory <u>should</u> come to your mind like a flash of lightning. (ICE-GB: S1B-013)

The teacher who uttered this sentence might have demanded from the pupils to recall a certain theory. Since he obliges everybody to follow his instruction, *should* can be read as 'deontic'. At the same time, the teacher might find it likely that this theory automatically pops up in the minds of his pupils. In this case, *should* would be 'epistemic'. Coates (1992: 61) refers to such incidents where 'epistemic' and 'root' meanings co-exist in a "both/and relationship" as "merger".

Finally, there are some syntactic features that are likely to occur with either 'epistemic' or 'deontic' uses. In contrast to 'epistemic' modals, 'deontic' modals do not combine freely with the perfective (6) and progressive (7) aspect (Hoye 1997: 75).

> (6)   You <u>may</u> leave! (deontic) vs.
> *You <u>may</u> have left! (≠ deontic)

> (7)   You <u>must</u> eat! (deontic) vs.
> *You <u>must</u> be eating! (≠ deontic)

The reason for this behaviour of 'deontic' modals is that they are commonly used for obligation or permission, which can be given for present and future actions, but not for past events. Exceptions to this rule apply for *should* and *could*, which can also appear with the perfective (8) and progressive aspect (9) in their 'non-epistemic' use.

> (8)   You <u>should/could</u> leave.
> – You <u>should/could</u> have left.

> (9)   She <u>should/could</u> wait for me.
> – She <u>should/could</u> be waiting for me.

The fundamental distinction 'epistemic' vs. 'non-epistemic/root/deontic' is widely accepted among scholars. More problematic is, however, to consent to a semantic classification of modal verbs, as the following chapter will prove.

2.2.4. Approaches to the semantics of the modals

A lot of scholars have attempted to find a general classification of the meaning of modal verbs. Among these are Palmer (1979/1986/1987), Leech (1987), Hermerén (1978), Coates (1983), Lyons (1977) or Matthews (1979) to name but a few. It has been widely acknowledged that the semantic description of modality is an "extremely complex area" (Hoye 1997: 76). Palmer claims that "there is, perhaps, no area of English grammar that is both more important and more difficult that the system of the modals" (1979: 1). In this chapter, some reasons that account for the difficulties will be listed. Subsequently, two basic approaches – the monosemantic and the polysemantic approach will be introduced. In the following, the proposal of Quirk et al (1985) will be explained and discussed in greater detail, since it will be employed for the present investigation into modals in Kenyan and British English.

The reasons for the impossibility of finding a concise and all-encompassing classification are manifold. First of all, as shown in the previous section, modals are polysemic and can therefore be highly ambiguous and indeterminate in their meaning. The distinction between the basic notions of 'epistemic' and 'deontic' uses are rather gradual than absolute (Quirk et al. 1985: 221). This makes it difficult to draw a line and to ascribe a definite meaning to a modal. Secondly, modals cannot be treated as if they had lexical status and could occur freely. They are lexico-grammatical items and can therefore have an almost entirely grammatical function as in '*May all your troubles be little ones!'* or a lexical function as in '*Jane can swim'* (Matthews 1993: 58). Again, we encounter a continuum between these two poles. Thirdly, several modals have similar meanings (Kennedy 2002: 75). *Must* and *should* can both express obligation, *may* and *can* can both express permission. Finally, the meaning of the modals has not only a logical but also a practical (or pragmatic) element. Psychological influences can transform the meaning of permission in a statement like *'You can go now.'* into a command (Leech 1971: 71).

In order to describe modals semantically linguists such as Ehrman (1966), Perkins (1983), Coates (1983) or Bouma (1975) have taken a monosemantic approach. Here, each modal is assigned a single 'basic' or 'core' meaning. Ehrman defines the 'basic meaning' as "the most general meaning of the modal in question, the meaning that applies to all its occurrences" and "the lowest common denominator of all the occurrences, for the determination of which context is unnecessary" (Ehrman 1966: 10).

The basic meaning for *can* is defined as "there is no obstruction to the action of the lexical verb of which can is an auxiliary (ibid.: 12)". Other meanings or shades of meaning are referred to as 'subsidiary meanings' and 'overtones'. This monosemantic view has raised considerable criticism with other scholars. It has been proved that such a description is for example not applicable to *may* or *should* (Hermerén 1978: 26). Ehrman herself conceded that *may* is to be found on a continuum and refrains from assigning it a basic meaning. A monosemantic view would moreover raise the question which of the various meanings of a modal should be its basic one (Hoye 1997: 77).

Other scholars are therefore in favour of a polysemanic approach, which equates each difference of use with a difference in meaning (Hoye 1997: 77). This approach accounts for the polysemy of modals, but the problem encountered here is that the list of meanings can get rather long and overlap to some extend. This becomes evident in English dictionaries. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD), for instance describes, 11 uses for *can*, 8 for *will*, and 14 for *should*. In Longman's Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1998) we find 10 notions for *can*, 6 for *will*, and 10 for *should*. Perkins (1983: 269) rejects such proposals pointing out that this would imply "semantic anarchy" of the English modal system. Although this is point of view sounds exaggerated, it has to be admitted that a complete listing of single meanings is difficult to overlook and especially confusing when the number of meanings differ from book to book.

A useful compromise between mono- and polysemantic approaches is forwarded by Quirk et al. (1985). They take indeterminacy of modals into account but also try to establish a basic framework in which the modals are assigned major meanings. Modals are placed in three groups with similar or overlapping meanings (Quirk et al. 1985: 220/221).

- permission/possibility/ability: *can, could, may, might*
- obligation/necessity: *must, should*
- volition/prediction: *will, would, shall*

These major meanings can then be subdivided further into a limited number of subsenses. In the case of *will* and *would*, there are three subsenses of volition: intention (*'I'll write as soon as I can'*), willingness (*'Would you help me to address these letters?'*) and insistence (*'She would keep interrupting me.'*) (Quirk et al. 1985: 229).

The above mentioned major meanings can furthermore be ascribed to the 'epistemic' vs. 'nonepistemic/root/deontic' distinction or in Quirk et al.'s terminology intrinsic and

extrinsic. They chose different terms to stress the involvement of "human judgment of what is or is not likely to happen" in the first type and the involvement of "some kind of human control over events" in the latter type. The arrows in the figure below hint at the inherent feature of indeterminacy of modals and indicate correlates are not absolute but gradual :

Figure 4: The meanings of the modals according to Quirk et al. (1985: 221)
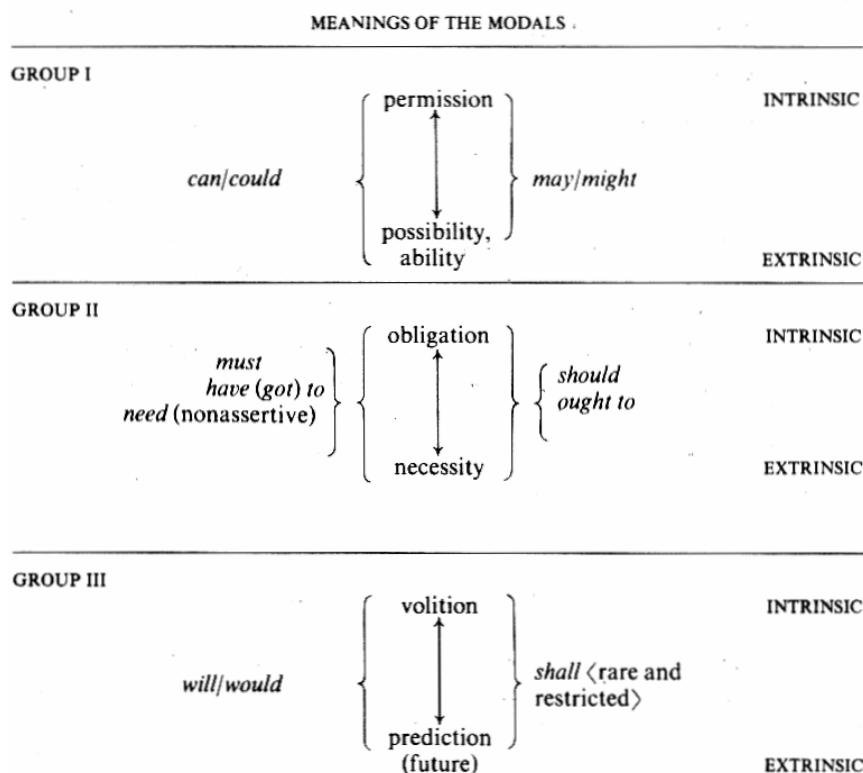
Even though the majority of modal meanings find their way into this proposed system, there are still differing or additional meanings that need to be treated separately. Among these are the use of the past tense modals *could, might, would* and *should* to express hypothetical meaning, tentativeness or politeness. Using a past tense modal instead of a present tense one does not change the meaning of the utterance, but adds a note of politeness (1) or tentativeness (2):

(1)   <u>Can</u> I see your ticket? vs.
        <u>Could</u> I see your ticket?

(2)   I <u>may</u> be wrong. vs.
        I <u>might</u> be wrong.

Another use that does not fit into the scheme is the notion of *would* and *should* as 'mood markers' to mark the mood of a clause (Quirk et al. 1985: 234). Both modals can express hypothetical meaning in a main clause (3) and *should* can serve as a marker of putative meaning (4). The latter acknowledges that something may exist or may come into existence and is elsewhere cited as a subjunctive form.

> (3)   If she left him, he <u>would</u> be devastated.
> (4)   He insisted that she <u>should</u> stay.

Bybee et al. (1994: 177) open an extra category for modals occurring in subordinate sentences, where he includes the subjunctive should in complement clauses. Palmer (1990) also treats modals in subordinate clauses separately and, in addition, conditional clauses and modals and politeness. Obviously, it is not possible to produce a clear-cut categorization of all modals and account for every single use of each modal at the same time.

Whatever classification, it seems that there are always idiosyncrasies remaining. For example, the placing of *can* in its sense of ability (*'I can swim'*) into the 'extrinsic' category might be questionable. Since ability involves at least some sort of human control, it could be argued that it would fit better into their definition of 'intrinsic' modality. Nevertheless, Quirk et al. recommend to regard ability as a special case of possibility (1985: 221) and hence place it in the extrinsic category. From another point of view, the sentence '*I can swim.'* neither expresses a certain attitude or judgment of the speaker ('epistemic'/'extrinsic') nor any kind of permission, obligation or volition ('deontic'/'intrinsic'). The utterance is perceived as a factual assertion. Palmer's above introduced subcategory 'dynamic' appears more suitable for such cases on the borderline of modality.

Despite the just mentioned concerns, the approach of Quirk et al. will be adopted for the following study. Major strong points are the acknowledgement of the polysemic nature of the modals and the proposal of a coherent system with a definite number of central meanings. The value of this classification has been recognized by other scholars such as Hoye (1997) or Biber et al. (1999), who have run an investigation into modals and found this approach feasible for their purposes. Yet, it will still be necessary to make minor alterations, subdivisions or extensions with regard to the meaning categories chosen in this present study.

3.   METHODOLOGY: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS

3.1.   Corpus linguistics

During the last decade, corpus linguistics, the study of language on the basis of text corpora (Aijmer/Altenberg 1991: 1), has become more and more popular among linguists. This is reflected in the vast number of papers issued around this topic as for example McEnery/ Wilson (1996), Biber et al. (1998) or Kennedy (1998) to name but a few. Corpus linguists themselves even claimed that corpus methodology was becoming mainstream (cf. Svartvik 1996).

Looking at all the advantages, this rising tendency to use a corpus, a body of written text or transcribed speech, for language analysis is not surprising. Since corpora are nowadays available on electronic media, it is, first of all, possible to rely on the help of computers for data analysis. Hence, a large amount of language data can easily be processed. At the same time an eye can be kept on contextual factors such as the speakers' age, sex, education or profession (Biber et al. 1998: 3). Secondly, conclusions are drawn on the basis of an empirical study and not on intuition alone or small random samples of language (ibid.: 9). Thirdly, results are easily verifiable by other researchers, because databases are usually available to everybody. Finally, this availability of corpora on CD-ROM enables a comparative study of language varieties worldwide. It is not necessary any more for every individual researcher to run an expensive and time-consuming data collection beforehand.

All these advantages support the decision to investigate the use of modals in Kenyan English by means of a corpus-based study. The corpus analysed is a section of the East African component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-EA henceforth), which will be briefly introduced in the subsequent chapter.

3.2. The corpora: ICE-EA, ICE-K and ICE-GB

The ICE-EA is part of the International Corpus of English (ICE), a project that endeavours to collect English language data from several countries with English as first or second language in order to make a comparison between or among these different

varieties possible[3]. Other available components of the ICE are, for example, the British component (ICE-GB), the New Zealand component or the Singapore component.

Compiled by a project team between 1991 and 1996, the ICE-EA comprises a collection of computerized spoken and written texts from Kenya and Tanzania (Hudson-Ettle/Schmied 1999). The ICE-EA encompasses a spoken subcorpus with language data from both countries and two parallel written subcorpora, one for Kenya and one for Tanzania. This particularity can indeed be regarded as a blessing, because it enables a researcher to look directly into Kenyan English, which will be attempted in this present study. Therefore, the attention will only be drawn to the Kenyan component of the ICE-EA, the ICE-K, which is composed of the combined spoken subcorpus plus the Kenyan written subcorpus.

In order to detect any peculiarities in the ICE-K from the 'standard', the British component of the ICE, the ICE-GB, will be taken as a reference. Since the ICE-GB was collected along the same principles as the ICE-K, a major advantage is the easy comparability of these two corpora. The allegation of comparing "apples and oranges" (Lindquist/Levin 1999: 201) when comparing data from two different corpora can therefore be evaded.

However, there are still some problems remaining. Some spoken text categories such as 'telephone conversations' or 'unscripted monologues' were not obtainable in Kenya and are therefore not represented in the ICE-K. To make up for the lack of these spoken texts, more written texts were collected for Kenya. The emphasis thus shifted to the written part in the ICE-K, while in the ICE-GB the emphasis lies on the spoken section (Skandera 2003: 68). Apart from that, some new text categories were introduced in the ICE-K, which fail to have a direct counterpart in the ICE-GB. These are for example: 'written as spoken' or 'school broadcasts'. As a result, a direct comparison is not always possible for all collected texts.

3.3. Limitations of corpus linguistics

It is hardly realistic to assume that corpus linguistic is the non-plus-ultra in language research and without flaws or disadvantages. Despite the many advantages, there are some worries a researcher may encounter. When the size of the corpus is rather small,

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[3] A detailed description of the ICE project is to be found in Greenbaum (ed.) (1996).

as it is the case for the ICE-K with about 1 million words, some language phenomena might not at all be present in the data, even though they exist. Even huge corpora cannot guarantee that all existing features in a language are represented. Depending on data collection and collection guidelines, some features might furthermore be over- or underrepresented. Thus, findings cannot be generalized unconditionally.

Another trouble evolves from the method commonly employed for analysing corpus data. To start with word counts means to start at a very low level of abstraction. Frequency tables do not reveal structures and "can often mask more general patterns of similarity and difference" (McEnery/Wilson 2001: 91). It may therefore appear as a Sisyphean task to deduct general language patterns from occasional peculiarities and distinguish them from accidental mistakes. Here, an initial hypothesis stemming from personal observation of real-life language might at least give the investigation some direction. Apart from that, corpus data alone can hardly answer big questions such as 'Is the use of modals determined by cultural values of a society?'. Here, it is necessary to "go beyond looking at data" (Chomsky cited in Aarts 1999: 6). A combination of research methods such as native-speaker introspection, corpus analyses and questionnaires are therefore advisable.

Because of the limited amount of time and financial means, the present paper relies largely on one of the proposed methods: the comparative analysis of two language corpora. In additon, a questionnaire on "modals and politeness" completed by 40 university students of different faculties of MOI university in Nairobi was included in the investigation to shed more light on this cultural aspect of modal usage in Kenya. Since the questionnaires arrived back in Germany only shortly before the paper's deadline, the findings could only serve to complement the results of the corpus analyses[4].

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[4] A copy of the questionnaire is to be found in the Appendices of this paper.

4.   MODALS IN THE ICE-K AND THE ICE-GB: AN OVERVIEW

4.1.   Frequency overview

The aim of this paper is to reveal possible differences between Kenyan and British English with regard to modal verbs. A common starting point for such an analysis is to compare word frequency lists of two corpora, because a considerable variation in relative occurrence can serve as an indicator for different usage. This assumption is supported by Greenbaum (1988: 100) who states that "differences between regional and social dialects may also be manifested in the relative frequencies with which certain linguistic features are used." Word frequencies seem to be inherent in a language variety. Frequency differences between two varieties could therefore be evaluated as an evidence for language variation.

In the following, a table with the absolute occurrences of the nine central modals will be set up. The list of frequencies for the ICE-K was compiled with the Concord tool of the Wordsmith software, a programme with which it is possible to search for single lexical items in the whole corpus or selected parts of the corpus. Unfortunately, it was not possible to convert the ICE-GB into Wordsmith-readable files as well. Therefore, the ICE-GB frequency list had to be compiled with the ICE-Cup3, a computer program especially designed to research the ICE-GB. Here, modal verb occurrences were calculated with the help of the Text Fragment mode. Although the Concord tool of Wordsmith and the Text Fragment queries of the ICE-Cup3 work after the same principle, it would have been preferable to use the same tool for the analysis of both corpora. Only then a complete ruling out of mistakes resulting from a different functioning of software would have been possible.

A pitfall in gathering a word lists are homographs, i.e. lexemes with a different meaning but the same spelling. Homographs for *may* are for example the month *May* or the female first name *May*. Furthermore, somebody can be called *Will*, have a last *will* or even a big *might* and this has nothing to do with the modals *will* or *might*. *Must* can also occur in a converted form as a noun as in '*a must*'. If occurrences of such homographs are ignored, results will be inaccurate. Nevertheless, the problem can be avoided by working with a parsed corpus. As not only the ICE-GB but also the ICE-K are now available in a tagged format, it was easy to extract the modal forms from other irrelevant lexemes with the same spelling. Some mistakes, however, remain due to false tagging.

In the ICE-K, for example, the main verb in the phrase *'we should sub-divide one region into areas'* (cl-lesst.txt) is tagged as a 'NN1 noun'. Yet, these errors are by no means frequent and thus do not question the reliability of the overall outcome of the study.

Another point that needs special attention are the forms in which words occur in the corpora. The analysed modals all have negative forms such as *won't, can't,* or *couldn't* and some appear in the contracted forms *'ll* and *'d*. Since negative forms appear with a relatively low frequency in comparison to their positive counterparts and are found with all examined modals, it was decided to neglect them in the preliminary word count. The contracted forms *'ll* and *'d*, however, had to be considered, because it was discovered that they unevenly contribute to the overall occurrence of certain modals in either corpus.

The contracted form *'ll* can easily be ascribed to *will*, since the other possibility *shall* is extremely rare in the corpora already in its non-contracted form. The short form *'d* is more problematic, as it can stand for *would, could* or *had*, which are all frequent. Thanks to tagging, *had* can be ruled out as not being a modal form. As for *could* and *would*, it was decided to add the *'d* to *would*, since it accounts for the vast majority of cases. Kennedy (2002) also attributes the contracted form *'d* to *would* in his analysis of the BNC. Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1985: 228) note that "from the semantic point of view, as well as from the historical point of view, *'ll* and *'d* are to be regarded as contractions of *will* and *would* respectively."

Even though the bare figures already allow a helpful insight into frequency similarities and differences of both corpora, it is not possible to draw a conclusion right away. The corpora differ in the number of total words, so that absolute numbers cannot be juxtaposed directly. Apart from that, numbers do not show whether differences are statistically significant or not. A chi-square test according to Oakes (1998: 28) was therefore run with the above data. Results are displayed in the last column designated 'significance'. Two asterisks indicate a significance level of 0.025 and four asterisks a level of 0.001, which is highly significant.

The table below shows the results of the frequency count in both tagged corpora.

Table 5: General frequency overview over modals in both corpora

Modals tagged	ICE-GB	ICE-K	Significance
Total words	1061264	1005496	
can	2772	3342	****
could	1439	1261	
may	1217	1050	
might	690	353	****
must	670	778	**
shall	217	228	
should	1058	1802	****
will+'ll	3695	3398	
would+ 'd	3338	2260	****
Total modals	**15096**	**14472**	
(Total in %)	1.42	1.44	

As can be observed from table 5, there are more central modals in the Kenyan corpus than in the British one. The difference, however, is very small with 0.02 per cent, and according to the chi-square test of significance not statistically significant. Despite this lack of a general statistical significance on the overall level, there are significant differences in the frequency of five individual modals, namely *can, might, must, should* and *would*. Three of these, i.e. *can, must* and *should* occur significantly more often in the ICE-K. The modals *might* and *would*, in contrast, are found considerably more often in the British corpus. It is likely that these 5 modals will show noticeable differences in their usage in the two examined language varieties.

Another table has been be elaborated, which makes it possible to visualize the discovered differences in frequency for each modal. Even though the chart is based on the same data, it allows a direct comparison of modals in both corpora by using relative occurrences. Here, the absolute number of found modals is put in relation to the total number of words in each corpus (see figures in table 5). The resulting quota is then expressed in occurrences per one million words.

Table 6: Comparative frequency overview between the corpora

ICE-GB and ICE-K: Total modals compared

Modal	GB	K
will+'ll	3695	3398
would+'d	3338	2260
can	2772	3342
could	1439	1261
may	1217	1050
should	1058	1802
might	690	353
must	670	778
shall	217	228
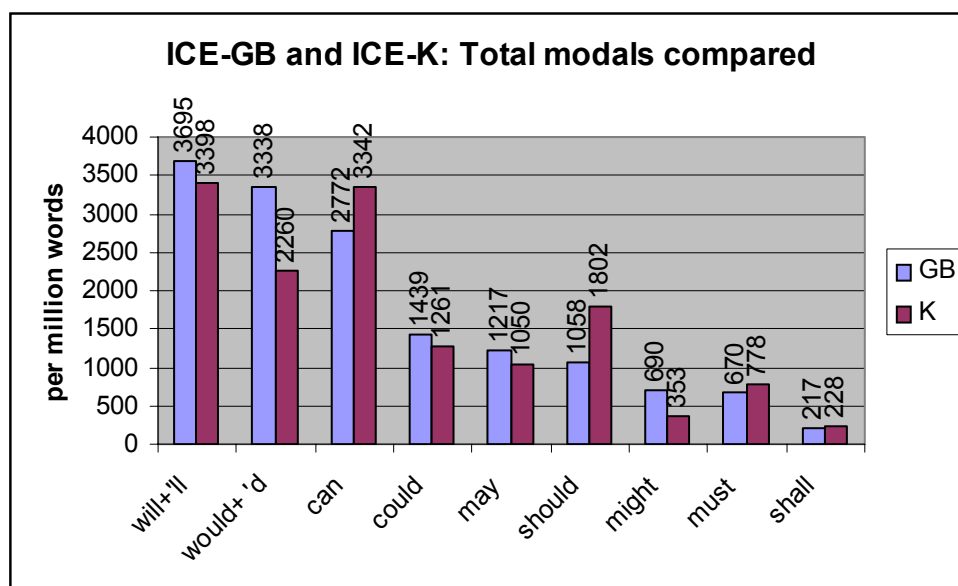
Most salient to the eye are again the frequency differences for the modals *would, can, should* and *might*. At this point, one can only speculate about the causes of these deviances. One explanation for the higher occurrence of certain modals in the ICE-K could be that a modal has overtaken some of the functions of another one. It is also possible that a modal is part of several fixed expressions, which are excessively used in the new variety but archaic in BrE. Conversely, some peripherical meanings of a modal might have been dropped in the New English variety, which might have resulted in a less frequent use there.

It must be noted that it is not possible to draw a direct link between the higher frequency of *can* and the lower frequency of *might* or the higher frequency of *should* and the lower occurrence of *would* in the ICE-K. Their semantic notions overlap only to a limited extend, whereas general frequencies differ greatly from each other. Thus, one cannot generalize that *might* is substituted by *can* or *would* by *should* in KenE, even though the first two can express possibility and the latter two are markers of hypothetical meaning. A diligent analysis of every individual modal with a view to semantically related modals is therefore indispensable.

4.2.   Frequency ranking

Another way to gain a first impression of possible differences is to establish a ranking of the modals within a corpus, which indicates the popularity of a modal in a language variety in relation to other modals. Such a list can, for example, show whether a certain modal is consistently prefered to another modal with a similar function. Noticeable differences in the ranking lists of two varieties of the same language might again hint at a different modal usage or meaning.

The ranking is set up according to the relative occurrence of every individual modal in relation to all modal occurrences and expressed in percent. In table 7 below, the ranking lists for the ICE-GB and the ICE-K are contrasted. The most frequent modal in each variety is assigned to rank 1, the least frequent to rank 9. Variations of more than one rank between the corpora are printed in bold. The percentage figures in brackets indicate the findings of Kennedy (2002: 77), who displayed a similar frequency overview for modals in the British National Corpus[5]. They will serve as another reference point in the comparison of KenE with BrE.

Table 7: Frequency ranking of the modals in the corpora

	ICE-GB total	%	(BNC)	ICE-K total	%
Rank	Total modals	N=15,096	(N=1,387,730)		N=14,472
1	*will+'ll*	24.5	(22.8)	***can***	23.5
2	*would+ 'd*	22.1	(20.9)	*will+ 'll*	23.1
3	***can***	18.4	(16.9)	*would+ 'd*	15.6
4	*could*	9.5	(12.2)	***should***	12.5
5	*may*	8.1	(8.2)	*could*	8.7
6	***should***	7.0	(8.0)	*may*	7.3
7	*might*	4.6	(4.4)	*must*	5.4
8	*must*	4.4	(5.1)	*might*	2.4
9	*shall*	1.4	(1.5)	*shall*	1.6
Total		100%	(100%)		100%

The table above displays a number of similarities between the corpora. Firstly, *can, would* and *will* are the three most frequent modals the ICE-GB and the ICE-K. Together they account for almost two thirds of all examined modal verb occurrences. Secondly,

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[5] The figures had to be re-calculated for comparability, because Kennedy analysed a broader set of modals and included short and negative forms.

shall proves to be the least frequent modal in both text collections appearing in only 1.4 (1.6) percent of all modal verb phrases. Finally, the rankings for *could, may, might* and *must* only vary by one position. The most striking difference in the ranking comparison is the rank deviance of *can* and *should* between the corpora. These modals are two ranks higher in the ICE-K than in the ICE-GB.

Kennedy's figures for the BNC deviate from the ICE-GB percentages by less than two points. They confirm the calculated ranking for BrE except for the infrequent modals *might* and *must*. In comparison to the ICE-K, the same deviances leap to the eye: the ranking differences of *should* and *can.*

The results from the frequency overview and the modal ranking indicate that BrE and KenE show a lot more similarities than differences in the usage of modal verbs. The majority of the 9 examined modals does not display any statistically significant deviances in frequency or ranking. Therefore, it has to be assumed that both varieties of English are still very close together with regard to modals.

Convenient, quick and useful as these preliminary overviews may be, the limits of these methods of investigation have now been reached. It is not possible to prove or explain usage differences in the two language varieties by just pointing out the differences in word frequency between the corpora. Variations might also be caused by mere accident, differences in corpus size or compilation. Moreover, statistics can even put the researcher on the wrong track and hide linguistically interesting data behind similar numbers. Mair correctly points out that "there are statistically significant patterns in corpora which cannot be interpreted linguistically, and some linguistically significant facts from corpora are not statistical" (1997: 201). Aarts adds that "it is far more interesting to go beyond the bare statistics, and ask why a particular pattern is frequent or infrequent" (Aarts 1999: 8). Therefore, it is essential to have a closer look at the above findings and investigate also the syntactic and semantic behaviour of each individual modal in both corpora.

5. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL MODALS IN SELECTED TEXT TYPES

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. Selection of texts

For the semantic and syntactic analysis, four different text categories have been selected. These are 'private conversation', 'public dialogue' from the spoken components of the corpora, and 'academic writing' and 'non-printed writing' from the written sections. 'Private conversation' excludes 'telephone calls', for they are only available in the ICE-GB. 'Public dialogue' comprises the three subsections 'classroom lessons', 'broadcast discussions' and 'broadcast interviews'. The category 'non-printed writing' encompasses 'student essays' and 'exam papers' within 'non-professional writing' as well as 'social letters' and 'business letters' within the subcategory 'correspondence'. Table 8 gives an overview over the selected text categories and displays the number of total words within every category chosen and the number of modals therein.

Table 8: Number of texts and modals in the 4 selected text categories of each corpus

| | ICE-K | | ICE-GB | |
Selected text categories	Words	Modals	Words	Modals
Spoken	**261568**	**4350**	**313884**	**4036**
private dialogue	*60282*	*872*	*205608*	*2559*
conversation				
public dialogue	*201286*	*3478*	*108276*	*1477*
class lessons				
broadcast discussions				
broadcast interviews				
Written	**161253**	**2211**	**189792**	**2568**
non-printed	*80976*	*1472*	*104164*	*1625*
non-prof. writing				
student essays				
student exam papers				
correspondence				
social letters				
business letters				
academic writing	*80277*	*739*	*85628*	*943*
Total	**422821**	**6561**	**503676**	**6604**

It was decided to chose this limited number of text categories to facilitate a better comparability between both corpora, since not all text types are equally available in

both corpora[6]. With the selection of two text types from the spoken subcorpus and two from the written text subcorpus, it is furthermore possible to juxtapose distinct style categories. As a result, the analysis might even reveal differences between the language varieties that have not yet been established in written language, but are emerging in spoken language. Apart from that, the four chosen text types can be aligned along a continuum with regard to formality, in which 'private conversation' is the least formal and 'academic writing' the most formal category. It will be interesting to examine, whether differences in language usage follow a certain pattern along the continuum. For example, it is likely that the highest deviances from the standard appear in the least formal text category.

Nevertheless, the above selection also has some shortcomings. Even though each of the two written text types of the corpora comprise a fairly similar number of words, both spoken text types differ considerably with regard to the amount of text they include. In the ICE-K, for example, 'private conversation' contains only one third of the amount of data as the same category in the ICE-GB. In contrast, 'public conversation' is twice as large in the ICE-K. These misproportions could have distorting effect on the results of the examination.

In order to avoid this, the present study works with relative numbers. The occurrence of a certain modal or phenomenon is always regarded in relation to the number of words in the respective category. Apart from that, it must be pointed out that the most important ratio between spoken and written texts has been kept equal: In both corpora the selected spoken sections constitute two thirds and the written sections one third of the data analysed.

5.1.2. Methods of investigation

The subsequent examination of individual modals will entail 3 distinct methods of analysis, which are considered adequate to identify differences in usage between Kenyan English and British English:
- First, a comparison of modal verb frequencies
- Second, a comparison of modal verb phrase structures, and

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[6] See chapter 3 for examples.

- Third, a comparison of the distribution of semantic notions between the selected text types of the both corpora

Comparison of modal verb frequencies

Comparisons of modal verb frequencies are regarded useful, because they can reveal recurring trends in the usage of certain types of modals such as past tense or present tense modals. Apart from that, the detected frequency differences between the 4 text types in the corpora might be a symptom for more fundamental differences in the usage of modals in different contexts. Kennedy argues that "corpus-based distributional analysis [...] makes it possible to extend our understanding of linguistic variation across different genres in different domains of use (2002: 73)". The then following syntactic and semantic analysis also aimed to explain what the discovered frequency differences might have been caused by.

Comparison of modal verb phrase structures

The syntactic analysis examines the structures in which the modals occur. Possibilities to form a modal verb phrase are limited in number. The four basic syntactic categories are termed 'Infinitive', 'Passive', 'Progressive' and 'Perfect'. Since they apply to all nine modals in the same way, these categories are briefly introduced here:

'Infinitive'

This section comprises modal verb phrases which contain a modal and the infinitive form of a main verb (1). Furthermore, it includes instances where the main verb is preceded by an adverb (2) or an adverbial (3). Questions with the modal before the subject (4) and modals standing alone to avoid the repetition of the main verb are also assigned to this category (5).

    (1)   You <u>can become</u> reckless you know (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)
    (2)   You <u>can also work</u> in the cooperative movement (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)
    (3)   Promotion of right <u>should, however, go</u> hand in hand with tolerance of different views. (ICE-K: br-intk.txt)
    (4)   How <u>could you be</u> so mean? (ICE-K: soc-letk.txt)
    (5)   By this time I guess she <u>will</u>. (ICE-K: conv-1k.txt)[7]

'Passive'

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[7] This characteristic feature of modal verbs is referred to as "code" (see also chapter 2).

Verb structures formed by a modal plus the auxiliary *be* and a past participle belong to this section. Adverbials and adverbs can stand between the modal and *be*.

> (6)   This <u>might be called</u> the chain of development. (ICE-K: ld-humk.txt)

'Progressive'

This category contains simple progressive structures that are formed with a modal, *be* and a present participle. Again, adverbials and adverbs may be included in the verb phrase.

> (7)   It <u>will only be encouraging</u> the situation. (ICE-K: br-disct.txt)

'Perfective'

This section comprises several perfective constructions. The prototypical member is thereby a simple perfective sentence with a modal, the auxiliary *have* and a past participle (8). Other constructions are combinations with the passive or/and the progressive. These are, for example, occurrences with the passive voice and the perfect aspect as in example (9) or combinations of with the perfect and the progressive aspect as in example (10).

> (8)   That one you <u>might have considered</u> before opening your bookshop. (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)
> (9)   By the time a child starts formal education, the local language <u>will have been acquired.</u> (ICE-K: ldhum-k.txt)
> (10)   In their little minds, they <u>could have been pondering</u> what next. (ICE-K: feat-k.txt)

All four selected text categories are screened individually for these structures so that the distribution of verb phrase structures can be interpreted and compared for the 4 text types within a corpus and between the language corpora.

The ICE-GB is investigated by means of ICE-CUP Fuzzy Tree Fragment Queries, which allows to search the corpus for standard grammatical tree structures, whereas the ICE-K is examined with the help of the Wordsmith Concord tool. It must be taken into account that probably not all verb phrases are correctly recognized by the language software. Reasons therefore are incorrect word tagging[8] or the occurrence of incomplete modal verb phrases, which results from a speaker's rephrasing or repeating while

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[8] For example: The main verb in the utterance *'You might address yourself'* (ICE-K: br-intk.txt) is tagged as a noun. See chapter 4.1. for another example of false tagging.

talking[9]. The categories 'passive', 'progressive' and 'perfect' are therefore double-checked by hand to minimize possible errors.

Comparison of semantic notions

For the semantic analysis, a random sample will be extracted if the amount of data in one section is too large for an individual inspection of every single modal occurrence. There are, for example, 1,084 instances of the modal *can* in the 'public conversation' section of the ICE-K. The random samples comprise at least ten percent of all occurrences. Nonetheless, in the majority of cases a much higher percentage with an average of 70 tokens will be examined. The semantic values of the various modals cannot be generalized and are therefore dealt with in the respective chapters. As mentioned before, it will be abstained from explaining the particular classifications of modal meanings in great detail, since this would lie beyond the scope of this present study. The aim of this paper is to compare two varieties of English and not to discuss various proposals of modal semantics and their possible shortcomings. Hence, one approach considered practical will be chosen and – if necessary – adapted or extended.

Composition of chapters

Present tense and past tense modals are often grammatically and semantically linked. *Could* and *might*, for example, can function as past tense or hypothetical versions of *can* and *may*. Thus, the couples *can/could* and *may/might* are treated within one chapter each. This also allows to draw conclusions and parallels between these modal pairs, which all share the meanings possibility, ability and permission (Quirk et al. 1985: 221). *Will, would* and *shall* are all modals of volition and prediction (ibid.), which makes it reasonable to investigate their usage in connection with each other. The same applies for *should* and *must* as modals of obligation and necessity (ibid.), which are therefore also dealt with in a separate chapter.

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[9] For example: *'A doctor must or is trained only to preserve live'* (br-disck.txt) or *'I can I mean I can understand'* (ICE-K: conv-t.txt).

5.2. CAN/COULD

5.2.1. Frequency overview

The tables below give an overview over the number of occurrences of *can* and *could* in the 4 selected text types.

Table 9: Frequency of CAN and COULD in the 4 selected text types of each corpus

ICE-K

Text types	Total words	Can	%	Could	%
Private conversation	60282	221	0.37	57	0.09
Public conversation	201286	1084	0.54	261	0.13
Non-printed writing	80976	237	0.29	96	0.12
Academic writing	80227	148	0.18	64	0.08
Total	422771	1690	0.40	478	0.11

ICE-GB

Text types	Total words	Can	%	Could	%
Private conversation	205608	562	0.27	256	0.12
Public conversation	108276	285	0.26	171	0.16
Non-printed writing	104164	285	0.27	128	0.12
Academic writing	85628	208	0.24	88	0.10
Total	503676	1340	0.27	643	0.13

Figures show that *can* is more frequent than *could* in every text category of both corpora. This observation has already been made for other English language corpora such as the LSWE corpus (Biber et al. 1999: 486) or the BNC (Kennedy 2002: 77) and can therefore be evaluated as a characteristic feature of the English language. Both corpora further display a similar frequency of *can* in the written sections 'non-printed writing' and 'academic writing'. The difference between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB there totals an insignificant average of 0.04 percent.

A remarkable divergence is however noticeable in the spoken part: In the Kenyan corpus, *can* is significantly more common in 'private conversation' and even twice as frequent in the 'public conversation' than in the respective sections of the British corpus. The fact that *can* is a popular modal in Kenyan English has already been noted in the preliminary frequency overview. This more detailed frequency analysis now reveals that the relatively higher occurrence of *can* in the ICE-K can be fully ascribed to the spoken texts.

This observation has a far-reaching implication. In general, language change manifests itself first in speaking before it is also gains acceptance in writing. Biber et al. (1999: 487) note that "it is not surprising to find linguistic novelty establishing itself in conversation first, and then spreading to the written registers". Given that word frequencies are characteristic to a language, this finding supports the assumption that KenE as a new variety of English is developing away from BrE and that it is in the process of establishing its own characteristic features.

Two hypotheses can be put forward to explain the deviance in the figures for *can* between the corpora. Firstly, *can* might be subject to semantic change in Kenya and hence in the process of acquiring new shades of meaning. As a consequence, the modal would be used in a wider set of functions in KenE and occur more often in number. The subsequent semantic analysis will reveal, whether this explanation applies here or must be ruled out. Secondly, it is conceivable that the higher occurrence of *can* does not result from a wider range of meanings, but from a more extensive use of the modal in its traditional notions. Kenyan speakers of English might more commonly opt for this modal instead of other synonymous constructions or lexemes such as *'to be possible'*, *possibly, 'to be able to', could* or *may*. Thus, the frequency difference would have to be ascribed to differing preferences of Kenyans in language usage.

In contrast to *can*, the past tense modal *could* is evenly distributed in all sections of both corpora. Nevertheless, in the spoken section of the ICE-K *could* is by 0.03 points slightly less frequent than in the respective texts of the ICE-GB. The divergence is however too small to be statistically significant. Even so, given that *could* is a more tentative variant of *can*, one could evaluate KenE as slightly less tentative than BrE in everyday conversations. In general, the variance between both corpora with regard to *could* is again higher in speaking than in writing.

5.2.2. Syntactic analysis

All modals in the four text categories have been examined with regard to the syntactic structures in which they occur. First, the syntactic behaviour of *can* is displayed for both corpora followed by a similar analysis for the modal *could*. Subsequently, some differences regarding single text types are under scrutiny.

The results of the syntactic analysis of *can* are given in the figure below:

Figure 10: Syntactic distribution of CAN compared
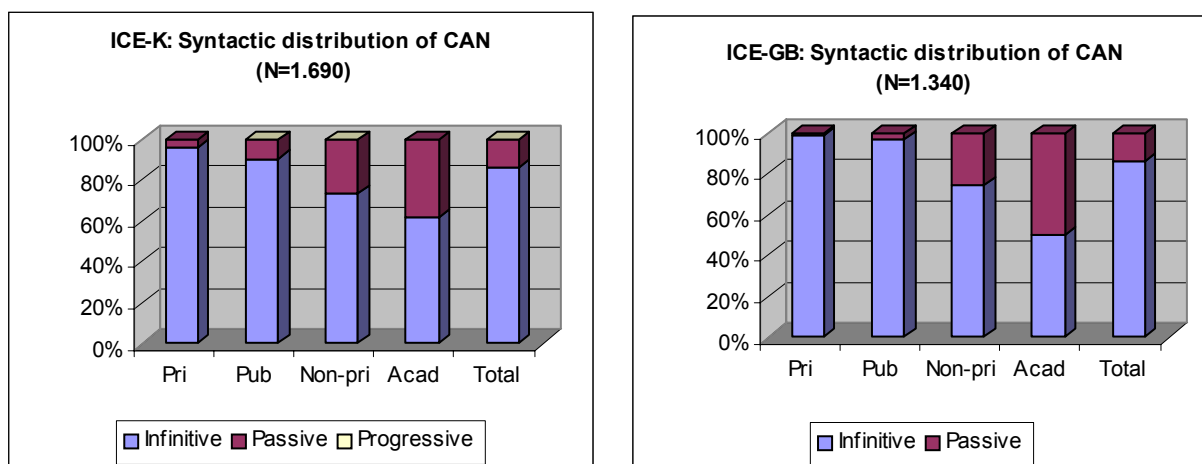
Some modals favour certain syntactic constructions but consistently avoid others. Biber et al. comment that "while the majority of modals do not co-occur with marked voice or aspect, particular modals show differing preferences for these combinations (1999: 499)." Against this background, Biber et al. found out that *can* is "particularly common" with the passive (ibid.). As shown in figure 10, their finding is confirmed by the present analysis. In both language corpora, almost 20 percent of all instances appear in passive constructions, while the remaining examples are almost exclusively followed by a bare infinitive.

Biber et al. also state that the "progressive aspect with modals is generally rare" and that "*can* [...] very rarely occur[s] with the perfect aspect" (ibid.). To put it more precisely, only the negative variant *can't* expressing epistemic possibility is associated with these forms (Coates 1983: 101). The positive *can* never occurs in these aspects in StE. Not a single example is listed in the literature showing a combination of the progressive or the perfect with the modal in its positive form. In the British corpus, *can* does not at all occur with the progressive or the perfect. In the ICE-K, however, some cases have been found that contradict this general rule. Five examples show *can* in its positive form together with the progressive aspect. A selection of these is given here:

(1)   He's just going to pay he'll still be passing through amidst some other books. So he <u>can be seeing</u> other possible copies... (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)
(2)   Of course that's not acceptable because the very good land that <u>can be producing</u> without much energy can be left to the peasants.(ICE-K: br-intk.txt)

(3)   I am only saying what a population policy <u>can be doing</u>. (ICE-K: br-disct.txt)

Looking at the above sentences, the use of this aspect in these contexts can be judged as non-standard. In example (1), for instance, the progressive is combined with a stative verb (*to see*), which does not usually occur with this aspect. Quirk et al. (1985: 198) state that "in many cases the progressive is unacceptable with stative verbs." KenE might not be the only variety that sometimes "violates" traditional rules of StE. It has been noted that the distinction between stative and dynamic verbs is often blurred in new varieties of English (Schmied 1991: 67; Platt et al. 1984: 72-73). If no distinction is being made, the progressive, which commonly combines with dynamic verbs, might also be applied to some stative verbs.

The main verbs in examples (2) and (3) are not stative, but they describe facts and general truths in the sentences. According to Hewings (1999: 2), this is usually expressed with simple tenses, not with the progressive.

Two reasons have been cited to be responsible for the extension of the progressive in New Englishes, including KenE. Firstly, it may result from an over-emphasis of the progressive aspect in the teaching of English (Platt et al. 1984: 73). Secondly, the phenomenon might be caused by the non-existence of the progressive aspect in the people's first language. Thus, it is difficult for learners to get a feeling for the correct usage of this grammatical feature. Once a language learner has managed to understand the concept, she or he often tends to overuse it. Such an overgeneralization is a general language learning strategy[10].

Overgeneralization errors can become fossilized, if learners remain in an interlanguage stage and do not advance their language skills further. Should this happen to an entire speech community, this could lead to the establishment of distinct features of a new variety of English. In the present case, however, the progressive use of *can* does not even make out one percent of all occurrences. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the examples cited are individual learner errors and not emerging characteristics of Kenyan English.

In contrast to *can, could* occurs in all 4 syntactic constructions as indicated in figure 11. Similarly to *can*, the most common use is an infinitive construction followed by the passive voice. In both corpora perfect structures make up less than 10 percent (5.9 %

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[10] Schmied (1991: 52) explains that after tendency to simplify language at an early learning stage, from a certain level onwards learners are inclined to exaggerate some typical features of English.

ICE-K, 7.6 % ICE-GB) and progressive constructions with *could* are even less frequent with approximately 1 percent.

Figure 11: Syntactic distribution of COULD compared
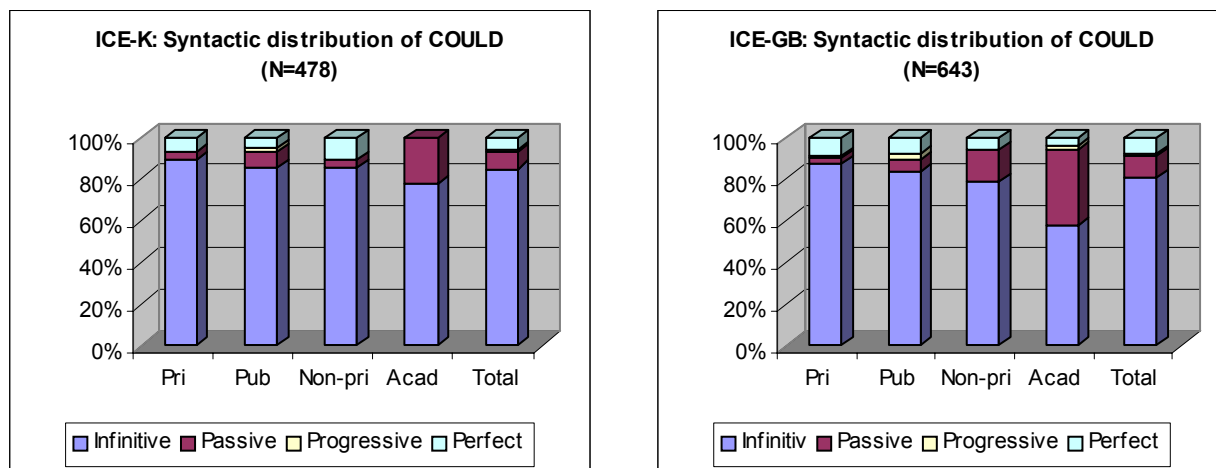
There is a correlation between the marked voice or aspect associations of a modal and its typical meanings, as Biber et al. (1999: 499) observe. *Can* and *could* are, as visible in the graphs, commonly found in passive constructions. The passive voice frequently correlates with the meaning 'logical possibility' (ibid.). Since the passive is most frequently used in 'academic writing', it can be assumed that this section shows a high percentage of 'logical possibility' meanings. As will be shown in the subsequent semantic analysis, this assumption proves to be true.

The above charts are also helpful to run a comparison between the 4 text categories. Studies of the syntactic behaviour of modals in different text types have already been exercised by Mindt (1995), Biber et al. (1999) and Kennedy (2002). They all confirmed that there is a considerable variation between verb phrase structures in spoken and written language and also between different text types within these categories such as fiction texts, news texts and academic texts. The reason for such a deviance is that each text type requires a certain style or degree of formality. Syntax is one of the determinating characteristics of style. Academic texts, for example, prefer an impersonal, neutral style, which is usually expressed by the passive voice. As a result, passive constructions are extremely frequent there.

As expected, in both corpora the use of the passive voice with *can* and *could* is more frequent in writing than in spoken language. If the use of the passive voice is equated with formality, there is evidence that BrE and KenE show a different degree of

formality in spoken and written language. In order to illustrate this, the above indicated percentages of passive voice have been extracted and are displayed below in table 12.

Table 12: Percentage of passive voice constructions in both components of both corpora

	CAN		COULD	
	ICE-K	ICE-GB	ICE-K	ICE-GB
Spoken	8%	2%	7%	4%
Written	31%	36%	11%	24%

In the ICE-K, the use of the passive is much more frequent in spoken language compared to the ICE-GB. Kenyans form almost twice as often passive constructions with *could* and 4 times as often with *can* in conversations. This leads to the conclusion that Kenyan English has a higher degree of formality in spoken language than British English. The observation is confirmed by Schmied who states that "African English is often generally said to be formal (1991: 51)". Since informal domains are usually occupied by African languages, speakers might either lack the stylistic repertoire to find suitable informal expressions in conversational English or might consider the formal style in informal settings more polite and appropriate in their culture.

5.2.3. Semantic analysis

Within the framework of the semantic analysis, first of all the meanings of *can* are classified. Subsequently their distribution in the corpora is examined. The results are displayed in total and individually for the 4 chosen text categories. The focus then shifts to *could*. Eventually, an interpretation of the obtained findings is attempted.

The meanings of CAN and their distribution in the corpora
Can represents a variety of meanings. In its major sense it indicates that something is possible, or, in other words, 'nihil obstat', which means "there is no obstruction to the action of the lexical verb of which *can* is an auxiliary" (Ehrman 1966: 12). So, for example, the phrase *'We can have a cup of tea now'* means that nothing prevents us from having a cup of tea, or simply, it is possible for us to have a cup of tea now. Nevertheless, the OALD exhibits a total of 11 different shades of meaning for *can*.

Since it is likely that some of these are only marginal uses of the modal and therefore rarely or not at all represented in both corpora, 4 broader semantic categories have been determined. These categories are termed: 'possibility', 'ability', 'permission' and 'dynamic implication'. The first three have been adopted from Quirk et al. (1985: 221), who designated these categories as major meanings of *can*. The last category 'dynamic implication' was introduced by Palmer (1990: 86) and has been added here for a more detailed analysis. In the following, these four categories are explained in more thoroughly.

As mentioned above, 'possibility' can be circumscribed as *'it is possible that'* or *'it is possible for'*. It would be more exact to designate this category as 'root possibility', because this present study focuses on positive forms and *can* in its positive form can only express 'root possibility' (Facchinetti 2002: 235)[11]. The examples below illustrate '(root) possibility':

(4)   So the girl <u>can</u> bleed profusely even she <u>can</u> faint or death could occur immediately. (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)
(5)   None of the language problems <u>can</u> be exclusively identified with the so-called developing world. (ICE-K: ldhm-k.txt)

Since there is often there is no or only little indication of subjectivity, this meaning has also been designated as "dynamic" (Palmer 1990: 83) or the "most neutral meaning" (Coates 1983: 93). The action here "depends not on inherent properties, but on external circumstances" (Facchinetti 2002: 236), which means that the influence of the subject on an action is low. Such a neutral sense is often paralleled by a passive construction as visible in example (5).

'Ability'-*can* is almost exclusively found with an animate subject and therefore predominantly occurs in infinitive constructions. The majority of phrases with verbs such as *remember, believe* or *hear* have been grouped into this category:

(6)   I <u>can</u> remember very well. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)
(7)   I <u>can</u> never think of anything to say when I'm being under stress. (ICE-GB: S1A-038)
(8)   I kind of used to think I <u>can</u> imitate her (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)

Even with the above mentioned characteristics, it is sometimes difficult to decide which semantic category *can* must be ascribed to. 'Ability' and 'possibility' are particularly problematic, because ability can be regarded as a special case of possibility (Quirk et al.

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[11] Facchinetti explains: "For *can*, epistemic values are the least presented and generally limited to interrogative and negative polarity contexts, where the modal is the negative counterpart of either epistemic possibility *may* or epistemic necessity *must*: *It must/may be John -> It <u>can't</u> be John*" (Facchinetti 2002: 235, compare also Palmer 1987: 108-109)

1985: 221). Typical for ability is that the possibility of an action depends on some skill or capability of the subject. Apart from the general paraphrase *'it is possible'*, 'ability'-*can* is therefore paraphrasable by *'be able to'* or *'know how to'* constructions (Quirk et al. 1985: 222). Thus, a sentence such as *'She can sing'* could be rephrased as *'She knows how to sing'*.

Still, it often remains unclear whether *can* implies ability or possibility since both readings are plausible at the same time and do not exclude each other:

> (9)   When we start questioning we ask more questions than they <u>can</u> answer. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)
> > Ability: [...]more questions than they are able to answer.
> > Possibility: More questions than it is possible for them to answer.
>
> (10)   In conclusion then we <u>can</u> see the relationship between subjects and objects, interpreted in various manners, as one of the fundamental qualities in all societies. (ICE-GB: W1A-011)
> > Ability: [...] we are now able to see [...] – acquired skill
> > Possibility: [...] it is possible for us to see [...]

Such cases of indeterminacy between 'possibility' and 'ability' are collected separately under 'Possibility/Ability' in the analysis below in order to avoid vague results.

Can is also used to ask for or to grant 'permission'. Characteristic for this meaning is that it necessitates an animate subject and an agentive verb (Facchinetti 2002: 236). 'Permission'-*can* can easily be recognized by the paraphrase *'to be allowed'* or *'to be permitted'* (Coates 1983: 87).The following examples illustrate this:

> (11)   Tell me, please, <u>can</u> I have a date with you [...](ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)
> (12)   Men take brideprice to be like binding and so they <u>can</u> beat you any time they're drunk. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

'Dynamic implication' is the denomination for cases in which somebody asks for help, makes suggestions or offers or requests something (Facchinetti 2002: 236/237). Here, the speaker wants to exert an influence on the listener or initiate an action. The implication can thereby be rather subtle and direct as in example (13) or explicit as in example (14).

> (13)   We <u>can</u> discuss the merits of this type of arrangement during our meeting. (ICE-GB: W1B-022)
> (14)   Now <u>can</u> you please tell us the organisation's structure and the membership procedures. (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)

There are some cases of ambiguity, where more than one semantic notion would make sense and it is not possible to deduct the meaning from the context. Only additional

information about general circumstances, situational factors or the speaker's intonation could reveal here which meaning the speaker wanted to convey. Sometimes even both readings are plausible at the same time and do exclude each other.

(15)   But maybe Helen <u>can</u> tell us. (ICE-GB: S1A-055)
            Ability: 'Maybe Helen is able to tell us'.
            Dynamic implication (request): 'Helen, please tell us.'

(16)   The women members in CHADEMA <u>can</u> join BAWATA if they like. (ICE-: br-intt.txt)
            Possibility: 'It is possible for the women members to join...'
            Permission: 'The women members are allowed to join...'

Such cases of ambiguity or indeterminacy between two or more semantic categories other than 'ability' and 'possibility' are gathered in category 'ambiguity/indeterminacy'.

Even with the above listed characteristics and the two merger categories it is surprisingly difficult to classify all examples of the corpora samples without doubt. This is due to the fact that prototypical examples are rare in language. Furthermore, the scarcity of circumstantial information often leaves it to the researcher's imagination, in which situation a statement was uttered. All examined sentences of the samples have therefore been double-checked. This, nevertheless, is still no guarantee for a flawless categorisation.

The results of the semantic analysis are shown below. The two diagrams indicate the distribution of the just introduced meanings of *can* in every of the four text types and in total. An interpretation of the findings will follow after the notions of the past tense form *could* have been displayed.

Figure 13: Semantic distribution of CAN compared
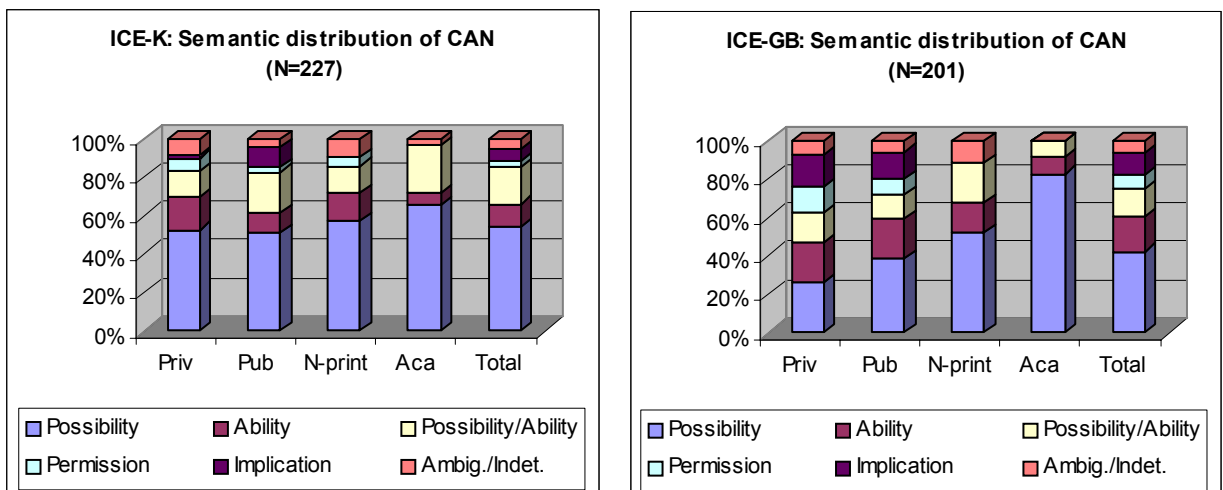
The meanings of COULD and their distribution in the corpora

Could is formally the past tense of *can* and can therefore adopt the same basic meanings. Its past tense use is predominantly found in narration or reported speech (Facchinetti 2002: 237).

> (17)   Past possibility: It <u>could</u> not work coz we do work in shifts.
>   (ICE-K: soc-letk.txt)
> (18)   Past ability: They were out because the parents <u>could</u> not raise their school fees or uniforms for them.
>   (ICE-K: ldsoc-k.txt)
> (19)   Past ability/possibility: This meant that they could draw support from only one or three ecosystems.
>   (ICE-K: ldtech-k.txt)
> (20)   Past permission: ...where you felt that you <u>could</u> not separate women from their communities from their houses
>   (ICE-K: br-talkk.txt)

Apart from that, *could* can express the hypothetical version of meanings such as 'ability', 'possibility' or 'permission' (Quirk et al. 1985: 232). Examples are illustrated below:

> (21)   Hypothetical possibility: It might help to clear my mind if I <u>could</u> talk it over with someone.
>   (ICE-GB: W2F-011)
> (22)   Hypothetical ability: Depends on the speed of how the first aider <u>could</u> do this.
>   (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)
> (23)   Hypothetical possibility/permission: Maybe Thursday I <u>could</u> take off.
>   (ICE-K: ICE-GB: S1A-039)

Like *can*, *could* shows a considerable number of cases of ambiguity and indeterminacy. The sentence below makes this clear:

> (24)   Perhaps Joe Bloggs <u>could</u> advise on this (ICE-GB: W1B-020)
>   Possibility: It is possible that Joe Bloggs has some advice.
>   Ability: Joe Bloggs is able to advise on this.
>   Implication (indirect request): Please advise on this, Joe!

The semantic distribution of *could* in the sample texts is displayed in figure 14. As exactly the same categories apply, all percentages are directly comparable with the figures for *can*.

Figure 14: Semantic distribution of COULD compared

ICE-K: Semantic distribution of COULD (N=219)

ICE-GB: Semantic distribution of COULD (N=250)
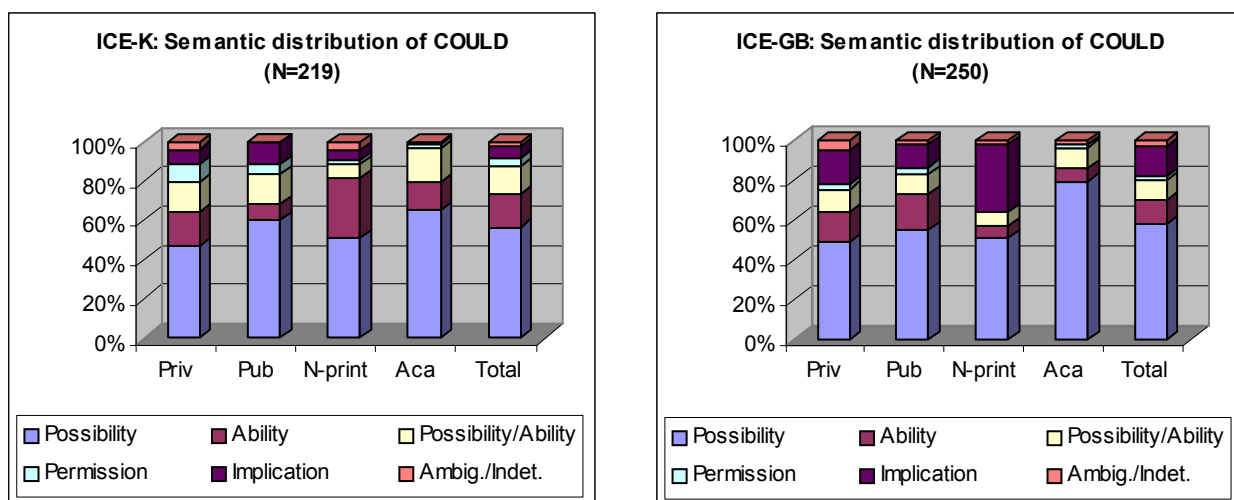
The results of the semantic distribution of *can* and *could* will now be described and interpreted. First of all, the focus will be on general trends after that the attention will be drawn to some details considered important.

Interpretation of data

In general, the charts for *can* and *could* show a similar picture: Both modals are predominantly used to express 'possibility' and 'ability' and less to signify 'permission' and 'implication'. Therefore, it is possible to state that, as a rule, the most prominent function of *can* and *could* in both language varieties is to express possible or probable facts. In contrast, pragmatic functions such as asking for permission or making an implication are comparatively rare. This general finding is not astonishing, because in an ordinary conversation people usually talk about things and do not constantly try to exert influence on the other person by granting or asking for permission, making suggestions or demands.

Another similarity between the corpora becomes visible when spoken and written texts are juxtaposed. In both corpora the meanings 'possibility', 'ability' and 'possibility/ability' appear more often in written language than in spoken language. The difference is especially noticeable for *can*, for which these 3 categories account for an average of 83 (ICE-K) and 69 (ICE-GB) percent in the spoken sections but 92 (ICE-K) and 94 (ICE-GB) percent in the written sections. 'Permission' and 'implication' show the opposite tendency. These results are again hardly surprising, since pragmatic functions

are predominantly confined to spoken language. A request or an implication will only be effective, if the person is directly addressed.

A possible difference in meaning was mentioned by Okombo (1986: 329) who listed the use of *can* in Kenyan English to show inclination: *'He is a rude boy; he can abuse his mother'*. However, in the analysis of the random sample not even one such notion has been found. Consequently, it must be concluded that Okombo's observation is not a characteristic feature of KenE. Apart from that, no other possible new meaning has been detected in the Kenyan corpus. Judging from this semantic analysis, *can* and *could* do not have more meanings in KenE than in BrE. The initial assumption that the high frequency of *can* in the ICE-K may be due to a wider set of meanings must therefore be rejected.

Nevertheless, a closer examination of percentages in single sections some remarkable peculiarities: Figures imply that in Kenyan English *can* and *could* are used less in their pragmatic function as in British English. For *could*, 'permission' and 'implication' constitute only 11 percent in the ICE-K sample compared to 17 percent in the ICE-GB. *Can* even displays a higher variation with 10 percent and 18 percent respectively. Conversely, there is evidence that in Kenyan English *can* and *could* are used more frequently in their core sense 'possibility' and its closest variant 'ability'. With 87 percent for the ICE-K and 81 percent for the ICE-GB, the difference runs up to 6 percent for *could*. The variance is with 8 percent even higher for *can*, where the same categories account for 84 and 76 percent respectively.

A reason therefore might be that in a new variety of English such as Kenyan English, a lexeme is somehow overused in its basic meanings. Thus, while KenE focuses on modal verbs to express the modality 'possibility', it is probable that in BrE employs a wider stylistic range. Instead of just using *can* and *could*, other expressions such as *probably, possibly, may, might* or *'to be able to'* might be a popular choice of British speakers. It would be interesting to examine this hypothesis further by investigating all ways to express one modality and comparing the results between different varieties of English. Only then a satisfactory explanation can be obtained.

There is evidence that the under-representation of the pragmatic meanings of *can* and *could* in the ICE-K has similar causes. 'Permission' and 'implication' can also be expressed via other lexemes such as *please* or *may* or via imperative constructions. It seems that Kenyans favour a variety of other expessions to *can* or *could*. Three independent analyses prove that this assumption is true: Supportive data is, first of all,

given by Buregeya, who examined requests in Kenyan English. He found out that this variety typically uses imperative structures for polite requests (2003: 13). More evidence is added by the findings of the politeness questionnaire administered to 40 university students in Kenya. Informants were ask how they would make certain requests in different situations. More than 50 percent of the inquired students opted for a bare imperative construction in an informal setting. In very formal situations and especially in written requests, the construction '*Kindly* + imperative' was prefered to modal expressions. Almost a quarter of all informants considered the latter construction as most appropriate when demanded to ask for a recommendation letter from their professor. Finally, a direct comparison between business letters in both corpora confirms that in KenE *could* is rarely used for making a request. All in all, there are only 5 such occurrences. In 4 of these, *could* is part of a standard phrases as in: *'We would appreciate if you could...'* or *'We would be grateful if you could...'*. Some common expressions in BrE as for example *'Perhaps you could...'* (4 tokens in ICE-GB 'business letters') or *'Could you please...'* (9 in ICE-GB) are not at all present in this section of the ICE-K. The construction '*Kindly* + imperative', in contrast, occurs 23 times in the Kenyan but not even once in the British business letters.

In the frequency overview, the slightly higher frequency of *could* in the ICE-GB was assumed to be due to a more tentative language use in BrE. Tentativeness is understood here as the preference of a speaker not to commit oneself fully to the statement expressed. In the more tentative language variety, speakers would opt more frequently for a modalised expression instead of a mere factual statement or would chose a modal that conveys a higher degree of uncertainty than another. In this respect, *could*, for example, is more tentative variant than *can*. Preisler (1986: 95) explains that "the preterite without past-tense reference is the most important category for the expression of epistemic remoteness. [...] adding contrary-to-factness or just a (further) degree of tentativeness."

In order to find evidence to support or decline this initial hypothesis, it is examined how often *could* occurs as a past version of *can* and how often as a hypothetical variant. Only the hypothetical *could* can be used interchangeably with *can* and can serve as an indicator for the inclination of a speech community to make tentative statements. The results are as follows: In the ICE-K, 70.6 percent of the 219 analysed examples are hypothetical uses of *could*. In the ICE-GB, in contrast, the percentage is noticeably higher with 85.6 percent of 250 examined clauses. The very high share of hypothetical

uses in the ICE-GB, which outnumber the figure result for the ICE-K by over 15 points, could be seen as a proof for the assumption that BrE is more tentative in statements than KenE. This result seems plausible, because indirectness is known to be characteristic feature of British culture. It is likely, that Kenyan speakers of English do not fully adopt this cultural particularity of the British but maintain their own way of speaking, which is probably somewhat more direct.

Finally, some peculiarities concerning the use of *can* have been found in the sample of ICE-K texts, which deserve comment. Please consider the following examples.

(25)   Now if the Cold War patrons <u>can</u> leave us alone then we <u>can</u> solve these conflicts as they come. (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)

Judged from the *if-then* structure, example (25) is a conditional clause. However, in this case the use of *can* both in the subordinate and the main clause is somehow awkward. Obviously, the first *can* is redundant here and would have to be left out to make the sentence grammatically correct.

The following sentences also deserve comment:

(26)   What <u>can</u> be an appropriate expression for means of labour? (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)
(27)   Who <u>can</u> try to define what are the productive forces? (ICE-K: cl-less.txt)

Example (26) sounds unfamiliar, because one is inclined to use a past tense modal in its hypothetical function or *may* for posing such a question: *'What might/would/could/should/may be an appropriate expression...'*. Example (28) is unusual here, because in a classroom setting, the *can* in *'Who can...?'* questions generally has the meaning of 'ability' or 'permission' (*'Who can answer?'* or *'Who can leave now'*). Here, neither of these two notions really fits, since the verb '*to try*' does not readily combine with 'ability' or 'permission' in this context. The paraphrases underline the peculiarity of the combination: **'Who is able to try to define...?'* or **'Who is allowed to try to define...?'*. In the example cited, *can* appears to stand for 'implication', a meaning which is in such an interrogative construction more commonly expressed by *'Who would like to try...?'*. Thus, it is not surprising that the phrase *'who can try...'* does not at all occur in the ICE-GB. In the ICE-K, however, 19 instances were counted.

Even though some of the above examined combinations occur quite often in the ICE-K, it is too early to speak of a distinct feature of KenE in any of these cases. At this point, such instances must rather be evaluated as mistakes made by individuals. So, for example, all 19 occurrences of *'who can try'* appear in the same file 'class lessons' and were probably all uttered by the same teacher.

Conclusion

In a summary of findings, the higher occurrence of *can* in the ICE-K can be ascribed to the extensive use of this modal to express 'possibility' and 'ability' in KenE, which probably results from the preference of Kenyan speakers to use *can* instead of other lexemes for conveying these meanings. For a confirmation of this hypothesis, a more comprehensible study would be necessary. In the ICE-K, *can* and *could* are both employed comparatively less in their pragmatic functions 'permission' and 'implication'. These are partly overtaken by imperative constructions or combinations with *kindly*. The slightly lower frequency of *could* in the ICE-K might result from a lower degree of tentativeness in KenE. It was observed that *could* occurs noticeably less frequent in its hypothetical function in the ICE-K. With regard to syntax, *can* and *could* are combined more commonly with the passive voice in Kenyan spoken texts. Since the differences to the ICE-GB are considerable, one can deduct a more formal usage of English in Kenyan conversations from these results.

In general, however, *can* and *could* express the same meanings in both language varieties. No additional meanings have been detected. Apart from the few instances of non-standard usage as for instance in conditional clauses or in connection with the progressive aspect, the examined modals hardly deviate from the ancestor variety BrE in form and function.

5.3.   MAY/MIGHT

5.3.1. Frequency overview

The table below displays an overview of the occurrences of *may* and *might* in 4 text types of the ICE-K and the ICE-GB. In both corpora, the past tense modal *might* is less frequent than its present tense counterpart *may* (ICE-K: 0.13 vs. 0.04; ICE-GB: 0.10 vs. 0.06). This tendency has also been observed for the LSWE corpus (Biber et al. 1999: 486) and the BNC (Kennedy 2002: 77).

Table 15: Frequency of MAY and MIGHT in the 4 selected text types of each corpus

ICE-K

Text types	Total words	May	%	Might	%
Private conversation	60282	35	0.06	31	0.05
Public conversation	201286	170	0.08	102	0.05
Non-printed writing	80976	187	0.23	34	0.04
Academic writing	80227	166	0.21	20	0.02
Total	422771	558	0.13	187	0.04

ICE-GB

Text types	Total words	May	%	Might	%
Private conversation	205608	63	0.03	154	0.07
Public conversation	108276	67	0.06	73	0.07
Non-printed writing	104164	156	0.15	52	0.05
Academic writing	85628	217	0.25	37	0.04
Total	503676	503	0.10	316	0.06

Total figures show that *may* is by 0.03 percent slightly more frequent in the Kenyan corpus than in the British one. *Might*, in contrast, is 1.5 times more common in the ICE-GB. Even though this deviance is much greater than for *may*, this frequency difference is not as significant as the preliminary frequency overview indicated[12]. There, the difference for *might* between the two corpora amounted to a significance level of 0.025 according to the chi-square test of significance. Obviously, this is a case where the specific analysis of selected text types supplies different and, presumably, more reliable results than a general analysis. Judging the above data, the usage of *might* is much more similar in the two language varieties than originally expected. The high deviance on the overall level must therefore have other causes.

In addition, it is worth noting that it is again the present tense modal, which is relatively more common in the Kenyan corpus, and the past tense modal that is comparatively less

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[12] See chapter 4 for the results of the frequency comparison between the corpora.

frequent there. A parallel trend has already been observed for *can* and *could* in the previous chapter. Since *may* and *might* stand in a similar relation to each other as *can* and *could*, the explanation for this phenomenon might also be similar. Taken that *might* partly functions as a remote and tentative variant of *may*, it can be assumed that KenE is less tentative or hypothetical than BrE. Kenyans seem to prefer *may* to *might* when both variants occur in free variation.

Interestingly, the distribution of *might* is balanced in all text types of both corpora with percentages ranging from 0.02 to 0.07. *May,* however, is considerably more frequent in written texts (average of 0.21%) than in spoken language (0.06 % on average). This gives rise to the assumption that the pragmatic functions of *may* are not the most important uses of this modal. As pragmatic functions mostly matter in speaking, figures would otherwise show the opposite tendency: a higher occurrence in spoken text and a considerably lower one in writing.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the highest frequency difference between the corpora can be observed for *may* for the text category 'non-printed writing'. There, numbers deviate by 0.08 percent. This is considerable in relation to the average deviance of about 0.02 percent for *may* and *might* in all other text categories. Hopefully, the now following syntactic and semantic analysis help to explain this difference. It will be interesting to see whether 'non-printed writing' also has the highest divergence between the corpora in these examinations.

5.3.2. Syntactic analysis

For the syntactic analysis, the distribution of the verb phrase structures for *may* and *might* will be displayed and interpreted simultaneously:

Figure 16: Syntactic distribution of MAY compared
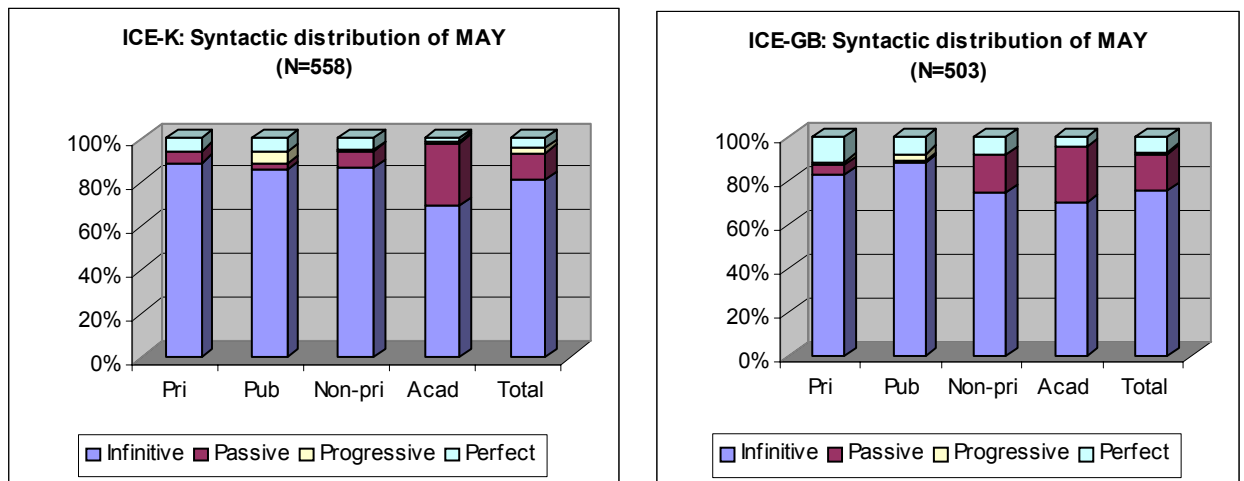
Figure 17: Syntactic distribution of MIGHT compared
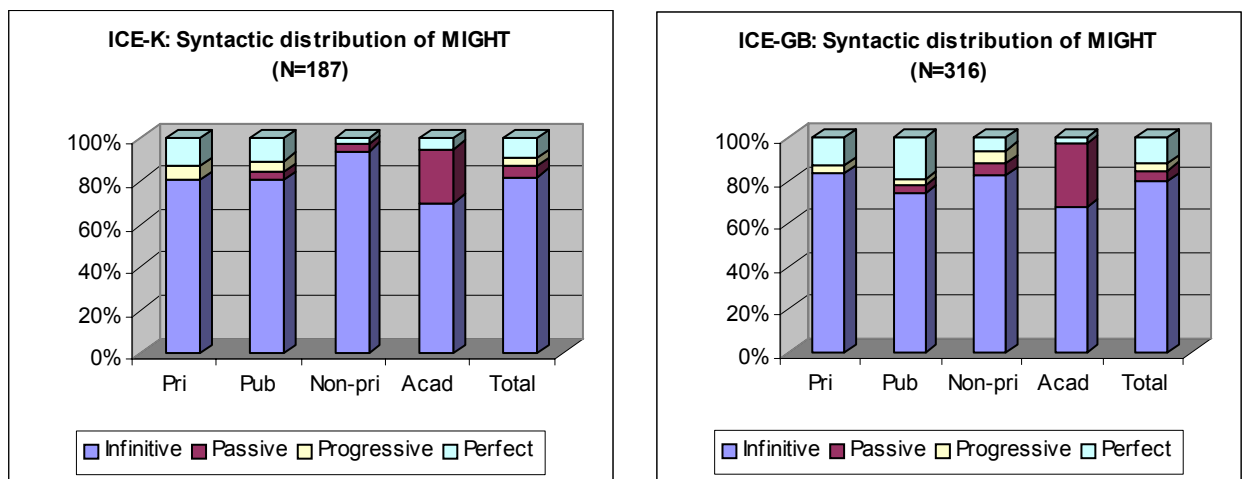
At first sight, a number of similarities between the corpora leap to the eye: In 'private conversation' *may* does not occur together with a progressive form, whereas *might* does. In contrast, *might* is not used in a passive construction there, even though it is common for *may*. Thus, one could overhastily conclude that there is a 100 percent correlation between *may* and the progressive aspect and *might* and the passive voice. The figures for 'public conversation', however, refute this assumption showing that in both corpora *may* and *might* co-occur with both. At this point it is impossible to explain why there is

such a big difference between 'private conversation' and 'public conversation' regarding the syntactic distribution. Nevertheless, it is amazing that both corpora show the same trends in the conversation texts.

In the ICE-K as well as in the ICE-GB, both text categories of the written component display a large share of passive constructions with *may* and *might* in contrast to the spoken sections. As expected, the most formal text category 'academic writing' shows the highest percentage of passive constructions in both corpora. Despite the just mentioned similarities, passive constructions are in general slightly more frequent in the spoken sections of the ICE-K compared to the ICE-GB. This observation adds evidence to the assumption that KenE is more formal in conversations than the British variety of English.

The attention will now be directed towards the perfect aspect. In the ICE-GB, *may* and *might* occur slightly more often in perfect constructions than in the ICE-K. The difference is especially noticeable for *might* in the spoken texts. If one keeps in mind that *might* is more frequent in these categories of the ICE-GB, the conclusion lies near that BrE has a preference for the more tentative *might* for expressing epistemic possibility, the major function of this modal, as will be seen in the following section. Apart from that, it seems that both language varieties do not deviate much from each other. Two general trends can be detected for either corpus: Firstly, the perfect aspect is more frequent in speaking than in writing. Secondly, *might* occurs more often in perfect constructions than *may*.

Even though the difference is small, progressive constructions with *may* are more frequent in the spoken texts of the ICE-K compared to the ICE-GB. Unlike for *can*, no non-standard uses of the progressive have been detected in the ICE-K in combination with *may*. Thus, other reasons must be responsible for the higher percentages in the Kenyan corpus. The figures might be explained by a general tendency to use more progressive constructions in English. Quirk et al. observed that "the progressive aspect has been undergoing grammatical extension over the past few hundred years (1985: 202)." This trend may be especially prominent in new varieties of English, since "a general tendency to overuse the continuous aspect" has also been noted for Standard Caribbean English (Mair 1992: 85) and for Black South African English (Wade 1998). It must however be abstained from over-evaluating the implications of these findings, since the differences between the corpora are to small to be statistically significant. Apart from that, the use of the progressive with the modal *might* is very similar in both

language varieties. In the 'non-printed writing' section of the ICE-GB, *might* with the progressive is even more common than in the ICE-K. Thus, the hypothesis of an overextensive use of the progressive aspect in KenE is not generally supported.

5.3.3. Semantic analysis

Starting with *may*, both modals are now examined with regard to their semantic values and the distribution of these in both corpora. The interpretation of the gained data then follows. In addition, possible links to the findings for *can* and *could* from the previous chapter are investigated.

The meanings of MAY and their distribution in the corpora

According to Quirk et al. the two major uses of *may* are 'possibility' and 'permission' (1985: 223). For the purpose of this study these two categories do not prove to be entirely practical for two reasons. Firstly, the subjunctive use of *may* to express a wish can not be ascribed to either of these categories. Secondly, a category 'possibility' is too broad to provide meaningful results. Therefore, instances of the subjunctive use of *may* are collected in a separate section and the very general 'possibility' category is subdivided further into 'root possibility' and 'epistemic possibility'. As a result, 4 meaning categories form the basis for the semantic analysis in this present study. These are 'epistemic possibility', 'root possibility', 'permission' and 'wish'. All of these categories will now be explained more thoroughly.

Examples for 'epistemic possibility' are:

(1)   You <u>may</u> wish to know that our Nairobi office remains open on Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m. (ICE-K: bus-letk.txt)
(2)   They <u>may</u> need eyeglasses (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)

Epistemic possibility in general expresses the speaker's lack of confidence in the proposition expressed or, in other words, in what is being said (Coates 1983: 131). Epistemic *may* is characterized by subjectivity, which means that the speaker's personal opinion is reflected in the utterance. It is therfore often used as a 'hedge' to avoid a commitment to the truth of what is expressed (ibid.: 133/134). Suitable paraphrases are *'it is possible that'* or *perhaps*. This meaning is easily recognizable in real life conversations because 'epistemic' *may* is usually stressed. Analysing written texts and transcribed conversations without prosodic annotations is a more difficult enterprise.

Nevertheless, the syntactic behaviour of *may* hints at the meaning it is supposed to convey. Coates (1983: 137/150) notes that there is a 100 percent correlation for *may* between epistemic possibility and the progressive aspect, the perfective aspect and negation. This means that all cases of progressive and perfect constructions in the syntactic analysis can automatically be identified as examples of epistemic possibility.

There is a special case of *may* that must be attributed to the category 'epistemic possibility'. This is the concessive use of *may*. Consider the following example:

> (3)   I <u>may</u> like loud music but to your ears I'm being cruel. (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)

May is used here to admit that something is true before introducing another argument or another point. Thus, the utterance could be paraphrased as *'I <u>admit</u> that I like loud music, but...'* At first sight the association with 'epistemic possibility' is not quite clear. Nonetheless, Coates (1983: 135), Quirk et al. (1985: 224) and Leech (1983: 75) all treat this peculiarity within this category. Looking at another example with the same '*may – but'* construction, the proximity to 'epistemic possibility' becomes more understandable:

> (4)   This <u>may</u> be rather provoking to conservationists but I think this has been done purposely in order to uh to stimulate discussion. (ICE-K: br-disct.txt)

Example (4) can be rephrased as: *'Although <u>it is possible that</u> it is rather provoking, I think this has been done...'.* The paraphrase here clearly confirms the 'epistemic possibility' notion of *may*[13].

The second subcategory of possibility is 'root possibility' (Coates 1983: 131). In contrast to 'epistemic possibility', no subjective evaluation is implied. External circumstances are responsible for the possibility of an action or a state:

> (5)   Transport to and from the Jom Kenyatta Airport <u>may</u> also be arranged at Kshs 400. (ICE-K: bus-letk.txt)
> (6)   Pulmonary cysts <u>may</u> co-exist with pulmonary tuberculosis. (ICE-K: ldnats-k.txt)

May in this sense can be paraphrased as *'it is possible for'* or *'circumstances allow...'* (Coates 1983: 141). Here, the modal has the same possibility sense as *can* and *could* and can be substituted by them (Quirk et al. 1985: 223). This use is mainly restricted to formal English, where it often co-occurs with the passive voice (Coates 1983: 142).

A special case of *may* assigned to this category is the function of *may* as a quasi-subjunctive. Here, *may* occurs in a subordinate clause after *'so that'* to express purpose:

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[13] The concessive use of the modal has been detected in both corpora with a similar frequency. In the examined sample of the ICE-GB 13 instances were counted compared to 11 in the ICE-K.

<blockquote>
(7)   We should like to keep your details on file so that we <u>may</u> contact you should an appropriate post become available. (ICE-GB: W1B-019)
</blockquote>

Such constructions are paraphraseable by *'so that it is possible for ... to ...'*[14].

The third basic meaning of *may* is 'permission' (Coates 1983: 131). Since asking for, granting or refusing permission aim at influencing a person, this meaning undoubtedly has a pragmatic force. Some examples will illustrate this.

<blockquote>
(8)   If I <u>may</u> reply to that (ICE-K: br-disk.txt)

(9)   In the meanwhile, <u>may</u> I just confirm a few administrative details (ICE-GB: W1B-030)
</blockquote>

Following Leech (1987: 76) and Chalker (1990: 236), the fourth meaning category is denoted (exclamatory) 'wish' in this present study. Coates (1983: 132) designated this notion as 'benediction'. Here, *may* is employed to express blessings or curses. Consider the following example:

<blockquote>
(10)   <u>May</u> God bless you. (ICE-K: soc-letk.txt)
</blockquote>

Characteristic for this meaning is that *may* occurs with subject-operator inversion and parallels the function of the formulaic subjunctive (Quirk et al. 1985: 224).

In contrast to *can* and *could*, ambiguity and indeterminacy do not so often occur with *may*. With the help of the context, the few instances found could eventually be ascribed to a distinct category:

<blockquote>
(11)   In fact you <u>may</u> elect to make partial withdrawals. (ICE-GB: W1B-022)
(root possibility/permission: more permission)

(12)   A parastatal <u>may</u> also be established by or under an Act of parliament or other written law. (ICE-K: ldsoc-k.txt)
(root possibility/permission: more root possibility)
</blockquote>

The distribution of all four meanings of *may* in the samples of the 4 selected text categories of the ICE-K and the ICE-GB are displayed in the figure below.

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[14] With two examples in the British sample and 5 in the Kenyan one this quasi-subjunctive use of *may* is however rare.

Figure 18: Semantic distribution of MAY compared
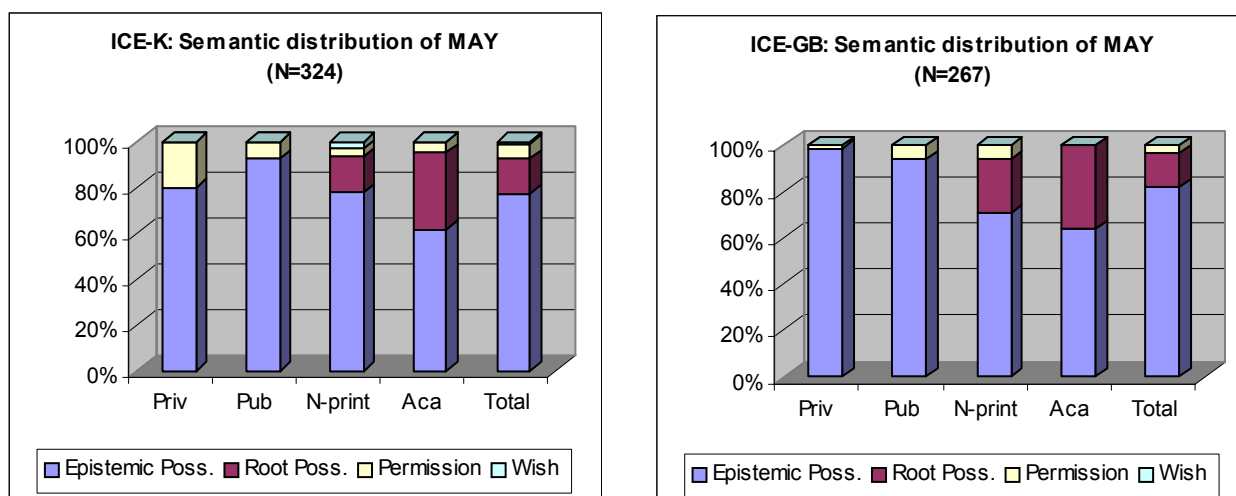
Interpretation of data

As visible, in both corpora 'epistemic possibility' exhibits the highest share of all investigated meanings of *may*. In the ICE-K, 77 percent of all examined occurrences are assigned to this category and with a total of 82, the percentage is equally high in the ICE-GB. These numbers imply that in both language varieties *may* is a very common means to express 'epistemic possibility'. Taking the similar results of the frequency overview into consideration, it can be concluded that there is no noticeable difference in the usage of *may* as a modal of 'epistemic possibility'. In both analyses, percentages hardly deviate between the corpora.

It leaps to the eye that 'root possibility' only occurs in written language. This is not surprising because Quirk et al. (1985: 223) already indicated that this meaning is confined to formal English. More of a surprise is however the similarity of the results. So, for example, academic texts display a percentage of 33.3 percent in the ICE-K and 36.3 percent in the ICE-GB. A reason for this closeness may be the fact that academic writing has to suffice an international standard for international readers. Unlike for all other text categories, the target audience are not only Kenyans. Writers probably attempt to stick as closely as possible to the rules of StE. Apart from that, people that write academic texts have enjoyed university education are likely to have an excellent command of English, firstly because of the long period of English instruction and

secondly because of their opportunity to communicate to native speakers of English at conferences, congresses or during exchange programmes.

The section 'non-printed writing', *may* in the 'root possibility' sense displays a variance of 6 points between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB. Speakers of BrE seem to opt more often for *may*, when they have the choice between this modal and *can* or *could*. Given that *may* fulfils the same function but is additionally marked for formality, results may leave the impression that KenE is perceived less formal in written texts than BrE. In the frequency comparison at the beginning of this chapter was observed that *may* is more popular in the ICE-K in this text category. Now, the semantic analysis shows that the high occurrence of this modal is not primarily caused by its function to express 'root possibility', but to a great extent by its 'epistemic possibility' notion.

In the Kenyan corpus, *may* is used twice as often for 'permission' as in the British one. The highest difference between the corpora is in 'private conversation'. In this text category 7 occurrences were counted for the ICE-K compared to only 1 example in the ICE-GB. The observation now has to be put into relation to the findings of the previous chapter on *can* and *could*. Since *may, can* and *could* all express 'permission', a correlation between these modals in this function must be assumed. In the ICE-K *can* and *could* display a relatively lower percentage of the meanings 'permission' and 'dynamic implication' compared to the ICE-GB. Now figures show that *may* is relatively more frequent in the ICE-K in its permission function. This result implies that *may* is a much more common way to express permission in KenE than in BrE and that it is preferred to *can* and *could* to convey this meaning.

The popularity to use *may* to ask for permission in KenE is confirmed by results of the politeness questionnaire distributed among Kenyan university students. First of all, it showed that *may* is perceived as very polite by Kenyan speakers of English. In a selection of 6 modal expressions to make a request, *'may I'* was ranked as the most polite choice by 65 percent of the participating students before all other given alternatives such as *'can I', 'could I'* or *'might I'*. In a second test section, informants were asked to complete phrases with the modals they thought were most appropriate in that situation. Among those were the following 4 questions:

a) ___ I ask you a question?
b) ___ I borrow your car tonight, Daddy?
c) ___ I interrupt you for a second, Madam?
d) ___ I take this seat?

Please note that in all of these utterances, *may, can, could* and *might* can be used interchangeably. Which modal the speaker choses depends largely on the speaker's personal preference and evaluation of the situation. The table below displays the results of the enquiry among the 40 informants.

Table 19: Selected results of an elicitation test on modals in requests administered to 40 university students in Kenya

Sentence	*may*	%	*can*	%	*could*	%	other	%	Total	%
a)	26	65%	13	33%	1	3%	0	0%	40	100%
b)	17	43%	19	48%	2	5%	2	5%	40	100%
c)	26	65%	9	23%	4	10%	1	3%	40	100%
d)	25	63%	12	30%	1	3%	2	5%	40	100%
Total	94	59%	53	33%	8	5%	5	3%	160	100%

Figures prove that the modal *may* is with 59 percent clearly the prefered choice of Kenyan speakers for making a request in conversations. In general, almost twice as many informants opted for *may* instead of *can* to complete the phrases.

Interesting is the fact that hardly anybody found *could* an appropriate choice*,* even though informants evaluated this modal as more polite than *can*. A reason therefore might be that *may* and *can* are often part of fixed, standardized expressions and more readily come to the mind than the modal *could*.

The high frequency of *may* adds evidence to the observation that KenE has a higher degree of formality in conversation than BrE. Coates states "where *may* is used [...] it signals formality, and *can* cannot be substituted for it without losing the formal marking (1983: 106)." Formality is thus not only reflected in syntactic structures, as shown in a previous chapter, but also in the choice of words. The corpus findings and the data received from the questionnaire hint at a tendency of Kenyan speakers to prefer *may*, a modal which is marked for formality and politeness, to other less formal alternatives in conversations.

The subjunctive use of *may* to express 'wish' has only been spotted in the ICE-K, but not even once in the ICE-GB. Without exception instances appeared in connection with religious blessings such as *'May the Lord bless you'* or *'May God bless you'.* The cultural context might give an explanation for this phenomenon. Kenyan speakers seem to have a closer affinity to God and a more conservative understanding of how to practice religion than the average British person. In the politeness questionnaire, for example, one student did not give an answer to the questions 'How would you ask somebody for a light?' and 'How would you invite a girl/guy for a cup of coffee' saying

that "My faith does not permit me to imagine such a situation." This religiousness could result in a higher usage of such phrases, not only in church but also in every day language.

Some examples with *may* were spotted in the ICE-K which sound peculiar and will therefore be given a closer look. Please consider the following examples:

(13)　<u>May</u> you please give us a hint on what are the problems. (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)

(14)　But before you reach to successes <u>may</u> you first just tell us have you ever received any assistance? (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)

In both examples, *may* occurs in direct questions together with the 2nd person pronoun *you.* This is unusual because according to the rules of StE "*may* = 'permission' is found only rarely with third person subjects, and co-occurs in 84 per cent of cases with a first person subject. In the interrogative it is restricted to first person subjects (Coates 1983: 106)." Permission questions with *may* are thus only acceptable as *'May I...?'* or *'May we...?'*. In the examples cited above, *may* would have to be replaced by *can* to make a correct utterance: *'Can you please give us a hint...'* or *'...can you first just tell us...'*.

This non-standard use of *may* seems to be rather common in KenE, which is underlined by the fact that all in all 6 such constructions have been spotted in the ICE-K, whereas no single instance of *'May you...'* was found in the ICE-GB. Even in the questionnaire among Kenyan university students, this construction has been found 3 times: *'May you proofread this draft for me.', 'May you get me a drink'*, and *'May you assist me, I'm applying for a job.'* This usage of *may* is obviously not due to accidental mistakes, so that one could argue that in KenE *may* has been developing an additional function or at least an additional field of usage, which it does not have in BrE.

According to the categorization chosen in this present study, this additional usage would have to be termed 'dynamic implication', since *may* is used here to request something and to trigger a certain behaviour from the addressee. This function is quite common for the modals *can* and *could*, as shown in the previous chapter. In KenE it seems to be transfered to the modal *may* as well. The result of this semantic development is an extension of the meanings of the modal. From another perspective, one could also regard the change as generalization or, more precisely, a simplification: Kenyan speakers ignore certain exception to the general rules of StE such as the syntactic restriction. Hence, the complexity of StE grammar is simplified by equally applying the same rules to modals with the same meaning. As a result, *can, could* and *may* all become acceptable in interrogatives with the first person.

The focus of attention will now be drawn to the past tense modal *might*.

The meanings of MIGHT and their distribution in the corpora

Might, in contrast to *may*, does not have a subjunctive use. The modal can function as a past tense version or a hypothetical version of the present tense modal *may*. Thus it can adopt the three meanings 'epistemic possibility', 'root possibility' and 'permission' (Coates 1983: 147).

As explained in the theoretical section of this paper, it is not possible to express past with *might* alone. In order to convey a past reference, *might* must either occur within a reported speech construction as in example (15) or must be combined with the perfect aspect as in example (16).

> (15) And you asked him whether he thought that you <u>might</u> get back together. (ICE-GB: S1A-050)
> (epistemic possibility – past reference with reported speech)

> (16) They <u>might</u>'ve smoked a cigarette. (ICE-GB: S1B-004)
> (hypothetical epistemic possibility – past reference with perfect aspect)

In the examined texts, not even one percent of all examples occur in reported speech sentences to backshift *may*. Moreover, no examples of past 'permission' or past 'root possibility' have been discovered.

In the majority of examples, *might* functions as a 'remote' form to express hypothetical versions of *may*. Hypothetical versions have been discovered for all three cited meanings. Consider the following examples:

> (17) Our friends <u>might</u> be wondering what we learn in this class. (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)
> (hypothetical epistemic possibility)

> (18) I enclose confirmation of the award so that you <u>might</u> initiate the necessary steps. (ICE-GB: W1B-022)
> (hypothetical root possibility)

> (19) Melanie you <u>might</u> briefly run through. (ICE-GB: S1B-003)
> (hypothetical permission)

In many cases of possibility, *may* and *might* can be used interchangeably. The past tense modal expresses a higher level of tentativeness regarding possibility as visible in the examples (17) and (18) or politeness in cases of permission as shown in example (19) (Quirk et al. 1985: 224). Coates, nevertheless, states that *might* "seems no longer to be used as the tentative form of *may*, but simply as an alternative form for the expression of the modality 'it is possible that' (1983: 153)". It is, however, impossible to decide

within the framework of the present study, whether a speaker uses *might* as a more tentative version of *may* or just as a way to express 'epistemic possibility'. Therefore, the analysis will do without a further sub-categorization of 'epistemic possibility'. It is furthermore assumed that in the majority of cases *might* is still a more tentative choice to *may*. The distribution of the three cited meanings in the selected texts are displayed in figure 20.

Figure 20: Semantic distribution of MIGHT compared
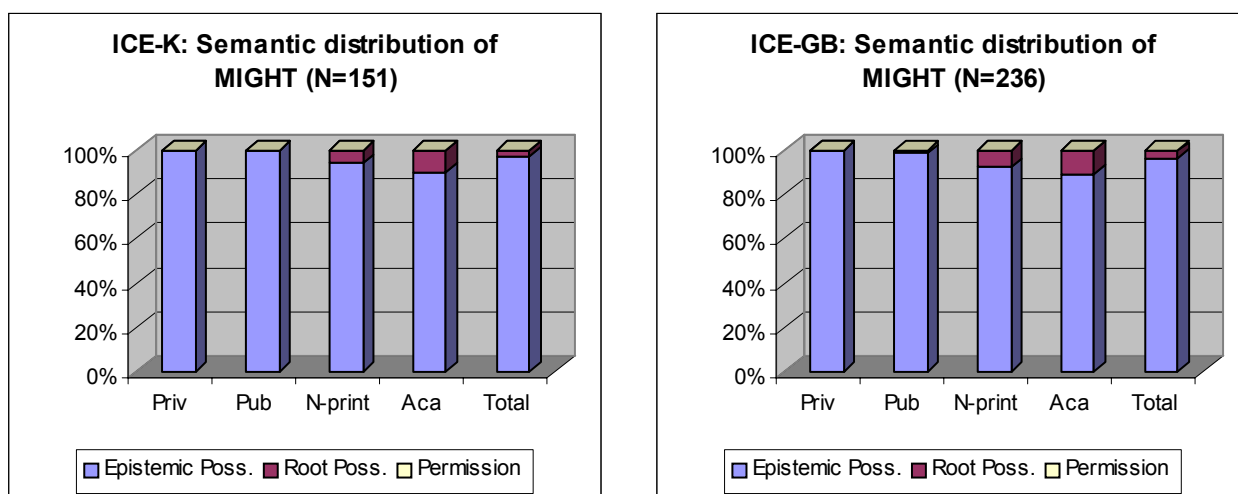
Interpretation of data

Astonishingly, there is no difference in the semantic distribution of *might* between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB. In either corpus the 'epistemic possibility' sense of *might* is dominating. 'Root possibility' is again confined to the written sections, where it is much less frequent in comparison to *may*. Particularly striking is the similarity of the percentages of these two meanings between the corpora. Total numbers deviate by only one percent. These findings lead to the confirmation that semantic notions have neither been newly established nor been dropped in KenE. Furthermore, it seems that both varieties do not differ at all in their semantic usage of *might*.

In all examined examples of both corpora only one instance of 'permission' was found in the ICE-GB. These figures confirm Quirk et al. in their observation that *might* expressing permission is "rare and apparently obsolescent in this usage" (1985: 224). In

conclusion it can be stated that the use of *might* to express permission is virtually non-existent in both varieties of English.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysed data. Considering the results for *may*, BrE seems to be slightly more formal in the expression of root-'possibility' in written texts. Supportive evidence is given by the fact that root-*may,* the more formal variant of *can* and *could,* is less common in the written sections of the ICE-K, especially in texts which target a Kenyan audience.

Academic texts show the least deviance in the syntactic and semantic distribution between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB, which is probably due to the high level of education and exposure to English of Kenyan scholars and the levelling of national features of English through international standards.

In both varieties, *may, can* and *could* are generally the only modals to voice 'permission'. *Can* is in general the preferred choice to express permission in BrE, whereas in KenE *may* is more common than *can* or *could*. The frequent usage of *may* to ask for permission in Kenyan conversations leaves the impression that KenE is more formal in spoken language, since this modal is especially marked for formality.

Finally it has been observed that *may* is taking on an additional function in KenE. Various examples have been detected, in which *may* is used to express 'dynamic implication', a function that is confined to *can* and *could* in BrE. Despite this emerging difference, it must however be noted that the meanings and usage of the modals *may* and *might* are still very similar in both language varieties. This is further underlined by the almost identical distribution of epistemic-*may*, epistemic-*might* and root-*might* in the corpora.

5.4.   WILL/WOULD/SHALL

5.4.1. Frequency overview

This chapter deals with *will, would* and *shall*, all modals of volition and prediction (Quirk et al. 1985: 221). The frequency of these three modals in the analysed text types is displayed in figure 21. As visible, *will* and *would* are very common in both corpora with percentages ranging from 0.21 to 0.37. It can thus be concluded that these modals play an important role in both varieties of English. *Shall*, in contrast, is extremely rare with a percentage of 0.02 in the corpora samples and will therefore be excluded from a more thorough analysis.

Table 21: Frequency of WILL, WOULD and SHALL in the 4 selected text types of each corpus

ICE-K

Text types	Total words	Will	%	Would	%	Shall	%
Private conversation	60282	213	0.35	183	0.30	8	0.01
Public conversation	201286	786	0.39	470	0.23	23	0.01
Non-printed writing	80976	415	0.51	164	0.20	37	0.05
Academic writing	80227	134	0.17	70	0.09	6	0.01
Total	422771	1548	0.37	887	0.21	74	0.02

ICE-GB

Text types	Total words	Will	%	Would	%	Shall	%
Private conversation	205608	540	0.26	707	0.34	47	0.02
Public conversation	108276	269	0.25	435	0.40	15	0.01
Non-printed writing	104164	442	0.42	360	0.35	29	0.03
Academic writing	85628	163	0.19	117	0.14	8	0.01
Total	503676	1414	0.28	1619	0.32	99	0.02

In comparison to the ICE-GB, the ICE-K shows a much higher usage of *will* with a total of 0.37 versus 0.28 percent. *Would*, however, is by 0.11 percent more common in the ICE-GB. The observation that the past tense modal is relatively less frequent in the ICE-K compared to the ICE-GB has already been made for the pairs *can/could* and *may/might* in the previous chapters. Now, relative frequency differences between *will* and *would* are not only evident between the corpora but within either individual corpus. In both conversation texts, *will* is more frequent than *would* in the ICE-K. In the same sections of the ICE-GB, *would* is more common than *will*. Given that *would* partly functions as a general hypothetical marker and a more tentative variant of *will*, figures

could be interpreted with regard to tentativeness. Then BrE would again be the more tentative variety.

Interestingly, *will* and *would* occur much less in academic writing than in any other text type. This phenomenon can be observed in both corpora. Apart from that, the divergence between the corpora is with 0.02 and 0.05 much smaller in this text category than in the other ones. A reason for the latter result is certainly that academic texts necessitate a highly standardized English since national features of English might be stigmatized by an international audience. Moreover, the authors of such texts can be expected to have enjoyed a good instruction in English and a high exposure to StE, which usually contributes to a levelling of differences between BrE and KenE in academic texts. The proximity of StE and Kenyan academic writing has already been observed in connection with other modals[15].

In both text categories, *will* and *would* include also their respective contracted forms *'ll* and *'d*. The frequency analysis revealed that there is a considerable difference in the relationship between contracted and non-contracted forms between the spoken parts of both corpora. In the ICE-GB, 483 of the 809 occurrences of *will* and 352 of the 1,142 tokens of *would* in the spoken texts appear in the contracted form. This equals a percentage of 60 and 30 percent. In the ICE-K, in contrast, 252 of the 999 occurrences of *will* and 58 of the 653 tokens of *would* are listed in the short form, which corresponds to percentages of 25 and 9 percent respectively. Short forms are usually a marker for informality, which is especially underlined by the fact that they only occur in conversations and private correspondences. The high percentage of non-contracted forms in the spoken section of the ICE-K can thus be considered as further indication that KenE is more formal in spoken language. This tendency has already been described in previous chapters with the higher share of passive constructions in spoken ICE-K texts and a preference to use the more formal *may* instead of *can* for requesting.

5.4.2. Syntactic analysis

The syntactic distribution of *will* in the 4 text types is displayed in figure 22.

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[15] See chapter on *may/might*.

Figure 22: Syntactic distribution of WILL compared
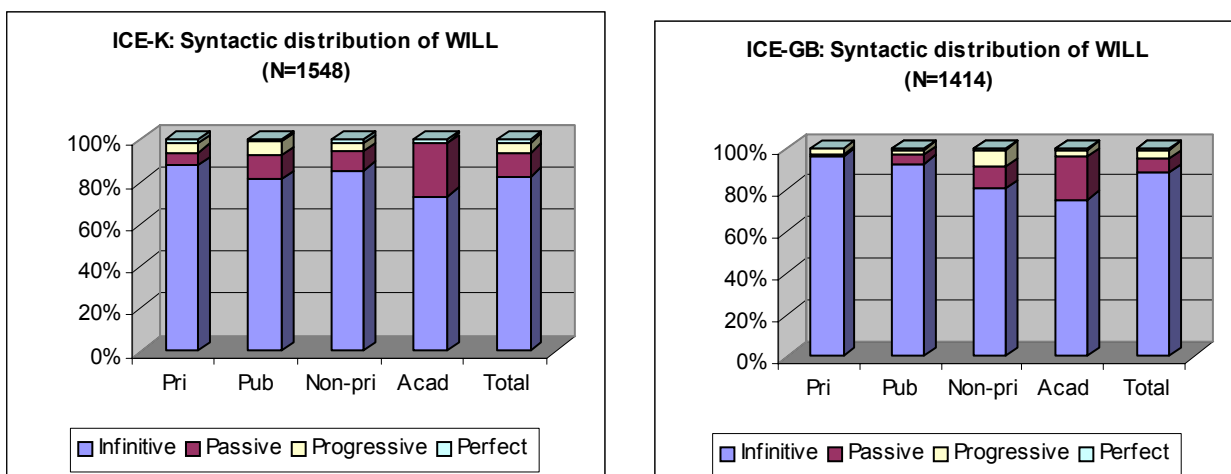
The charts show a number of similarities between both language corpora. Firstly, infinitive constructions constitute the largest share of all uses. Secondly, passive constructions are especially prominent in academic writing. Thirdly, *will* is hardly ever used with the perfect aspect.

Nevertheless, the charts also hint at some dissimilarities. The use of the passive voice in spoken language is noticeably more frequent in the ICE-K. This phenomenon parallels the observation made for *can* and *could* in a previous chapter. Furthermore, the Kenyan corpus displays a higher total of progressive constructions with 4.9 percent compared to 4.3 percent in the ICE-GB. This is once more in line with the results for other modals that also indicated that the progressive aspect is used more extensively in KenE. Nevertheless, this interpretation can be challenged because the difference is not statistically significant. Apart from that, the ICE-GB displays considerably more progressive constructions in the written sections.

Now the focus of attention will shift to *would*. Similarly for both corpora, the vast majority of occurrences can be attributed to infinitive constructions. In addition, the perfect aspect is more typical for spoken language, whereas the passive voice is predominantly confined to written texts. In comparison to *will, would* is in general more often combined with the perfect aspect in both corpora.

The results of the syntactic analysis of *would* are presented in figure 23.

Figure 23: Syntactic distribution of WOULD compared
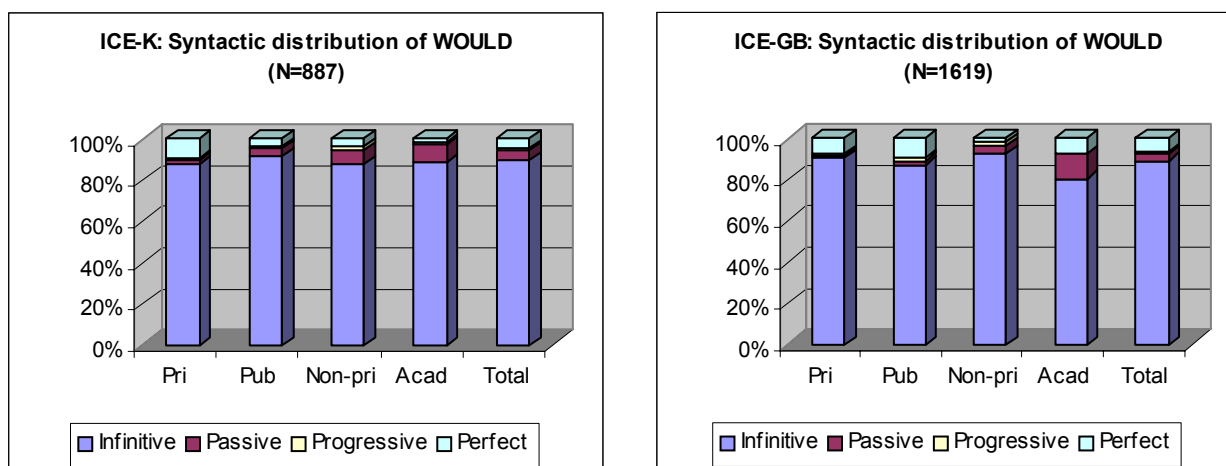
There are hardly any significant differences discernable between both corpora. Some trends that have already been noticed for other modals are, nevertheless, also discernable for *would*: Firstly, passive constructions are more frequent in the spoken texts of the ICE-K and, secondly, the progressive aspect occurs with 1.4 percent by 0.3 percent slightly more often in the Kenyan corpus than in the British one.

5.4.3. Semantic analysis

For the semantic analysis, first of all the meanings of *will* and their distribution in the corpora are examined. Afterwards, figures for *would* are displayed and subsequently compared and interpreted.

The meanings of WILL and their distribution in the corpora

Of the various different senses of *will,* which have been explained in the literature, four basic meanings have been determined to underlie the distributional analysis of the modal in the various text types. These basic notions are 'intention', 'willingness', 'prediction' and 'predictability'. The categorization has been adopted from Coates (1983: 169). All 4 semantic categories of *will* are now explained more thoroughly.

As the category name already implies, *will* in the sense of 'willingness' expresses that somebody wants to do something or is willing to do something. Please consider the following examples:

(1) And that's why I <u>will</u> never drink Del Monte juice. (ICE-GB: S1A-047)
     willingness: I'm not willing to drink Del Monte juice

(2) "... Maria, I want you to marry me" [...] – "I <u>will</u>." (Coates 1983: 171)
     willingness: I want to marry you

'Willingness'-*will* takes an animate subject which is usually human (Collins 1991: 187). Suitable paraphrases are *'to be willing to'* or *'to want to'*. In some instances, the willingness of a person is demanded and *will* is used to express a request or an order (Chalker 1990: 423). Thus, the modal in this sense can also have a pragmatic force similar to the function of 'dynamic implication' described in a previous chapter. Two examples shall illustrate this:

(3) If you cannot agree <u>will</u> you please telephone this office before sending any further demands (ICE-GB: W1B-023)
(4) I'm talking <u>will</u> you please shut up in that (ICE-GB: S1B-042)

When the volition implied is strong, 'willingness'-*will* has a notion of insistence as in *'If you <u>will</u> go out without your overcoat, what can you expect?'* (Quirk et al. 1985: 229) Nevertheless, neither corpus sample displayed such a case.

The second major meaning 'intention' differs from 'willingness', because it focuses on some future event rather than the speaker's state of mind (Coates 1983: 173). Hence in '*I will marry you'*, *will* expresses the general inclination to marry the person without an indication when the action will eventually take place. '*I will buy the rings tomorrow'*, in contrast, would have to be classified as 'intention'-*will,* because the focus of attention lies on a specific action in the future. Just as 'willingness', 'intention' usually occurs with an animate subject. Three examples of *will* indicating 'intention' are displayed below:

(5) I'<u>ll</u> come back to the panel shortly (ICE-GB: S1B-027)
(6) I'<u>ll</u> do that in a minute (ICE-GB: S1A-087)
(7) I have not received it, but be sure that anytime I receive it I <u>will</u> send it to your dad (ICE-K: soc-letk.txt)

'Willingness' and 'intention' are closely semantically linked, since intention presupposes willingness (Coates 1983: 173). Therefore, cases of indeterminacy occur. In spoken language, 'willingness' *will* is likely to be emphasised, which makes it easy to decide which of the two meanings is intended. Unfortunately, no phonetic transcription is available for the corpora. In questionable cases the example has been attributed to the most probable of the two alternatives.

Will in its 'prediction' sense is predominantly used for marking future time and can be regarded as neutral, since such statements often do not contain traces of subjectivity. Examples that illustrate prediction are:

(8)   There <u>will</u> be a course in University College on 16-19 September. (ICE-GB: W1B-018)

(9)   Well, I hope it <u>will</u> be hill-walking. (ICE-GB: S1A-017)

(10)   Urban population <u>will</u> continue to grow and the problems of overurbanisation will increase alongside the continuing spectre of rural poverty. (ICE-GB: W2A-019)

Examples can be paraphrased by *'I predict that...'.* The future time reference of the predication is characteristic to this meaning category (Coates 1983: 179). Sometimes, the speaker's attitude toward the prediction is indicated (Collins 1991: 189) as for instance in example (9). In these cases, sentences are introduced by an adverb or typical phrases indicating attitude such as *'I hope'*, *'hopefully'* or *'I think'*.

'Predictability', the last meaning category of *will*, is based on common sense or on repeated experience and always makes a claim about the present and not the future (Coates 1983: 177). It is popular in scientific writing or proverbs, since habitual predictability describes a typical or characteristic behaviour (Leech 1987: 84). *Will* indicating 'predictability' is frequently found with inanimate subjects (Coates 1983: 181-182). Consider the subsequent examples:

(11)   Any good rose-growing manual <u>will</u> show you how to do it. (ICE-GB: S1B-025)

(12)   In social work as there are in any kind of profession there <u>will</u> be people with different positions. (ICE-GB: S1B-030)

When the main predication refers to an event in the past and *will* appears in a perfective construction, the example must also be assigned to 'predictability' (Coates 1983: 179). A good illustration was found by Coates (ibid.) in one of her analysed corpora:

(13)   ...and my mother was not drunk – several people in the house will have said that to you. (I predict that several people have said that to you)

There is a close link between the syntactic structure in which the modal occurs and its meaning. For example, *will* in its 'root' senses 'willingness' or 'intention' neither combine with the progressive or perfective aspect, nor the passive voice (Coates 1983: 177). When *will* is used in these constructions, it can automatically be interpreted as having the epistemic meanings 'prediction' or 'predictability'.

(14)   Studies <u>will</u> be conducted in Kilifi District, Coast province. (ICE-K: ldnatsk.txt)
(Passive voice: prediction)

(15)   He<u>'ll</u> be straining and be craning his neck to see what is there (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)
(Progressive aspect: prediction)

(16) And these are people you are just going to you are just going to give them information on uh IT at one particular time and next time they <u>will</u> have changed. (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)
(Perfective aspect: prediction)

The distribution of the four meaning categories of *will* in the sample texts of the corpora is displayed in figure 24:

Figure 24: Semantic distribution of WILL compared
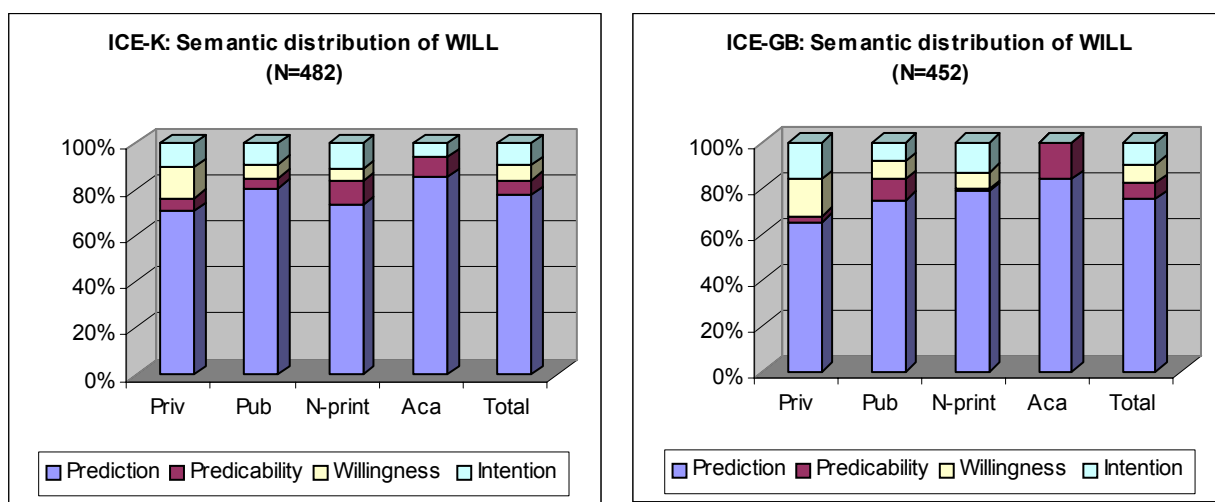
Interpretation of data

At first sight it is striking how the dissimilarities in the semantic distribution in the 4 text types are levelled in the total of all text categories. 'Prediction' is the major function of *will* in both corpora with 77 and 75 percent of occurrences followed by 'intention' with a percentage of 9 in each corpus. The other two meanings 'predictability' and 'willingness' are also similarly distributed with 7 percent each in both corpora. A reason for this balanced result might be that the semantic usage of the modal *will* is identical in both language varieties. Even though the modal is in general more frequent in KenE, it has neither developed new notions nor dropped any meanings.

Regarding the single text categories, no particular trend can be determined except that 'willingness' and 'intention' occur relatively often in the 'private conversation' texts of both corpora and rarely or not at all in 'academic writing'. This is not surprising because these two meaning categories generally co-occur with a subject. In academic text, however, an impersonal style is adopted where animate subjects are often omitted by using passive constructions. The fact that 'intention' has not at all been spotted in the 'academic writing' section of the ICE-GB, even though it is quite prominent in this

section in the ICE-K, is probably due to the topics dealt with. In the ICE-K, intentions of farmers are discussed:

> (17)　There are construction trees which they <u>will</u> protect and fodder trees which they <u>will</u> utilize (ICE-K: ldtech-k.txt)

Nevertheless, it is more characteristic for academic texts in both corpora to use *will* in the meanings 'prediction' and 'predictability' as the charts above prove.

In the ICE-GB sample, 5 instances of 'prediction'-*will* are preceded by *hopefully*, 12 by '*I hope*' and 12 by '*I think*'. In the ICE-K, however, such phrases are not so common. In the examined sample there are only 2 examples with *hopefully*, 4 with '*I hope*' and 3 with '*I think*'. This again could hint at a higher degree of tentativeness of BrE in comparison to KenE, since such expressions of personal opinion in combination with modal verbs reinforce each other and thus increase level of tentativeness conveyed.

There are some sentences containing *will* in the ICE-K which sound peculiar and are worth a closer look.

> (18)　Currently we <u>will</u> be operating 20 rooms upto the end of the month. (ICE-K: bus-letk.txt)
> (19)　If you <u>will</u> have time pliz meet me there but if not possible mind not my dear. (ICE-K: soc-letk.txt)

In the example (18), an adverb *currently* indicating present time is combined with *will* expressing future prediction. This results in some sort of tense disharmony and would probably be inacceptable to a British speaker. Nevertheless, this instance has to be evaluated as an individual mistake than as a feature of Kenyan English. It must be assumed that the writer of this sentence is not highly proficient in English, since he or she wrongly merges the two prepositions *up* and *to* to one word.

Example (19) shows a non-standard use of a conditional clause. Here, *will* is put in the if-clause, which is unusual according to the rules of StE: "*will* does not normally occur in protases" (Palmer: 1990: 177). Even without the modal *will*, futurity would be implied: '*If you have time, please meet me there...'*. In this case the speaker probably uses *will* as a general marker of future even though the grammatical construction or the context makes the use of the future marker redundant. This could then be classified as a type of overgeneralization, which is a typical learning strategy for languages.

Except for the just mentioned examples, the analysis leads to the conclusion that the usage of *will* is similar in both language varieties. Even though the ICE-K displays a higher occurrence of the modal in relative numbers, the syntactic and semantic behaviour of *will* does not hint at any significant deviances between the corpora.

The attention will therefore shift to the modal *would.*

The meanings of WOULD and their distribution in the corpora

Would is the past tense form of *will* and can therefore express the past versions of the meanings 'willingness', 'intention', 'predictability' and 'prediction'. In contrast to *might*, it is not necessary to combine *would* with the perfect aspect or a reported speech construction to convey past meaning. Examples for all basic meanings are given below. The first two contain *would* with reported speech, the last two do not:

> (20)   Past intention: I was approached through my sister by a British lady who was teaching in uh RRRin one of the colleges in one of the primary colleges in the country to write stories and she told us she <u>would</u> publish the stories and so we cracked our heads. (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)

> (21)   Past prediction: First I thought it <u>would</u> be me to pay the publisher or the printer for that matter (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)

> (22)   Past predictability: And in the evenings then we <u>would</u> sit down and uh I would tell stories or we'd play games (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)

> (23)   Past willingness: When we were coming back he sat in front He <u>would</u> talk and talk and talk. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

Apart from that, *would* functions as a general marker of hypothetical meaning (Coates 1983: 205).

> (24)   How do you transmit that into proper Swahili so that a person from the village <u>would</u> understand what gender sensitisation means. (ICE-K: br-intt.txt)

> (25)   If it was really bad you <u>would</u> see those threads. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

> (26)   I think many people <u>would</u> easily answer this question. (ICE-K: br-disct.txt) (...if they were asked)

The most typical context in which *would* is used as a hypothetical marker are conditional clauses (as in example 25). Nevertheless, the if-clause is often omitted as shown in example (26). In the ICE-K sample, only 48 out of 299 examples occurred together with an if-clause compared to 46 out of 312 in the ICE-GB. In both corpora, the share of if-clauses thus constitutes about 15 percent.

Figure 25 indicates how the 5 functions of *would* are distributed in the sample texts of both corpora:

Figure 25: Semantic distribution of WOULD compared
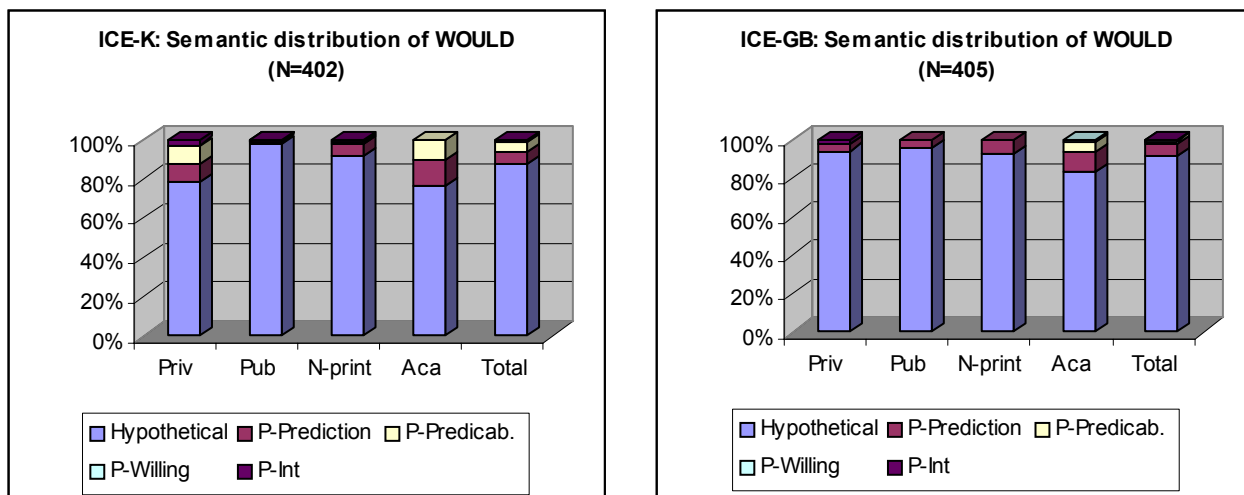
Another sub-categorization is now introduced, which will be made use of later: Within the category 'hypothetical marker', a distinct group of examples can be identified in which *would* functions as the hypothetical form of *will* in its volitional senses 'intention' and 'willingness' (Coates 1983: 211). Here, *would* can either be substituted by *will* (example 27) or paraphrased by *'would be willing to'* (example 28) (Leech 1987: 127) and always occurs with an animate subject and an agentive verb (Coates 1983: 211). Examples to illustrate this subgroup are given below:

(27)   <u>Would</u> you mind to tell us uh a brief background about ICAC and uh what uh are you going to discuss in Arusha .(ICE-K: br-intt.txt)

(28)   Now there is a change but I <u>would</u> say it's not a very positive one at the moment. (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)

This subcategory of the hypothetical meaning can serve as an indicator for tentativeness. The insertion of *would* into an utterance or the choice of *would* where *will* is also suitable, leaves the impression that the speaker is more hesitant in his statement or request. In the ICE-K, 52 out of 351 examples could be ascribed to this subgroup compared to 55 out of 370 in the ICE-GB.

Interpretation of data

In both language varieties, *would* functions predominantly as a general hypothetical marker. The reason therefore may be that ways to express hypothetical meaning in English are limited. The only other modal that can exert this function is *should*. Quirk et al. explain "would (and sometimes, with a 1st person subject, *should*) may express hypothetical meaning in main clauses (1985: 234)." Since the use of the alternative

marker *should* is syntactically restricted, it is not surprising that in both language varieties *would* is so prominent as a general hypothetical marker.

Would in the function of the hypothetical form of volitional *will,* the above described subgroup within the hypothetical category, occurs in both samples in about 15 percent of all hypothetical cases. The vast majority of instances has been detected in the spoken section. This result hints at a similarity in the semantic usage of *would* in both language varieties and does not contribute to the expected trend of BrE being more tentative.

In general, the past tense functions of *would* do not play an important role in either corpus. All four meaning categories combined only display a total of about 13 percent in the ICE-K and 8 percent in the ICE-GB. Nevertheless, a considerable difference between the 'private conversation' sections of both corpus samples leaps to the eye: In the Kenyan corpus 21 percent of the examined sentences with *would* are past tense functions, compared to 6 percent in the same text type in the British corpus. Reading through the sentences in the Kenyan sample, almost all occurrences of this past functions can be attributed to one text. A writer describes how she got interested in writing when she was young from a past perspective and talks about habits during that time (see examples (20) to (22)). This results in the high occurrence of 'past prediction' and 'past predictability' in the 'private conversation' category of the ICE-K.

On the one hand, one might therefore argue that the divergence in past tense function of *would* between the Kenyan and the British corpus is topic induced and not significant. On the other hand, however, the high frequency of *would* in these past meanings could also be seen as an indication that narrations are more typical in KenE than in BrE. Many African cultures have been noted to be oral cultures, in which knowledge and values are handed down from generation to generation by story-telling (Wilson 2004; East Africa Living Encyclopedia 2004). From this point of view, the higher frequency of past uses is a reflection of "African realities" and could be evaluated as a characteristic feature of KenE.

In both corpora, past senses of *would* are furthermore typical in academic writing. Authors sometimes deal with past habits and historical developments and put the reader in the perspective of that time. Nevertheless, the past functions of *would* also sometimes appear within reported speech constructions in the corpora to give an account of what somebody else has said.

In general, the past versions of the 'willingness' and 'intention' are almost never conveyed by *would*. A reason therefore might be that in both language varieties other

lexemes such as '*was going to', 'was willing to', 'intended to'* or '*wanted' to* are used to express this meaning. In this respect, KenE and BrE do not deviate at all from each other.

Despite the overall similarity in the use of *would* in the ICE-K and the ICE-GB, there are some instances in the Kenyan corpus that have to be assessed as non-standard uses according to the rules of StE. Consider the following examples:

(29) If such a thing <u>would</u> happen to me I don't abstain totally. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

(30) If they <u>would</u> take into consideration the cultural aspect of it then we will not having uh structural adjustment in the in the first place. (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)

(31) They could do better if they <u>would</u> first be in the decision-making bodies right from the villages and up (ICE-K: br-disct.txt)

All examples display a non-standard use of tenses in conditional clauses. Usually, the *would* functioning as a hypothetical marker does not belong into the if-clause, except for indicating politeness and emphasis (Vince 1998: 43). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that these mistakes are individual learner mistakes and not typical for KenE. A proof therefore is the low occurrence of these mistakes (4 out of 351 examples) and their appearance only in conversation and not in writing. Apart from that, conditional clauses are a in general not an easy field of English grammar.

Conclusion

In summary, it can be maintained that the ICE-K and the ICE-GB show a very similar semantic and syntactic behaviour with regard to *will* and *would*. No new usages have been detected in the ICE-K and the percentage of *would* in the function of the hypothetical form of volitional *will* is equal in both corpora. Nevertheless, some indications have been found that show KenE as the less tentative variety. Modal expressions with *will* are less often combined there with phrases indicating tentativeness and personal attitudes such as '*I hope'* or '*I think'*. At the same time, however, results for *would* run contrary to this trend by displaying a similar percentage of tentative uses between the corpora. It has furthermore been noticed that KenE uses considerably less contracted forms and a higher share of passive constructions in spoken language, which hints at a higher degree of formality in conversations. Non-standard uses of *will* and *would* have been spotted within conditional clause constructions. These, however, were infrequent and did not display a comparable underlying structure.

5.5. SHOULD/MUST

5.5.1. Frequency overview

Table 26 shows the frequency overview over the occurrence of *should* and *must*, two modals of obligation and necessity (Biber et al. 1999: 485). Figures indicate that *must* is rarely used in both corpora. With 0.07 percent in the ICE-K and 0.05 percent in the ICE-GB, the total shares hardly deviate between the corpora. Except for the 'non-printed writing' category in the Kenyan corpus, the distribution of *must* is balanced in the different text types ranging from 0.04 to 0.07 percent. Since there is no salient indication for a different usage of *must* between the language varieties and due to its infrequent use, the further analysis will exclusively concentrate on the modal *should*.

Table 26: Frequency of SHOULD and MUST in the 4 selected text types of each corpus

ICE-K

Text types	Total words	Should	%	Must	%
Private conversation	60282	85	0.14	39	0.06
Public conversation	201286	463	0.23	119	0.06
Non-printed writing	80976	220	0.27	82	0.10
Academic writing	80227	72	0.09	59	0.07
Total	422771	840	0.20	299	0.07

ICE-GB

Text types	Total words	Should	%	Must	%
Private conversation	205608	143	0.07	87	0.04
Public conversation	108276	113	0.10	49	0.05
Non-printed writing	104164	113	0.11	60	0.06
Academic writing	85628	54	0.06	51	0.06
Total	503676	423	0.08	247	0.05

The figures for *should* display significant differences in the frequency of this modal between both language corpora. In the Kenyan corpus, *should* is more than twice as frequent as in the British corpus. The variance is especially noticeable for both conversation texts and the category 'non-printed writing'. The text category 'academic writing' again maintains the least deviance between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB. This confirms that the English in academic texts is very close to StE and representing the acrolectal variety in the English language continuum in Kenya.

There is a peculiarity which deserves a brief comment: The 'non-printed' writing section of the ICE-K not only displays the highest relative frequency for *should* but also for *must*. Since both modals can express obligation and necessity, it is likely that this trend

is not accidental. Maybe the topics treated in this section require an extensive use of modals of obligation and necessity. Whether the higher frequency of *should* is furthermore due to the emergence of new meanings will be investigated later on.

5.5.2. Syntactic analysis

The syntactic distribution of *should* shows noticeable differences between the two language corpora. In the ICE-K, *should* predominantly occurs in infinitive and passive constructions with a small percentage of perfect constructions. In the ICE-GB, in contrast, the passive voice is only frequent in written texts, whereas in the spoken sections the perfect constructions are especially popular.

Figure 27: Syntactic distribution of SHOULD compared
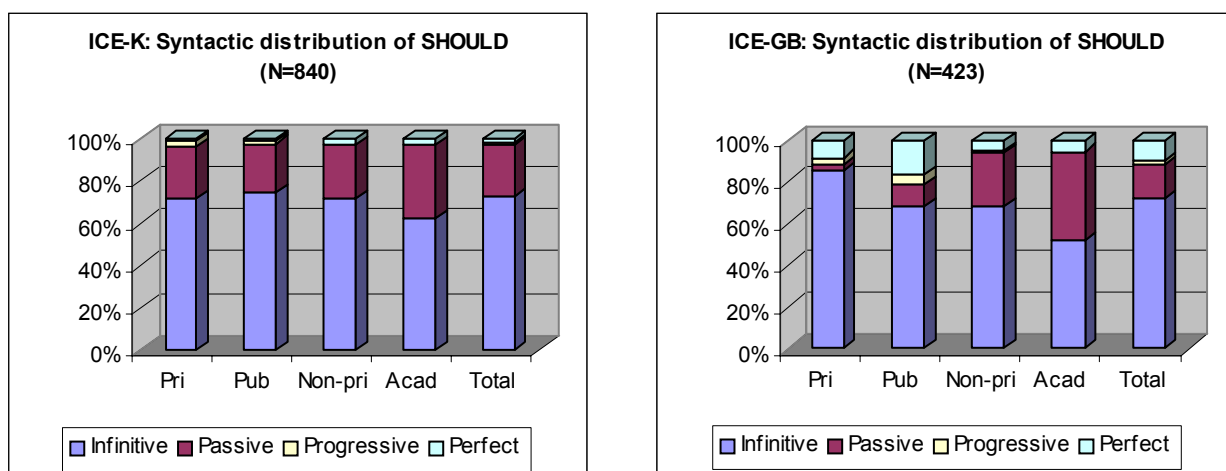
The high share of passive constructions in the 'private conversation' and 'public conversation' text of the ICE-K are surprising in two ways. Firstly, the percentage of passive voice in these texts are almost as high as in the written sections. Secondly, a tremendous divergence is noticeable compared to the ICE-GB. The higher share of passive constructions in Kenyan spoken texts has already been observed for other modals. It contributes to the hypothesis that KenE has a higher degree of formality in spoken language. In this case, however, written and spoken language seem to be almost identical.

Nevertheless, the syntactic divergence between the corpora is much higher for *should* than for any other modal so far examined. The assumption lies near that formality may

not be the only reason for this difference. The high share of passive constructions could also be due to the topics discussed by the speakers. Looking at the content of the examined sentences in both corpora, this suspicion is confirmed. In ICE-K 'private conversation' texts, discussions are about politics, history, culture or women rights. The examples below make this obvious:

(1)   It <u>should</u> be incorporated in the Union government then we have Tanganyika government. (ICE-K: conv-t.txt)
(2)   Men believe woman <u>should</u> be looked at as children and that's what they believed. (ICE-K: conv2-k.txt)
(3)   So to my mind I think this <u>should</u> not be implemented in the near future and I also stressed it to my fellow Zanzibari who are maybe in Zanzibar or somewhere else to come out with a different argument suggestion and proposal or advice about this. (ICE-K: conv-t.txt)

Such public domain topics necessitate a more formal and impersonal style, because the agent is often not known or deliberately omitted in general statements. As a result, the speaker employs a lot of passive constructions, where no agentive subject is needed.

In the ICE-GB, however, the private conversations recorded seem to be far more informal and dealing with more personal topics. An indication therefore is the shortness of sentences, which make it often impossible to guess what conversations are about. Such typical "small talk" phrases in general do not combine with passive constructions. In addition, speakers are more often directly addressed, so that the subject cannot be omitted.

(4)   That <u>should</u> be fun. (ICE-GB: S1A-069)
(5)   You <u>should</u> be forewarned. (ICE-GB: S1A-030)
(6)   I think you <u>should</u> just stand up and burp. (ICE-GB: S1A-030)

The more informal and confidential style of conversations in the British corpus is also reflected in the high number of perfect constructions in this section. The perfect aspect is typically employed when people give their personal advice or opinion or tell a story to the listener as indicated in the examples below.

(7)   I mean I brought a buckle but I <u>should</u> have brought a belt. (ICE-GB: S1A-014)
(8)   He thinks like I <u>should</u> have finished it by now. (ICE-GB: S1A-084)
(9)   Perhaps you <u>should</u> have done. (ICE-GB: S1A-030)

Obviously, the 'private conversation' sections of both corpora show a considerable divergence in "privacy". Maybe corpus compilation is responsible for this result. One could, for example, imagine that it was not possible for the Kenyan corpus team to tape authentic private conversations. It can be assumed that they had to rely on a "simulation" of a private conversation with a group of selected people instead.

Naturally, a stimulated and monitored conversation in a public place between people who do not know each other well would give different results than a conversation between two friends at home.

On the other hand, the results could be seen as a indication that language choice in Kenya is largely dependent on the topic discussed. English, for example, is the language of politics, commerce and science[16]. Therefore, people would discuss such issues in English. The language spoken at home and with close friends is usually an indigenous language or Kiswahili. Private matters would consequently be discussed exclusively in the native tongue or the national lingua franca. When asked to lead a conversation in English, Kenyan informants would probably chose a topic they usually discuss in English anyway such as politics, history or rights.

5.5.3. Semantic analysis

Following the same steps taken in previous chapters, the semantic notions of *should* are first explained and then displayed with regard to their distribution in the two examined language corpora. Subsequently, the data gained data is analysed with a view to possible differences between the language varieties.

The meanings of SHOULD and their distribution in the corpora

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 227) *should* can express 'obligation' and 'tentative inference'[17]. Moreover, it functions as a marker of 'hypothetical' meaning and as a marker of 'putative' meaning (ibid: 234). Not explicitly listed in Quirk et al. (1985) but quite frequent in English is the use of *should* for expressing 'tentativeness and politeness' (Chalker 1990: 337). In the following, all these functions will be explained in greater detail.

The most common meaning of *should* is 'obligation', a root modality (Coates 1983: 58). The speaker thereby gives advice to somebody or expresses a critical opinion as shown in the following examples:

> (10) So if those children start running everywhere they <u>should</u> be stopped. (ICE-K: br-disck.txt)
> (11) Tonight he was actually ill and <u>should</u> have been in bed. (ICE-GB: W1B-010)

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[16] See chapter 2 on the sociolinguistic situation in Kenya.
[17] 'Tentative inference' is designated as 'logical necessity' in Biber et. al (1999: 495).

This root meaning of *should* combines well with passive and perfective constructions. With the latter, *should* typically has the implication that the advice has not been followed (Quirk et al. 1985: 227). Example (11), for instance, implies that the person had not been in bed despite being ill.

In its epistemic sense, *should* is employed to convey 'tentative inference'. Here, the speaker concludes what may be true on the basis of what she or he knows (ibid.). It was observed that the majority of examples with *should* in this meaning have future time reference and can be paraphrased as *'I think it's probable that...'* (Coates 1983: 65). Two typical examples are:

> (12)   The payment and invoice <u>should</u> reach you about the end of next week. (ICE-GB: W1B-014)
> (13)   As long as they have agreed among themselves then there <u>should</u> be no problem. (ICE-K: cl-lessk.txt)

The third function of *should* has been termed 'putative' meaning (Quirk et al. 1985: 234), since it describes something that is generally accepted, supposed to be or to become true. As shown in the examples below, this category comprises the quasi-subjunctive use of *should* in subordinate that-clauses (see example (14)) and instances with *should* in the subordinate clause of a conditional clause (15). In addition, a number of rhetorical questions starting with *'Why should...'* are assigned to this category (16) (ibid.). Although infinitive constructions make up the majority of cases, perfect and progressive constructions are possible.

> (14)   She insisted very much that I <u>should</u> be the one to come up. (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)
> (15)   <u>Should</u> a need arise for you to be away, please make a recommendation of your nominee(s). (ICE-K: bus-letk.txt)
> (16)   Why <u>should</u> I look forward to marriage after I've seen all that? (ICE-K: conv1-k.txt)

In its 'hypothetical' function, *should* can replace *would* in the 1st person singular or plural to mark the hypothetical meaning in main clauses of conditional clauses (Quirk et al. 1985: 234).

> (17)   Because if I made it up because it had a purpose then I <u>should</u> be able to stop it. (ICE-GB: S1A-062)

A special use of the hypothetical *should* it to add tentativeness or politeness to given statement (Coates 1983: 221). It was considered necessary to put up a separate category for this meaning type in the present study, because it makes it easier to investigate differences in tentativeness and politeness between the two language varieties. The

category entails examples in which the speaker wants to indicate that he or she is not completely confident about something as *'I should think'* or *'I should say'*. A further member of this category is *should* in a pragmatic function, when it occurs in *I/we* questions to make a polite suggestion or an offer as in *'Should I open a window?'*. (Chalker 1990: 337). Some examples of the category 'tentativeness and politeness' from the examined corpus samples are:

    (18)   That's a good ten minutes I <u>should</u> think. (ICE-GB: S1A-023)
    (19)   I <u>should</u> like to add uh on the types of foods which uh conventionally they are not uh thought about whenever people think of sources of food (ICE-K: br-disct.txt)

Finally, there are some cases, which could not easily be assigned to one of the above categories. These examples are collected under 'ambiguity'. It was found that most of these cases were ambiguous with regard to 'obligation' and 'tentative inference' as shown in the example below.

    (20)   We <u>should</u> be invited to the reception (ICE-GB: S1A-071)
                (Obligation: it is necessary that we are invited/
                Tentative inference: it is very probable that we are invited)

The distribution of all these meanings in the corpora samples is indicated in the charts below:

Figure 28: Semantic distribution of SHOULD compared
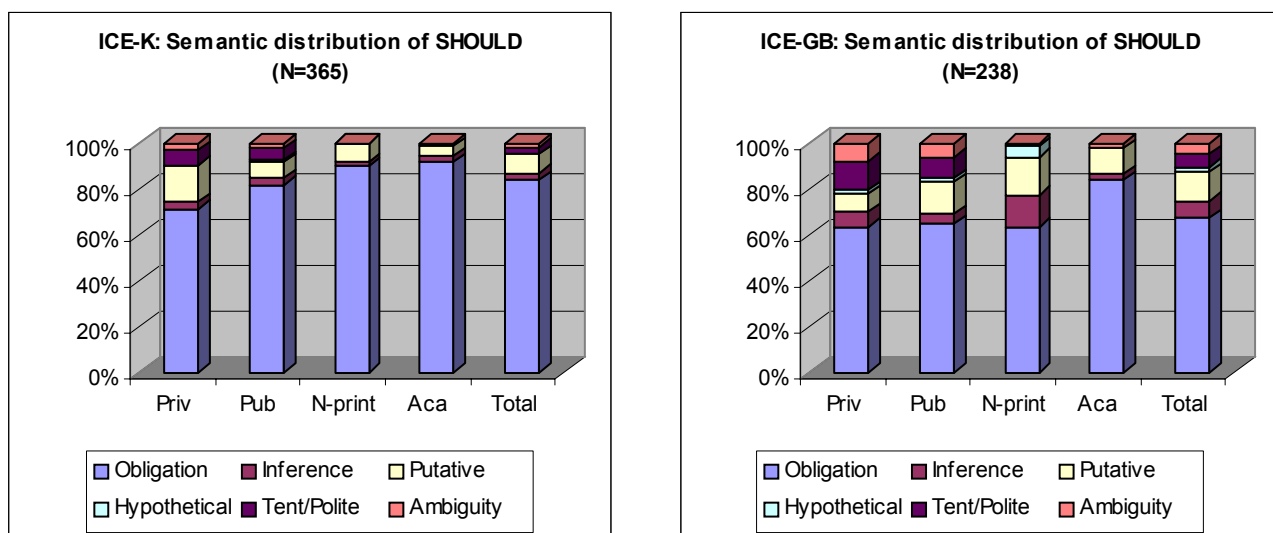
Interpretation of data

The charts display an astonishingly different semantic distribution for both corpora. Comparing the total numbers for ICE-K with the ICE-GB, *should* in its obligation meaning is by almost 20 percent more frequent in the Kenyan corpus. As already

mentioned in the frequency overview above, this high divergence may partly be topic induced. A look at the content of the analysed examples confirms this explanation: In the 'non-printed writing' section, the category with the highest divergence between the corpora, almost two thirds of all instances in the ICE-K appear in student exam papers. All of these examples deal with responsibilities of teachers, learners and the school. Obviously, students were asked to write about obligations in their exams. This consequently necessitates the use of a high number of modals expressing obligation such as *should* or *must*. The sentences below demonstrate the dominance of the topic:

(21) A teacher <u>should</u> be able to maintain his or her authority in a classroom. (ICE-K: exam-k.txt)
(22) He <u>should</u> treat all learners equally. (ICE-K: exam-k.txt)
(23) Students <u>should</u> not be left to behave the way they want. (ICE-K: exam-k.txt)
(24) The learners <u>should</u> be involved in such activities. (ICE-K: exam-k.txt)

In the ICE-GB, in contrast, it is not possible to deduce one general topic from the investigated samples. The content of the analysed sample sentences can however not fully explain the differences between the corpora, since the tendencies are not limited to 'non-printed writing', but are prominent in both conversation texts as well.

The results could also be regarded as an indication that KenE preferably uses the polysemous *should* in its major sense 'obligation'. As shown in the chart above, all other meaning categories occur much less often in the ICE-K compared to the ICE-GB. The underlying mechanism for this possible development could be some kind of generalization, which means that core meanings are overused at the expense of other functions. Since it is impossible to prove or reject such an interpretation within the scope of the present study, this explanation is nothing but a vague hypothesis.

Another reason for the frequent use of *should* in the ICE-K could be that Kenyans opt less often for alternative ways of expressing weak obligation. Substitutes could for instance be *'ought to'*, *'to be necessary'* or even the stronger *'have to'* or *must*.

Should in 'putative' function is with 8 percent less common in the ICE-K than in the ICE-GB, where it maintains an average of 13 percent in all text categories. Even though the deviation appears considerable, no striking difference in usage has been detected. In both corpora, all instances of this meaning in the spoken sections occur either in combination with *that*-clauses or questions with *why*. In 'non-printed writing', the majority of examples is part of the subordinate clause of a conditional sentence (6 tokens in both corpora) in phrases such as *'Should you require further information...'*. These expressions are especially typical for business letters and internationally

standardized. The results for the 'putative' furthermore do not show a coherent tendency between the two corpora. Whereas the ICE-K displays a relatively higher occurrence in 'private conversation', the ICE-GB outnumbers the figures for this semantic category in all other text types.

The 'hypothetical' function of *should* occurs only once in the ICE-K, while in the ICE-GB 5 instances were counted. It can therefore be concluded that Kenyan speakers of English almost exclusively choose *would* to express the hypothetical function in conditional clauses, even if *should* would be possible in the 1st person. In this respect, KenE does not differ much from BrE, since this function of *should* is not popular there either. It would be easy to confirm these findings by running a preference test with a number of informants of both language varieties.

Finally, it can be observed that *should* is slightly more common in the ICE-GB than in the ICE-K in expressions of 'tentativeness and politeness'. In the spoken sections, this function is applied 14 times in the ICE-GB and 11 times in the ICE-K. In the British corpus, the phrase *'I should think'* was counted ten times. In the Kenyan sample, this phrase does not even appear once. There, *should* is combined with a variety of other verbs such as *say, add* or *try*. Even though the numbers confirm BrE to be the more tentative variety, the divergence is rather small between the corpora and could also be accidental.

Conclusion

Considering the above observations, it can be maintained that word frequency deviances for *should* are primarily topic induced. 'Private conversations' in the ICE-K, for example, deal with politics, rights and history. 'Exam papers' debate obligations of students and teachers. The root meaning 'obligation' constitutes the largest share of meanings in the ICE-K, whereas peripherical meanings of *should* appear relatively less often. This could be interpreted as a preference of KenE to use a word in a sense perceived as prototypical or central. Apart from that, neither non-standard uses nor new meanings have been detected for the modal. Some observations from previous chapters have however been confirmed: the higher percentage of passive constructions in spoken language and the lower occurrence of tentative markers in KenE.

Nevertheless, the closer examination of the syntactic and semantic behaviour of *should* has proved that a significant divergence in word frequency does not necessarily mean that the usage of a lexeme is considerably different in two language varieties. A word

frequency overview may be a good starting point for a comparative analysis, but its results should not be over-evaluated.

6.   CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to find out differences in the usage of modal verbs between KenE and BrE. The data for the discussion was drawn from a distributional, syntactic and semantic analysis of modal usage in two comparable language corpora, the ICE-K and ICE-GB. In the following, the findings of the investigation and their implications are summarized. Subsequently, the limitations of this study are pointed out and, finally, some suggestions for further research given.

Considering all findings of the above analysis, it must be maintained that the usage of modal verbs in KenE is still very close to BrE. Despite deviances in frequency and single trends to use a modal in a non-standard way, modal meanings and functions are generally equal in both varieties of English.

Two observations hint at a possible diverging semantic development of KenE from BrE. Firstly, KenE displays an inclination to use *may* in addition to *can* to express 'dynamic implication' as in *'May you please open the window'.* In BrE, only *can* is acceptable in this context, since the use of 'permission'-*may* is syntactically restricted to the 1st person pronouns. Secondly, in the ICE-K some modals are more often used in their major sense than in their additional or rather peripherical functions. This was for example the case for *can, could, will* and *should*. Both observations indicate a generalisation of rules concerning the semantic and syntactic usage of modal verbs in KenE.

For some modals the syntactic analysis revealed a slight tendency of KenE to use modal verbs more frequently with the progressive compared to BrE. As shown for *can*, this is partly induced by the non-standard combination of stative verbs with this aspect. In general however, the percentage differences between the Kenyan and the British corpus are marginal and not statistically significant.

More salient and recurring are hints at a higher degree of formality of Kenyan private and public conversations. All examined modals are more often used in passive voice constructions in spoken language. The Kenyan corpus further displays a considerably lower share of the informal short forms *'d* and *'ll* than the ICE-GB in speaking. This trend is easily eyplained by Kenya's socio-linguistic situation: Informal settings in Kenya are generally dominated by Kiswahili, the national lingua franca, and one or more indigenous languages. Kenyans are seldom in the need to express feelings or emotions in English when they are among themselves. As a result, the English they

speak resembles the English employed in domains such as politics, international trade and science, which necessitate a high level of formality.

The results of the analysis partly indicate that KenE is slightly less tentative than BrE. Various observations have lead to this finding. Firstly, the semantic analyses revealed that the past tense modals *could* and *might* occur in less often in their function as more remote and tentative variants of their present tense counterparts *can* and *may* in the ICE-K. Secondly, expressions of personal opinion such as *'I think'* or *'I hope'*, which increase the tentativeness of a speaker's statement, are less often combined with modals in the ICE-K. However, the differences observed between the corpora are in general too small to be of statistical significance. In addition, the usage of *would* as a more tentative variant of *will* is almost identical in both text samples.

Differences in modal usage seem to reflect cultural differences and habits of the speech communities. Apart from the higher level of formality in speaking, the present study demonstrated that Kenyans typically prefer a different form of requesting compared to the British. In many contexts, KenE favours imperative constructions and combinations with *kindly* to modal expressions. In requests containing modal verbs, Kenyans often prefer the more formal *may* to *can*. The latter observation is in line with the more formal syntactic constructions in Kenyan conversations. Schmied states that "features associated with formality usually signal politeness, and are therefore valued highly in traditional African societies. (1991: 51)" The way Kenyans communicate in English therefore mirrors the people's understanding of norms and values in social interaction.

As expected, the differences between the language varieties were least significant in the acrolectal text type 'academic writing'. This is ascribed to the fact that authors of academic texts usually have enjoyed tertiary education including and a long period of English instruction. Since academic publications are not only directed to a national audience, but also at an international readership, writers are probably eager to stick as closely to the rules of international English.

At this point, some difficulties faced during the present study must be pointed out. As mentioned earlier, the semantics of modal verbs is an extremely complex topic. First of all, it was highly problematic to find a workable classification of modal meanings. Suggestions of scholars range from 2 to 12 different notions for single modals. It was therefore necessary to find a compromise and set up a new classification with as few different meanings as possible, but as many meanings as necessary. Several times the chosen categorization proved to be inadequate in practice and had to be reconsidered. In

the following, the classification of every single occurrence in the sample texts turned out to be an even bigger challenge, which was due to modal characteristics such as polysemy, indeterminacy or ambiguity. Even with the great diligence applied, the flawlessness of the results cannot be guaranteed. Thus, up to 130 examples per text category were investigated and double-checked to keep mistakes as insignificant as possible.

Suggestions for further research finally arise from the limitations of the present study. Since the findings summarized above almost entirely rely on corpus analyses, it is recommendable to confirm or reject the proposed hypotheses by means of elicitation tests with Kenyan and British informants. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate other expressions of modality such as typical verbs, adverbs and nouns or intonation patterns. This would give a more comprehensive picture of differences between two language varieties. Furthermore, a comparison between the modality concepts of English and Swahili or an indigenous African language would be a challenging and valueable endeavour.

Even though no fundamental differences between the language varieties have been identified, the examination of modal verb usage in this present study has hopefully contributed another little puzzle piece to the description and understanding of Kenyan English as a New variety of English.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Syntactic distribution per text category in the ICE-K

ICE-K: Private conversation

Total words: 60282
Total modals: 872
Percentage: 1.447

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	211	51	187	161	31	25	61	8	31	766
Passive	10	2	13	3	2	0	21	0	0	51
Progressive	0	0	9	2	0	2	2	0	3	18
Perfect	0	4	4	17	2	4	1	0	5	37
Total	221	57	213	183	35	31	85	8	39	872

ICE-K: Public conversation

Total words: 201286
Total modals: 3478
Percentage: 1.728

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	980	223	638	431	145	82	347	17	99	2962
Passive	100	20	89	18	5	4	106	1	12	355
Progressive	4	4	51	6	9	5	5	3	1	88
Perfect	0	14	8	15	11	11	5	2	7	73
Total	1084	261	786	470	170	102	463	23	119	3478

93

ICE-K: Non-printed writing

Total words: 80976
Total modals: 1472
Percentage: 1.818

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	174	82	354	144	162	32	157	25	64	1194
Passive	62	4	38	11	14	1	57	7	8	202
Progressive	1	0	15	3	1	0	0	5	0	25
Perfect	0	10	8	6	10	1	6	0	10	51
Total	237	96	415	164	187	34	220	37	82	1472

ICE-K: Academic writing

Total words: 80227
Total modals: 739
Percentage: 0.921

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	91	50	98	62	115	14	45	6	35	516
Passive	57	14	33	6	47	5	25	0	21	208
Progressive	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4
Perfect	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	0	3	11
Total	148	64	134	70	166	20	72	6	59	739

Appendix 2: Syntactic distribution per text category in the ICE-GB

ICE-GB: Private conversation

Total words:	205608
Total modals:	2559
Percentage:	1.244

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	556	224	517	638	52	129	122	47	63	2348
Passive	6	7	8	11	3	0	4	0	2	41
Progressive	0	2	13	7	1	5	5	0	3	36
Perfect	0	23	2	51	7	20	12	0	19	134
Total	562	256	540	707	63	154	143	47	87	2559

ICE-GB: Public conversation

Total words:	108276
Total modals:	1447
Percentage:	1.336

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	277	142	249	379	59	54	77	14	37	1288
Passive	8	10	11	9	1	3	12	1	6	61
Progressive	0	5	7	6	2	2	5	0	0	27
Perfect	0	14	2	41	5	14	19	0	6	101
Total	285	171	269	435	67	73	113	15	49	1477

95

ICE-GB: Non-printed writing

Total words:	104164
Total modals:	1625
Percentage:	1.56

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	213	101	356	332	117	43	77	24	40	1303
Passive	72	19	48	16	26	3	29	1	13	227
Progressive	0	0	35	5	1	3	1	4	0	49
Perfect	0	8	3	7	12	3	6	0	7	46
Total	285	128	442	360	156	52	113	29	60	1625

ICE-GB: Academic writing

Total words:	85628
Total modals:	943
Percentage:	1.101

	can	could	will	would	may	might	should	shall	must	Total
Infinitive	104	51	123	94	152	25	28	8	27	612
Passive	104	32	33	14	55	11	23	0	22	294
Progressive	0	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
Perfect	0	4	1	9	9	1	3	0	2	29
Total	208	88	163	117	217	37	54	8	51	943

Appendix 3: Semantic distribution of the modals per text category in the ICE-K and the ICE-GB

CAN

ICE-K	Possibility	Ability	Possibility/Ability	Permission	Implication	Ambig./Indet.	Total
Priv	31	10	8	4	1	5	59
Pub	59	12	24	3	12	5	115
N-print	12	3	3	1	0	2	21
Aca	21	2	8	0	0	1	32
Total	123	27	43	8	13	13	227

ICE-GB	Possibility	Ability	Possibility/Ability	Permission	Implication	Ambig./Indet.	Total
Priv	14	11	8	7	9	4	53
Pub	39	20	13	8	14	6	100
N-print	13	4	5	0	0	3	25
Aca	19	2	2	0	0	0	23
Total	85	37	28	15	23	13	201

COULD

ICE-K	Possibility	Ability	Possibility/Ability	Permission	Implication	Ambig./Indet.	Total
Priv	25	9	8	5	4	2	53
Pub	36	5	9	3	7	0	60
N-print	22	13	3	1	2	2	43
Aca	41	9	11	1	0	1	63
Total	124	36	31	10	13	5	219

ICE-GB	Possibility	Ability	Possibility/Ability	Permission	Implication	Ambig./Indet.	Total
Priv	38	12	9	2	13	4	78
Pub	33	11	6	2	7	1	60
N-print	27	3	4	0	18	1	53
Aca	47	4	6	1	0	1	59
Total	145	30	25	5	38	7	250

MAY

ICE-K	Epistemic Poss.	Root Poss.	Permission	Wish	Total
Priv	28	0	7	0	35
Pub	89	0	7	0	96
N-print	73	15	3	3	94
Aca	61	33	5	0	99
Total	251	48	22	3	324

ICE-GB	Epistemic Poss.	Root Poss.	Permission	Wish	Total
Priv	67	0	1	0	68
Pub	64	0	4	0	68
N-print	46	15	4	0	65
Aca	42	24	0	0	66
Total	219	39	9	0	267

MIGHT

ICE-K	Epistemic Poss.	Root Poss.	Permission	Total
Priv	31	0	0	31
Pub	66	0	0	66
N-print	32	2	0	34
Aca	18	2	0	20
Total	147	4	0	151

ICE-GB	Epistemic Poss.	Root Poss.	Permission	Total
Priv	73	0	0	73
Pub	73	0	1	74
N-print	48	4	0	52
Aca	33	4	0	37
Total	227	8	1	236

WILL

ICE-K	Prediction	Predicability	Willingness	Intention	Total
Priv	89	7	17	13	0
Pub	132	7	10	15	164
N-print	71	10	5	11	97
Aca	83	8	0	6	97
Total	375	32	32	45	358

ICE-GB	Prediction	Predicability	Willingness	Intention	Total
Priv	81	3	20	20	124
Pub	97	12	10	11	130
N-print	78	1	7	13	99
Aca	83	16	0	0	99
Total	339	32	37	44	452

WOULD

ICE-K	Hypothetical	P-Prediction	P-Predicab.	P-Willing	P-Int	Total
Priv	89	10	10	1	3	113
Pub	119	1	1	0	1	122
N-print	90	6	1	0	1	98
Aca	53	9	7	0	0	69
Total	351	26	19	1	5	402

ICE-GB	Hypothetical	P-Prediction	P-Predicab.	P-Willing	P-Int	Total
Priv	94	4	0	0	2	100
Pub	105	5	0	0	0	110
N-print	91	7	0	0	0	98
Aca	81	10	5	1	0	97
Total	371	26	5	1	2	405

SHOULD

ICE-K	Obligation	Inference	Putative	Hypothetical	Tent/Polite	Ambiguity	Total
Priv	45	2	10	0	4	2	63
Pub	107	4	9	1	7	3	131
N-print	89	2	8	0	0	0	99
Aca	66	2	3	0	0	1	72
Total	307	10	30	1	11	6	365

ICE-GB	Obligation	Inference	Putative	Hypothetical	Tent/Polite	Ambiguity	Total
Priv	40	4	5	1	8	5	63
Pub	42	3	9	1	6	4	65
N-print	42	9	11	3	0	1	66
Aca	37	1	5	0	0	1	44
Total	161	17	30	5	14	11	238

Appendix 4: A comparison of text categories and text files and codes between the ICE-K and the ICE-GB

Text categories	Text files and codes	
	ICE-K	**ICE-GB**
Spoken		
private dialogue		
conversation	conv1-k.txt conv2-k.txt conv-t.txt	S1A-001 - S1A-090
public dialogue		
class lessons	cl-lessk.txt cl-lesst.txt	S1B-001 - S1B-020
broadcast discussions	br-disck.txt br-disct.txt	S1B-021 - S1B040
broadcast interviews	br-intk.txt br-intt.txt	S1B-041 - S1B-050
Written		
non-printed		
non-prof. writing		
student untimed essays	essays-k.txt	W1A-001 - W1A-010
student examination essays	exams-k.txt	W1A-011 - W1A-020
correspondence		
social letters	soc-letk.txt	W1B-001 - W1B-015
business letters	bus-letk.txt	W1B-016 - W1B-030
academic writing		
humanities	ldhum-k.txt	W2A-001 - W2A-010
social sciences	ldsoc-k.txt	W2A-011 - W2A-020
natural sciences	ldnat-k.txt	W2A-021 - W2A-030
technology	ldtech-k.txt	W2A-031 - W2A-040

Appendix 5: Questionnaire on English in Kenya distributed among 40 students of MOI university, Kenya

With filling in the questionnaire below, you will give an important contribution to a research paper on English in East Africa. It consists of 4 tasks and will not take more than 10 - 15 minutes of your time. It is <u>not</u> an English test! We are <u>not</u> necessarily interested in the 'correct' answer, but in the answer you personally find most appropriate!

Task 1:

Please rank the following phrases according to their politeness (from 1 to 6). Give '1' for the most polite utterance and '6' for the least polite.

a)
_____ Can I borrow your bike?
_____ Could I borrow your bike?
_____ May I borrow your bike?
_____ Might I borrow your bike?
_____ Would you lend me your bike?
_____ Will you lend me your bike?

b)
_____ Will you close the window?
_____ Could you close the window?
_____ Can you close the window?
_____ I'd like you to close the window.
_____ May I ask you to close the window?
_____ Would you mind closing the window?

c)
_____ I'd appreciate if you could turn down the volume.
_____ I'd like you to turn down the volume.
_____ Could you turn down the volume?
_____ Would you turn down the volume?
_____ Turn down the volume, will you?
_____ Turn down the volume, would you?

Task 2:

Please fill the gaps with one of the following modals, each modal can occur more than once.

> will, would, can, could, may, might

1. _____ I ask you a question?
2. _____ you possibly phone me later?
3. _____ you get me a drink?
4. _____ you mind waiting for me a bit longer?
5. _____ I borrow your car tonight, Daddy?
6. _____ I interrupt you for a second, Madam?
7. You _____ even consider moving somewhere else.
8. _____ I take this seat?
9. I _____ suggest that we forget about the whole issue.
10. I _____ like to add something to the discussion if I _____ .

Task 3:

Suppose you would like somebody to do you the favour of proofreading your draft. Below you find some ways you could make your request.

First, <u>tick only</u> the <u>three</u> that will <u>spontaneously</u> come to your mind. Second, <u>put a cross</u> before the <u>two</u> (if there are any) that will definitely <u>not readily</u> come to your mind.

1. ( ) Please, proofread this draft for me.
2. ( ) Will you be so kind as to proofread this draft for me?
3. ( ) I would like you to proofread this draft for me.
4. ( ) Can you proofread this draft for me?
5. ( ) Do you mind proofreading this draft for me?
6. ( ) Kindly proofread this draft for me.
7. ( ) Would you mind proofreading this draft for me?
8. ( ) Could you proofread this draft for me?
9. ( ) I wonder if you could proofread this draft for me.
10. ( ) Could you possibly proofread this draft for me?

Now, is there an expression you usually use in similar circumstances but which is not included in the list above? If there is one, please write it here:

....

....

Task 4:
How would you make a request in the following situations? Please take your time to imagine each situation and then chose your words appropriately. It will sometimes be necessary to use more than one sentence. Use <u>direct</u> speech! (<u>Not</u>: I'd ask her if I could sit down. <u>Right</u>: "Excuse me, Madam. Can I sit here?")

*Situation 1: **Suppose you want to smoke a cigarette, but have left your matches/lighter at home. How would you ask the following people for a light?***
Your best friend, who is a heavy smoker

"..

....

....

A woman waiting at a bus stop smoking

"..

....

....

*Situation 2: **Suppose you want to apply for a job and need a referee. Ask your professor via email to write a recommendation letter for you.***

"..

....

....

*Situation 3: **Suppose you want to invite the girl/guy you have a crush on for a cup of coffee. How would you ask?***

"..

....

....

*Situation 4: **Remind your friend to return a book to you, which she borrowed from you a year ago. You have asked her twice already without success.***

"..

....

....

Personal details:
Age: ....   Sex: f   /   m
Nationality: ....
I live in (city/district):...

My mother tongue is: ....
I speak the following language(s) at home with my family and friends:

....

I've been learning/studying <u>English</u> for .... years.
        I started learning it:
        (   ) from my parents   (   ) at nursery school   (   ) at primary school
        (   ) at secondary school   (   ) at university   (   ) ....

I'm currently studying at ....university in ....
I'm a ....year student. I major in ....

In case you're not studying, what's your occupation?
....

Comments:
....

....

Thank you very much for your collaboration!
If you have any comments on politeness in your society, this questionnaire, the project or anything else, please contact:
katja.seidel@wirtschaft.tu-chemnitz.de

103

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre, dass ich diese Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen Hilfsmittel als die angegebenen verwendet habe und alle Zitate, die anderen Werken entnommen sind, kenntlich gemacht habe.

Chemnitz, 20. Oktober 2004