

Modality in Czech and English

Possibility particles and the conditional mood in a parallel corpus

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The paper examines two kinds of modality exponents and their interlingual relationships, using an aligned parallel minicorpus of two contemporary Czech originals (drama and novel) and their English translations. It focuses on four most frequent Czech adverbial particles of possibility/approximation: *snad*, *možná*, *asi*, *nejspíše*, and the Czech conditional mood marker *by* in the texts and their equivalents. It contrasts the findings with the equivalents in the latest and largest Czech-English dictionary. The results confirm that in either case the lexicographic description is insufficient both in the range of equivalents offered and their respective representativeness.

Keywords: parallel corpus, Czech modality particles, Czech mood marker, English equivalents

1. Modality and contrastive corpus studies

Modality is a complex category cutting across more than one field and discipline, including morphology, lexicon, syntax and pragmatics. Next to modal verbs and adverbs, covered by grammars, it is perhaps mood (including the conditional in Czech) and particles in some languages that stand out as modality exponents. Their contrastive investigation is still at its beginning and parallel corpora provide a unique opportunity and a powerful impetus for their study.

At the moment, a joint attempt to build a parallel Czech-English and English-Czech corpus is being made by Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno, aiming at a balanced representation. The selec-

tion, however, is limited by the available translation texts. The Czech texts are available from the Czech National Corpus, the English ones are in the stage of being processed. Basically, two major types of contemporary texts are being gathered, i.e. Informative and Imaginative, which, in turn, will be pragmatically split into whatever subcategories that offer themselves. Notwithstanding the fact the Prague parallel corpus is still in its initial phases and very few texts have been processed to a degree allowing in-depth research, we thought it useful to show that even at this stage, with limited resources and a tiny sample, it is possible to arrive at remarkable results which put the information in existing bilingual dictionaries in a new perspective. The choice of texts was limited by three factors: availability, quality of translation and suitability in terms of offering enough data on the features to be studied. The quality of translation was seen as crucial, overriding even such factors as one of the translators being a dramatist, a fact which might possibly make the language less representative of general usage. As the study was conceived as a pilot probe testing and demonstrating the potential of parallel-corpus analysis, not aiming at an exhaustive and definitive description of matching between English and Czech modal particles, the risk of a certain amount of distortion was seen as tolerable. On reflection, we have decided to base this study on two parallel texts of a novel and a drama by renowned contemporary Czech authors (Michael Viewegh, *Výchova mladých dívek v Čechách* and Václav Havel, *Largo desolato*; see References below). The suitability of choosing a novel and a drama for examining the adequacy of dictionary equivalents is open to question. However, apart from such considerations as availability and quality of translation and the fact that bilingual dictionaries are very much used in literary translation, we concluded that including both a novel representing written language and a play as an approximation of spoken language was, at this point, all we could realistically hope for.

In the following, a probe will be made into the cross-linguistic distribution and behaviour of modality exponents of two kinds, namely Czech modality particles denoting possibility (see Section 2) and the conditional mood (see Section 3). On the basis of the two parallel texts, only a Czech-English mapping will be attempted. The focus on the two kinds of modality exponents stems from experience with traditional problems and difficulties in their translation. The need to explore the former follows from the limited occurrence of modal particles in English, sharply contrasting with their profusion in Czech; correspondences between the Czech conditional *by* and its English counterparts have not been studied so far.

The texts are not lemmatised, the alignment used is based on the Vanilla aligner. The total numbers of words (tokens) found in the texts are as follows:

Viewegh – 43 171 words (Czech) and 56 023 words (English)

Havel – 14 363 words (Czech) and 16 367 words (English)

Thus, both English translations are considerably longer in terms of word count, Viewegh being longer by 29,76 per cent and Havel's text by 13,95 per cent. Although English uses many more words to express the same text (between 14 and 30 per cent), the difference does not seem to be reflected in modality exponents as will become clear from the discussion of each type of exponent.

2. Czech possibility particles in English

Although typologically different, i.e. highly inflected language (genetically close to Polish or Russian), Czech uses similar means of expressing modality as English (verbs and related categories, particles clausal adjuncts, etc.). As might be expected, however, their distribution in Czech and English overlaps only partially. Modality particles are very common in both Czech texts, out of which a subset of those expressing possibility (132, i.e. 0.3 per cent in Viewegh, and 117, i.e. 0.8 per cent for Havel) has been chosen. However, only those with frequencies of 5 and more have been taken into account in the selection. As a result, the choice narrowed down to the following four particles *snad*, *možná*, *asi*, *nejspíše*. The particles will be taken one by one and examined against their English counterparts; their total frequencies in the corpus are given in parentheses. The English equivalents found in the texts are compared especially with those listed in the largest contemporary Czech-English dictionary (Fronek 2000).

2.1 Snad

SNAD (Viewegh 34, Havel 12). Surprisingly it was found that, contrary to bilingual dictionary information, there is only a weak regularity between *snad* and the selection of its English equivalents in the corpus. There are only 6 (Viewegh) and 3 (Havel) cases (17,8 per cent and 25 per cent respectively) corresponding to the English *perhaps*. Such cases, based on frequency, might be called standard equivalents. Very often *snad* is not translated at all (11 and 3 cases respectively), having thus a zero counterpart. The largest group of equiv-

alents (11 and 5 respectively), however, is formed by a variety of equivalent types, both lexical and syntactic, each having a very low representation. These, for lack of a suitable cover-all term, will be called non-standard or special cases. They include

- (a) question tag: *Umřel snad Arnold Schwarzenegger? – Arnold Schwarzenegger hasn't died, has he?*
- (b) change of a question into an imperative sentence: *No ty snad nechceš? – Don't tell me you don't want to.*
- (c) change of an adjective into a verbal clause: *snad celé týdny nemytý – which looks as if...*
- (d) use of a conjunction: *ne snad přímo protokolární ale – if not a ceremonial, then; ne snad lhostejný ale... – though not indifferent, still...*
- (e) use of a set phrase: *A ne snad? – What's wrong with that?*
- (f) negative yes-no question: *Nenapsal jsi to snad sám? – Isn't that how you put it?*
- (g) negative rhetorical question (with an archaic form): *Nemá snad učitel očí? – Hath not a teacher eyes?*
- (h) specific collocation (jointly with *trying to*): *Chcete tím snad říct... – Are you trying to say?*
- (i) other complex solutions: *To by mi snad probůh řekli – But they'd have told me, for heaven's sake; Měl jsem snad povolat nějakou učitelku? – You wouldn't expect me to have got some woman teacher in, would you?*

Moreover, a variety of other individual equivalent solutions have been found (with the frequency of 1 in each case), including *surely, most likely, even, I think, I hope, I might*.

2.2 Možná

MOŽNÁ (Viewegh 31, Havel 14). Also here, an extremely low correspondence to any regular English counterpart has been found. In fact, there is a scale of possible equivalents, including *might* (6 cases), *could* (4 cases), *perhaps* (3), *maybe* and *possibly* (each twice), and, only once in each case, *most likely, I suppose (that/so), it is conceivable, it could be that*. This suggests that it is difficult to point to any single regular equivalent at all, there being only tendencies of various probability. This holds for the novel. Havel's drama fares somewhat better, offering *perhaps* (9x) as a major equivalent. Next to this, there are 4 cases where a special construction is involved, too. These constructions are mostly correlated with the English adjective *possible*, i.e. in expressions such as *if possible, as possible*. It is also significant that there is a number of cases with zero correspondence in English (5 in Viewegh). It is interesting that the translator sometimes tended to give up on the English equivalent in particularly complex cases of a double alternative or multiple modality (... *v lepším případě možná*

i šest – six at the most), though not always (*A za tohle volání bysme jim možná poděkovat měli – And maybe it's that calling that we ought to thank them for*).

2.3 Asi

ASI (Viewegh 31, Havel 9). Neither does *asi* offer any clear-cut class of equivalents in English. In one text only (Viewegh) the English equivalent *about* is used 8 times, mostly with expressions of quantity (*asi půldruhého metru vysoká knihovna – about five feet high...*); Havel's text uses *probably* in 3 cases. The rest are of a scalar nature again, starting with *must* (4x, *jak asi vypadají – what it must be like*), followed by *I expect* (2x, *já asi budu – I expect I am...*) and a number of occasional solitary solutions, such as *or so* (*asi tucet starých vodových obtisků – a dozen or so old stickers*), *some* (*balíček asi dvě stě kopi – a pile of some 200 photocopies*), *that's for sure, probably, sometime* (*asi v polovině srpna – sometime in the middle of August*), and possibly the indefinite article and/or numeral (*asi dvě desítky parodií – a score of parodies*). The diversity of means used is remarkable, ranging from verb and adverb through pronoun and article to set phrases. Not surprisingly, however, it is the zero equivalent group again that is largest of all (7 cases in the novel and 4 cases in the drama). No equivalent is often found in cases where the use involves the choice between two quantitative alternatives, which in Czech is “softened” by the particle, e.g. *asi šest nebo sedm básní – six or seven poems*. Other cases, involving special and non-standard solutions, also point, among other things, to the interesting possibility of a particle feature, here mostly a kind of indefiniteness, being encompassed within a single equivalent with a broader meaning. This happens when the particle is related to another word as well, cf. *co asi – whatever*. These cases also include the use of an idiom as an equivalent, cf. *Co vy o tom asi tak víte? – A fat lot you know about it! Ta asi vypadá! – And you left it in a mess!*

2.4 Nejspíše

NEJSPIŠE (Viewegh 10, Havel 0). There is a clear tendency for *nejspíše/e* to have *most likely* (5 cases) as its stable equivalent, next we found 2 cases of no equivalent and a few occasional uses of *no doubt, most probably, I ought to* (used once in each case).

2.5 Equivalents of *snad*, *možná* and *asi* in a standard bilingual dictionary

It is revealing to compare these results with equivalents of *snad*, *možná* and *asi* (represented in both Viewegh and Havel) in a standard bilingual dictionary (Fronek 2000; the figures for novel and drama are conjoined by +), see Table 1.

Table 1. Corpus equivalents versus bilingual dictionary equivalents

	Standard Equivalents	Special Equivalents	Zero Equivalents
<i>Snad</i>			
Corpus	9+3	10+0	11+3
Dictionary	6		
<i>Možná</i>			
Corpus	10+4	4+0	5+0
Dictionary	4		
<i>Asi</i>			
Corpus	10+4	9+2	7+2
Dictionary	10		

Without attempting any systematic treatment or considering the zero equivalent possibility, the dictionary offers a few more equivalents which have not been recorded in this corpus, including *maybe*, *conceivably*, *really* (for SNAD), *may* (for MOŽNÁ) and *approximately*, *around*, *presumably*, *I expect*, *I presume*, *I wonder*, *would* (for ASI). Their status and applicability must be studied, however, in a much larger corpus. At the moment, the figures obtained seem to point to the rather disconcerting fact of a serious discrepancy between the corpus and the dictionary data: in the case of SNAD both agree in 3 equivalents only, the rest, which is much larger, is different in both sources. Equally, in the case of MOŽNÁ there is agreement in 3 equivalents only, and with ASI, agreement is in four equivalents, found in both sources.

3. The Czech conditional *by* and its English equivalents

As in the first part of the study, the core task is comparison of the equivalents provided in the largest and latest Czech-English dictionary (Fronek 2000) with the information offered by our sample of aligned Czech-English texts. While the dictionary gives only two equivalents of the Czech conditional lexeme 'by', namely *would* and *should* (the latter as 1st person conditional and the central

modal auxiliary of obligation, synonymous with *ought to*), the following examination reveals the disparity between dictionary information and the richness of data found in the parallel corpus.

3.1 Lexeme *by*

The primary function of the Czech lexeme *by*, which is a special form of the verb *to be* and subsumes several inflected forms (*bych, bychom, bys, byste*, and colloquial *bysme*), is seen as expressing conditional (hypothetical, unreal) meaning contrasting with that of the indicative, especially in the apodosis of the conditional sentence. Hence in Czech grammatical theory *by* is called the conditional and regarded as part of the three-member category of mood, together with the indicative and the imperative. By contrast, the grammatical status of its English equivalent is different. The standard treatment of *would* in English, such as in CGEL (Quirk et al. 1985), excludes it from the indicative-imperative-subjunctive mood system and deals with it under modals (Quirk et al. 1985:219–237) and conditional clauses (ibid:1010–1012). It does, however, label *would* and 1st person *should* as ‘mood markers’ (ibid:234) of hypothetical meaning in certain contexts (conditional clauses, some nominal clauses). Insightful analysis of the pros and cons of either approach can be found in Dušková (1999:247–251), where she argues for the re-inclusion of the conditional in the mood system.

Whether or not we decide to call the Czech *by* and the English *would* conditional or merely mood marking, the problem is that both have additional modal meanings: the Czech *by*, either on its own or in combination with modal verbs (cf. *would have/be able/be allowed to* in English), can also be epistemic and deontic, with the characteristic additional sense of tentativeness (expressing politeness, uncertainty, irresolution, deference, modesty, etc.). The tentative *by* is therefore typically used when expressing requests, directives, opinions, or suggestions. The situation of *would* in English is not only similar, but, if anything, even more complex (see, for example, Huddleston, Pullum et al. 2002). The tentative *by/would* is characterized by the “neutralised opposition” between the conditional and the indicative form (*Will/would you sit down, I think/I should think that*, etc.). In this respect, tentativeness is an important feature which may help distinguish the modal (epistemic, deontic) uses of *by/would* from the mood-marking conditional ones (hypothetical of open condition, unreal, etc.), though in Czech the replacement of the hypothetical *by* with the indicative in colloquial speech is not impossible, either.

3.2 Equivalents of *by*

The results of the text comparison are given in the Table 2 below. It proved convenient to divide the equivalents of *by* into three distinct types: (a) *would*/*d*/1st person *should* (typically mood-marking, conditional), (b) modal verb (including deontic *should*), (c) alternative (other than *would*/modal verb). The number of *by* occurrences in the Havel original was 121, the number of equivalents is 116 (five instances were not translated); in the Viewegh original the lexeme *by* occurred 150 times, three were omitted in translation, thus leaving 147 equivalents. The modal verb equivalents in the Havel translation included *could* (13), (deontic) *should* (9), *might* (3), *ought to* (2); modal verb equivalents in the Viewegh translation comprised *may/might* (1/12), *can/could* (1/10), *should* (11), *ought to* (10), *will* (2), and *must* (1).

As the total incidence of the lexeme *by* in both texts would be too large to cover in the space available, it was decided to restrict the analysis of *by* and its equivalents to only one pair of texts. Since the most interesting type of equivalent is the alternative one, the choice fell on the Havel texts where the group of alternative equivalents is largest. The following discussion therefore concerns only the original and the translation of *Largo desolato*. As the table shows, the ‘dictionary’ equivalents *would* and (1st person conditional and deontic) *should* were used to translate less than half of the 116 instances of the Czech *by* (i.e., 41 and 9 cases respectively, 43.0 per cent in all). Almost the same number was translated by other means than *would*/past modal (48 instances, 41.4 per cent), and the rest by the past tense modals *could*, *might*, and by *ought to* (18 instances, 15.5 per cent). Cutting across the formal classification of equivalents into the three groups is the differentiation between the equivalents in terms of meaning. For the sake of simplicity, they were divided into two categories: conditional uses and (tentative) modal uses, which are dealt with separately under each formal group below.

Table 2. Equivalents of the Czech lexeme *by* in the Havel and Viewegh texts

type of equivalent	Havel		Viewegh		total	
<i>would/should/d</i>	41	35.3%	61	41.5%	102	38.8%
modal verb	27	22.4	48	32.6	75	28.5
alternative	48	41.4	38	25.9	86	32.7
total	116	100.0	147	100.0	263	100.0

3.3 *Would/d* equivalents

Of the 41 *would* equivalents, 32 (78.0 per cent) are used in conditional, hypothetical meaning. The largest subgroup (14) consists of simple sentences with an implicit condition. In one case the implicit condition was even added in ‘explicit’ translation (*Pro vás bychom ukradli třeba celou papírnu – For you we’d steal the whole paper mill if we had to*). The second largest group (11) is comprised of complex sentences with *by/would* in the apodosis of the conditional sentence (explicit condition). The remaining ten hypothetical uses include 4 cases of *by/would* in nominal object clauses (*nikdo z nás neví, jak by to sám unesl – None of us knows how we’d be able to stand it ourselves*), two cases of relative clauses (*něco, co by skutečně zabralo – something that would make them sit up*), and one case of a nominal subject clause translated as a simple sentence with a disjunct (*To je jasné, že by to pro ně bylo výhodnější – Obviously that would be much more to their liking*).

In contrast to hypothetical *by/would*, tentative uses form a distinct minority here (9; 22.2 per cent). They include two instances of epistemic *would* in a simple sentence (*určitě by vás to zajímalo – I’m sure you’d find it interesting*), the other two simple sentences are a polite request and query. The next three are tentative opinions in the main clause governing a nominal object clause (*řekl bych, že > I’d say that*). Finally, *by/would* appeared twice in the main clause of the comparative sentence (*než být takhle doma, to bych byl radši tam! > I’d rather be there than here like this!*) as part of the fixed expression (modal idiom) *would rather*.

3.4 Past modal equivalents

The smallest groups of equivalents (27; 22.4 per cent) involves past modals *could*, *might*, *ought to* and also the deontic *should* (1st person *should* of condition did not occur in the text). (Semi-auxiliaries such as *have to* combined with *would* and the modal idiom *would rather* were subsumed under *would* equivalents.) Although the Czech combination of conditional *by* + modal verb roughly corresponds to the uses of the English past modals, their distribution in the sample was remarkably asymmetric. Despite almost the same number of *by*+modal occurrences in the Czech original (29x) and the (conditional) past modals in English (27x), only 14 of the Czech *by*+modal verb phrases were translated by a past modal in English. By contrast, 4 of the Czech *by*+modal verb phrases were translated by *would* and 11 by an alternative equivalent.

The largest subgroup (8) involves nominal object clauses with both tentative (*domnívali jsme se, že by vás mohl zajímat* – *we thought you might be interested in*) and arguably hypothetical *by* (*myslíme, že by se dalo dělat víc* – *we are of the opinion that you could be doing more*), though in two cases the actual translation was a tentative relative clause. Next are 7 rhetorical questions (*jak bych začala* – *where should I begin*; *kdo jiný by měl dát věci do pohybu* – *who else but you could get things going*) which directly contrast with the alternative equivalents in the previous group. The following group of 5 are simple-sentence requests, opinions and suggestions (*měl bys Lucy vyhledat* – *you ought to go and see Lucy*; *poprosil bych vás o* – *could I ask you for*). There are only three conditions, one implicit and two conditional sentences, both of which radically transformed (*mohl bych tomu uniknout, kdybych popřel* – *I could get out of it by denying*), two comparative sentences – with epistemic *by* in the main and deontic *bych* in the dependent clause (*možná jsem víc zdrženlivý, než bych měl být* – *I'm possibly more reserved than I should be*), and finally two relative clauses, one directly contrasting with the same sentence but an alternative equivalent (*pevný bod, z něhož by všechno ve mně rostlo* – *a fixed point from which everything inside me could grow*). Although the English past modal equivalents are conditional like *by* and *would*, the ratio of hypothetical to tentative uses of *by* appears to be the reverse of the *would* equivalents group (i.e. some two thirds are modal, i.e. other than mood-marking hypothetical uses).

3.5 Alternative equivalents (other than *would*/past modal)

Compared with the *would* equivalents, the situation in this largest group (48; 41.4 per cent) is even more complex. Also, in contrast to the *would* group, most of the *by* instances are non-conditional here, though the wish and comparison clauses and part of the postmodification uses of *by* in Czech seem to be exceptions. There is one instance which might possibly be construed either as implicit condition or cause; translation by *will* instead of *would* suggests that causal interpretation (treated as modal here) was preferred: *Rychle – na balkón! Proč? Odvlekli by tě!* – *Quick – go out on the balcony! Why? They'll drag you off!* (cf. paraphrases: If you didn't escape, they would drag you off/You must escape, or they'll drag you off). However, the distinction between hypothetical and tentative (deontic, etc.) uses is sometimes very difficult to make, on account of the wide range of contexts in which *by* occurred in this group:

wish (1x): *kéž by to byla lichá obava* – *let's hope our fears are groundless*

- gradation (1x): *když jsem si ji schopen přiznat já, tím spíš by sis ji měla přiznat ty* – if I can all the more reason for you to
- concession (1x): *dosáhnout účelu, aniž by se muselo* – to achieve our goal without having to;
- opinion (2x): *s tím bych souhlasila* – they've got something there; *řekl bych to tak* – let me put it like this
- offer, suggestion (3x): *možná by sis měl vzít* – perhaps you need some; *já bych vyrobil* – I'll make
- intention (volition) (4x): *chtěl bych* – I'm trying to; *nerad bych* – I don't want to; *potřeboval bych* – I need to
- nominal dependent object clause (6x): *nevzpomínám si, že bys mne někdy vzal za ruku* – I can't remember you ever taking my hand; *nevím, co bys chtěl projednávat* – not that I know what there is to discuss; *cítím, že jediným východiskem by pro mě bylo* – I have a feeling that my only way out is to
- attitudinal/expressive rhetorical question, formula (7x): *Jak bych ti to řekl?* – How shall put it?; *Co byste oplácel?* – What is there to repay?; *kdo jiný by měl ...?* – who else but you is there ...
- comparison (dependent clause) (11x): *radši zemřu, než bych se vzdal sám sebe* – I'd rather die than give up my own human identity; *hraju svou roli dál, jako by se nic nestalo* – I go on acting my role as if nothing has happened; *všichni jako bychom ztráceli jistotu* – we've all begun to question whether
- postmodifying clause (relative, appositive) (11x): *má ... pocit, jako by se ve mně cosi hroutilo* – I've had the feeling that something is collapsing inside me; *sebeklam, jímž by ses snažil svět ... ujistit* – a crutch ... illusory, self-deceiving – by means of which you try to assure the world; *pevný bod, z něhož by všechno ve mně rostlo* – a fixed point out of which I can grow; *prohlášení, v němž by byly* – declaration covering

Thus the translation alternatives to *would*/past modals are essentially the indicative, non-finite verb constructions, and lexical means (collocations, idiomatic, frozen structures). This type of alternative equivalent apparently prevails with the tentative, non-conditional uses of *by* in the Czech original (in more than two thirds of cases).

We may conclude, on the basis of the Havel sample, that the Czech *by* occurs in quite a varied range of contexts. However, most of its uses in the texts appear to be modal (i.e., tentative epistemic, deontic, etc.), rather than mood-marking (i.e. hypothetical, unreal). Of the three types of equivalent, the mood-marking function prevails only in *would* equivalents (some 80 per cent). In the other two groups of equivalents (past modal and alternative equivalents) modal uses are more common (some two thirds in both). In other words, the Czech *by* is translated by *would* especially when it has a conditional meaning, while the (tentative) modal meanings of *by* are more frequently expressed by other equivalents and only marginally by *would*. Conversely, these other equivalents (i.e. past modal and alternative) are somewhat less frequently used to translate

the conditional (mood-marking) uses of the Czech *by*. Next, the large number of alternative equivalents (i.e., other than *would*/past modal), such as the indicative, suggests that the Czech tentative modal uses of *by* often have non-tentative counterparts in English. In sum, although the English *would* shares both mood-marking and modal meanings of the Czech *by* (apart from having some specific ones, such as insistence, willingness, future in the past, etc.), apparently the relationship between the Czech *by* and the English *would* is rather asymmetric. This partial overlap between *by* and *would* is due to the fact that some of the uses of the Czech *by* are taken over by different English modals, others can be expressed by the indicative, non-finite verb constructions, and lexical means, set expressions etc., or they simply have to be dispensed with in English due to different linguistic and/or pragmatic conventions. All in all, the comparison of the texts has shown that the largest contemporary Czech-English dictionary is inadequate in that it completely omits equivalents such as past modals *could*, *might*, *ought to*, and especially the uses of the indicative, non-finite verb constructions, and lexical means. Yet these form two thirds (57 per cent) of equivalents of the Czech *by* even in the small Havel sample. Clearly, the asymmetry between the uses of the Czech *by* and the English *would* even in their conditional function has been little explored so far due to the laboriousness of collation and therefore aligned parallel texts can be of much help here.

4. Conclusions

The results of the present contrastive study do point to the insufficiency of even the best dictionaries, a fact mentioned in corpus studies with increasing frequency now (cf. Salkie 2002). There is no doubt a relation between the fact that description of modality particles has been rather underdeveloped in Czech grammatical theory so far and the way they are treated in monolingual and, consequently, even bilingual dictionaries. As a result the dictionaries look upon them as isolated lexical items and the description of the range of their modal meanings is rather sketchy. This reductionist tendency is carried even further in the bilingual dictionaries where modal distinctions are generally swept under the carpet and presumably “universal” world-class corresponding equivalents are usually offered instead. However, it is evident that parallel corpora may do much better in offering information on usage, too, which is missing from dictionaries in most cases. Such specific and complex cases as modal and mood

marking elements certainly require much more information. This should include the mapping of distribution (their place in the sentence), constraints, if any, etc., which has not been possible with such a small corpus as was available in this case. It is evident that only a corpus with its profusion of contexts may contribute to the resolution of epistemic, deontic and alethic types of modality, the expression of which in language is extremely varied and complex. This applies even more when it comes to correspondences between two languages as both parts of the study have shown. In fact, both have indicated serious discrepancies between dictionary equivalents and the actual situation in texts in terms of the number, frequency and type of equivalents occurring in texts and their distribution (in the case of *by/would* exposing a remarkable asymmetry of incidence). The results of the study go on to confirm the necessity of re-evaluation of the hitherto descriptions against the background of information provided by parallel corpora. Generally speaking, the results coincide, for example, with those of Aijmer (1996), who examined the Swedish modal particles using the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus.

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