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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Selected differences in Czech and English syntactic ambiguity

Vybrané rozdíly mezi českou a anglickou syntaktickou ambiguitou

Sofie Rajchartová

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Klára Lancová, Ph.D.

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V Praze, 2020

I declare that the following BA thesis represents my own work for which I used only the sources and literature stated and that this thesis has not been used in the course of other university studies or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

Prague, 2020

Ráda bych poděkovala vedoucí své práce, PhDr. Kláře Lancové, Ph.D., za veškerý čas, který mé práci věnovala a za všechny cenné rady, které mi poskytla.

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá vybranými typy anglické a české syntaktické ambiguity (dvojznačnosti). Hlavním cílem práce je porovnat příklady dvojznačných konstrukcí v obou jazycích a ověřit výskyt těchto typů dvojzačnosti, ať už v jednom nebo v obou zmíněných jazycích. Tyto příklady byly poskytnuty dvěma romány pro mládež, jejich filmovými zpracováními a českými překlady. V práci jsou kladeny otázky týkající se celkového výskytu dvojznačných výrazů, vlivu žánrů na jejich výskyt, shod překladu a primárně zkoumá hypotézu zabývající se skutečností, že vybrané typy dvojznačnosti se objevují častěji v angličtině než v češtině. Teoretická část práce definuje pojem významu, kontextu, ambiguity a již zmíněných typů syntaktické ambiguity. Praktická část popisuje výzkum a poskytuje analýzu rozdílů s cílem ověřit hypotézy této práce.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Ambiguita, dvojznačnost, význam, syntax, komparace, analytický jazyk, syntetický jazyk

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with selected types of English and Czech syntactic ambiguities. The main aim of this thesis is to compare examples of ambiguous structures in both languages and verify the occurrence of these types of ambiguities in either or both said languages. These examples are taken from two English young-adult novels, their respective film adaptations and the Czech translations. The thesis poses research questions regarding the overall frequency of ambiguous expressions, genre-dependency, the correspondence of translations and centres around the hypothesis that the selected types of ambiguities tend to appear more frequently in English than in Czech. The theoretical part of the thesis concentrates on the definition of meaning, context, ambiguity and the aforementioned types of syntactic ambiguities. The analytical part describes the research and provides an analysis of the differences, in order to verify the hypotheses of this thesis.

KEYWORDS

Contents

1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the phenomenon of ambiguity in English and Czech and the selected differences concerning the topic. The reason for concentrating on the topic of ambiguity is its frequency and certainly the fact that it appears a rather fascinating field of examination. I was interested in the comparison of the two languages and the various interpretations of the selected types of syntactic ambiguities.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine the hypothesis that the selected ambiguous structures tend to appear more frequently in English than in Czech, mainly due to the different morphological structure of the languages. Furthermore, another objective of the thesis concerns the primary sources, which provided the data for the analysis. Therefore, the thesis intends to examine the possible correspondence between English ambiguous expressions and their Czech translations. It is also important to mention that the original aim of this thesis was to analyse and compare syntactic and *lexical* ambiguity as well. However, since there are limitations concerning the scope of a bachelor thesis, there was not enough space to concentrate on both types of ambiguity.

The thesis is divided and organised into three main chapters - the theoretical part, the research questions and the analytical part.

The theoretical part of this work introduces the semantic notion of meaning (pp 10-13) and is further devoted to the phenomenon that is especially relevant for the purposes of this thesis: ambiguity (pp 14-19). It further looks to define both the concept of ambiguity itself (p. 14), as well as eight selected types of its occurrence in greater detail (pp 15-18). The part also provides some information about the process and methods of translation (pp 19-20).

The main hypothesis and the research questions are presented in the chapter Research Questions (p. 22).

The analytical part of this thesis provides an overview of the analysis and research that was conducted based on the sources that are introduced in the subchapter Methods and Materials (pp 23-26). The analytical part is further subdivided into two other chapters – Results and Interpretation.

The chapter Results (pp 27-35) presents the outcomes of the collected data, the frequency of occurrence of the selected types of ambiguity and some illustrative examples of English or Czech ambiguous structures and their counterparts.

The chapter Interpretation (pp 36-48) then analyses and compares some of the English and Czech examples of the selected types of ambiguities. Furthermore, it provides interpretation and explanation concerning the occurrence of ambiguity and the possible disambiguation.

The last chapter, Conclusion (pp 49-51), further summarises the thesis and findings in general and comments on the results and the research questions. Hopefully, this thesis will make a valuable contribution to the investigation of contrastive analysis in syntactic ambiguities.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Meaning in language

2.1.1 The notion of meaning from the semantic and pragmatic perspective

The semantic phenomena of *meaning* have been approached from a variety of angles. Although, the different perspectives often overlap to a certain degree, every approach presents something unique and innovative. Meaning can therefore be approached from the point of view of several academic disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, neurology, semiotics and linguistics (Cruse, 2000). This thesis centres around the field of linguistics as the primary approach and more specifically the sub-field of semantics. Semantics is, therefore, even more relevant, as its main focus is on the study of meaning. It is, however, not the only field within linguistics that looks ate the notion of meaning. While the study of semantics concentrates mainly on the literal meanings of words, phrases and sentences and is concerned with the grammatical processes of it, the field of pragmatics studies meaning in terms of context and the use of language in particular situations. These two main fields are, however, usually combined when studied, since in everyday use, the grammatical processes and the factors outside of language are taken into account (Portner, 2006) As far as semantics are concerned, there needs to be a certain distinction when it comes to the process of defining meaning. It is the distinction between the *semantic meaning* and *speaker´s meaning* (Portner, 2006). *Semantic meaning* may be understood as the literal meaning of a sentence and is dependent on its grammatical structure, whereas *speaker´s meaning* is what the speaker intends to convey and communicate and therefore goes beyond the literal, semantic meaning (Portner, 2006).

To distinguish between those two terms, Portner (2006) uses the following sentence as an example:

′′Can you give me an apple?′′

The literal question would only demonstrate my interest in the other person's physical ability to *give* me an apple, which is the semantic meaning. When it comes to the speaker′s meaning, the question is seen as a request – adding a layer of what the speaker intends to communicate. (Portner, 2006)

Portner (2006) further defines the notion of semantic meaning in the following extract.

''So to some extent the semantic meaning of a sentence depends on the context of use –

the situation in which the sentence was uttered, by a particular speaker, to

a particular addressee, at a particular time, and so forth.'' (Portner,2006)

The lexeme ′′me′′ used in the question automatically refers to the speaker, which confirms the dependency on the context and the meaning of the individual words. Therefore, it may be understood that *semantic meaning* depends on the English lexicon. The *speaker′s meaning*, however, is determined by contextual aspects of use that are additional to the literal. (Portner, 2006)

This results in the fact that semantics focuses on the *semantic meaning,* as it concerns its connection to the lexicon, grammar and the grammatical perspective. Whereas pragmatics concentrates on the connection between context of use and not only on speaker′s meaning, but also on semantic meaning. (Portner, 2006)

2.1.2 Meaning, context and ambiguity

Cruse (2000) also agrees that context is of vital importance when it comes to resolving the meaning of an utterance. While there is quite a vast range of roles that context can play, its power to *disambiguate ambiguous expressions* (Cruse, 2000) comes across as the most relevant.

Lyons (1996) comments on the topic of context in the following extract. '' *I trust that the context will reduce, if it does not entirely eliminate, ambiguity and the possibility of misunderstanding.* ''*(*Lyons, 1996)

To disambiguate means to resolve an ambiguous word, phrase or sentence, which is a unit that has multiple semantic meanings (Portner,2006) or possible interpretations. Cruse (2000) mentions that there are many potential ambiguities in our daily language which, however, are frequently not noticed, since they are easily disambiguated by context. He also states that we often intuitively do not notice the ambiguous words in a sentence, since there is usually the disambiguating information already given in the sentence. (Cruse,2000)

Portner (2006) further claims that *ambiguity* (which shall be further addressed later) is one of the fundamental semantic concepts, which help us talk about meaning and understand how words, phrases and sentences are connected to each other and the world. Alongside ambiguity, these, for instance, belong to the other mentioned concepts as well: *synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, hypernymy, entailment, tautology, contradicts* and *contradiction*. (Portner, 2006)

2.1.3   Meaning and the Principle of Compositionality

It is important to note that there is an infinite number of words, phrases and sentences that can carry meaning. (Portner, 2006) These meanings can then be combined in order to form other, more complex meanings. Language has an unlimited ability to express and it is not possible to put all feasible sentences and expressions into some sort of storage or dictionary. (Cruse,2000) However, we, as language users, are able to deal with the meanings of new expressions every day, which is explained by the Principle of Compositionality. (Portner, 2006) We understand a sentence because we understand its smaller units and the way these are combined. The Principle of Compositionality describes how smaller units of meaning are joined to create larger, and therefore, more meaningful expressions in language. (Pustejovsky, 2011) There are, nevertheless, according to Cruse (2000) exceptions regarding the Principle of Compositionality, such as idioms. When hearing an idiom, thinking about it

compositionally, one is not able to decode the meaning right away, even though the meaning of the individual words may be clear. Cruse (2000) specifies this by giving an example of a non-compositional expression, the idiom, *white elephant* - while understanding the literal meaning of the words *white* and *elephant*, it may be rather challenging to interpret the meaning of the whole expression. (Cruse, 2000)

2.1.4 History of meaning

The first remarks about meaning are considered to have appeared in antiquity. This study of meaning may have begun with Plato´s theory of forms, followed by Aristotle and his theory of meaning. (Pustejovsky, 2011) Pustejovsky (2011) further suggests that several philosophers have touched upon the topic of meaning throughout the centuries, however, the first philosophers that he considers significant in the studies of semantics are Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege. (Pustejovsky, 2011) Frege argued that semantics is not connected to psychology and moreover, the distinction between sense and reference. (Peregrin, 2002) However, the term *semantics* as we know it today is said to have originated elsewhere, namely in Michel Breál´s *Essai de sémantique: Science de significations* from 1897, translated as *Semantics: Studies in the Science of Meaning.* (Allan, 2016)

 Furthermore, the term *meaning* was profoundly studied by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards in *The Meaning of Meaning*, published in 1923. Another object of their study was the influence of language on thought. Their semiotic triangle (or triangle of meaning/ triangle of reference) has been a significant contribution to the linguistic world. (Ogden, Richards, 1923)

According to the American linguist and philosopher J.J. Katz, the purpose of the theory of semantics is to define several terms, some of which are closely related to the notion of meaning. (Peregrin, 2002) One of these terms is a phenomenon that is crucial for this thesis and therefore, shall be further deconstructed in the next chapter - Ambiguity.

3 Ambiguity in Language

3.1 The Ambiguity phenomenon

The phenomenon of *ambiguity* occurs when there is – or there appear to be - more than one semantic meaning and interpretation to a word, phrase or sentence. (Portner, 2006) It is a language phenomenon that occurs rather frequently. (Lyons, 1996) There are many levels of representation of linguistic ambiguities, however, in this thesis, only one kind of ambiguity and its examples will be further deconstructed – *syntactic ambiguity.* (MacDonald, 1993).

It is not only the fact that English is an analytic language and Czech a fusional one (Mareš, 2014; translation: mine) that affects the differences and also similarities in ambiguity in each language. There may be kinds of ambiguity that are typical for Czech and do not occur in the English counterparts, and conversely, types of ambiguity that emerge in English and have no ambiguous Czech equivalent. Undoubtedly, it is also possible for both of these languages to be equally ambiguous. (Dušková, 1999) The following part will introduce the kinds of ambiguity that will be analysed in greater detail later on.

Before broaching the topic of syntactic ambiguity, it is important to briefly mention lexical ambiguity. It differs from syntactic ambiguity because of the fact that it does not come from the syntactic possibilities of word combination, but from the concrete words appearing in a sentence. Therefore, if a word has more than one meaning or interpretation, operating with that word in a sentence may lead to lexical ambiguity. (Anderson, 2018)

Anderson (2018) further suggests that the sentences with lexical ambiguity can usually be resolved and therefore disambiguated by contextual information.

In contrast with syntactic ambiguity, the types of lexical ambiguity appear to be less complicated to determine, since there are only three. Namely homonymy, polysemy and categorial ambiguity (Hirst, 1992).

3.2 Syntactic ambiguity in Czech and English language

If there is a possibility of more than one grammatical syntactic representation of a sentence, this is referred to as syntactic ambiguity. (Anderson, 2018)

The following part will introduce some of the possible occurrences of syntactic ambiguity that have been selected for this thesis. This specific selection was mainly inspired and based on the chapter *A Contrastive View of Syntactic Ambiguities* (Dušková, 1999). Dušková (1999) considers the majority of these types of ambiguities central ones. The rest of these types of ambiguity were selected because of pure interest and the fact that they appear rather frequently. This thesis will further define and compare the following types of ambiguity: ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb *must*, ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures, ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers, ambiguity in sentences with successive pre- modification, ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element, ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions, ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings, and ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post- modification.

3.2.1 Ambiguity in sentences with modal verb *MUST*

The English modal verb *must* can be used to express two types of modalities – *root* and *epistemic*. *Must* in terms of root modality indicates obligation, whereas in terms of epistemic modality, it indicates *logical necessity*. (Dušková, 2006) Czech also distinguishes between these two types of modality, however, it is crucial to know the context to understand which type of modality is being expressed, whereas in English, it is possible to make the distinction formally. The forms of the Czech verb *muset* stays the same (i.e. only the conjugation endings are added) in the present (*musí*) as well as in the past tense (*musela*), which can possibly trigger ambiguity. To disambiguate the meaning, the English verb changes its form in the past tense depending on which type of modality is being conveyed. The past tense of *must* expressing root modality, obligation is *had to*, whereas when expressing epistemic

modality, logical necessity, the verb is in the form of *must have*. (Dušková, 2006) Therefore, ambiguity is more likely to arise in the Czech sentences rather than in the English ones.

3.2.2   Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures

Sentences with coordinated structures are ones, where two heads (nouns) on the same level are coordinated, usually by the preposition *and*. (Dušková, 2006) We talk about ambiguity when this coordinated structure is pre- modified by one adjective. In that case, it is not exactly clear, whether the adjective relates to the first or the second head or both. (Dušková, 1999) Dušková (1999) further suggests that there has to be a semantic compatibility of the adjective with both nouns. These sentences are generally equally ambiguous in both languages.

3.2.3   Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers

The chances of ambiguity arising in the English language when using quantifiers depend on the manner they are related in. The quantifiers may be used in a *segregatory* manner or in a *combinatory* manner. (Dušková, 1999) The quantifying expressions used in segregatory manner implies separation, whereas in the combinatory meaning, it implies combination, grouping. (Dušková, 1999) This type of ambiguity can also be called scope ambiguity, if the sentence contains more than one scope- bearing element. (Porter, 2006) It can affect a whole English sentence as well as a Czech one. (Dušková, 1999)

3.2.4   Ambiguity in sentences with successive pre- modification

Ambiguity appearing in these kinds of sentences seems to be limited to English only. When there is more than one word preceding one head, ambiguity may arise. The reason for this is the fact that in English, one of these words might be understood as either a *pre- modifier*,

16

therefore an adjective, or *a determiner*. (Dušková,1999) Structures like these usually contain two nouns, one of them in possessive case. If the noun in the possessive case has a generic reference, then it serves as a pre- modifier (an adjective) of the second noun, whereas if the noun in the possessive case has a non- generic reference, the entire noun phrase that proceeds it, functions as a determiner of the second noun. '*'Czech cannot express these different meanings by the same form; accordingly, the construction is disambiguated in the Czech counterparts.*'' Dušková, 1999)

3.2.5 Sentences with an object as a first clausal element

English is a language with a fixed word order with the following usual structure of clausal elements – SUBJECT (S), VERB (V), OBJECT (0), COMPLEMENT (C), and ADVERBIAL (A) (adverbials are further organized as M– manner, P- place, T- time). Quirk (1985) suggests that the verb is the most central element of the sentence and adverbial the most peripheral one, therefore, object is less peripheral than the adverbial and still more peripheral than the verb. While it is possible for objects (direct and indirect) to be used as a first clausal element, namely in a passive sentence, it would, in such cases, appear as a subject. The sentences that have both object indirect and object direct (SVOO) then have two forms of a passive sentence, i.e. in one the indirect object becomes a subject and in the other the direct object does. Another circumstance in which object may stand as a first clausal element is when highlighting structures, such as cleft-sentences, alternative cleft sentences and fronting, are used. These structures enable the user to select which element will be the most focused on, which, of course, also has its limitations. (Quirk, 1985) However, the Czech word order is relatively flexible, therefore, there are usually many various options

concerning the arrangement of the elements. Moreover, it is completely common for an object to be put at the beginning of a sentence, whereas, English, being an analytic language, allows this only in the aforementioned rare cases. (Černý, 1998)

3.2.6   Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions

Ambiguity in subordinate clauses is rather common, however, it is more or less specific to English, since Czech possesses a sort of disambiguating device used in such cases, namely punctuation. (Dušková, 1999) Nevertheless, it is not only punctuation that helps prevent ambiguity in Czech subordinate clauses, some kinds of ambiguity seem to be specific to English only. For instance, the subordinate clauses that have different syntactic functions. These potential differences trigger the ambiguity and are usually in the types of nominal clause. (Dušková, 1999) Nominal relative clauses, for instance, may often resemble nominal interrogative clauses, because they are both introduced by a wh- element, which may cause the potential syntactic ambiguity. (Quirk, 1985)

3.2.7   Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings

In English, it is more likely for ambiguity to arise due to the lack of inflectional endings. This may trigger the uncertainty of meaning in the English clauses of comparison, which is where the noun at the end of such sentence might be in nominative or in accusative case. This may sound the same in the English language, however, the Czech inflection serves as a systematic device, which can disambiguate such structures. (Dušková, 1999)

3.2.8   Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post-modification

Ambiguity may arise in structures where it is not clear whether there is an adverbial or a post-modifier. (Dušková, 1999) Since there are many types of adverbials, it is also easy for

ambiguity to emerge, when there is an item functioning as an adverbial and may be understood as having different semantic roles. In English, this can be resolved by either putting the adverbial as a first clausal element and that way highlighting the function or simply rephrasing the sentence. (Quirk, 1985) Czech uses distinctive forms, therefore this kind of ambiguity does not occur. (Dušková, 1999)

3.3 The translation process and requirements

The notion of translation is closely related to the topic of this thesis, as translators may experience many problems concerning syntactic and lexical ambiguity, mainly due to the dissimilarities between the default and the target language. (Levý, 1998) The translation process begins with the translator's task of deciphering the original text. The second step is to then convey the same proposition within the bounds of the target language. It then becomes the reader's task to decipher the meaning provided by the proposed translation. The element of the proposition should remain unaltered, whereas the language form needs to be changed. (Levý, 1998) Levý (1998) further suggests that an author's interpretation of reality is usually subjective, which should also be captured by a translator. However, the translator is a reader as well after all, which may lead to another level of subjective understanding. (Levý, 1998)

Levý (1998) further comments on the topic:

" *A subjective comprehension of a text is a fact that needs to be taken into consideration, if only because it can cause many problems*." (Levý, 1998; translation: mine)

When reading a text, everyone tends to create a certain picture of it in their mind to *concretize* it. (Levý, 1998) However, as far as this concretization of a certain text is concerned, there is a difference between a common reader and a translator. The translator has to express this concept in the target language, which leads to another semantic interpretation of the same piece of writing. Nevertheless, that is not where the translation process ends. Levý (1998) also adds that another, third, conception of a text emerges even after the translation has been finished, i.e. when it is being read. (Levý, 1998) This process leaves a great amount of space to create a few different interpretations, which may lead to possible disambiguation of originally ambiguous structures or to the erroneous occurrence of ambiguity.

Levý (1998) summarizes the translation requirements in the following three steps - *apprehension of the source, interpretation of the source, re- stylisation of the source.* (Levý, 1998; translation: Corness, 2011)

When it comes to the *apprehension of the source,* ambiguity and other errors may arise as a result of polysemy (a type of lexical ambiguity) or other false associations. (Levý, 1998; translation: Corness, 2011)

As far as the *interpretation of the source* is concerned, Levý (1998) suggests that there cannot be a complete semantic correspondence between the source and the target language (translation), which requires not only a correct translation but also an interpretation. It is very common that some expressions in the target are not as semantically broad or ambiguous as the expressions in the original version, therefore, it is necessary for the translator to specify the meaning by choosing a narrower interpretation. Consequently, the translator often comes across the aforementioned situations and has to decide between several possibilities. (Levý, 1998; translation: Corness, 2011)

Concerning the *re- stylisation of the source*, it is important to mention the fact that language systems usually differ and are not equivalent, therefore, cannot be mechanically translated, which makes the process of translation more difficult and misunderstandings may occur. (Levý, 1998; translation: Corness, 2011)

4 Research questions

To identify the specific aims of this thesis, it appears essential to ask a few research questions. The main objective of this thesis is to verify the hypothesis that the selected ambiguous structures tend to appear more in English than in Czech, mainly due to the different morphological structure of the languages.

The next question this thesis sets out to answer is concerning the frequency of examples of syntactic ambiguity. There are eight categories in which syntactic ambiguity may appear and four different sources for its evidence, which will be further introduced in the next chapter. How many examples will there be in total with regard to each category, and, moreover, is the frequency genre-dependent?

Since the main sources for the analysis will be in the form of two different novels by different authors, their film adaptations and their Czech translations, it is crucial to pose the following question: will the novels and their film adaptations provide the same examples? If not, what causes the differences between genres?

The quality and method of translation also plays a significant role, since there might be expressions that are - based on the theoretical part of this thesis - supposed to be ambiguous in one or the other language and yet, the translation may provide disambiguation. Therefore, this thesis also aims to answer this question: Will the translation of each structure correspond with the theoretical background regarding ambiguity and/or disambiguation? (i.e. Will the translation provide disambiguation even though the theory states that the particular type of ambiguity is specific to both languages and vice versa?)

5 Analytical part

5.1 Methods and materials

5.1.1 Materials

The inspiration for the analytical part of this thesis was certainly the *chapter A Contrastive View of Syntactic Ambiguities* from *Studies of the English language, Part 2* (Dušková,1999). The concept of syntactic ambiguity has already been introduced in the theoretical part and was inspired not only by the aforementioned chapter. Moreover, *Libuše Dušková*(1999) compares and analyses selected examples of Czech and English ambiguity, which will similarly be the aim of the analytical part of this thesis.

To effectively demonstrate syntactic ambiguity and its counterparts in both languages, I decided to use examples from a contemporary novel *Paper Towns* by the American author *John Green*.

The original aim was to only use *Paper Towns* by *John Green*, however, it proved to be insufficient in terms of the number of examples. three more sources and their Czech translations were added to demonstrate the phenomena sufficiently. The other selected novel is a coming-of-age epistolary novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by another American novelist: *Stephen Chbosky*. Since both of these novels were also adapted into films, it seemed prudent to incorporate the film adaptations and their scripts into the analysis as well.

 Paper Towns, published in 2008 (Deakin, Brown, Blasingame Jr., 2015) and its Czech translation *Papírová města* will serve as one of the sources for analysis and comparison of the selected examples of syntactic ambiguity.

The novel Paper Towns was awarded the *2009 Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Mystery.* Paper Towns has 305 pages and is divided into three parts. Each part of the book then has a different number of chapters (part one - 9, part two - 20, part three - 22). Green also provides one last chapter called *Discussion Questions,* where he suggests possible themes of the novel that could be discussed. The same structure was maintained even in the Czech version of the

novel. The Czech version used for this thesis was translated by *Veronika Volhejnová*. (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

"Green presents witty protagonists who aren't heroic or beautiful in the conventional sense but rather ordinary and flawed. They are human and they are real."(Deakin, Brown, Blasingame Jr., 2015)

The authenticity of the adolescent voice and representation of the teenage struggles plays another role in Green´s popularity and his writing. (Deakin, Brown, Blasingame Jr., 2015) He uses language that is commonly used among teenagers and is extremely approachable, which is exactly the type of language that was needed for the analysis - daily and ordinary, so that the ambiguity phenomenon would be evident and would not get lost in the use of poetic devices and other possible poetic interpretations.

The novel *Paper Towns* was adapted into a *romantic mystery comedy-drama* film in *2015* (IMDB, *Paper Towns* 2015). The film was written by *Scott Neustadter* and *Michael H. Weber*, directed by *Jake Schreier* and produced by *Wyck Godfrey* and *Marty Bowen*. (IMDB, *Paper Towns* 2015) The romantic mystery comedy-drama stars *Nat Wolff* and *Cara Delevingne* and its runtime *is 109 minutes*. (IMDB, *Paper Towns* 2015)

Its Czech version *Papírová města* premiered on *23rd July 2015* and the Czech subtitles were made by *Kateřina Hámová*. (Národní filmový archiv, *Papírová města*)

The second novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, published in *1999*, and its Czech translation *Ten, kdo stojí v koutě* (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower,* 2020) will serve as another source for analysis and comparison of Czech and English syntactic ambiguity. The epistolary novel immediately became a best-seller. (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* 2020)

The Perks of Being a Wallflower has 224 pages and is further divided into 4 parts. Since it is an epistolary novel, each part is then divided into separate letters that the main protagonist writes, beginning each of them with a date and *"Dear friend,"*. Equally to Paper Towns, the same structure was maintained in the Czech novel. For the purposes of this thesis, a Czech version translated by *Vratislav Kadlec* was used. (Chbosky, Kadlec, & Eliášová, 2012)

The author himself summarizes the novel in the following interview extract. "*The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a very traditional, coming-of-age story, book, and movie about a freshman who enters high school and experiences all of the first kisses, first crushes, first parties, that perfect drive to the perfect song, etc. with the friends who get him through. It's about a boy who starts off being very shy and learns to participate over the course of a year. And by the end, he is set free.*[...] *I chose the letters because I felt it was the most intimate way I could talk to a reader. When you write a letter to somebody, it's direct communication. And I was very interested in direct communication because I wanted the story to feel intimate.* " (Chbosky, 2012)

The whole book is written in a series of letters, therefore, from a point of view of the main protagonist - a teenager. Chbosky uses ordinary language, one that would be typical for such a character. In order to maximise comparisons and draw conclusions across multiple texts, it was important to use another novel where adolescence plays a huge role in terms of language.

The novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was, as well, later adapted into a *coming-of-age drama* film. The film premiered in *2012* and was also, interestingly, directed and written by *Stephen Chbosky*. It is also one of three films produced by J*ohn Malkovich, Lianne Halfon* and *Russell Smith*. The drama *stars Logan Lerman, Emma Watson* and *Ezra Miller* and runs for *103 minutes*. (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower,* 2012)

The Czech version, however, has a different title than the Czech translation of the book. It is called *Charlieho malá tajemství* and was translated by *Jan Feldstein*. (Filmová databáze s.r.o. (FDb.cz), *Charlieho malá tajemství (2012)*)

The fact that *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was written by the same person in both cases (the novel, the film) raises questions about the similarity of examples in both sources. Will the film provide the same/similar examples of syntactic ambiguity as the novel or will the number of examples be different?

5.1.2 Methods

The process of analysis was divided into three main steps. The first step consisted of gathering the needed theoretical information from a chapter *A Contrastive View of Syntactic Ambiguities* from *Studies of the English language, Part 2* by *Libuše Dušková* (Dušková,1999) This chapter allowed me to determine the categories, in which the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity would be explored.

The second step consisted of selecting sources, which would provide a sufficient number of examples of the given phenomenon in the selected categories. These sources were introduced in the previous chapter.

The third step consisted of collecting the data and examples from all the sources. I have been working mainly with digital versions of the novels (PDF), although sometimes I used printed versions as well. When it comes to the original film adaptations, I have been working with digital copies of scripts written for the films. To peruse the Czech versions, I have been using digital documents with Czech subtitles. Working with the digital forms was a lot easier in terms of finding the examples, since it allows to search for the possible key-words and to copy and paste all the found data immediately. I have not used any specific chapters or parts of the books, scripts and subtitle documents, conversely, when looking for the required example I always studied the whole source. The analysis and interpretation was then accomplished by using the theoretical background, applying it to each example and, furthermore, using my own knowledge and creativity.

The results of the analysis are presented in the next chapter.

5.2 Results

This chapter presents the results concerning the examples of selected differences in English and Czech syntactic ambiguity. There is one table for each category. The table presents the number of English and Czech examples from the novels and from the films in each category and also the percentage of examples with the categories in relation to the total number. The results also show whether the languages deal with syntactic ambiguity in the said category based on the number of examples presented in the table. This chapter will present the reader with the most illustrative examples. These examples will be further interpreted and analysed in the next chapter. The other examples falling within their categories are further attached in the appendix.

The following table presents the overall results concerning the number of examples in total, the overall number of examples in the English and the Czech version of Paper Towns (novel + film), and the overall number of examples in the English and Czech version of The Perks of Being a Wallflower (novel + film), as well as the overall results concerning each individual title.

Examples of selected types of syntactic ambiguity	Paper Towns	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Total
Examples in total (En+Cz)	**28**	**74**	**102**
Novels (En/Cz)	18	64	82 (80,39 %)
Film adaptations (En/Cz)	10	10	20 (19,61 %)

Table 1: The overall results concerning the number of examples

There are 8 selected categories of syntactic ambiguity, some of which may be specific to English, some to Czech and some may occur in both languages. 6 of these types of ambiguities appear in English, whereas only 4 appear in Czech.

5.2.1 Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb must

Following the same order as established in 3.2, the first type of ambiguity assessed is that caused by the modal verb *MUST*. This modal verb, and thus, the possible ambiguity, appears rather frequently and can be easily identified. This category contains the most examples - 30 in total (out of 102 examples), therefore 29,41 % of the examples was collected from this type of ambiguity. There were 15 examples in English and 15 examples in the Czech translation.

Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb must			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 102) (+ %)
Paper Towns	4	4	8 (7,84 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	14	8	22 (21,57 %)

Table 2: Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb must

In the English version of the novel *Paper Towns*, there is a sentence with the verb must in its past tense, i.e.: had to –

(1En) *So I just had to pay Ruthie five bucks to sleep in my room,* […] (Green, 2008)

In the Czech version, we can see that the sentence is translated like this:

(1Cz) *Takže jsem musela zaplatit Ruthii pět babek, aby spala u mě v pokoji* […] (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

There is, however, a verb in the same form as it is in (1Cz) in the Czech version of the book -

(2Cz) *Uvažovala jsi někdy o tom, kolik času musela Margo trávit plánováním toho všeho?* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

Nevertheless, the original sentence differs from (1En) –

(2En) *Did you ever think about how much time Margo must have spent planning everything?* (Green, 2008)

These examples, as well as the ones attached in the appendix and the ones interpreted in the next chapter, show the presence of ambiguity in Czech.

5.2.2 Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures

The next category contains fewer examples - 18 in total, which is 17,65 % of all examples. However, the novel T*he Perks of Being a Wallflower* provided 14 of them, whereas there were none in the film adaptation, even though the film was written by the same author.

Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 102) (+ %)
Paper Towns	2	2	4 (3,92%)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	14	-	14 (13,73 %)

Table 3: Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures

Chbosky (1999) presents the reader with an illustrative example of ambiguity in coordinated structures. These examples are equally ambiguous in both languages.

(3En) *My mom likes old movies and plants.* (Chbosky, 1999)

(3En) was translated into Czech as –

(3Cz) *Máma má ráda staré filmy a kytky.* (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

5.2.3 Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers

There were not many examples concerning the category of ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers, i.e. 4 examples in total, which is only 3,92 %. There were no examples provided by the film adaptations.

Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers		
Title	**Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)**	**Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)**	**Total (out of 102) (+ %)**
Paper Towns	2	-	2 (1,96 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	2	-	2 (1,96 %)

Table 4: Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers

Chbosky's novel provides the following example.

(4En) Then, it was time for the five top honor students to give a speech. (Chbosky,1999)

The Czech translation provides a similar example of ambiguity.

(4Cz) Pak měly následovat projevy pěti nejlepších studentů v ročníku. (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

Ambiguity of this kind, therefore, occurs in both languages. An interpretation of the examples will be provided in the next chapter.

5.2.4 Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification

The following results show that ambiguity caused by successive pre- modification was present mainly in the novel by *Stephen Chbosky*, though there were no cases in his film adaptation. The sources provided 16 examples (15,69 %) of this type of ambiguity. However, it must be mentioned that most of these structures should be taken into consideration only hypothetically, since the context and general knowledge helps disambiguate them.

Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification			
Title	**Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)**	**Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)**	**Total (out of 102) (+ %)**
Paper Towns	2	-	2 (1,96 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	14	-	14 (13,73 %)

Table 5: Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification

The novel Paper Towns illustrates the ambiguity in the following example.

(5En) […] *I noticed that blue painters' tape had been used to seal our hole in the board.* (Green, 2008)

The following construction is used in the Czech translation -

(5Cz) […] *někdo opravil modrou maskovací páskou, jakou používají malíři pokojů.* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

(5Cz) is not ambiguous and, therefore, also disambiguates the English structure. This type of ambiguity appears to be specific to English only.

5.2.5 Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element

The ambiguity in this category seems to be limited to Czech only. Five of the found Czech examples prove the frequent occurrence of an object at the beginning of a sentence, however, due to the absence of *concord* (Lyons, 1996) between the clausal elements, these sentences are not ambiguous. See these examples in the next chapter and in the appendix.

Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 106) (+ %)
Paper Towns	2	-	2 (1,96 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	10	-	10 (9,8 %)

Table 6: Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element

For instance, the following sentence from the Czech translation could have various interpretations -

(6Cz) *Holky nesměly odmítnout.* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

The original English sentence of the Czech counterpart disambiguates the ambiguity in (6Cz)

-

(6En) *Girls were not allowed to say no.* (Green, 2008)

5.2.6 Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions

Subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions may cause ambiguity, which is specific to English only. There were 10 examples (9,8 %) in total that helped exemplify the differences between Czech and English ambiguity.

Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 102) (+ %)
Paper Towns	2	2	4 (3,92 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	6	-	6 (5,88 %)

Table 7: Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions

This type of ambiguity may be illustrated by the following sentence:

(7En) […] *Chuck Parson asked me this morning what I knew about you and Jase.* (Green, 2008)

The Czech translation is, however, not ambiguous, since ambiguity does not appear in this case in Czech.

(7Cz) […] *Chuck Parson se mě dneska ráno ptal, co vim o tobě a o Jasovi. (*Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

5.2.7 Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings

This type of ambiguity again appears to be specific to English. The sources provided only 4 examples in total (3,92 %), therefore, based on the limited evidence, it can be assumed that the frequency of this type of ambiguity is not high.

Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 106) (+ %)
Paper Towns	2	-	2 (1,96 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	2	-	2 (1,96 %)

Table 8: Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings

Another kind of ambiguity that only arises in English is the one illustrated by the following sentence from the English novel Paper Towns–

(8Cz) *I figure that you guys probably know Marcus better than anyone.* (Green, 2008)

The Czech translation dealt with this in the following manner –

(8Cz) *Vy dva asi znáte Marcuse líp než kdo jiný, co*? (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

5.2.8 Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post-modification

In this case, the film adaptation of *Paper Towns* provided more examples than *The Perks of Being a Wallflower.* There were 8 examples (7,84 %) in total. These examples will be further interpreted and analysed.

Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post- modification			
Title	Number of examples in the novel (En+Cz)	Number of examples in the film adaptation (En+Cz)	Total (out of 106) (+ %)
Paper Towns	2	2	4 (3,92 %)
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	2	2	4 (3,92 %)

Table 9: Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post- modification

The novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* presents an illustrative example –

(9En) *Except for my dad, because he was too busy videotaping everyone with a camera,* […]. (Chbosky, 1999)

However, the translator disambiguated the structure by using a different preposition, which is also possible in Czech -

(9Cz*) Teda až na tátu, protože ten měl plné ruce práce s tím, jak to všechno natáčel na videokameru,* […]. (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

5.3 Interpretation

The following part of the thesis presents the specific, selected differences in Czech and English syntactic ambiguity based on the examples from the English novels *Paper Towns* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, their Czech translations, and English and Czech film adaptations. The novel will provide an opportunity for comparison and for analysis of the expressions that may be ambiguous in one language and yet, completely unambiguous in the other, in the translation, and vice versa. Context plays a huge role when it comes to resolving ambiguity (Anderson, 2018), however, these examples will be treated and analysed individually, regardless of the contextual information in order to focus on the semantic comparison of the translations. The categories, as well as the order of appearance, have already been established and introduced. This chapter will provide the analysis and interpretation of the most illustrative examples. The other examples falling within their respective categories are further attached in the appendix.

5.3.1 Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb MUST

The Czech verb *musel/a* is a translation of the English modal verb *must* in the past tense, however, the form of the verb in English changes based on its function. It can either mean *obligation (root modality)* and have a *deontic function* or it can express *logical necessity* (Dušková, 2006), which has been previously explained in the theoretic part of the thesis.

Firstly, let us see how English and Czech deal with the modal verb must when it expresses obligation (root modality) –

(10En) [...] *but he had to stop when Mom got pregnant with my brother.* (Chbosky, 1999)

The Czech translation of the verb *had to* is *musela,* which is expressed by the following translation of (10En) –

(10Cz) [...] *ale musel přestat, když máma čekala bratra.* (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

Secondly, let us see how English deals with the modal verb *must* when it implies some sort of deduction, the (logical) necessity (epistemic modality, previously explained in the theoretical part) –

(11En) *She must have been great.* (Chbosky, 1999)

There is, evidently, no ambiguity in (10En) and (11En), because English has the ability to adjust the modal verb to the meaning of the whole expression in the past tense.

The following Czech translation provides an example of an ambiguous structure, since the form of the verb appears to be the same regardless of its function.

(11Cz) Musela být skvělá. (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

 (11Cz) may seem misleading, as the verb form looks and sounds exactly the same as the one in (10Cz). The original English sentence helps disambiguate the Czech translation, since English distinguishes between the aforementioned *root* and *epistemic modality* (Dušková, 2006).

As we can see, the Czech counterpart of the modal verb *must* in the past tense cannot be altered when distinguishing between *obligation* and *(logical) necessity* (Dušková,2006), therefore, ambiguity appears in (10Cz) and (11Cz). The rest of the examples concerning this category is listed in the appendix.

5.3.2   Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures

Ambiguity can also emerge in sentences with coordinated structures. The following example will help with interpretation and analysis of such structures -

 (12Cz) *Papíroví kluci a holky, co pijí pivo, které jim koupil nějaký idiot v papírové samoobsluze*. (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

The section that this analysis focuses on is:

˝Papíroví kluci a holky˝

This noun phrase contains two coordinated heads (*kluci a holky*) that are, however, both pre-modified by only one adjective *(papíroví)*. This pre- modifier could possibly refer to and modify both of these nouns or just the first one, which is where the ambiguity arises. However, this is how the sentence in the English version is formulated:

(12En) *All the paper kids drinking beer some bum bought for them at the paper convenience store.* (Green, 2008)

The motivation for the Czech translation probably resides in the shift of meaning of the word *kids*, which is in this context informal and refers to *˝young people who are no longer children˝* (Kid definition and meaning: Collins English Dictionary). Therefore, to express the same meaning, it was more suitable to use the translation *kluci a holky*, which more likely refers to teenagers than to children.

No ambiguity appears in the original phrase (*all the paper kids*), therefore, in this case, it is only the Czech translation that demonstrates the ambiguity in coordinated structures. Nevertheless, regardless of the context, the ambiguity in the English phrase could have arisen, had the author written the sentence differently, as illustrated here:

(13) *The paper boys and girls* …

Chbosky (1999) presents the reader with another illustrative example of ambiguity in coordinated structures, which can be used to analyse the ambiguity in both languages.

(14En) *My mom likes old movies and plants.* (Chbosky, 1999)[1]

And its Czech counterpart –

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[1] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

(14Cz) *Máma má ráda staré filmy a kytky.* (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)[2]

These examples (14En), (14Cz) demonstrate the type of ambiguous structure in the exactly same manner. The pre- modifier in both sentences (*old*, *staré*) could either refer only to *movies/filmy* or to *plants/kytky* as well.

This proves that it is possible for the ambiguity in coordinated structures to occur in English as well as in Czech.

5.3.3 Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers

Similar problems occur in sentences with quantifiers. According to Dušková (1999), the reason why ambiguity emerges in these types of sentences is that the concrete quantifiers can be used in either *segregatory* or *combinatory* relation. (Dušková,1999)

Green uses a sentence:

(15En) […] *all three of us will be taking hotties to the prom*. (Green, 2008)

In this case, *all three of us* may be understood as a trio, which would have *combinatory meaning* (Dušková, 1999) – i.e. three boys together, as a trio, would take some girls to the prom and they would all create one group of people. The meaning which was probably aimed for was *segregatory* (Dušková, 1999), i.e. each separate boy would take a separate ''hot'' girl to the prom. Moreover, the plural form of the lexeme *hottie* may further cause ambiguity even in the segregatory meaning, i.e. the clause could be understood as – each separate boy takes *many hotties* to the prom.

This was, however, successfully avoided in the Czech translation of the book, where only a singular form of the noun is used:

(15Cz) […] *tak půjdeme všichni tři na ples se sexy kočkou.* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

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[2] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

Nevertheless, apart from the singular form, this Czech counterpart (15Cz) remains equally ambiguous, based on the use of the quantifier *tři*, which again suggests that the clause (15Cz) could be interpreted as a trio taking one girl to the prom (combinatory meaning).

These sentences (15En) (15Cz) could potentially be disambiguated by adding the pronoun *each* (of us) and the Czech translation *každý* (z nás) and by omitting the quantifier (three/tři). To effectively disambiguate the sentences, we need to also stress that there is a separate *hottie/sexy kočka* for every one of the subjects. This could be managed by adding pronouns. The following examples present my own disambiguation.

(16En) *Each of us will be taking his own hottie to the prom.*

(16Cz) *Tak půjde každý z nás na ples se svojí sexy kočkou.*

Chbosky's novel provides another example that will be used to present the disambiguation in the Czech counterpart -

(17En) *Then, it was time for the five top honor students to give a speech.* (Chbosky,1999)[3]

It is possible to understand *the five top honor students* in a *combinatory* meaning (Dušková, 1999). That would mean that *five honor students give a speech* in one group, together. Chbosky probably aimed for the *segregatory* meaning (Dušková, 1999), as in - *each individual student gives their own speech.*

The Czech translation provides a similar example of ambiguity.

(17Cz) *Pak měly následovat projevy pěti nejlepších studentů v ročníku. (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)[4]*

However, the plural form of the Czech word *speech – projevy* helps disambiguate the meaning a little bit and therefore, the sentence can be understood in a *segregatory meaning*. This example (17Cz), nevertheless, still does not provide a fully unambiguous structure, since it could also be interpreted as - *a group of five people gives various speeches.*

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[3] Previously mentioned in chapter Results
[4] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

5.3.4 Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification

Ambiguity may also appear in structures with successive pre-modification of the following kind -

(18En) […] *I noticed that blue painters' tape had been used to seal our hole in the board. (Green, 2008)* [5]

The adjective *blue* could be either assigned to *painters'* or *tape,* which means that the clause could be interpreted either as *the tape of blue painters'/ the tape that belongs to blue painters',* where *blue* is a pre- modifier of *painters'* or it could be interpreted as the original phrase *blue painters' tape*, where the *blue painters'* is used as a *determiner* of *tape* and *painters'* serves as a pre- modifier of *tape.* (Dušková, 1999)

As mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, ambiguity of this kind may only appear in the English language. It would not be possible to express these different interpretations by one structure in Czech, contrastingly, a disambiguated structure would be used.

The following disambiguated construction is used in the Czech translation -

(18Cz) […] *někdo opravil modrou maskovací páskou, jakou používají malíři pokojů. (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)*

The construction is disambiguated by an adjectival clause (*jakou používají malíři pokojů*), therefore, no ambiguity emerges. The original English phrase could be also interpreted by

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[5] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

Czech structures such as - *modrá malířská páska* or *páska modrých malířů,* however, these two meanings cannot be merged into one structure as in English.

The Perk of Being a Wallflower provides us with another possible example of this type of ambiguity –

(19En) *She's going in her new boyfriend's car, which is a Buick.* (Chbosky, 1999)

Some of the examples attached in the appendix as well as this example need to be taken into consideration without the contextual information. Therefore, similarly to (18En) and *the painters' tape*, it could be assumed that *boyfriend's car* is some special type of car. However, the *blue painters' tape* in (18En) probably meant that the adjective *blue* pre-modifies the head *painters' tape*. In this case (19En), nevertheless, the meaning that was probably aimed for is the opposite – the whole noun phrase *new boyfriend's* functions as a *determiner* with respect to *car.* (Dušková,1999) The possible interpretations, however, are – *She's going in a boyfriend's car which is new* or *[...] in a car that belongs to her new boyfriend.*
Czech cannot express these possible meanings by one form, therefore, the Czech counterpart disambiguates the construction – see in Appendix B.

5.3.5   Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element

Ambiguity caused by an object being the first element in a clause may, on the other hand, appear to be specific to Czech.

For instance, the following sentence from the Czech translation could have various interpretations -

(20Cz) *Holky nesměly odmítnout.* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)[6]

In (20Cz), the word *holky* could be understood as an object or a subject. In this case, it is important to know the context to disambiguate the sentence. Moreover, the ending -ly of the verb used in (20Cz) is typical for conjugation of verbs in feminine past tense, which could help distinguish between a subject or an object at the beginning of (20Cz). However, it is not the ultimate rule, since the subject is not expressed and it could also be feminine.

For an object to stand at the beginning of a sentence, the English language uses constructions for *highlighting* (Quirk, 1985) or the passive voice. However, in passive structures, the object becomes a subject and these structures are not ambiguous in English.

The original English sentence of the Czech counterpart (20Cz), therefore, disambiguates the ambiguity in (20Cz) – see in Appendix A.

As mentioned above, no ambiguity arises in such English structures.
Furthermore, the research proved that the occurrence of this type of ambiguity in Czech is not that frequent either, since it requires a *concord* (Quirk, 1985) between subject, object and verb. The Czech translation of Chbosky's novel, nevertheless, provided many examples of sentences with object as a first clausal element, which are not ambiguous. These are, however, very frequent, because of the fact that Czech is a *synthetic language with a flexible word order*. (Dušková, 2006) Moreover, *functional sentence perspective (FSP)* plays a major role concerning the Czech word order, whereas the English word order cannot be used as a mean of *FSP* in the same manner, since it is *fixed*. (Dušková, 2006) See Appendix B for Czech sentences exemplifying the flexibility of Czech word order and their English counterparts with a fixed word order.

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[6] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

5.3.6 Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions

The theoretical part of this thesis already presented the fact that some types of subordinate clauses may cause ambiguity.

This may be illustrated by the following sentence:

(21En) […] Chuck Parson *asked me* this morning *what I knew* about you and Jase. (Green, 2008)[7]

(21En) is ambiguous, since the clause *what I knew* could be in this case understood either as a *nominal interrogative dependent clause* or a *nominal relative clause.* (Dušková, 1999) The sentence could possibly be disambiguated by adding the *antecedant* (e.g.: the thing*)* and creating *a relative clause*. (Quirk, 1985)

(21En') *They asked me the thing that I knew.*

The Czech translation is, however, not ambiguous, since ambiguity does not appear in this case in Czech.

(21Cz) […] Chuck Parson se mě dneska ráno ptal, co vim o tobě a o Jasovi. (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)[8]

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[7] Prevously mentioned in chapter Results
[8] Prevously mentioned in chapter Results

(21Cz) shows one of the interpretations of the English counterpart. (21En) could also be interpreted as *Chuck Parson se mě dneska ráno ptal na to, co jsem věděl,* which would mean that (21En) is a nominal relative clause. This also shows a different tense form.

The script of Paper Towns further provides another example, which can be used to exemplify ambiguity caused by another type of syntactic function –

(22En) *I'll let you know when I see her.* (Neustadter & Weber, 2015)

In (22En), the *when-clause* can either have *an adverbial* or *a nominal function.* (Dušková, 1999) This ambiguity should be resolved by the Czech translation, however, the translation provided by a subtitle website appears to be rather odd. (See the translation in Appendix A)

There are two possible interpretations in Czech that could resolve the ambiguity, i.e. *Dám ti vědět, když ji uvidím.* or *Dám ti vědět, až ji uvidím.* The disambiguation should be provided by the contextual information.

The appearance of ambiguity in this case seems to be limited to the English language only.

5.3.7 Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings

Another kind of ambiguity that only arises in English is the one illustrated by the following sentence from the English novel Paper Towns. The sentence will help examine the ambiguity –

(23En) *I figure that you guys probably know Marcus better than anyone.* (Green, 2008)[9]

In (23En), the lack of inflectional endings may cause ambiguity, since it means that the lexeme *anyone* may be understood either in *accusative* or *nominative* case. (Dušková, 1999)

The Czech translation dealt with this in the following manner –

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[9] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

(23Cz) *Vy dva asi znáte Marcuse líp než kdo jiný, co?* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)[10]

In the Czech counterpart, the translation of *anyone* is in the nominative form, however, another interpretation that could have also been put into translation is something like - *Vy dva asi znáte Marcuse líp než kohokoli jiného, co?*

Kohokoli jiného would be in the form of accusative.

It might have also been possible to replace *anyone* with a proper noun, therefore, in that case, Czech would only use an inflectional ending to disambiguate the sentence.

The other novel presents such example –

(24En) *I don't think anybody hugged my sister longer than my dad.* (Chbosky, 1999)

My dad could be understood in the form of accusative or nominative, which allows for two different interpretations in Czech.

Myslím, že ségru nikdo neobjímal déle než můj táta. (nominative)

Myslím, že nikdo neobjímal ségru déle než mého tátu. (accusative)

It is possible to see that the inflectional ending alters the meaning of the whole sentence.

The translator used the following sentence to resolve the ambiguity –

(24Cz) *Myslím, že sestru nikdo neobjímal déle než on.* (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)

By translating the sentence (24En) like this, the translator avoided the word *dad (táta)* and only used a personal pronoun in the nominative form. Czech, therefore, disambiguates the ambiguous meaning by declension.

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[10] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

5.3.8 Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post-modification

Similarly, this type of ambiguity, occurring only in English, is usually resolved by prepositions used with declension in Czech. (Dušková, 1999) The following example was selected to interpret the ambiguity -

(25En) […] *Ben shouted, pointing at me with the sword.* (Green,2008)

This sentence may be interpreted in two different meanings, either the mentioned Ben is holding the sword, which would make it an *instrument*, or the one who is speaking is holding the sword, which would be *a post- modification.* (Dušková, 1999) However, in this case, the use of the definite article *the* increases the possibility of disambiguation.

Let us see what the Czech counterpart is –

(25Cz) […] *křikl a ukázal na mě tím mečem.* (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014)

It is clear that the one holding the sword is the one who *shouted* (*Ben*) in the original English sentence. The word *mečem* in (18Cz) is used as an *instrument*. (Dušková, 1999) The Czech preposition *s (with)* could possibly be added in the other interpretation and the sentence would have a different meaning - *křikl a ukázal na mě s mečem.* In this sentence *s mečem* is a *post- modification.* (Dušková, 1999)

The novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* presents more illustrative example, which can be further analysed –

(26En) *Except for my dad, because he was too busy videotaping everyone with a camera, […].* (Chbosky, 1999)[11]

This construction (26En) has two possible interpretations. Either, the one who held the camera is *dad* and in that case *with a camera* would be *an instrument* (Dušková, 1999),

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[11] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

or *the dad* was videotaping other people who had *a camera* in their hands. In the latter case, *with a camera* would be *a post- modification* (Dušková,1999*)* of *everyone.*

It is possible to again translate the structure with an added Czech preposition *s – […] nahrával všechny s kamerou (post- modification)* or without the preposition, which alters the meaning – *[…] nahrával všechny kamerou (instrument).*

However, the translator used a different preposition, which is also possible and more frequent in Czech -

(26Cz) *Teda až na tátu, protože ten měl plné ruce práce s tím, jak to všechno natáčel na videokameru*, […]. (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012)[12]

The translation, therefore, resolves the ambiguity in (26En). It is possible to see that the desired meaning was for *with a camera* to function as *an instrument.* (Dušková, 1999)

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[12] Previously mentioned in chapter Results

6 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to prove that the selected ambiguous structures appeared in English more frequently than in Czech, mainly due to the different typological classification of the languages. The other objectives of the thesis concerned answering the research questions regarding the overall frequency of ambiguous expressions, genre-dependency, the correspondence of translation. In order to do so, 102 examples of 8 selected types of syntactic ambiguities were collected and 27 were also analysed and used in the analytical part to exemplify the ambiguity.

The theoretical part of the thesis helped define the phenomenon of meaning (pp 10-13).and distinguish between the semantic meaning and speaker's meaning (p.10). It also touched upon the importance of context when it comes to disambiguation of ambiguous structures (p.11). The next subchapter introduced the principle of compositionality (p.12) and the related fact that people are able to deal with the meanings of new expressions every day. The topic of history of meaning (p.13) was also broached in the theoretical part.

The next chapter of the theoretical part concerned the ambiguity phenomenon in language (p. 14), the differences between syntactic and lexical ambiguity, presented the selected types of further analysed syntactic ambiguities (pp 14-19) (ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb *must*; ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures; ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers; ambiguity in sentences with successive pre- modification; ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element; ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions; ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings; and ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post- modification) and briefly touched upon the characteristics of lexical ambiguity (p. 19). Moreover, the topic of translation, its process and methods, was introduced in the last subchapter (pp 20-21).

The next chapter concerned the aforementioned research questions and the main hypothesis of the thesis. (p. 22)

The thesis then proceeded to the analytical part, where, firstly, the methods and materials were presented (pp 23-26). This part described the sources used for the purposes of the analysis in great detail, as well as the processes of gathering the data.

Secondly, the results were presented. The chapter Results (pp 27-35) then provided different tables with quantitative information concerning the research – the number of examples in total, the number of examples in each source, the number of examples in each category of syntactic ambiguities. It also presented illustrative examples and their translations of the selected types of ambiguities, which helped prove the anticipated hypothesis that the majority of these types of ambiguities are limited to English.

Thirdly, the last part of the analysis, Interpretation (pp 36-48), provided analysis, interpretation and comparison of selected illustrative English and Czech examples of each type of ambiguity. These examples were needed to thoroughly explain the reasons for the occurrence of ambiguity. Furthermore, the chapter provided disambiguation if and when necessary.

Subsequently, it now seems essential to compare the previously stated hypothesis and research questions with the received results. Within the selected source material, the ambiguous structures appeared more frequently in English than in Czech – there were 8 types of ambiguities and the ambiguity in English appeared in 6 of these types, whereas only in 4 cases for the Czech equivalent. The languages proved to be equally ambiguous in 2 types of syntactic ambiguities. It is also possible to answer the research questions concerning the total number of examples. There were 102 English and Czech examples in total, majority of which were applicable to the analysis (see more details in Appendix A and B). The highest number of examples regarding one category was 30 (29,41%) – ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb *must*. On the other hand, both *ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings* and *ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers* provided only 4 examples in total (3,92%).

The novels provided overall a lot more examples (82 examples; 80,39 %) than the film adaptations (20 examples; 19,61 %), possibly due to the fact that the film adaptations contain shorter dialogues and are also time-limited. It was anticipated that the film adaptation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* would provide more examples than the film adaptation of *Paper Towns*, since the former film adaptation and the novel were both written by the same author. However, they both provided the same amount of examples (10; 9,8 %)

To answer another research question, there were not any identical examples, although, it was assumed that there would be some identical sentences in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (film), due to the aforementioned reason.

Lastly, when it comes to the translation of ambiguous structures and/or disambiguation – the analysis presented examples that were ambiguous in both languages, however, the translation helped disambiguate them. The translation, therefore, did not always correspond with the theoretical background.

To conclude, the thesis proved the main hypothesis and helped answer all the research questions. By nature of this thesis, these conclusions are of course limited to the source material chose, though their similar linguistic styles and adaptations in multiple media forms (as both novels and films) would increase the extent to which these hypotheses should be more widely applicable.

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8 Appendices

Appendix A - Examples provided by the novel Paper Towns (Green, 2008; translation: Volhejnová, 2014) and its film adaptation (Neustadter, Weber, 2015; translation: www.titulky.com).

Abbreviations used in the Appendix:

Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb must – Amb. – 1

Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures - Amb. 2

Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers - Amb. 3

Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification - Amb. 4

Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element - Amb. 5

Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions - Amb. 6

Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings - Amb. 7

Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post-modification - Amb. 8

Paper Towns			
Original Text	**Czech Translation**	**Type of examined ambiguity**	**Novel/Film**
So I just had to pay Ruthie five bucks to sleep in my room, […].	Takže jsem musela zaplatit Ruthii pět babek, aby spala u mě v pokoji […].	Amb.- 1	Novel
Did you ever think about how much time Margo must have spent planning everything?	Uvažovala jsi někdy o tom, kolik času musela Margo trávit plánováním toho všeho?	Amb. - 1	Novel
Last time I was this scared I had to sleep with a stuffed animal.	Naposledy, když jsem se takhle moc bál, jsem musel spát s plyšákem.	Amb. - 1	Film

Some dream you must have been having.	To teda musel být sen.	Amb. - 1	Film
All the paper kids drinking beer some bum bought for them at the paper convenience store.	Papíroví kluci a holky, co pijí pivo, které jim koupil nějaký idiot v papírové samoobsluze.	Amb. - 2	Novel
Bloody Ben and Lacey Pemberton.	Krvavej Ben a Lacey Pemberton	Amb. - 2	Film
[…] all three of us will be taking hotties to the prom.	[…] tak půjdeme všichni tři na ples se sexy kočkou.	Amb. - 3	Novel
I noticed that blue painters' tape had been used to seal our hole in the board.	[…] někdo opravil modrou maskovací páskou, jakou používají malíři pokojů.	Amb. - 4	Novel
Holky nesměly odmítnout.	Girls were not allowed to say no.	Amb. - 5	Novel
Chuck Parson asked me this morning what I knew about you and Jase.	[…] Chuck Parson se mě dneska ráno ptal, co vim o tobě a o Jasovi.	Amb. - 6	Novel
I'll let you know when I see her.	Ale budu vědět, až ji uvidím.	Amb. - 6	Film
I figure that you guys probably know Marcus better than anyone.	Vy dva asi znáte Marcuse líp než kdo jiný, co?	Amb. - 7	Novel
Ben shouted, pointing at me with the sword.	[…] křikl a ukázal na mě tím mečem.	Amb. - 8	Novel
Yeah, I think about that every morning...when I eat my Lucky Charms with a little black Santa spoon.	Jo, na to myslím každý ráno,když se snažím jíst se lžičkou, na který je černej Santa.	Amb. - 8	Film

Appendix B – Examples from the novel The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Chbosky, 1999; translation: Kadlec, 2012) and its film adaptation (Chbosky, 2012; translation: www.titulky.com).

Abbreviations used in the Appendix:

Ambiguity caused by the use of the modal verb must – Amb. – 1

Ambiguity in sentences with coordinated structures - Amb. 2

Ambiguity in sentences with quantifiers - Amb. 3

Ambiguity caused by successive pre-modification - Amb. 4

Ambiguity in sentences with an object as a first clausal element - Amb. 5

Ambiguity in subordinate clauses with different syntactic functions - Amb. 6

Ambiguity caused by the lack of inflectional endings - Amb. 7

Ambiguity in sentences with adverbials and post-modification - Amb. 8

The Perks of Being a Wallflower			
Original Text	**Czech Translation**	**Type of examined ambiguity**	**Novel/Film**
But the laughing made her feel sick, so I had to get out of the car and help her into the back-seat.	Ale z toho smíchu se jí udělalo špatně, tak jsem musel vystoupit a pomoct jí na zadní sedadlo.	Amb.- 1	Novel
When I got home, I had to mow the lawn for my allowance, and I didn't mind one bit.	Když jsem přišel domů, musel jsem posekat trávník, abych si zasloužil kapesné, a ani trochu mi to nevadilo.	Amb. - 1	Novel
[...] but he had to stop when Mom got pregnant with my brother.	[...] ale musel přestat, když máma čekala bratra.	Amb. – 1	Novel
He talked about the time when he had to go to the mill three times a day to see if there was any work for him.	Vyprávěl o dobách, kdy musel chodit třikrát denně do fabriky, aby zjistil, jestli tam pro něj nemají práci.	Amb. - 1	Novel

I must have been in the car for a long time because eventually my sister found me there.	Musel jsem v autě sedět dost dlouho, protože mě tam nakonec našla sestra.	Amb. - 1	Novel
He must have been lost.	Nejspíš se ztratil.	Amb. – 1	Novel
I honestly don't remember when I did it, but from the look of my hair, I must have grabbed a pair of scissors and just started cutting without strategy.	Vážně jsem si nemohl vzpomenout, kdy jsem to udělal, ale podle toho, jak jsem vypadal, jsem někde musel sebrat nůžky a prostě se bez rozmýšlení ostříhat.	Amb. - 1	Novel
I guess it was hard, too...because Brad had to get drunk every time they fooled around.	Myslím, že to bylo taky těžké, protože Brad se na to musel pokaždé opít.	Amb. - 1	Film
This collection of presents is so gay...that I think I must have given them to myself.	Tahle sbírka je tak teplá, že myslím, že jsem si ji musel dát sám.	Amb. - 1	Film
My brother and sister always came for those...until Chris had to go to training camp.	Můj brácha se sestrou vždycky přišli, než musel Chris odjet do výcvikového tábora.	Amb. - 1	Film
She must have been great.	Musela být skvělá.	Amb. - 1	Film
I was very little, and even though the psychiatrist said it was very natural for little boys and girls to explore things like that,[...]	[...] a i když psychiatr prohlásil, že prozkoumávat tyhle věci je pro malé chlapce a holčičky úplně přirozené, myslím, že otec se stejně tak trochu bál.	Amb. - 2	Novel
Things like the homecoming football game and dance, even if I don't have a date.	Myslím tím třeba akce, kde se scházejí absolventi, jako školní fotbalový turnaj nebo plesy, i když nemám nikoho, s kým bych tam šel na rande.	Amb. - 2	Novel
[…], there was this one tape that had all of these memories and feelings and great joy and sadness.	Prostě jsem si říkal, že tady, v mojí dlani, leží na jediné kazetě všechny vzpomínky a pocity a radosti a smutky.	Amb. - 2	Novel

I went shopping with my mom and sister, and my mom was in a bad mood because of parking spaces and lines.	Šel jsem nakupovat s mámou a sestrou a máma měla špatnou náladu, protože nemohla zaparkovat a všude byly fronty.	Amb. - 2	Novel
My mom likes old movies and plants.	Máma má ráda staré filmy a kytky.	Amb. - 2	Novel
And everyone was clearing out their lockers by throwing their old papers and notes and books on the hallway floor.	A všichni si uklízeli skříňky a vyhazovali staré eseje a poznámky a knížky na podlahu.	Amb. - 2	Novel
So, I just opened my locker, put all my old papers and things in my backpack [...].	Tak jsem akorát otevřel skříňku, dal jsem si staré eseje a ostatní věci do tašky, […].	Amb. - 2	Novel
Then, it was time for the five top honor students to give a speech.	Pak měly následovat projevy pěti nejlepších studentů v ročníku.	Amb. - 3	Novel
There is only one bathroom in my great aunt´s house, so this turns to trouble when all the beer starts to hit my cousins.	V pratetině domě je jenom jedna koupelna se záchodem, a tak je docela problém, když na bratrance dolehnou všechna ta piva.	Amb. - 4	Novel
The story behind the book was that she saw a movie that talked about one poem that compares this woman´s hands to flowers and rain.	Šlo o to, že viděla nějaký film, ve kterém se mluvilo o jedné básni, která přirovnávala ženské ruce ke květinám a dešti.	Amb. - 4	Novel
He even mentioned my brother´s name!	Dokonce zmínil bratrovo jméno!	Amb. - 4	Novel
She's going in her new boyfriend's car, which is a Buick.	Ta totiž pojede autem svého nového přítele, který má buicka.	Amb. - 4	Novel
He's coming home for my sister´s graduation, which is so nice.	Přijede domů na sestřino slavnostní zakončení, což je od něho pěkné.	Amb. - 4	Novel
His "cumberbunn" (I don't know how to spell this) matched my sister´s dress,	Jeho šerpa nebo pás (nejsem si teď jistý, jak se tomu správně říká) ladila nebo ladil k sestřiným šatům, které	Amb. - 4	Novel

which was powder blue and low-cut.	byly světle modré a s hlubokým výstřihem.		
The great thing about my mom´s purse is that no matter what you need at any given moment, she has it.	Na mámině kabelce je skvělé, ţe je jedno, co zrovna v danou chvíli potřebuješ, protože ona to má.	Amb. - 4	Novel
And I never even invited Mary Elizabeth.	A Mary Elizabeth jsem vůbec nezval.	Amb. - 5	Novel
Some guy that I didn't know from somewhere else did the part of Frank 'Not Furter.	Roli Franka N. Furtera převzal nějaký kluk nevím odkud.	Amb. - 5	Novel
My sister didn't care about the word.	Ani sestru to vůbec nezarazilo.	Amb. - 5	Novel
He hit my dad all the time.	Mého tátu pořád bil.	Amb. - 5	Novel
My dad was very interested in that.	Tátu to velmi zaujalo.	Amb. - 5	Novel
Bill looked at me looking at people, and after class, he asked me what I was thinking about, […].	Bill se díval, jak pozoruju lidi, a po hodině se mě zeptal, o čem jsem přemýšlel, a já jsem mu to řekl.	Amb. - 6	Novel
My sister saw Mom crying and asked what was wrong.	Sestra viděla, že máma pláče, a zeptala se, co se stalo.	Amb. - 6	Novel
Then, she asked me what I wanted, […].	Pak se mě zeptala, na co bych měl chuť, […].	Amb. - 6	Novel
I don't think anybody hugged my sister longer than my dad.	Myslím, že sestru nikdo neobjímal déle než on.	Amb. - 7	Novel
Except for my dad, because he was too busy videotaping everyone with a camera […]	Teda až na tátu, protože ten měl plné ruce práce s tím, jak to všechno natáčel na videokameru, kterou si vypůjčil.	Amb. - 8	Novel
He even drew on Mr. Callahan's legendary goatee...with a grease pencil.	Dokonce si tužkou nakreslil legendární bradku pana Callahana.	Amb. - 8	Film