ABSTRACT

The present thesis analyzes the English conditional clauses introduced by unless and if (not) conjunctions and their Czech counterparts. However the two conjunctions might seem the same, their meaning and use widely differs: while unless combines condition with exception (its meaning could be interpreted as ‘except if’) and thus introduces clauses expressing the only condition that prevents the realization of the matrix clause, if (not)-clauses express only one of several such conditions. The limitation of meaning of unless is reflected in its limited frequency in English texts and its limited possibilities as to positions and semantic roles.

The thesis consists of two parts. The theoretical part presents the concept of English conditional constructions from various aspects: their syntactic and semantic functions, and most importantly the conjunction unless and its difference from the negative if. The empirical part provides linguistic classification of 120 excerpted examples (60 if (not) and 60 unless conditional clauses) with their corresponding Czech equivalents; the examples are excerpted from Intercorp, a multilingual parallel translation corpus, provided by Charles University. All the conditions are first classified according to their syntactic functions (adjuncts vs. disjuncts) and semantic roles (open, hypothetical or rhetorical conditions) and then divided into groups for further analysis, lastly the unless and if (not) clauses are compared and conclusions are drawn.