

# A Corpus Study of the Meanings and Uses of the Modal Operator Will in Ghanaian English

Isaac Kwadwo-Nsowah Acquah  
School of Communication and Media Studies  
University if Education, Winneba, Ghana  
iknacquah@uew.edu.gh isaacquah7@gmail.com

## Abstract

The term ‘Ghanaian English’ is used to refer to the variety of English which is prevalent in Ghana. The variety is believed to have been influenced by indigenous Ghanaian languages. As a result, interested scholars have, accordingly, focused on identifying the possible linguistic indicators. One of such indicators in Ghanaian English is the meanings and uses of the modal operator will. This study is meant to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this regard. Specially, the study aims at examining the meanings and uses of the modal operator will in Ghanaian English. Thus, I was particularly intrigued by the uses of the modal operator will in Ghanaians English; the meanings expressed by the modal operator will in Ghanaians English; and, the area of divergence in the two varieties concerning the uses of the modal operator will. I selected 250 sentences reflecting the various meanings and uses of the modal operator will in Ghanaian English. In the end, the results show that the semantic content and the uses of the modal operator will is similar in the two varieties contra the usage of the modal operator will in the elliptical implication which is a feature in British English but absent in Ghanaian English. The results show, also, that the use of the modal operator will + main verb is one of the dominant features in Ghanaian English and quite rare in British English.

**DOI:** 10.7176/JLLL/91-02

**Publication date:** August 31<sup>st</sup> 2022

## Introduction

The notion of native-English and non-native-English may establish a signal that the meanings and the usage of the modal operator *will* express by these varieties of Englishes appreciate some variations. Since the tension among scholars about whether or not there is a Ghanaian English has generally been cleared by Owusu-Ansah (2012), establishing the fact that Ghanaians do agree that the English they use is different from other varieties; the reverse is true. Internationalisation of English and the justification of New Englishes, of which Ghanaian English is part, begs for definition of Ghanaian English. Ghanaian English is a term used to identify the variety of English that is spoken and/or written in Ghana. It is accepted as a variety of English which has become indigenized as a result of the contact between English and the various Ghanaian languages (Wiredu, 2012).

## Positioning the study

Many studies on modality have been carried out by many erudite scholars. This study has a relationship with other studies on three broad areas: on modality and modals or modal verbs, Larreya (2009), *Towards a typology of modality in language*. He presents in his paper a distinction between modality and modalization. He argues that modalization is the use speakers make of modality depending on (1) the type of knowledge they have, or not have, concerning the situation which is submitted to the modal judgment; and, (2) the type of knowledge the hearer is assumed to have, or not have concerning the same situation. This he terms the *modalization situation*. He defines modality as mental system- or sub-system-based on the mutually related concepts as possibility and necessity. Declerck (2009), *Not-yet-factual at time t'*, discusses that this concept has the idea that the world in question is envisaged by the speaker but not yet factual at time t' to which it is anchored. He explains that this kind of hypothetical world which is the not-yet-factual at time t' is evoked by any expression that has posteriority as part of its meaning. Salkie (2009), *degree of modality*, puts modals into sections and sets out the need for a prototype analysis. For example, section three of his classification offers a set of criteria which defines the core of the category of modality. He examines several English modal auxiliaries with respect to the criteria, concluding that some frequently fail to meet the criteria and are therefore not core members of the category- have a low degree of modality.

In the case of Ghanaian English, many studies have been conducted and have proven to be worth-researched. According to Owusu-Ansah (2012), there are three proofs that confirm the existence of Ghanaian English. He makes, vehemently, three claims to establish the fact of the existence of Ghanaian English, which until then was a moot question. Ngula (2009, 2010, 2012), are generally, corpus-based investigation into the semantics of modal verbs in Ghanaian English; Wiredu (2012), focuses on pronominal reference in Ghanaian English. All the above non-native writings posit that there is the existence of Ghanaian English, which is accepted as a variety of English. The availability of general and specific studies on corpora, modals and modality

in the world Englishes, as well as specialized studies on corpora, modals and modality in Ghanaian English done by both native and non-native writings, make it possible to carry out this study. A common feature of corpus research on modality by both native and non-native writing is the comparison to a norm.

Even though there is a growing body of literature on modality, modalization and Ghanaian English, much work has been conducted in, *inter alia*, modality in Ghanaian contractual documents; a corpus-based investigation into the semantics of modal verbs in Ghanaian English; Modality in Ghanaian and American personal letters; Proofs of the existence of Ghanaian English, Amoako-Atta, (1998), Ngula, (2009), Owusu-Ansah, (1994, 2012); however, a study that takes a closer look at a single modal operator in Ghanaian English has not been given much attention. For this reason, studies that have explored the phenomenon of a corpus study of the meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English are rare. Thus, a study that proposes a corpus study of the meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English largely remains undone; as such, the present study will explore the meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English; giving that, there should be adequate studies that reveal the characteristics uses of Ghanaian English in all aspects of language study (Ngula, 2009). Thus, in this study, a conscious effort is made to describe the meanings that are expressed by the modal operator *will*, a central modal verb, in the written English of educated Ghanaians, with the view of finding out the areas of divergence between Ghanaian and British usage as far as the meanings of the modal operator *will* is concerned. Against this backdrop, the present study is undergirded by such objectives as finding out the uses of the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English; the meanings expressed by the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English; and, the areas of divergence between Ghanaian English and British English concerning the use of the operator *will*. Thus, I was particularly intrigued by how educated Ghanaians use the modal operator *will* in communicate various levels of both epistemic and deontic meanings.

## Modal Concept

### Etymological Meanings of Modality

One can distinguish different kinds of modal meaning. *Alethic* modality (Greek: *Aletheia*, meaning ‘truth’), sometimes *logical* or *metaphorical* modality, concerns what is possible or necessary in the widest sense. It is in fact hard to find convincing examples of *alethic* modality in natural language, its inclusion in this list is primarily for reason of historical completeness. The following categories, however, are of primary importance in the study of natural language. *Epistemic* modality (Greek *episteme*, meaning ‘knowledge’) concerns what is possible or necessary given what is known and what available evidence is. *Deontic* modality (Greek: *Deon*, meaning “duty”) concerns what is possible, necessary, or permissible or obligatory, given a body of law or a set of moral principles or the like. *Bouletic* modality, sometimes *boulomaic* modality concerns what is possible or necessary given a person’s desires. *Circumstantial* modality, sometimes *dynamic* modality, concerns what is possible or necessary, given a particular set of circumstances. *Teleological* modality (Greek: *teleos*, meaning “goal”) concerns what means are possible or necessary for achieving a particular goal (adapted from Von Fintel (2006)). In the descriptive literature on modality, there is taxonomic exuberance far beyond these basic distinctions.

### Some Definitions of Modality

What do linguists mean by the term modality? In the literature one finds four different approaches (Salkie, 2009). These are “siphoned” from scholars such as:

- a. Palmer (2001:1), modality is concerned with the status of the proposition that describes the event. To Palmer, it is the expression of the attitude of the speaker, or the expression of the subjectivity of the speaker’s opinions and emotions.
- b. Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998: 80), in their typological study, they propose to use the term modality for those semantic domains that involve possibility and necessity as paradigmatic variants, a definition they describe as relatively restricted.
- c. Downing and Locke (1992), say modality is to be understood as semantic category which covers such notion as possibility, probability, necessity, volition, obligation and permission.
- d. Coates (1983), to avoid the problem of confusion on a set of expressions such as modal verbs in English; modality is taken to include whatever these expressions mean. As such he analyzes the meaning and use of English modals in corpus data without attempting any definition of the term modal. In a non-native writing, Ngula (2010) defined modality as the speaker’s (or writer’s) opinion and attitude towards the proposition that is expressed or the situation that the proposition describes.

Close analysis of the meanings of modality expressed by the above scholars revealed that, in the main, the term could be explicated as semantic designations of the speaker/writer towards a proposition or event. Thus, the semantic designations are semantic category which expresses or embodies the speaker’s/writer’s description of pragmatic modifications as possibility, probability, necessity, volition, obligation and permission towards the expressed proposition or that which describes the situation or event.

### Conceptual background

The underpinning conceptual frameworks on which the present study rests are the concept of modality, world Englishes, and Ghanaian English. These frameworks are central to the study because they would not only situate the study but also put forward relevant explanations to the issues understudy.

### Modality

Even though there are various theoretical frameworks that have been employed to the study of modality, most linguists such as Coates and Leech (1980); Kratzer (1981); Yole (1998, cited in Ngula, 2010), pay attention to the two main distinctions between epistemic modality and root modality. The “root” and “epistemic” distinction is part of a division which extends far beyond modality, or even language. The two categories belong to two different domains of human mental activity: the domain of affect and/or action and the domain of knowledge (Larreya, 2009). In the literature, scholars use different terms to refer to these categorizations (epistemic/root). Prominent ones are Quirk *et al* (1985), ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ modality and, Halliday (1970), ‘modality’ and ‘modulation’. In this study, I employ epistemic and root approach in the analysis, paying more attention to Larreya (2009), implicative and volition and Declerck (2009), not-yet-factuality approach because they provide simple and appropriate approach to analyzing the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English.

### Epistemic Modality

The term epistemic is derived from the Greek word *epistēmē*, meaning ‘knowledge’. Epistemic modality thus relates to the speaker’s knowledge on the proposition. If we use epistemic modal, we are interested in what else may or may not be the case, given the facts (of the not stated) we know already (Kratzer, 1981 cited in Ngula, 2009). Now epistemic modality means that the attitude may be that of assessing the probability that the proposition is true in terms of modal certainty, probability, possibility. Epistemic modality, according to Suhadi (2011), is the use of modality which is based on the speaker’s evaluation and judgement in relation to the degree of confidence of the knowledge on a proposition. It therefore “functions to comment on and evaluate an interpretation of reality of carrying out speech functions” Suhadi (2011: 167). It is concerned with language as information, with the expression of degree or nature of the speaker’s commitment to the truth of what he says. Epistemic modalities are always subjective; they conform to the rational laws of deduction. That is, they are concerned with the interpretation of the world via the laws of human reason. Summarizing epistemic modality, Suhadi states that epistemic modality is:

The linguistic expression of an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration or some aspect of it will occur, is occurring, has occurred in a possible world which serves as the universe of interpretation for the evaluation process.

(Suhadi, 2011: 168)

### Deontic Modality

Deontic or root modality, on the other hand, is derived from Greek word ‘*deont*’ (*deon*), meaning ‘which is obligatory’. The term is adopted as a type of modality to mean obligation and permission. As such, Suhadi (2011) opines, deontic modality indicates whether the proposition expressed by a command is obligatory, advisable, or permissible according to normative background such as law morality, convention and so forth. In other words, it does not base on the speaker’s knowledge or facts, but on the speaker’s awareness of what is socially determined – obligation, permission, advice, volition, ability, and necessity. Root modality is typically used interpersonally, i.e. in communication and it is not always subjective. Deontic modality is concerned with the meaning of a proposal in the negative and positive poles in prescribing and proscribing (Suhadi, 2011). Thus far, epistemic modality and deontic/root modality are based on different premises. Intimated by Portner (2009), whereas epistemic modality involves knowledge, deontic modality concerns with moral evaluations concerning right and wrong based on certain rules.

### Volition and modality

German provides an argument in favour of volition as part of modality: its modal system (which is idiosyncratic, and therefore may be thought to be the formal counterpart of a semantic system) includes a verb *wollen* which fundamentally expresses volition (Larreya, 2009). In English, for instance, the modal operator *will*, although etymologically akin to *wollen*, is only a marker of volition. Larreya (2009) argues that it seems difficult to regard volition as one of the prime constituents of modality, or place it at the same level as possibility and necessity. It nevertheless plays an important role in modality, on several counts, which will be very useful in analyzing meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in the Ghanaian context, giving that it can be used to make commitments and express volitional stance with reference to one’s emotions. According to Zhongyi (2015: 161), volitional modality is defined as “a semantic domain with which speakers express their force of volitional

stance, involving willingness, desirability, or intentions indicated by the utterance and this force is evaluated in terms of volitional stance towards the centre of willingness". Some distinctions can be made within the domain of volition. Strong volition (as in *I will stay here*) implies that some physical or external volition (force) might prevent the accomplishment of the "willed" situation. Weak volition (as in *Okay, I will wash the shirt*) which implies that there is the existence of some external volition directed towards the accomplishment of the modalized situation. These distinctions will be dealt with in the analysis.

### **Not-yet-factuality modal concept**

This is the idea that the world in question is envisaged by the speaker but *not yet factual at the time t*' to which it is anchored (Declerk, 2009: p. 1). He refers to this hypothetical world as "not-yet-factual at t and it is evoked by any expression that has posteriority as part of its meaning. The clearest cases are those in which the reference is to a future world. For example, *Ellen will take the exams tomorrow*, evokes a world which is subjective in the specific sense that is not-yet-factual at S (speech time).

## **Methodology and Research Design**

### **Corpus Approach**

The study employs a corpus methodology. The corpus methodological approach is an empirical approach to linguistic description which relies on actual usage, a corpus, (Ngula, 2010). The term 'corpus' is defined as a systematic collection of naturally occurring texts, spoken or written or both, assumed to be representative of a given language, dialect or other subset of a language to be used for linguistic analysis (Sinclair, 1991, cited in Ngula, 2010). According to McEnerry and Wilson (1996) the method begins from compiling and designing a corpus with which to investigate a topic, and finish with retrieval, extraction and interpretation of information from the corpus to help the investigator to answer his research questions. In sampling the data, scripts of students' essays, students' political manifestos, meeting minutes and brochures of national politicians were photocopied and the sentences that made use of the modal operator *will* were selected. The sentences were retyped without altering their structure or meaning.

### **The Corpus**

The source of data for the study was a collection of written/printed material compiled in 2021. The data were made up of text categories comprising a range of educated Ghanaian English, including students' essays, students' political manifestos, minutes of meetings and brochures of national politicians. The inclusion of this set of groups was to present a wide range of communicative situations. The length of words as a result is 6, 142 with *will* occurring 282 times in 250 sentences. The selection of the text sample is informed by, among other factors, the fact that the texts that constituted the corpus would reflect contemporary educated Ghanaian usage.

### **Reference to the Uses of the Modal Operator *Will* in British English**

Since the analysis of the modal operator *will* in the Ghanaian context is based on a corpus real textual data and not on invented examples of English usage, it is necessary that British English references to the modal *will* be based on corpus work. Thus, references of British English used in this study are 'sourced' from examples given by Declerck (2009), Larreya (2009), Salkie (2009), Von Fintel (2006), Owusu-Ansah (2012), Wiredu (2012), and Ngula (2009, 2010, 2012). The choice of works of these authors as the source of information on the modal operator *will* in British English stems from the fact that the source of information on the modals in British English used in their studies are from such studies as, Coates (1983), Quirk *et al* (1985) and, Leech and Leech (1980) etc.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The functional use of *will* fall into two categories, between which there is much overlap and indeterminacy: prediction (as in *Sam will win the match*) and volitive (as in *Okay, I will do the dishes*) in context where an essential part of the meaning is "I am willing or agree to do the dishes. Thus, among other uses of the modal operator *will*, the findings of this study are analyzed using the functional use categories, prediction and volitive. This analysis is done in the light of Larreya (2009) and Ngula (2012). Larreya (2009) identifies, among other usages, possibility necessity, problematic implicative, elliptical implicative, explicit implicative, weak volition, strong volition causative+volition. Ngula (2012) also analyzes the modal operator *will* under permission, intention, obligation and probability. However, the present study employs habitual prediction, specific prediction, and the general prediction which are all epistemic; and the volitive; thus, weak volition, strong volition, as an order and as ability, root (deontic). The table below indicates the usage of the modal operator *will*, number of sentences, and the percentages.

Usage of Modality	Number of Sentences	Percentage (%)
<b>Habitual Prediction</b>	26	10.4
<b>Specific Predictability</b>	51	20.4
<b>General Predictability</b>	36	14.4
<b>Weak Volition</b>	23	9.2
<b>Strong Volition</b>	30	12
<b>As An Order</b>	21	8.4
<b>As Ability</b>	28	11.2
<b>Will + Main Verb</b>	35	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1: Uses of modal operator Will in Ghanaian English

### Uses and Meaning of Modal Operator Will in Ghanaian English

#### Habitual Predictability (Epistemic)

There is indication from the Ghanaian data that regarding the modal operator *will*, using it as habitual prediction is quite rare with 26 cases (10.4%). Here are some examples in the sample examined to illustrate these uses:

1. *They will keep the environment clean at all time (sic).*
2. *Some Ghanaians also do not have the money to pay the people who are supposed to remove the faeces therefore though they have the place of convenience they will not use it.*
3. *There is no day that one buys food or item and it will not be parceled in a polythene bag.*

This use of *will* is fundamentally implicative, but it is marginally related to material possibility and perhaps weak volition. Thus, it has been used to predict what is the habitual characteristic of the people. In sentence 1 for instance, it is characteristic feature that the people keep their environment clean at all times. In another example, in sentence 3, the people's habitual practice of parceling items in plastic bags is clearly communicated, predicting their habitual practices. In the main, the writers of the above sentences used the modal operator *will* to predict the habitual characteristics of the people.

#### Specific Predictability (Epistemic)

It is evident from the present work that Ghanaians use the modal *will* to make specific prediction. The study indicates that specific predictability has the highest records of 51 cases (20.4%). Here are some examples to illustrate such uses:

1. *When all these are put in place it will help prevent so many communicable diseases.*
2. *If we in our status as JCRC have achieved this feat, then we believe that when voted into office we will achieve more.*
3. *Therefore if lies and propaganda is [sic] published by the media, there will be disagreement which may lead to autocracy and even disintegration among public officials.*

The conjectural use of *will* which is also same as the epistemic *must* Palmer (1990, citd in Larreya, 2009), may have something to do with the fact that the conjectural use of *will* is related to both its "habitual" use and its "futural" use. This means that the speaker assumes, considering, what is known is necessary the case that, *If we in our status as JCRC have achieved this feat, then we believe that when voted into office we will achieve more*

when the JCRC takes into account its present status, they should be able to achieve more if voted into office.

#### General Predictability (Epistemic)

With respect to modal *will* we observe that it has a general predictability usage. The data record 36 cases (14.4%). Some examples to illustrate these modal meanings from Ghanaian English are as follows:

1. *We must remove small weeds in our surrounds so that when water is poured, it will not stay there but will move through the soil to prevent stagnant waters which breed mosquitoes since they cause malaria.*
2. *However, the neighbour who paid such fee will also report others who fall a victim to the authorities as revenge. (sic)*

Here the modal meaning is characteristic behaviour. The expressed antecedent is intrinsic characteristic of the referent of the syntactic subject. For instance, in example 2 it can be glossed as something like, (the nature of man is such that the neighbours who paid such fee will also report others who involve in such acts).

#### Volition

With respect to volition, we observed that in Ghanaian English both strong and weak functions are common.

### Weak Volition (Deontic)

From the Ghanaian data examined, we observed that weak volition records 23 cases (9.2%). Here are some examples to illustrate these modal usages:

1. *In relation to our health, we need to institute a sick bay, a plan that will serve as a first aid point before a referral to the main hospital.*
2. *Sanitation will be a pleasant thing in the sight of people if the government can follow the above mentioned ways of proper sanitation*
3. *I will be throwing dust into your eyes if I should say I'm going to purchase computers this for this hall.*
4. *I am confident that we will modernize more than 80 percent of agriculture to improve food supply in the country to generate high foreign exchange through export.*

It is quite evident from the Ghanaian context that this usage is also associated with an implicature that external volition (force) is directed towards the accomplishment of the modal situation. Thus, in example 1, it can be glossed as a response to a request made by the hearer(s); and, so the speaker's response, (we will institute a plan that will serve as a first aid point before a patient is referred to the main hospital). The proposition in example 4 expresses a very weak volitional stance among the four examples. Generally, this is mainly because the volitional force expressed in the utterance is not the speaker's, but only assumed by the speaker considering his/her own belief, 'I am confident'.

### Strong Volition (Deontic)

Another deontic function of the modal *will* is also evident in strong volition. There is indication from the Ghanaian data that strong volition is typical in Ghanaian English with the record 30 cases (12%). Some examples are as follows:

1. *I will pursuing this new approach in my administration as the SRC president not because it is in my interest but it is in the interests of the student body.*
2. *To finally expedite industrialization in the country, we will double the production of alternative energy supply in our first 180 days in office.*
3. *Sanitary inspectors will be coming around any time of the day.*
4. *I will wait to see if the next Hall Week Celebration will be as exciting as this.*

These uses are associated with the implicature that some physical obstacle or some external volition might prevent the accomplishment of the modal situation. For instance, in example 1, the speaker uses the "will" as a high volitional marker to express his determination to his/her audience in taking the action, he explains the reason why he decides to do so. And in the case of example 3: *Sanitary inspectors will be coming around any time of the day*, the speaker warns the audience about the sanitary inspectors' willingness to carry out their duty to enforce sanitation laws. Here, the implicature may be made explicit by the speakers adding something like, (respectively in 1 and 3, whether the audience like it not he will pursue the agenda in the interests of the students; and whether the inhabitants like it or not or the sanitary inspectors will visit the them).

### As an Order (Deontic)

Another notable feature revealed in the Ghanaian sample concerned the use of modal operator *will* is as an order. Overall, I identified 21 cases (8.4%) in the data, involving the use of *will* as an order. Here are examples to illustrate this modal usage.

1. *All of you will agree with me that the difference between the impossible and possible lies in a person's determination as said by Tom Lasorda.*
2. *It can also be said by the government that if any individual leaves a place to grow, he or she will pay a fine to deter Ghanaians from leaving his or her surroundings to grow.*
3. *For example; a bye-law could state that, anybody who throws rubbish at unauthorized places or caught easing oneself anywhere will pay a fine of GHC50.*

The deontic use of *will* as an order may be a case of indeterminacy or merger between the expression of physical obligation and that of the moral obligation. The sentence (...*a bye-law could state that, anybody who throws rubbish at unauthorized places or caught easing oneself anywhere will pay a fine of GHC50*), for instance, may be a case merger between the expression of physical obligation (... because he will pay a fine of GHC 50) and that of moral obligation (...because it morally prudent to keep the environment clean).

### As ability (Epistemic)

The Ghanaian sample indicated that the use of the modal operator *will* as ability is also a typical feature of Ghanaian English. The data indicate 28 cases (11.2%) and below are some examples to illustrate this usage:

1. *It will allow easy flow of water and other particles.*
2. *It will go a long way to improve the general sanitation in the country.*
3. *To begin with, clean up exercise will be of great help in improving sanitation.*

This epistemic use of the modal operator *will* indicated in the Ghanaian English is marginally related to possibility or weak volition; if speaking of drainage in Ghana, one says, good drainage system can allow easy flow of water and other particles. The use of the modal will in sentence 2 for instance, can be glossed that clean up exercise *can help improve sanitation*.

#### **Will + Main Verb**

One other worth noting feature revealed in the Ghanaian sample is the usage of the modal operator *will* plus main verb. Significantly, it occurred in 35 cases (14%). It takes the phraseological pattern, Will+Main Verb (Will+MV). Thus, this usage of the modal operator *will* combines with its main predicate in simple present tense to express a kind of request that is non-binding on the addressee. This usage of the modal operator *will* seems to be quite rare in the British variety. Here are some examples for instantiation:

1. *I'm not saying I will provide you with job but I can get you to that platform that will help you find the job.*
2. *This will also reduce the rate at which people dispose faeces indiscriminately.*
3. *Landlords who have houses without gutters should construct suitable size gutters that will enable the water used to pass through.*

Such a combination to express this meaning does not seem to occur in British English (Ngula, 2012), however, examples of this use of the modal operator *will* seem to be the very dominant usage in the Ghanaian corpus studied.

#### **Elliptical Implication**

The elliptical implication, whose main markers in the English modal system are *will* and (shall) does not seem to occur in Ghanaian corpus studied. The elliptical implication is characterized by two facts: (a) where the antecedent of the relation is not mentioned explicitly (often because it is not at issue for the speaker) and (b) the relation is rarely abductive (i.e. rarely reverse the cause-consequence relation). The first characteristic of the elliptical implication is where the parentheses request the fact that the antecedent remains unexpressed (Larreya, 2009). In *I am sure he'll win the match* or in *He'll sit there for hours* or in *That'll be John*, the modal judgment in inferring a consequence from a set of “known” facts are not specified. Some examples from the Ghanaian corpus which could be parenthesized are:

1. *We will transform the economy in our first hundred days in office.*
2. *I will say that Greater Accra is the dirtiest among the regions since it is where most of the people are found.*
3. *It will allow easy flow of water and other particles.*
4. *I will pursuing this new approach in my administration as the SRC president not because it is in my interest but it is in the interests of the student body.*
5. *To finally expedite industrialization in the country, we will double the production of alternative energy supply in our first 180 days in office.*

These and many other sentences from the Ghanaian corpus could have been parenthesized as (*We'll transform the economy in our first hundred days in office; I'll say that Greater Accra is the dirtiest among the regions since most of the people ...; and, It'll allow easy flow of water and other particles; I'll pursuing this new approach in my administration as...; and ... we'll double the production of alternative energy supply in our first 180 days in office*); however, the elliptical implication usage seems to be absent in Ghanaian English since not a single sentence featured this use in all the 250 sentences in the Ghanaian corpus.

#### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study has been to investigate ways along which the meanings and uses of modal operator *will* divert between Ghanaian English and British English. The study establishes that the semantic content and the uses of the modal *will* is, to an appreciable extent, similar in the two varieties of English. To be able to determine whether or not the uses found in Ghanaian data were also uses found in British English, I relied on Ngula (2012) corpus-based semantic investigations on the modal verbs and Coates (1983) corpus-based semantics investigation of British English. I also drew information, where necessary, on other studies, including Larreya (2009). The study of the modal meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in the Ghanaian context provides additional evidence in support of the claim that the uses of the modal operator *will* vary from one region to another.

Similar observations on the modal operator *will* have been made by other scholars, including, in Ghana, (Ngula, 2009, 2010, 2012), Owusu-Ansah (2012), Wiredu (2012); in Nigeria (Kujore, 1985). The study bears a number of implications. In the first place, it lends credence to Owusu-Ansah (2012); Wiredu (2012); Ngula (2009, 2010, 2012) as it confirms the claim that there exist a variety of English – Ghanaian English. As well, the study is a contribution to studies on Ghanaian English and on modality in the academia as it reveals meanings and uses of the modal operator *will* in Ghanaian English. Further studies could focus on the uses of modals in

idiomatic expressions in Ghanaian English.

## References

- Amoako-Atta, G. (1998). *Modality in Ghanaian contractual documents*. Unpublished B. A. Dissertation, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Coates, J. (1983). The semantics of the modal auxiliaries. London: Croom Helm.
- Declerck, R. (2009). *Not-yet-factual: A neglected modal concept*. Topics in English Linguistics: Mouton de Gruyter, Division of Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Downing, A. & Locke, P. (1992). *A University Course in English Grammar*. New York: Prentice Hall International.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1970). "Functional Diversity in language, As Seen From a Consideration of Modality and Mood in English". *Functions of Language* 6: 322 – 361.
- Kratzer, A. (1981). The notional category of modality. In H. J. Eikmeyer and H. Rieser (Eds), *words, world, and contexts*. Berlin: de Gruyter. 39 - 74
- Larreya, P. (2009). Towards a typology of modality in language. Topics in English Linguistics: Mouton de Gruyter, Division of Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Leech, G. & Coates, J. (1980). Semantics Indeterminacy and the modals. In S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, & J. svartvik (eds), *Studies in English Language for Randolph Quirk*. London: Longman, 79 – 90.
- Mc Eney, T. Wilson, A. (1996). *Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Ngula, R. S. (2009). *A corpus investigation into the semantics of modal verbs in Ghanaian English*. Unpublished MPhil. Dissertation, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Ngula, R. S. (2010). *Variation in the semantics of modal verbs in Ghanaian English*. Drumspeak International of research in the humanities. Vol. (3).
- Ngula, R. S. (2012). *Owning the other tongue: Evidence from the semantics of modal verbs in Ghanaian English*. A festschrift For Professor Kofi Yankson. University press.. University of Cape Coast.
- Owusu-Ansah, L. K. (1994). *Modality in Ghanaian and American personal letters*, in world Englishes. Vol.13 (3): 341-346
- Owusu-Ansah, L. K. (2012). *Three proofs of the existence of Ghanaian English*. A festschrift For Professor Kofi Yankson. University Press. University of Cape Coast.
- Palmer, F. R. (2001). Mood and Modality. 2<sup>nd</sup> (ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Portner, P. (2009). *Modality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Quirk, R., Crystal, D., Greenbaum, S. & Leech G. (1985). A comprehensive grammar of the English language. London: Longman.
- Salkie, R. (2009). *Degrees of modality*. Topics in English linquistics. Mouton de Gruyter. Division of Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Suhadi, J. (2011). Epistemic Modality and Deontic Modality: Two Sides of a Coin. *JULISA*, 11(2), 156 – 179.
- Van der Auwera, J. & Plungan, V. (1998). Modality's semantic map. Linguistic typology 2:79- 124. Versstraete, Jean-Christoph.
- Von Fintel, K. (2006). *Modality and language*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Massachusetts University Press.
- Wiredu, J. F. (2012). *Prominence Reference in Ghanaian English*: A study of a selected group of university students. Between language and literature: A festschrift For Professor Kofi Yankson
- Zhongyi, X. (2015). Modality and Evidentiality in Political Discourse: A Cognitive-functional Account. An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Lancaster University.