

FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF THE MODAL VERB “CAN” IN
“JENNIE GERHARDT” BY TH. DREISER’S

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Annotation: Modal verbs are used to show the speaker's attitude toward, the action or state indicated by the infinitive, i.e. they show that the action indicated by the infinitive is considered as possible, impossible, probable, improbable, obligatory, necessary, advisable, doubtful or uncertain, etc. The modal verbs are: can (could), may (might), must, should, ought, shall, will, would, need, dare. The modal expressions to be + Infinitive and to have + Infinitive also belong here.

Key words: modal verbs, expressions, negative sentences, interrogative sentences.

Modal verbs are called defective because all of dare and need) lack verbals and analytical forms (i.e. tenses, analytical forms of the Subjunctive Mood, the (except compound the Passive Voice). Besides they do not take -s in the third person singular. They also have the following peculiarities:

(1) All of them (except ought and sometimes dare and need) are followed by the infinitive without the particle to.

(2) All of them (except dare and need) form the negative and the interrogative form without the auxiliary do.

(3) All the modal verbs have two negative forms - a full one and a contracted one.

The verb can has two forms: can for the Present Tense and Could for the Past Tense; the expression to be able which has the same-meaning can be used to supply the missing forms of the verb can.

"It must cost a good deal to live here, don't you think?"

"You mustn't stare at people when they pass," cautioned her mother, wisely. "It isn't nice." (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p13).

He was too long in earning a competence upon which they might subsist. (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p28).

She knew that there were other girls whose lives were infinitely freer and fuller, but, it never occurred to her to be meanly envious; her heart might be lonely, but her lips continued to sing. (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p29).

Keeping her pretty hand weighed in the air, she listened until the long, soft notes spread and faded and her heart could hold no more. (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p29).

1.Physical or mental ability.¹

Cousin Val can't walk much, you know, but he can ride perfectly. He's going to show me the gallops. (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p31).

I don't know what Captain Loomis was doing there, but you can guess - it was about Thorpe. (Th Dreiser “Jennie Gerhardt” p32).

In this meaning it can be used only with the Indefinite Infinitive.

2. Possibility.

(a) due to circumstances:

Born a native of southern Ohio, he had been raised and educated there, if one might except the two years in which he had studied law at Columbia University.

¹Жигадло В.Н., Иванова И.О., Йофик Л.Л. *Современный английский язык, и.*, 1956.с 115

(Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p35).

Only in the last presidential election he had thrown his support to a man for Governor who, he well knew, had no claim which a strictly honorable conscience could have recognized. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p38).

Yes, he might be called a successful man, but for all that Senator Brander felt that he had missed something. Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p40).

"Oh yes, sir; he's around now, although he can't go out just yet." (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p40).

In the last three sentences can comes close to may expressing permission, but it does not so much indicate possibility depending upon the will of the person addressed (which is the essence of permission) as possibility depending on circumstances.

They must be in a bad way truly.

"You take that," he said, "and tell your mother that I said she should use it for whatever she wants." (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p44).

(b) due to the existing laws:

Gerhardt commented upon this wonderful treasure-trove, repeating again and again how good he must be or how large must be his heart. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p46).

Can expressing possibility is used with the Indefinite Infinitive only.

Note, - Could is often used in polite requests.

Could you give us a consultation to-morrow?

2. Incredulity, doubt, astonishment (they are closely connected). In these meanings can is used with all the forms of the Infinitive in interrogative and negative sentences, though astonishment is expressed only in interrogative sentences.

He had such stern views about accepting money without earning it that even in their distress, she would have experienced some difficulty in getting him to take it. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p55).

Unda kuchli fikrlar bor ishlamasdan pul topishda, shuning uchun u (qiz) undan pulni qaytarib olishda bir qancha qiyinchiliklarga duch keldi.

As for Mrs. Gerhardt, one could better imagine than describe her feelings.

(Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p55).

Gerhardt, odam uning his tuyg'usini ifodalashdan ko'ra yaxshiroq tasavur qila oladi.

"You shouldn't do that, Sebastian," said the father. "It may go harder with you on that account. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p55).

Siz buni qilmasligingiz kerak edi, Sebastian, - dedi ota. "Bu o'sha hisobda siz bilan qiyinroq borishi mumkun.

"I can't help it," she said, half crying, half smiling.

Bunday qilolmayman. U dedi yarim yig'lab, yarim kulib.

How would the Lord look upon quibbling like this? (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p56).

Lord bu kabi janjalga qanday qaraydi.

"I went there solely because I thought I could help him," (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p57).

Men u yerga bordim chunki unga yordam berolaman deb o'yladim.

"He ought to see that this thing, if continued, is going to do him irreparable damage," said Mr. Kane. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p61).

"U bir narsani ko'rishi kerak, agar davom etsa, yani unda tuzatib bo'lmaydigan shikast borligini," - dedi Mr.Kane.

"I don't know how that could be arranged unless you could show the old gentleman a marriage certificate. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p61).

Agar sen jentelmentga nikoh guvohnomasini ko'rsatolmasang, bu qanday amalgam oshishi mumkunligini ham bilmayman.

And yet he ought to be with Vesta again. She would make him happy. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p61).

U yana Vesta bilan bo'lishi kerak.

"I don't see how it can be arranged. (Th Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt" p.). Bu qanday rejalashtirilishi mumkunligini bilmayman.

In the last two examples we can easily replace could by can without any change of meaning.

Could with the Perfect Infinitive has almost the same meaning as can with the Perfect Infinitive, only the negation is not so categoric as with can.

If the action refers to the past, the/Perfect Infinitive is mostly used. Other forms of the Infinitive are hardly ever used.

Note,- The Russian negative-interrogative sentences of the type.

²"Неужели она не читала эту книгу?" are rendered in English by complex sentences:

Can it be that she has not read this book?

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² Long R.B. *A Grammar of Contemporary English.* Chicago, 1965.