

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE

Filozofická fakulta

Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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Modální slovesa *may* a *might* a jejich překladové protějšky

English modals *may* and *might* and their Czech translation equivalents

Praha, srpen 2013

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Děkuji paní PhDr. Pavlíně Šaldové, Ph.D. za odborné vedení, podněty a cenné rady poskytnuté při psaní této práce.

Abstrakt

Tématem této bakalářské práce jsou anglická modální slovesa *may* a *might* a jejich české překladové protějšky. Teoretická část charakterizuje kategorii modalit a její dva základní podtypy - modalitu epistémickou (jistotní) a deontickou (dispoziční.) Poté podá přehled formálních rysů a významů daných modálních sloves. Rovněž stručně nastíní situaci v češtině. Praktická část je založena na analýze sta autentických výskytů sloves *may* a *might*, které budou získány z paralelního korpusu *InterCorp*. Analýza bude zaměřena jednak na význam a použití těchto sloves, jednak na jejich české překladové ekvivalenty (modální slovesa, modální částice atd.). Cílem této analýzy je zjistit, v jakém poměru se tyto prostředky vyjádření modalit objevují v českých překladech.

Abstract

This BA thesis is concerned with the English modals *may* and *might* and their Czech translation counterparts. The theoretical section will briefly introduce the category of modality and its two basic subtypes: deontic and epistemic. It will also provide an overview of the formal features and meanings of the two modals. Apart from that, it will focus on the mutual relationship between the two modal verbs. Furthermore, it will touch upon the situation in Czech. The empirical part will present an analysis of 100 authentic Czech translation equivalents of *may* and *might*. The material will be drawn from the parallel corpus *InterCorp*, specifically from prose and drama. The main objective of this analysis is to examine the proportion of the Czech means of expressing the meanings of *may* and *might* (modal verbs, modal particles etc.)

List of abbreviations

DM	deontic modality
EM	epistemic modality
IP	intrinsic possibility
MA_number	<i>may</i> _number of occurrence
MI_number	<i>might</i> _number of occurrence
<i>EMSA</i>	<i>Elektronická mluvnice současné angličtiny</i>
<i>PMČ</i>	<i>Příruční mluvnice češtiny</i>
<i>SSJČ</i>	<i>Slovník spisovného jazyka českého</i>

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1 Introduction

This BA thesis is concerned with the English modals *may* and *might* and their Czech translation counterparts. The theoretical section will briefly introduce the category of modality and its two fundamental subtypes: deontic and epistemic modality. It will also provide an overview of the formal features and meanings of the two modals. Furthermore, it will touch upon the situation in Czech.

The empirical part will present an analysis of 100 authentic Czech translation equivalents of the English modals *may* and *might*. The material will be drawn from the parallel corpus *InterCorp*. As regards text types, the material will be chosen from texts of fictional character, specifically from prose and drama. The main objective of this analysis is to examine the Czech means of expressing the meanings of *may* and *might* (modal verbs, epistemic predicators, epistemic adverbial particles etc.)

As Prof. Dušková et al. state in *MSA*, “the semantic system of Czech and English modal verbs differs to a considerable degree, especially as concerns the means of expressing epistemic modality. The deontic meaning, on the contrary, is in both languages conveyed by modal verbs despite the fact that the semantic fields do not exactly correspond to each other. In contrast to Czech, English evinces a marked tendency to prefer modal verbs over modal adverbials and particles (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44:21). The Czech translation equivalents of the modals *may* and *might*, with which this thesis is concerned, only confirm these tendencies.

While the deontically used *may/might* mostly correspond to the Czech modal *smět/moci* (*May I come in? – Mohu vstoupit?*), in the case of the epistemic *may/might*, there is a greater variety of options. They can be translated into Czech either as the modal verb *moci*, an adverbial particle or what Grepl et al. call “epistémický predikátor” (*It may be true – Může to být pravda/Možná je to pravda/Možná, že je to pravda/Je možné, že je to pravda*), etc. (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44.21) Thus, in English, the meaning of the epistemic particles of the type *perhaps* or *maybe* is often conveyed by means of modal verbs denoting possibility. Nevertheless, there is a case in which we can arguably expect a higher occurrence of modals, namely the constructions *may / might* + past infinitive denoting ‘possibility of a past happening’ (Leech et al., 2002: 69). The empirical section will show for which means the Czech translators opted when translating the two English modals and to which extent the translation equivalents correspond to the English original.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter will introduce the concept of modality, the deontic and epistemic type of modality and the English modal system. Apart from that, this section will describe English modals from the formal point of view and at the same time will provide an overview of their meanings. Likewise, it will present other, less common, uses of the modal verbs. Finally, it will attempt at a brief comparison with the situation in Czech.

2.1 Modality and its types

Linguistically speaking, modality is a rather broad term used to refer to the kind of meaning typically, but not always, expressed by modal verbs. (Huddleston, 1984: 165) That being said, the category of modality goes beyond one field and discipline, encompassing morphology, lexicon, syntax and pragmatics (Čermák et Klégr, 2004: 83). Contrary to mood, which is used as a grammatical category, modality is treated as a category of meaning (Huddleston, 1984: 165). The category of modality is closely connected with tense and aspect but differs from those “in that it does not refer directly to any characteristic of the event [reported by the utterance], but simply to the status of the proposition.” (Palmer, 1980: 2)

Quirk et al. define modality as “the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgement of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true” (Quirk et al., 1985: 219). Modality can be divided into two types: epistemic and deontic. Some authors like Palmer and Facchinetti add other types such as dynamic, root or event modality. However, for clarity sake I will use the basic terminology.

Modal verbs are used to distinguish between a judgement about a proposition and a categorical statement. Palmer provides the following examples in order to illustrate the difference:

[1] *Mary is at home.*

[2] *Mary may be at home.*

[3] *Mary must be at home.*

While the first example is a factual statement, the second one and third one contain a subjective judgment about the truth of the proposition (Palmer, 1980: 2).

It should be noted that each modal can express both deontic and the epistemic modality. However, the two uses sometimes overlap, as can be illustrated by the following example:

[1] *I'll see you tomorrow.*

The modal *will* has the deontic meaning of volition as well as the epistemic meaning of prediction. However, in the example above, the difference between the two kinds of modality is neutralized as the modal conveys volition and prediction at the same time (Quirk et al., 1985: 219).

2.1.1 Epistemic modality

The term “epistemic” is derived from the Greek word *episteme* meaning “knowledge.” (Arrese, 2009: 34) Epistemic modality “indicate[s] the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed in the utterance.” Semantically speaking, it mainly comprises the notions of “necessity” and “possibility” (Radden et Dirven, 2007: 238). We can distinguish between different degrees of the speaker’s certainty, which range from “high probability or necessity, medium certainty or probability, and low certainty and possibility” (Arrese, 2009: 34).

This type of modality “do[es] not primarily involve human control over events, but (...) typically involve[s] human judgement of what is or is not likely to happen.” (Quirk et al., 1985: 219).

Examples: [1] *You may remember it – Možná, že se na to pamatuješ.*

[2] *This idea ought to appeal to her. - Tento nápad by se jí měl zamlouvat.*

[3] *You must have overlooked something. - Něco jste museli přehlédnout.*

(EMSA)

The means of expressing epistemic modality are not limited to modals verbs. On the contrary, the epistemic meaning can be expressed in a variety of ways, ranging from modal verbs (*may, might, could*) and modal adverbs (*perhaps, possibly, probably*) to discourse markers (*I mean, I think, well*) (Radden et Dirven, 2007: 331).

2.1.2 Deontic modality

The word “deontic” comes from the Greek *deon*, which translates as “what is binding” in English (Facchinetti et al., 2003: 153). Deontic modality denotes “the speaker’s directive attitude towards an action to be carried out.” It primarily encompasses the semantic notions of “obligation” and “permission” (Radden et Dirven, 2007: 236). This kind of modality “involve[s] some kind of intrinsic human control over events” (Quirk et al., 1985: 219). The following sentences are instances of deontic modality.

[1] *May I come in? - Mohu vstoupit?*

[2] *She can't keep a secret. - Neumí/není schopna uchovat tajemství.*

[3] *I shouldn't have put it off.* - *Neměl jsem to odkládat.*

(EMSA)

2.2 English modal system

As Dušková et al. state, English modal verbs form a closed class consisting of nine members: *can, dare, may, must, need, ought, shall, will* and *used to* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41). Individual authors differ in their approach to the classification of English modal verbs. For instance, Quirk et al. further distinguish between the so-called “central modals” (*can, will, may, shall, must*) and “marginal modals” (*dare, need, ought to, used to*) (Quirk et al., 1985:137). Dušková et al. do not make similar distinctions, excepting the verb *used to*, which is labeled as a marginal modal (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

Leech uses a slightly different approach. In his definition of the English modal verb, he puts an emphasis on the semantic aspect. A modal verb is defined as “a member of a small class of verbs that have meanings relating to modality, that is to say concepts such as possibility or permission (*can, may*), obligation, necessity or likelihood (*must, should*), prediction, intention or hypothesis (*will, would*)” (Leech, 2004: 64).

2.2.1 Structural properties

In many respects, modals differ sharply from lexical verbs. In comparison with lexical verbs, modals “lack most of their morphological and syntactic properties,” which earned them the label ‘defective’ (Darven et Ridden, 2007: 242). However, there are certain affinities they share with auxiliaries. Apart from these, English modal verbs are characterized by a set of specific features on whose basis they form a distinct verbal class (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

As was suggested earlier, modal verbs have a very limited number of forms. They occur only in the present form and the distal form: *can/could, may/might, shall/should, will/would, dare/dared (durst)*. Modals are not inflected in the 3rd person singular of the present tense. The 3rd person singular present tense is formed without the *-s* ending. Consequently, there is no person-number agreement (Collins, 2009: 13).

The negation is formed by adding the negative particle *not* or its contracted form *n't*. The verb and the negative particle form one unit. E.g. *must, must not, mustn't; would, would not, wouldn't; will, will not, won't*. The only exception is the negative form *cannot*, which is written as one word. The use of the form *mayn't*, which is rare, is confined to British English. The same can be said about *shan't*, the negative form of the modal *shall* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

Interrogatives are formed only by inversion (that is to say without the periphrastic *do*). E.g. *Can you deny it? - Můžete to popřít? May I ask a question? - Mohu se na něco zeptat? Must you shout at me? - Musíš na mne křičet? Shan't I be in the way? - Nebudu překážet?* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

Similarly to auxiliary verbs, English modals can stand for a whole predication, which is evident from the following examples: *Need the bill be paid at once? – No, it needn't. Je třeba účet zaplatit hned? – Ne, není. His arguments cannot convince anyone, can they? Jeho argumenty nikoho nemohou přesvědčit, že ne? I wouldn't recommend it. – Wouldn't you? Nedoporučoval bych to. – Skutečně?* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

In general, English modals have no past tense forms as “the speaker’s assessment occurs at the present time” (Darven, Ridden, 2007: 242). The distal forms of modals (*might, could, should*) do not relate to a point in the past but usually imply “tentative modal meanings” (Darven, Ridden, 2007: 242). Although two of the modals *can* function as markers of past time, they do so only under very restricted conditions (Palmer, 1980: 30). Out of the modals *will, shall, may* and *can*, only *will* and *could* may be said to form the past tense. The modal *can* has a past tense form, if used in the sense of ability (*She could already play the piano when she was five*) (Darven, Ridden, 2007: 242). Similarly, *would* has a past tense form on condition that there is no implication of actuality (**I asked him and he would come. – I asked him, but he wouldn't come.*) (Palmer, 1980: 30).

Nevertheless, all the “past tense forms” of the modals are used in reported speech, as is illustrated by the example below (Palmer, 1980: 30):

He will/shall/can/may come tomorrow.

I said he would/should/could/might come tomorrow.

Apart from this use, the forms *would, should, could, and might* equally occur in the hypothetical (unreal) sense of the past tense: *If United could have won that game, that might have become league champions.* The meaning of the sentence is United did *not* win and therefore did *not* become league champions (Quirk et al., 1985: 232). *Might* + bare infinitive conveys an unreal condition, as in *If United could win the game, the might become league champions.* However, by using the forms *could* and *might*, the speaker suggests his lack of confidence in the team’s victory (Quirk et al., 1985: 232).

Modal verbs are followed by the bare infinitive, excepting *ought to* and *used to*. E.g. *There may be some delay. - Může dojít k nějakému zdržení. The window wont open. - Okno*

nejde otevřít. But: It oughtn't to be difficult. - Nemělo by to být obtížné. He used to play in the national team. - Hrával v národním mužstvu. As regards *need* and *dare*, they are used both with and without *to* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

Modals are lacking in non-finite forms (infinitive, present participle and past participle). The missing infinitive is compensated for by suppletive forms: *can – be able to* (moci, být schopen), *may – be allowed to* (smět, mít dovoleno), *must – have to* (muset), *be obliged/ forced/ compelled to* (být nucen) etc. Modal verbs do not occur in non-finite clauses (**I want him to may speak*) (Darven, Ridden, 2007: 242).

They cannot function as a main verb (**I can English*) as “their semantic content is bleached out” (Darven, Ridden, 2007: 242). With the exception of a few dialects (e.g. Scottish English), a modal does not combine with another modal (**I must may show you*) (Darven et Ridden, 2007: 242). However, this rule does not apply to suppletive forms, which can occur with a modal verb. E.g. *He may not be able to arrange it - Možná, že to nebude moci zařídít or We may have to stay overnight - Možná, že se budeme muset zdržet přes noc. In these cases, the modal meanings combined* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44).

Another restriction concerns the imperative mood. Modals cannot occur in imperative constructions as the primary function of imperatives (to express a command or a request) is basically identical with the modal meaning of necessity and desirability, but incompatible with the notion of possibility or volition (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

Given their lacking in finite forms, and their semantics, modal verbs cannot form passive. Nevertheless, what can be passivized is the lexical verb following the modal: *One cannot wonder at it. Nemůžeme se tomu divit. - It cannot be wondered at. Nelze se tomu divit* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41).

As Dušková et al. point out, the passive sentence containing a modal verb is analogical to the active one only under the condition that the subject is not the instigator of modality. If we passivize a sentence containing a deontic modal in which the subject functions as an instigator, we change the subject as well as the instigator. As a result, the meaning of the whole sentence is shifted. E.g. *The smaller boy dare not challenge the bigger one. - Menší chlapec si netroufá vyzvat většího. – The bigger boy dare not be challenged by the smaller one. - Větší chlapec si netroufá být vyzván menším.* In the active sentence, it is the smaller boy who does not dare, whereas in the passive sentence, it is the other way round. (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.41)

2.2.1.1 Scope of negation

In the case of modal verbs, there is a need to distinguish between the negation of the modal and the negation of the main verb. This distinction is based on the criterion of whether the scope of negation includes the modal verb or excludes it (Quirk et al., 1985: 803). With some modals like *may* and *might*, the auxiliary negation and the main verb negation occurs only in certain senses. As concerns *may* and *might*, the auxiliary negation is indicative of the notion of ‘permission’ (deontic modality). If it is the main verb that is negated, the modal conveys the epistemic meaning, that is ‘possibility.’ The difference is illustrated by the examples below:

Auxiliary negation

may not [=‘permission’]

You may not smoke in here. [‘You are not allowed to smoke in here.’]

Main verb negation

may not [=‘possibility’]

They may not like the party. [‘It is possible that they do not like the party.’]

They may not bother to come if it’s wet.

(Quirk et al., 1985: 803)

2.3 *May & might*: uses and meanings

The modals *may* and *might* express two basic kinds of meaning – deontic and epistemic. The former includes ‘permission,’ while the latter involves ‘possibility.’ Both modals can be used in the epistemic sense as well as in the deontic sense.

2.3.1 Epistemic meaning

1) Present possibility

In the case of epistemic modality, the speakers express their attitude towards the possibility of the proposition being true or not (Quirk et al., 1985:61). Thus, epistemic modality is the modality of propositions rather than actions, states, events etc., as Palmer asserts (Palmer, 1980: 41) The epistemically used *may* locates “the designated process in the realm of potential reality.” The three examples below illustrative of present possibility can be paraphrased by ‘It is possible that...’ (Quirk et al., 1985:61).

[1] *You may/might be right.*

[2] *There might be some complaints.*

[3] *We may never succeed.* (Quirk et al., 1985:61)

Compared to the epistemic *may*, the epistemically used *might* conveys a lesser degree of probability. In order to accentuate the tentativeness of the assessment, *might* can be accompanied by the adverb *still*. As Leech writes, “the effect of the hypothetical auxiliary [such as *might*], with its implication of contrary to expectation, is to make the expression of possibility more tentative or guarded.” He illustrates this with the example *Our team might still win the race*, which can be paraphrased as “It is barely possible that...” or “It is possible, though unlikely, that...” (Leech, 2004:130).

2) Present possibility of a past happening

As Radden and Dirven observe, epistemic modality applies to situations that take place at the present moment (*Juliet may be home already*) or in the future (*Juliet may be home by tomorrow*). As concerns past situations, the speaker can evaluate them in retrospect, as in *Juliet may have been home last night*. In this case, the speaker looks back to an anterior situation and assesses its probability “in its continuing relevance.” Deontic modality is, on the contrary, exclusively future-oriented (Dirven, Radden, 2007: 238).

Present possibility of a past happening is expressed by the form *may / might* + past infinitive:

[1] *The language of man or his ancestors may once have had a far larger element of the instinctive in it. - V jazyce člověka nebo jeho předků byl kdysi možná zastoupen daleko více prvek instinktivní.* (EMSA)

[2] *He may have phoned while I was away. Možná, že telefonoval, když jsem byl pryč* (EMSA)

2.3.2 Deontic meaning

Permission

Deontic modality can be called performative, in the sense that by using a modal verb a speaker may “give permission (*may, can*), and make a promise or threat (*shall*) or lay an obligation (*must*)” (Palmer, 1980: 58). The deontic *may* is usually used in very formal contexts (Palmer, 1980: 60).

[1] *May one enquire where his Highness spent the night?- Smím se zeptat, kde Jeho Výsost strávila noc?* (EMSA)

[2] *Visitors may reclaim necessary travel expenses up to a limit of £50.*

[3] *Might I ask whether you are using the typewriter?* (Quirk et al., 1985: 224)

In this use, *may* and *can* are basically interchangeable (with the exception of set phrases of the type *If I may*). Nonetheless, there *is* a certain nuance of meaning between these two modals. Yet, not every native speaker would agree with that (Quirk et al., 1985: 224). This slight difference lies in different degrees of politeness. In the case of *may*, the one who grants the permission is not the one who instigates the action. With *can* the opposite is true. This can be illustrated by the following example: *Can I go and play now? Yes, and you may.* – *Mohu si teď jít hrát? Ano, můžeš a smíš* (Dušková et al., 8.44.11). *Might* also functions as a modal of permission, yet it has been falling out of use and is considered old-fashioned. It represents a more tentative and polite alternative of *may* (Quirk et al., 1985: 224).

2.3.3. Other uses of *may* and *might*

The following subsection will describe other uses of the modals *may* and *might*, among which is expressing tentativeness and politeness, wish and concessive constructions, clauses of purpose (sentential modality) and *may* in academic style.

2.3.3.1 Tentativeness and politeness

The past tense form of *may* is often employed in polite directives and requests as well as in tentative constructions. The tentative form *might* is typical of polite and tactful language (Leech et Svartvik, 2002: 35). There is a tendency to prefer the forms *might* and *could* over *may* and *can* in polite questions and in expressing a tentative opinion (Quirk et al., 1985: 233). Alternatively, the speaker may use an *if-clause* in order to express a cautious, polite request, as in [3] (Leech, 1987: 77).

1) Tentative permission (in polite requests)

- | | |
|---|---------|
| [1] <i>I wonder if I might borrow some coffee?</i> | (Quirk) |
| [2] <i>Might I suggest a somewhat less strenuous procedure?</i> | (EMSA) |
| [3] <i>I'll pay you tomorrow, if I may...</i> (=if you will allow me) | (Leech) |

2) Tentative possibility

In the following examples, the speakers use the tentative form *might* in order to weaken their assertions:

a) expressing a tentative opinion

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| [1] <i>Of course, I might be wrong.</i> | (Quirk et al., 1985: 233) |
|---|---------------------------|

[2] *We might hire a car.* (EMSA)

b) polite directives and requests

[1] *You might call at the post-office.* (EMSA)

[2] *He (you) might go there now.* (EMSA)

Quirk et al. point to the tendency to neutralize the difference between epistemic *may* and *might* expressing tentative or hypothetical possibility. For instance, some native speakers would not find the sentence *You might be wrong* more reserved than *You may be wrong*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 233)

2.3.3.3 Wish constructions

May and *might* can also function as means of sentential modality (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44.23). *May* is used in wish constructions, adverbial clauses of concession and adverbial clauses of purpose (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44.23). Wish constructions are characterized by subject-operator inversion (Quirk et al., 1985: 224). This use of *may* is fairly formal and occurs exclusively in the expressions of blessings and curses. The construction is analogical to the formulaic subjunctive (*Heaven forbid*), which is a rarity as well (Leech, 2004: 116).

[1] *May the best man win!*

[2] *May he never set his foot in this house again!*

[3] *May God bless you!* (Quirk et al., 1985: 224)

2.3.3.4 Concessive constructions

Adjective + *though/as* + *may/might*

[1] *Unpalatable though [/as] it may be, we must consider the question of selfdefence.* - *Ačkoli nám to možná nebude po chuti, musíme zvážit otázku sebeobrany.* (InterCorp)

may/might* + *but

[3] *Some of them may be dangerous, but at all costs we have to avoid incidents.* - *Někteří z nich mohou být nebezpeční, avšak za každou cenu se musíme vyhnout incidentům.*

[4] *There might not be life here, but there could be consciousness, awareness.* - *Život tu nejspíš nebyl, možná že se tady však nacházela nějaká forma vědomí.* (InterCorp)

Examples [3] and [4] can be paraphrased as “I admit that...but...” (Quirk et al., 1985: 224).

however / wh-ever + *may* / *might*

[5] *Whatever doubts I may have, we must continue.* - *Ať mám jakékoli pochybnosti, musíme pokračovat.* (EMSA)

[6] *I imagine that wherever he might be, Alexander even now has it in his possession.* - *Předpokládám, že ať už je Alexander kdekoli, má ji i v této chvíli ve svém držení.* (InterCorp)

[7] *Our task is to deal with the customer's complaints, however unreasonable they may be.* (Leech)

Leech calls these constructions “truth-neutral” as “the speaker expresses a relative open mind as to whether any customer's complaints are unreasonable” (Leech, 2004: 77).

2.3.3.6 Clauses of purpose

In adverbial clauses of purpose, the *may* / *might* construction is formal and rather obsolete.

[1] *Christ died that we might live.* (Quirk)

[2] *In order that the child may think logically, he must first be able to separate the world of things into classes.* - *Aby dítě myslelo logicky, musí být nejdříve schopno rozdělit svět věcí na třídy.* (EMSA)

The clauses of purpose that contain a modal verb differ from the clauses of result (introduced by *so that*), in that the latter obligatorily requires the indicative form (Dušková et al., 2009: 224). The semantic difference can be illustrated by the following sentences:

[1] *He walked so slowly that we undertook him.* [clause of result]

[2] *He walked so slowly that we might / could undertake him.* [clause of purpose]

(EMSA)

2.3.3.7 *May* / *might* (just) as well (idiom)

May and *might* are part of the informal idiomatic expression *may* / *might* just as well. It is used to “suggest doing something because you cannot think of anything better to do” or “for saying that it would not make any difference if you did something else” (Macmillan Dictionary). As Quirk et al. add, the optional comparative clauses can be (and usually is) left out.

[1] *We may as well stay here for now (as look for a better place elsewhere).*

[2] *You might as well as tell the truth (as continue to tell lies).*

The speaker suggests that there is no point in looking elsewhere / your telling lies. (Quirk et al., 1985: 224).

2.3.3.8 Impersonal phrases (academic style)

Impersonal phrases of the type *It may be noted...* or *We may now consider...* appear frequently in academic texts. As Leech observes, these phrases are void of meaning, their only function being to draw the reader's attention (Leech, 2004: 77).

2.4 Can vs. may: areas of overlap

Subsections 2.4.1-3 examine the mutual relationship between the modals *can* and *may*, paying attention to the affinities between them, the conditions of interchangeability, and distribution.

2.4.1 Deontic meaning - permission

In earlier times, only *may* was considered a proper permission auxiliary. *Can*, on the contrary, was condemned by the linguists. English speakers were discouraged from saying *Can I...?* instead *May I...?* Nowadays, the permission auxiliary *can* is actually used much more frequently than *may*. Deontic *may* is usually encountered in a more formal register and viewed as more polite (Leech: 2004: 77). Nevertheless, there is a case where the permission *can* cannot be substituted by *may*. The fixed phrase *if I may* allows for no modification. Therefore the construction **if I can* is incorrect.

According to Quirk et al., the slight overlap in the domains of permission and possibility concerns exclusively the written or formal style and therefore we generally cannot speak of free variation (Quirk et al., 1985: 220).

2.4.2 Distribution of *may* and *can*

As Collins' corpus search shows, *may* occurs in considerably fewer numbers than *can* (1:3.4). Similarly, *might* is markedly less frequent than *could* (1:2.2) However, it should be taken into account that there are regional preferences. *May* appeared to be more popular in British corpora than in American and Australian ones. *Might*, on the contrary, was more popular in British and Australian corpora and less so in American corpora (Collins, 2007: 95).

As regards the distribution in various registers, epistemic *may* denoting logical possibility is almost confined to academic prose. This use of *may* is also common for conversation, whereas *may* as a permission modal is rarer in conversation. *May* occurs in written language much more frequently than in spoken language. Recent years have seen the decline of deontic *may* (Škardová, 2012: 19). More often than not, epistemic *might* expressing logical possibility outnumbers deontic *might*. Logical possibility appears in academic style as well as in conversation. (Škardová, 2012: 19).

2.4.3 Restricted use of *may*

The epistemic *may* is not used in interrogatives and in auxiliary negation. It is usually substituted by the modal *can*. The examples below demonstrate the difference between the two verbs:

She may not be serious ≠ She can't be serious. (Quirk et al., 1985: 224)

2.5 Czech modality vs. English modality

In both Czech and English, modal verbs express deontic and epistemic modality. Nevertheless, the semantic system of English modal verbs differs from the Czech one to a considerable degree, especially when it comes to epistemic modality. What the two languages share are the means of expressing deontic modality. This type of modality is expressed through modal verbs. Yet, there is a need to say that the semantic fields of the individual verbs do not do not exactly correspond to each other. However, this concerns the semantic structure of the verb, not the various means of the modal structure of the sentence (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44).

As far as the epistemic modality is concerned, we may observe certain differences in the modal structure of the sentence. In English, there is a tendency to opt for modal verbs when expressing epistemic modality. Czech, on the contrary, generally tends to express this type of modality by means of epistemic adverbial particles such as *možná, snad, asi, nejspíše* (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44). Other means of expressing the epistemic meaning include what Grepl et al. call “epistémické predikátory” of the type *Je možné /pravděpodobné / nesporné, že...* However, the Czech modals *moci* and *muset* occur in the epistemic function as well: *On mohl být indisponovaný / Petr se tenkrát musel zmýlit* (Grepl et al., 1995: 626).

2.5.1 Czech translation equivalents of *may* and *might*

Czech and English have similar means of expressing deontic modality. English deontic modal verbs are usually translated into Czech as the permission modal *moci* or its more formal alternative *smět*. However, as regards the epistemic meaning, Czech generally tends to prefer adverbial particles *snad*, *možná*, *asi* etc. or constructions of the type *Je možné, že...* indicating a medium degree of certainty (Grepl et al., 1995: 626). Nevertheless, this is still a tendency, not a universally applicable rule, as there are cases where it is more suitable to give preference to a modal such as *moci* over an adverbial particle.

Epistemic modality

Modal adverbs *možná*, *snad*, *asi*

Present / future possibility: *He may come (tomorrow). Možná, že přijde (zítra).*

Negative possibility: *They may not be at home. Možná, že nejsou/nebudou doma.*

Possible happening in the past: *He may have phoned while I was away. Možná, že telefonoval, když jsem byl pryč. (EMSA)*

Modal verb *moci*

Present / future possibility: *Může být osamocen. (PMČ)*

Negative possibility: *Nemusí být osamocen.*

Possible happening in the past: *On mohl být indisponovaný. (PMČ)*

Deontic modality

Modal verbs *moci*, *smět*

Permission: *May I come in? - Mohu vstoupit?*

You may say what you please. - Můžeš si říkat, co chceš.

Permission – official language: *Visitors may enter the exhibition rooms only with a guide. - Návštěvníci smějí vstoupit do výstavních místností pouze s průvodcem.*

Prohibition: *May I borrow your glasses? – No, you may not. / Mohu si vypůjčit tvoje brýle? – Ne, nesmíš.*

Prohibition (official language): *The exhibition rooms may not be entered without a guide. - Do výstavních místností se nesmí vstoupit bez průvodce. (EMSA)*

3 Material and methodology

As a frame of reference for both the theoretical and empirical part I used primarily the following sources: *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* (2009) by Prof. Dušková et al., *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985) by Quirk et al., *Modality and the English Modals* (1980) and *Mood and Modality* (2001) by Palmer, *Modality in Contemporary English* (2003) by Facchinetti et al., *Introduction to the Grammar of English* (1984) by Huddleston, *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar* (2005) by Huddleston and Pullum, and *Příruční mluvnice češtiny* (1996) by Grepl et al.

The empirical part of this thesis is based on 100 Czech authentic translations of the English modals *may* and *might*. The material was extracted from the multilingual parallel corpus *InterCorp*, which is a part of the Czech National Corpus. The corpus can be accessed either from the Park interface or from the NoSketch engine interface.

The first step was selecting filters in order to narrow the scope of the search. Given the fact that this thesis examines Czech translation equivalents of English modals, the search was restricted to Czech and English and only English originals were chosen. Another area of restriction was genre, the data being drawn from two genres – prose and drama.

As the other English central modal verbs, *may* and *might* lack in inflected forms (no –(e)s in the third person singular present indicative form, no –ing form, no –ed in the past tense form), there was no need to restrict the scope of the search in this respect. However, as the verb *may* is homonymous with *May* the noun denoting the month, there could have occurred examples containing the noun *may* instead of the modal verb. This could have been solved by restricting the scope of search so that all occurrences of *may* starting with a capital letter would be omitted. Nevertheless, that would mean that all occurrences of sentence-initial *may* sentences would be removed (questions, optative sentences). Therefore, only the form “may”/“might” was entered into the search engine. Eventually, no examples containing the noun *May* appeared in the results. All the examples were collected randomly to avoid the influence of a translator's idiolect, the concordance being reduced to 50 random lines. The randomized search enables the users to choose the exact number of results. For the purposes of this analysis, 50 instances of *may* and 50 instances of *might* were randomly collected. All the corpus findings were labelled MA_number and MI_number, MA and MI standing for *may* and *might*, respectively (see Appendices).

4 Analysis

The empirical section of this thesis is based on an analysis of 100 authentic occurrences of the verbs *may* and *might* extracted from the corpus *InterCorp*. Section 4.1 focuses on the proportion of the epistemic and deontic uses. In section 4.2, the examples of the two modals will be described in terms of use and meaning. Then an analysis of the Czech translation equivalents will follow in section 4.3. Attention will be paid to the various means that the translators chose in order to convey the modal meaning expressed by the English modals in question and to the correspondences or differences between the English verbs and their Czech counterparts.

4.1 Table 1: *May* vs. *might* - frequency of occurrence

Meaning	MAY	MIGHT	Σ=%
Present possibility (E/I)	35 ¹ (70%)	34 (68%)	69
Possibility of a past happening (E)	9 (18%)	15 (30%)	24
Permission (D)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	5
Wish constructions	2 (4%)	-	2
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	100

As is evident from Table 1, the epistemically used *may* and *might* markedly outnumber their deontic counterparts. In this respect, the corpus findings confirm the initial expectations about the frequency of the two modals. The epistemic meaning occurred in 93% of cases, while the deontic use only in 5 % of cases. Wish constructions featuring *may* represent the remaining 2%. The results of the corpus search clearly show that *may* and *might* as permission modals have been falling out of use in present-day English. Especially *might* as a permission marker is extremely rare (1 % of all occurrences), which is in accordance with the findings of Biber's study from 1999 (Biber et al., 1999: 491). The results of this corpus search clearly demonstrate that *may* and *might* are “dominantly epistemic” (Collins, 2009: 108).

¹ This number includes 4 instances of concessive *may*, which is treated as a separate category in section 4.2

The epistemic meaning of *may* and *might* was further divided into two categories, namely “present possibility” and “possibility of a past happening.” The table shows that *may* and *might* denoting “present possibility” occur three times more frequently than *may/might* + *past infinitive* standing for “(present) possibility of a past happening.” In comparison with *may* + past infinitive, *might* + past infinitive was slightly more common (9:15 occurrences).

4.2 Meanings of *may* and *might*

This section is concerned with the description of the various meanings of *may* and *might*.

4.2.1 *May* – present possibility (epistemic modality)

Epistemic possibility is the most frequent meaning of *may*. In this search it occurred in 93% of cases, while the deontic meaning (permission) only in 5 % of cases. *May* expressing present possibility occurred in 35 examples out of 50. Present or future possibility is expressed by the form *may* + bare infinitive (e.g. *Tonight I **may** die at the hands of religion, he thought.*) Apart from the forms *may*+ *bare infinitive*/ *may* + *past infinitive*, the possibility meaning can also be conveyed by means of an adverb (*Perhaps she saw him*), an adjective (*It's possible that she saw him*), a noun (*There is a possibility that she saw him*) etc. (Huddleston et Pullum, 2005: 54). The examples below can be paraphrased by means of these constructions.

As illustrated by the following examples extracted from the corpus, the epistemic *may* implies the speaker’s “lack of knowledge as to whether the proposition is true or not” and his/her assessing it as mere possibility (Collins, 2009: 95). This type of modality is concerned with propositions rather than events (Palmer, 1980: 21.) All the examples of epistemic modality below can be paraphrased as “it is possible that...” It is also important to note that the judgement and the act of speaking take place at the same time.

Epistemic *may* allows for both present-oriented uses and future-oriented uses (Arrese, 35: 2009). In contrast to *may*, most English modals are limited to the future-time epistemic use (Langacker, 1987: 278). If used with a telic verb, *may* can refer to the future, as in examples [1] and [2]:

- [1] *Tonight I **may** die at the hands of religion, he thought.*
*Dnes **asi** zahynu rukou náboženství. (MA_3)*

- [2] *“It is what he **may** tell others that I am afraid of.”*
„Spíš se bojím, co řekne těm druhým.“ (MA_18)

May in combination with an atelic verb refers either to the present or to the future. The modal can be used with Present Continuous Infinitive, in which case it expresses an action in progress that may take place either at the present moment, as in example [3], or in the future, as is possibly the case with the fourth example (Palmer, 1980: 42). It is not clear whether the form *might be falling* refers to a present point or to an action in the future.

- [3] *“Feelings **may** well be running high, but people seem to be going too far now.”*
*Lidé jsou **možná** opravdu roztrpčeni, ale mně se zdá, že zacházejí příliš daleko.“*
(MA_47)

- [4] *His idea was that meteorites **might** be falling in a heavy shower upon the planet, or that a huge volcanic explosion was in progress.*
*Podle jeho představy **mohl** například dopadnout na povrch Marsu silný meteorický déšť nebo tam mohlo dojít k rozsáhlé vulkanické erupci. (MI_44)*

In the present-oriented sense, *may* situates the designated process in potential “known reality,” which can be illustrated by example [4]:

- [5] *“Come to think of it, you **may** be right,” he sighed.*
*„Když o tom tak přemýšlím, **možná** máš pravdu,“ povzdechl si. (MA_5)*

This sentence could also be interpreted as a tentative way of expressing the speaker’s opinion. The speaker admits the possibility that what the addressee says is true, possibly out of politeness. In this instance, we would need to know the context of the utterance in order to judge whether it is a tentative use or not.

Similarly, in the future-oriented sense, *may* equally locates the designated process in potential reality but in this case “nothing is the speaker’s present conception of reality is seen as barring it from evolving along a path leading to the occurrence of that process.” (Langacker, 1991:278)

In example [6], the speaker makes it explicit when the action may take place (*when Faramir returns*). Similarly in example [1,] the speaker specifies the time when he presumes he may die.

- [6] *But things **may** change when Faramir returns.*
*Věci se ale **mohou** změnit, až se vrátí Faramir. (MA_48)*

Rarely, *may* refers to a habitual activity (e.g. *He **may** go to London every day when he gets his new job*), but no prototypical instances were found this corpus search. With that being said, if we decide to subsume the concessive *may* under the category of epistemic possibility, the following sentence can serve as an example of this use of *may*:

- [7] *“In any case, even if Shintaro **may** at times display naivete about certain things, this is nothing to be disparaged, it being no easy thing now to come across someone so untainted by the cynicism and bitterness of our day.”*
„I když se Šintaró v některých ohledech projevuje naivně, je to v každém případě slušný člověk.“ (MA_11)

The concessive use of *may* will be dealt with in greater detail in subchapter 4.2.4.

Epistemic modals usually express the epistemic judgement of the speakers themselves and therefore are subjective (Palmer, 1980: 42). The example below is illustrative of the subjectivity of the speaker. The speaker’s utterance is based on his own judgement. He/she infers that the subject’s upset has resulted in the subject’s inability to see the essential point. The speaker’s judgment has nothing to do with “ ‘objective’ verifiability in the light of knowledge” (Palmer, 1980: 3).

- [8] *He was quite disturbed, of course, and perhaps that **may** have made it difficult for him to see the essential point.*
*Byl přirozeně rozrušen a to mu **snad** bránilo, aby postřehl tuto zásadní věc. (MA_38)*

4.2.2 *May* – tentative possibility (epistemic modality)

Although *may* is usually considered a less tentative form of *might*, there occurred in the search one example in which *may* arguably represents a tentative form of expressing the speaker’s opinion. In the example below, the speaker suggests that he/she and the addressee

see the films in question. The speaker does so in a tentative and careful manner so as not to sound too authoritarian. He/she does not wish to give the impression that he is imposing his ideas on the addressee, which is why he uses the modal *may* denoting tentative possibility.

- [9] “*Having taken care of the matter on your mind, you **may** now be interested in some films we have taken of the scene of the crime and of the events immediately following.*”
„*Když jsme se postarali o záležitost, kterou jste měl na mysli, **snad** by vás zajímalo několik filmů, které jsme udělali na místě zločinu a o událostech, jež nastaly potom.*“
(MA_2)

In the following example the speaker presents the proposition in a tactful, tentative way. He/she does not want to imply that the addressee does not remember the person's name as that could be considered impolite. As Leech et al. observe, tactful language means “to avoid causing offence and distress to another person” (Leech et al., 2002: 35).

- [10] “*You **may** recall his name came up some time ago.*”
„*Jistě si vzpomeneš, že jeho jméno tu před nějakou dobou padlo.*“ (MA_7)

4.2.3 *Might* – present (tentative) possibility (epistemic modality)

Might conveying present possibility was found in 34 occurrences out of 50, which speaks of its predominantly epistemic use. This is equally true of *may* in the same function. Compared to *may*, *might* denotes a lesser degree probability. The epistemic *might* serves to express tentative possibility. Compared to *may*, *might* denotes a lesser degree probability. Alternatively, the epistemic *might* is indicative of the speakers' “reluctance to commit themselves on given questions” (Leech et al., 2002:35). Thus, the epistemic *might* also serves to express tentative possibility. The epistemic *might* typically occurs in tentative and tactful language.

As Leech et al. observe, tentative language is typical of speech acts such as requesting, advising, and offering. The use of polite and tentative language is largely context-dependent. If talking to someone whom the speakers do not know very well, they tend to use more indirect and tactful language (Leech et Svartvik., 2002: 34). *Might* as a more polite and tentative form of *may* is employed to express tentative possibility. In example [10], the suggestion is made more polite and indirect by using *might*. The speaker, who is making the suggestion, is presumably not on familiar terms with the addressees, which is why he uses the

tentative epistemic *might*. However, in this case, the one who makes the suggestion may simply be reluctant to commit himself to performing the action and he intends to keep the possibility open.

[10] *If Ted was attracted to the mother, he would suggest that the child, together with the mother, **might** like to model for him - maybe for the next book.*

Když Teda maminka přitahovala, obvykle navrhl, aby mu dítě společně s matkou stálo modelem - třeba pro příští knihu. (MI_38)

In sentence [11], *might* is employed to express a reduced degree of certainty. If the speaker used *may*, it would imply that he/she is more confident about the truth of the proposition. The speaker does not exclude the possibility of their having more luck but at the same time expresses his/her uncertainty.

Similarly, in example [12], the speaker cannot tell for certain whether it is her heart affected by influenza that is responsible for her strange feelings. However, she admits the possibility that it might be so. Again, the form *might* is indicative of the speaker's lower degree of confidence in the validity of the proposition.

In [13], the speaker draws the addressee's attention to the possibility that the situation might occur. As in the other examples, *might* arguably functions as a "diffident" marker of epistemic possibility here, as Collins terms it (Collins, 2009: 107).

[11] *If Dr. Lecter feels you're his enemy - if he's fixed on you, just as you've said - we **might** have more luck if I approached him by myself.*

*Jestliže si vás doktor Lecter jednou zafixoval jako svého nepřítele (jak jste mi prve říkal), pak **by** zde byla jistá naděje, kdybych za ním šla sama. (MI_48)*

[12] *For having lived in Westminster - how many years now ? over twenty, - one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that **might** be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes.*

*Když totiž člověk žije ve Westminsteru - kolik už je to? přes dvacet let - pociťuje i uprostřed všeho toho dopravního ruchu, nebo když se v noci probudí, Clarissa to ví jistě, takové zvláštní ticho, nebo snad vážnost, nepopsatelnou pauzu, napětí (ale to **by***

se možná dalo přičíst srdci, které, jak jí řekli, oslabila chřipka), než se ozvou údery Big Benu. (MI_46)

- [13] *Even though you may only be trying to attract chickadees, you **might** come home one night to find the biggest bear in the forest standing on your deck.*
*Přestožebudete chtít krmit jenom sýkory, **docela dobře se může stát**, že jednoho večera přijdete domů a najdete na verandě největšího medvěda z celého lesa. (MI_47)*

Nevertheless, Collins argues that the epistemic *might* has undergone a semantic transformation, that is to say that it ceases to function as a marker of lesser probability and that the difference between the epistemic *may* and *might* has been neutralized. Having said that, the Czech translators often *do* seem to distinguish between the slight shift in the meaning of the two modals but this will be dealt with later.

4.2.4 Concessive *may*

The concessive use of *may* can be interpreted as “involving a type of pragmatic strengthening in which the speaker concedes the truth of the proposition, rather than expressing confidence in it” (Collins, 2009: 93). This construction makes it possible for the speaker to “contrast one state of affairs with another” (Palmer, 2001 :31). In example [14], the utterer admits that the proposition “That he was clearly not vain attracted the women” is true. The modal *may* itself is not a concessive marker but acquires concessive meaning in combination with the conjunction *but* that introduces the second clause (Souesme, 2009: 159)

Similarly in sentence [15], the speaker admits the truth of the statement “Shintaro at times displays naivete about certain things” but in the second clause defends his behavior by adding *this is nothing to be disparaged*. In the non-finite construction, the speaker gives reasons justifying Shintaro’s conduct. In this case, the concessive marker *but* is missing and is replaced by *even if* introduced the first clause. The sentence can be paraphrased as “Shintaro may at times display naivete ..., but this is nothing to be disparaged.”

In example [16], the speaker is positive about the the truth of the proposition, therefore *may* loses its epistemic value here. “I may have been stuck in an office...” is actually more a fact rather than a modalised proposition. In the strict sense, the epistemic *may* can be paraphrased as “It is possible that...” While in the sentences [14] and [15], the speakers do not necessarily have to be confident of the proposition being true, in the last sentence the situation

is different. It is possible to paraphrase the sentence as “Although I have been stuck in office..., I can figure out...”

[14] “*That he was clearly not vain **may** have attracted the women in the first place, but eventually they took his lack of attention to his face as a sign that he was indifferent to them.*”

„Že zjevně není marnivý, **možná** ženy zprvu přitahovalo, ale posléze pokládaly jeho nedostatek pozornosti k obličeji za znak lhostejnosti k sobě samotným.“ (MA_9)

[15] “*In any case, even if Shintaro **may** at times display naivete about certain things, this is nothing to be disparaged, it being no easy thing now to come across someone so untainted by the cynicism and bitterness of our day.*”

„I když se Šintaró v některých ohledech projevuje naivně, je to v každém případě slušný člověk.“ (MA_10)

[16] *I **may** have been stuck in an office on the third floor at the Belvedere Center for Sleep Research for the past year, but it doesn't take a genius to figure out what you and the lab rats were doing.*

„**Možná** jsem poslední rok byla zavřená v kanceláři ve třetím patře Belvederova ústavu pro výzkum snů, ale nemusím být génius, abych dokázala vydedukovat, čemu jste se vy a vaše laboratorní krysy věnovali.“ (MA_50)

4.2.5 *May* – permission (deontic modality)

The semantic notion of ‘permission’ is always subsumed under the category of deontic modality. The speaker gives someone permission or asks someone to give him permission for an action to be performed. That is why the deontic modality is seen as performative. Compared to deontic *must*, deontic *may* is obviously weaker and “merely facilitates the performance of the action” (Huddleston, 1984:168). In this use, *may* semantically corresponds to *can* but represents a more formal form.

In sentence [17], the speaker does not ask the addressee for permission *per se*. Although the sentence has the form of a yes/no question (V-S), it does not end with a question mark. Thus, the speaker does not expect an answer from the addressee (*Yes, you may / No, you may not). The speaker’s utterance has the function of a polite, tentative warning. As Watts states, the “underlying illocutory force is that of order, a request or an enquiry” (Watts,

192: 195). If we look at the preceding sentence (*The camerlegno's voice simmered with rage*), we can see that the speaker expresses indignation at the addressee's disrespect.

May in sentence [18] has a different function. The conditional clause with *may* represents a polite request and can be paraphrased as "If you allow me." The speaker tentatively asks the addressee for permission. This construction is more tentative and therefore polite than *May I...?* or *Will you allow me...?* In this particular case, it is not possible to replace *may* with *can* as *If I may* is a set expression.

Example [19] is prototypical asking for permission. The speaker asks the addressee to allow him/her to proceed. We could use *might* here, but there would be a slight shift in connotation as *might* is a more tentative variant of *may*. However, as mentioned previously, *might* as a permission modal is a rarity nowadays.

In the previous examples, we saw a speaker asking someone for permission. In sentence [20], the roles are switched. It is the speaker who gives permission to the addressee. The sentence can be paraphrased as "I give you permission to ask." As Palmer remarks, despite the fact that deontic modality is connected to an external authority (rules, law), typically, the authority is represented by the actual speaker (Palmer, 2001: 10)

In this particular instance, the modal *may* has a performative action, which means that it is the speaker who gives permission. Alternatively, by using a deontic modal, he/she can also lay an obligation or make a promise or threat (Palmer, 1990: 69). Palmer argues that deontic modals are prototypically performative, prototypically because the speaker does not have to be necessarily involved in the utterance, but this sentence is not the case (Facchinetti et al., 2003: 14).

[17] "**May** I remind you that when you address me, you are addressing this office."
 „**Dovolte**, abych vám připomněl, že když ke mně hovoříte, obračíte se k úřadu,
 který zastupuji.“ (MA_27)

[18] "**If I may**, Your Honor."
 „**Dovolte**, Vaše Ctihodnosti.“ (MA_28)

[19] "**May** I proceed?"
 „**Můžu** číst dál?“ (MA_29)

[20] "I'm not sure I can answer, but you **may** ask."

„Nejsem si jistý , jestli vám dokážu odpovědět, ale zeptat se mě **můžete**.“ (MA_32)

In sentence [21], the meaning of *may* could be interpreted either as tentative permission or deontic ability (in this use, *may* could be replaced by *can*). However, the second interpretation (“If you allow me to do so”) seems more acceptable. Nevertheless, in fact, the speaker does not ask the addressee for permission but rather intends to be polite.

[21] *“If I **may** do so, without appearing boastful, I think I can honestly say that our one small boat, during that week, caused more annoyance and delay and aggravation to the steam launches that we came across than all the other craft on the river put together.”*

„Nerad bych, aby to vypadalo, jako že se vychloubám, ale mohu poctivě prohlásit, že naše lodička nadělala za ten týden parníkům, s nimiž se setkala, mnohem víc potíží, zdržovaček a nepříjemností, než všechna ostatní plavidla na řece dohromady.“
(MA_30)

4.2.6 *Might* – permission

Might as a marker of permission occurred in the search only once, which is suggestive of its present-day decline. If used in a question, *might* corresponds to deontic *may* (or *can*) but represents a more polite, tentative way of asking for permission. In sentence [22], the speaker does not actually ask the addressee for permission. He/she does not expect the answer *Yes, you might* but rather wants to find out what the addressees did. Beginning the sentence with *Might I ask...* does not make his enquiry seem intrusive.

[22] *“**Might** I ask what you were doing up in the mountains at all, and where you were coming from, and where you were going to?”*

„**Smím** se zeptat, co vůbec děláte tady v horách, odkud jdete a kam jste měli namířeno?“ (MI_42)

4.2.7 *May* in wish constructions

Apart from expressing deontic and epistemic modality, *may* equally functions as a means of expressing sentential modality. *Might* does not occur in this type of optative sentences. *May* as a part of optative constructions occurred only two times in the corpus search as this use is very formal and archaic. Sentential modality occurs in optative sentences

of the type *May the best man win!*, which are characterized by subject inversion (*may* + subject + predication) (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44.23). These constructions correspond to the formulaic subjunctive and are rather archaic, yet still less archaic than the type *Heaven forbid*. They usually express blessing, wishes and desires (Quirk et al., 1985: 835). Quirk et al. classify this type of constructions as irregular sentences as they “do not conform to the regular patterns of clause structures” (Quirk et al., 1985: 835).

Example [23] represents a sort of curse as the speaker wishes the addressee ill. On the contrary, in sentence [24], the speaker expresses his wish for the addressee’s luck or success. As prof. Dušková et al. observe, the word order cannot be reversed without a shift in meaning. The sentence *His beard may wither* is not an optative construction as it does not express the speaker’s wish but epistemic modality – ‘It is possible that his beard will wither.’ The same applies to the other example.

[23] “*May his beard wither!*”
 „*Ať mu vypadají vousy!*“ (MA_31)

[24] “*May you ever appear where you are most needed and least expected!*”
 „*Kěž se vždycky objevíte tam, kde je vás nejvíce zapotřebí, a kde jste nejméně očekáván!*“ (MA_43)

4.2.8 *May* – (present) possibility of a past happening (epistemic modality)

Epistemic *may* expressing present possibility of a past happening occurred in 9 findings out of 50, while *might* having the same meaning in 15 findings out of 50. In this use, *may* is followed by the perfect infinitive (e.g. “*I think that at some level I may have been guilty of stereotyping, too.*” - „*Myslím, že do jisté míry jsem se je snažila napodobit.* (MA_1)) This form is used for the epistemic meaning only, the deontic meaning is expressed by the suppletive form *be allowed to* (e.g. *I was allowed to...*) As with epistemic *may* denoting present possibility, *may* + past infinitive conveys non-factuality and reflects the limited knowledge of the speaker (Huddleston, 2005: 54). In example [25], the speaker is not certain whether he has already said something to the addressee or not, but cannot exclude the possibility that he did not. The speaker bases his judgement on what he thinks is true. The sentence can be paraphrased as “It is possible that I have already said that.”

Similarly, in example [26], the speaker's statement is non-factual as he / she are not sure whether the telescope was focused differently or not. He/she admits the possibility that it was so.

[25] *As I **may** have said, Setsuko spent much of the first day of her visit sitting out on the veranda, talking with her sister. (MA_35)*

*Jak už jsem **možná** řekl, Secuko s Noriko si téměř celý první den povídaly na verandě.*

[26] *The telescope **may** have been focused differently in the two observations.*

*Při těchto dvou pozorováních **mohl** být dalekohled různě zaostřen. (MA_36)*

As Palmer observes, modality is related only to the present, in the sense that the speakers' judgements are made in the act of speaking (Palmer, 1980: 50). In all these examples, the speaker makes a judgement about past events, i.e. events that have already taken place. Thus, the past tense forms of the modal verbs are not normally used to mark past judgements. In order to mark a past event, *have* is used before the main verb. This also applies to *might* denoting "possibility of a past happening."

In [27] and [28], the speaker makes a judgement at the present moment about events that took place in the past. These examples can be paraphrased as "I think/believe that it was my fancy/it made it difficult for him to see the essential point," using the verb such as *think/believe* and the past tense form of the main verb. The verbs of the type *think* and *believe* express the modal meaning corresponding to *may*. If the modal markers were omitted, the sentence would lose its modal meaning.

[27] *It **may** have been my fancy, or it **may** have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze.*

***Třeba** jsem se mýlil, ale **asi** to souviselo s mými ranami na bronzové desky. (MA_37)*

[28] *He was quite disturbed, of course, and perhaps that **may** have made it difficult for him to see the essential point. (MA_38)*

*Byl přirozeně rozrušen a to mu **snad** bránilo, aby postřehl tuto zásadní věc. (MA_38)*

4.2.9 *Might* - possibility of a past happening (epistemic modality)

This use of the epistemic *might* corresponds to the form *may* + *past infinitive* mentioned in the previous subchapter. In this case, the speakers too make a judgement about an event that happened in the past at the moment of the utterance. Nevertheless, there is a slight difference in meaning between the two forms. The form *might* + *past infinitive* indicates a lesser degree of certainty on the part of the speaker.

Might in the example [29] is used in the unreal/hypothetical sense. The sentence does not have the form of a prototypical conditional clause, yet has the same meaning. It can be paraphrased as *If they did not have nearsightedness on the Outer World, they might have reached the true solution of the murder almost at once* (They have nearsightedness so they did *not* reach the solution.) The perfective aspect marks the past hypothetical meaning (Quirk et al., 1985: 232).

- [29] *They don't have nearsightedness on the Outer Worlds, I suppose, or they **might** have reached the true solution of the murder almost at once.*
*Předpokládám, že ve Vnějších Světech neznají krátkozrakost, neboť jinak **by** dospěli ke správnému řešení vraždy téměř ihned. (MI_35)*

Sentences [30] and [31] are typical examples of *might* + *past infinitive* expressing a possibility of a past event. The speaker makes a judgement of an event that took place in the past. Example [31] can be paraphrased as “It is possible that such a difference was related to gender or to individual character.” Compared to *may* + *past infinitive*, *might* + *past infinitive* implies a lesser degree of certainty. Otherwise, the two forms are analogical.

- [30] *Marsha had found something in the paperwork about the head of the last animal on the day the meat for Becky's hamburger **might** have been slaughtered.*
*Marsha našla v podnikové evidenci jakési hlášení, podle kterého se toho dne, kdy odtud **podle všeho** odešlo maso na Beckyin hamburger, s jednou hlavou něco stalo - nějaká nehoda či co. (MI_37)*
- [31] *Such a difference, I thought, **might** have been related to gender or to individual character, but with only two cubs it was impossible for me to tell.*

*Tak zásadní rozdíl v chování **mohl** podle mého souviset buď s odlišným pohlavím, nebo s individuální povahou každého jednotlivce. Protože jsem ale měl k dispozici jen dvě medvíďata, nemohl jsem toto dosti přesně posoudit. (MI_39)*

4.2.10 *Might* as a part of clauses of purpose

Among the data, there was one instance of *might* as a part of an adverbial clause of purpose. This construction is fairly formal and obsolete.

[32] *“There was no reproach either in their faces or in their hearts , only the knowledge that they must die in order that he **might** remain alive, and that this was part of the unavoidable order of things.”*
*„Nevyčítaly mu to ani pohledem ani v srdci, nesly v sobě pouze vědomí, že musí zemřít, aby on **mohl** zůstat na živu, a to byla součást nevyhnutelného řádu věcí.“ (MI_23)*

4.2.11 *May* and *might* – less frequent uses

In the search, a small number of examples of *may* and *might* occurred, where the two modals are used in rather unusual ways and are difficult to classify into the previously mentioned categories.

In example [32], *might* seems to oscillate between the epistemic and deontic meaning. *As they might* can be paraphrased “as it was possible for them / as they could.” Therefore, in this case, *might* is replaceable with *could*.

[32] *Dosáhli pruhu souše mezi jezerem a skalami; byl úzký, často sotva šest sáhů široký, a zavalený spadlými balvany a kamením, našli však cestu těsně podle skály a drželi se co nejdál od temné vody.*

*They reached the strip of dry land between the lake and the cliffs: it was narrow, often hardly a dozen yards across, and encumbered with fallen rock and stones; but they found a way, hugging the cliff, and keeping as far from the dark water as they **might**. (MI_43)*

[33] *Vždyť **by** se jí podívala ven maximálně šestkrát za celou cestu.*

*She **might** look through it six times on the voyage. (MI_12)*

Similarly, [33] is not a prototypical example of the epistemic *might*. In instance, there is little likelihood that the modal functions a permission marker (*she was allowed to*). Again, *might* has the meaning of “possible for.” Palmer admits that an epistemic reading is not out of question here as similar examples can be paraphrased as “It may / might be that...” (Palmer, 1980: 158).

The following example is equally ambiguous as it is difficult to decide whether it has an the epistemic or deontic meaning. Palmer argues for the label dynamic *may* as, according to him, the modal has a dynamic sense in this case. The modal is paraphrasable as ‘possible for’ (*a place where it is possible to drink a very good glass of ale*).

[34] *Po břehu běží stinná cesta , tu a tam obtečkovaná hezounkými malými chatami, až k „Ouseleyským zvonkům,“ což je malebná hospůdka - hospůdky na řece jsou většinou malebné - a navíc podnik, kde se **můžete** napít výtečného piva, jak říká Harris [.]*
*A shady road, dotted here and there with dainty little cottages , runs by the bank up to the “Bells of Ouseley,” a picturesque inn, as most up- river inns are, and a place where a very good glass of ale **may** be drunk - so Harris says[.] (MA_42)*

4.3 Czech translation equivalents of *may* and *might*

This chapter is concerned with Czech translation equivalents of *may* and *might*, as found in the corpus search. It will present and analyze the Czech counterparts, paying attention to the means of expressing the meaning of the two modals (modal verbs, epistemic particles, epistemic predicators etc.) The chapter will also comment on the accuracy of the translations and the possible deviations from the English original.

4.3.1 Czech translation equivalents - frequency

Each modal verb was divided into four categories (possibility, permission, wish constructions, concessive use) and assessed separately. These categories seem to be more reasonable than the labels deontic/epistemic, which proved insufficient for the purposes of this analysis. As regards *may* expressing present possibility / possibility of a past happening, the most common counterpart found in the search was an epistemic particle of the type *možná* (38%). Nevertheless, the modal verbs *moci/smět* also occurred in not-negligible numbers (10 occurrences). Apart from that, there were five alternative constructions and three untranslated instances. With the deontic use, the situation is different. In all cases, *may* and *might* were translated by means of a verb, mostly as the modal *moci*, rarely as *smět*.

Among other uses of *may* are wish constructions, which were found only twice in the material. It comes as no surprise that both constructions were rendered into Czech by a modal particle (*kéž* and *at'*). Five times *may* was used in a concessive context. It was mostly translated by a modal particle, specifically *možná*. As Table 1 shows, *may* is used predominantly as an epistemic modal (74%).

Table 2: Czech counterparts of *may*

	possibility (EM/IP)	permission (DM)	wish constructions	concessive use
modal particle	19 (38%)	-	2 (4%)	4 (8%)
modal verb	10 (20%)	1 (2%)	-	-
<i>moci</i>				
<i>smět</i>	-	1 (2%)	-	-
different construction	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	-	-
not translated	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	-	1 (2%)
total	50 (100%)			

With *might*, the situation is slightly different. In most cases (40%), *might* expressing possibility was translated by means of the modal verb *moci* (rarely *smět* - in the deontic sense). The second most frequent counterpart was a modal particle (18%). Contrary to *may*, *might* was also found in combination with a modal particle (three instances). Five times the meaning of *might* was conveyed by a lexical verb in the conditional mood. In 16% of cases *might* had no direct translation counterpart. In four occurrences, the meaning of *might* was expressed by an alternative construction. *Might* as a marker of permission was encountered only once in the data, which speaks of its decline in present-day English, and was rendered into Czech as *smět*. As is evident from Table 2, *might* also proved to be dominantly an epistemic modal.

Table 3: Czech counterparts of *might*

	possibility	permission	wish constructions	concessive use
modal particle	9 (18%)	-	-	-
modal verb <i>moci</i>	20 (40%)	-	-	-
<i>smět</i>	-	1 (2%)	-	-
modal particle + modal verb <i>moci</i>	3 (6%)	-	-	-
conditional	5 (10%)			
different construction	4 (8%)			
not translated	8 (16%)	-	-	-
total	50 (100%)			

4.3.2 *May* expressing present possibility translated by an epistemic particle

With its 53% of occurrences, the epistemic particle *možná* was the most frequent equivalent of *may* conveying present possibility. Among other translation correspondences were the epistemic particles *snad* (3 occurrences), *asi* (3 occurrences), *třeba* (1 occurrence)

and, quite surprisingly, also *nejspíš* (1 occurrence) and *jistě* (1 occurrence), the total number of epistemic particles being 22 out of 37 examples of epistemic modality.

The epistemic particle *možná*, the most common counterpart found in the search, is one of the three lexical means of expressing epistemic modality, the other two being epistemic predicators and modal verbs. These modal markers convey various degrees of certainty on the part of the speaker about the truth of the proposition. If the speaker is not a hundred percent sure whether the proposition is true, i.e. whether it corresponds with reality, he/she signals this uncertainty by various means, either lexical or grammatical ones (Grepl et al., 1995: 624).

In the examples below, the particle *možná* implies a medium degree of certainty on the part of the speaker. Thus, it semantically corresponds with the modal *may*. Epistemic particles of this type have the character of a parenthesis, which is why they are not classified as clause elements (Grepl et al., 1995: 625). These particles are normally not separated by a comma from the rest of the sentence.

[35] “You **may** wonder why I should write a genealogy.”
„**Možná** se ptáte, proč jsem se rozhodla sepsat svůj rodokmen.“ (MA_16)

[36] For themselves they **may** be right.
Oni sami mají **možná** pravdu. (MA_19)

In the original version of example [37], the epistemic meaning is conveyed by the modal *may* and the modal adverbial *perhaps*. The sentence thus contains two markers of epistemic modality, which is rather unusual in English. The double modality marking occurred only once in the corpus search. The Czech translator chose the modal adverbial *možná* denoting epistemic possibility. *Perhaps* and *may* express the same meaning, i.e. possibility, therefore it was unnecessary to use two modal markers in the Czech translation. If the translator decided to maintain the structure of the original, the Czech translation would sound rather awkward – *Můžeš si možná myslet / Možná si můžeš myslet, že...*

[37] “You **may** perhaps think I am taking too much credit in relating this small episode.”
„**Možná** se vám zdá , že si v téhle epizodě připisuji příliš velkou zásluhu.“
(MA_12)

Example [38] is a negative sentence, in which it is the main verb, not the modal, that is negated. As was mentioned in the theoretical part, if *may* conveys possibility, it is excluded from the scope of negation. The same applies to Czech, as is evident from the example. In the Czech translation this is expressed explicitly as the negation is included in the main verb *nejsou*, whereas in English, it is not clear at first sight which of the verbs is negated.

The Czech translator rendered the original as a concessive sentence. The English sentence lacks this concessive meaning. In the Czech translation, which can be paraphrased as *It is possible that...but...*, the speaker concedes the truth of the proposition. The implication of the original, however, is *It is possible that...*

- [38] “Other examples of bear demonstrations **may** not be so obvious until you know what you’re looking for.”
„Další příklady medvědích názorných ukázek **možná** nejsou na první pohled tak zřejmé, ale to jen do té doby, než zjistíte, oč běží.“ (MA_13)

Apart from *možná*, *may* was also translated as *asi*, *snad*, and *třeba*. All of these epistemic particles have the same denotation as they all express epistemic modality. Likewise, they semantically correspond with the English *may*. Therefore, the Czech rendering preserves the meaning expressed by the source language.

In the translations below, the speakers express their “the lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition” (Coates, 1983: 133) by means of epistemic particles conveying possibility. The speakers make a judgement on the basis of their belief or knowledge. The Czech particles too reflect the subjectivity of the statement.

- [39] “He **may** be dead by now.”
„**Snad** je teď už mrtev!“ (MA_14)
- [40] You **may** be able to help me.
Třeba mi můžete pomoci. (MA_20)
- [41] “Cause I **may** have to get them.”
„Protože já je **asi** budu muset nosit.“ (MA_4)

In the data, one ambiguous example was found [see 42]. The ambiguity arises from the fact that *třeba*, being a polysemous word, can mean either *possibly* (*možná* – an epistemic particle or *for example* (*například*– an adverbial compound). While the original clearly has a modal meaning “It is possible that you think...,” the implication of the Czech translation is not so clear-cut. Nevertheless, the word order of the Czech clause *Myslíte si třeba* seems to speak in favour of the second interpretation, that is *třeba* meaning *for example* (*kupříkladu, dejme tomu*). Yet, even if this were so, the sentence would not have a purely factual but rather hypothetical meaning.

[42] *I mean you **may** think it's a long way down the road to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space.*

*Myslíte si **?třeba**, že drogerie ve vaší ulici je daleko, ale proti vesmíru je to úplný houby.* (MA_49)

In the material two other translations occurred that did not correspond very much with the meaning of the epistemic *may*. Those are the epistemic particles *jistě* and *nejspíše*, which have denotations different from the English modal. Especially the particle *jistě* has a markedly different meaning as it is indicative of the speaker's certainty about the truth of the proposition. That is why *jistě* is not a very appropriate translation and neither is *nejspíše*. The latter conveys a high degree of probability, signaling near certainty about the truth of the proposition.

As examples [43] and [44] show, the translator deviated from the meaning of the source text. The Czech epistemic particles *jistě* a *nejspíše* convey the notions of ‘certainty’ and ‘probability,’ respectively. *Jistě* usually corresponds to *must* in the sense of ‘logical necessity’ or to ‘be bound to’ or the epistemic particles such as *surely* and *certainly*. *Nejspíše* has the same meaning as the particle *probably*. *May*, as used in the two sentences below, would be more appropriately translated as *možná* or *asi*.

[43] “You **may** recall his name came up some time ago.”

„**Jistě** si vzpomeneš, že jeho jméno tu před nějakou dobou padlo.“ (MA_7)

[44] “Though I say it as shouldn't, you **may** think,” he added with a wry smile, seeing Frodo's glance.” „I když já mám nejmíň co mluvit, jak si **nejspíš** myslíte,“ pousmál se trpce, když zaznamenal Frodův pohled. (MA_17)

Among the findings, the epistemic particle *možná* followed by a subordinate clause was encountered once (*Možná, že kdybych to zkusil...*). The clause (*že kdybych to zkusil*) is dependent on the modal particle *možná*. In this case, *možná* and the subordinate clause can be separated by a comma. Similarly, if we had just one clause, not a sentence, such as *Možná(,) že bych to zkusil*, the use of the comma would not be obligatory. *Možná, že* is an accurate translation of the construction *It may be that...*

[45] “*It may be that if I chose to put it to the test, I would again be surprised by the extent of my influence.*”

„*Možná, že kdybych to zkusil, samotného by mě dosah mého vlivu překvapil.* (MA_10)

4.3.3 *May* expressing present possibility translated by *moci*

The modal verb *moci* in the epistemic meaning occurred in the search nine times out of 37 (this number comprises all instances of epistemic *may*). Thus, after modal particles, *moci* is the second most common counterpart of *may*. The modal *moci* is a lexical means of expressing epistemic modality, specifically a medium degree of certainty (Grepel et al., 1995: 626). The verb therefore semantically corresponds with *may*.

In [46], we see a prototypical use of the epistemic *may*. The Czech rendering too is indicative of epistemic possibility. Here *may* corresponds to the modal particles of the type *možná* mentioned in the previous chapter or epistemic predicators such as *Je možné, že...*. The translation can be paraphrased as *Na tom, co říkáš, možná něco je*.

Nevertheless, *may* in examples [47] - [49] cannot be assigned an epistemic value despite the fact that it conveys possibility. In these cases, we do not talk about epistemic possibility (‘It is possible that...’), but about so-called intrinsic possibility (‘It is possible for xy to...’ or It is possible to...). This type of modality “is concerned with potentialities arising from the speaker-external sources, i.e. from intrinsic qualities of a thing or circumstances” (Radden et Dirven, 2007: 246). That explains why the intrinsic *may* cannot be translated by means of epistemic particles such as *možná, asi, snad* or *třeba*. If the translators opted for such epistemic markers, they would shift the meaning of the sentence.

[46] “*There may be something in what you say, Rabbit,*” he said at last.

„*Na tom může něco být, co říkáš, Králíčku,*” řekl konečně. (MA_15)

[47] “I see that strange tales are woven about you,” said Denethor, “and once again it is shown that looks **may** belie the man - or the halfling.”

„Vidím, že tě obetkávají zvláštní příběhy,” řekl Denethor, „a opět se ukazuje, že vzhled **může** klamat u muže i u půlčítka.“ (MA_21)

[48] *At this moment in the history of science it appears that the best way to approach these laws is through the physics of elementary particles, but that is an incidental aspect of reductionism and **may** change.*

*To je ovšem náhodný aspekt redukcionismu a **může** se změnit.* (MA_24)

[49] “The images we are about to show are exceptionally vivid and **may not** be suitable for all audiences.”

„Chtěli bychom nyní upozornit, že následující záběry jsou mimořádně realistické a pro některé skupiny diváků **může** být pohled na ně nevhodný.“ (MA_41)

In the search one occurrence of the negative form *may not* was found. *May not* implies ‘It is possible but not necessary that..,’ which corresponds to the negative form of the verb *moci* - *nemuset*. In this case, *nemusíme* can be paraphrased as ‘we don’t necessarily have to.’ Presumably, in the previous sentence the epistemic *may* was employed.

[50] “Though we **may not** be, said Vroomfondel waving a warning finger at the programmers.”

„Anebo taky **nemusíme** být,“ zahrozil Vrúmfondl na programátory. (MA_23)

4.3.4 *May* expressing present possibility translated by other means

In five cases, *may* was translated into Czech by a less common construction. In example [51], *may* suggesting ‘possibility’ is rendered into Czech by the present conditional form of the reflexive verb *dát se*. The use of this construction is restricted to the third-person singular. It can occur either with an expressed subject (*Schůze se dá odložit*) or without a subject (*Dá se očekávat, že*) (SSJČ).

In [51] the translator modified the structure of the original sentence, replacing the first-person singular pronoun with an impersonal construction *dalo by se*. This construction is analogical to *We / one can say that...*, in which *we* and *one* represent the generic human agent.

In contrast to English, Czech allows for subjectless clauses. In the example in question, the agent of the action is not explicitly expressed but only implied. In English, it is possible to use either the general human agent or empty *it* + passive (*it may be said*). Although the Czech translation is slightly more impersonal, it does not deviate from the original meaning.

- [51] “*You know, sir, that my wife nursed him, and so I **may** say I am his foster-father.*”
 „*Víte, pane, moje žena ho odkojila, a tak **by se dalo** říci, že jsem jako jeho nevlastní otec.*“ (MA_6)

In [52], we also see a shift from the first-person plural to the third person singular indicating an impersonal construction. In the Czech sentence, *may* is translated by the predication *může se stát* consisting of a modal + reflexive verb.

- [52] ***Může se** ovšem **stát**, že budeme litovat, že s objevem finální teorie se příroda stala obvyčejnější, méně divotvorná a tajuplná.*
*Still, with the discovery of a final theory we **may** regret that nature has become more ordinary, less full of wonder and mystery.* (MA_25)

In [53], the intrinsic *may* is translated by the predication *je to možné*. The Czech rendering reflects the intrinsic meaning ‘possible for.’

- [53] „*Jeden čas jsem tam bydlel a doposud se tam vracím, kdykoli **je to možné**.*“
“*I dwelt there once, and still I return when I **may**.*” (MA_44)

In [54], the translator takes greater liberties with the original, rendering *may* as *měl bych*. However, the meanings of the two verbs do not overlap. *Měl bych* is rather an equivalent of the modal *should* conveying “a reasonable assumption or conclusion” rather than possibility (Palmer, 1980: 49). Although it is true that *should* bears a certain similarity to *may* in that it also “implicitly allows for the speaker to be mistaken,” it has different denotations (Palmer, 1980: 49). In this case, the modal particle *možná* or *snad* would be more accurate translations.

[54] „Pani Lippmanová měla právníka, **měl bych** tady někde mít jeho navštívenku, podívám se po ní.“

“Mrs. Lippman had a lawyer, I **may** have his card somewhere, I’ll see if I can find it.”
(MA_8)

4.3.5 *May* expressing present possibility – not translated

In two occurrences of *may* denoting present possibility, the modal remained untranslated. Consequently, the proposition lost its modal meaning and changed into a factual statement. In example [55], *may* is used epistemically and refers to a possible future action. The Czech translation implies that the speaker takes it for granted that the person in question *will* tell others, while in the original this is expressed as a mere possibility.

In [56], *may* has an intrinsic meaning (‘where it would be possible for both our hearts to rest’). *May* in both examples could be translated by the modal verb *moci* (*Spíš se bojím, co by mohl říci těm druhým / A daleko snad najdem zem, kde by srdce mohla spočinout.*) Again, the translation slightly shifts the implication of the original by omitting the modal marker.

[55] “It is what he **may** tell others that I am afraid of.”
„Spíš se bojím, co řekne těm druhým.“ (MA_18)

[56] *And far away will find a land where both our hearts **may** rest.*
A daleko snad najdem zem, kde srdce spočinou. (MA_45)

4.3.6 Concessive *may*

May in concessive contexts was encountered in the search six times. In five cases, it was found in concessive sentences of the type *may* + *but* and once in a nominal relative clause introduced by *whatever*. *May* as a part of a concessive sentence was translated as *možná*, which is indicative of the speaker’s conceding that proposition is the true. At the same time, the modal particle *možná* weakens the validity of the proposition.

In [58] *may* occurs in a nominal relative clause. In concessive constructions introduced by *wh-ever* or however, *may* is normally not translated.

[57] *The Illuminati **may** have believed in the abolition of Christianity, but they wielded their power through political and financial means, not through*

terrorists acts. Ilumináti možná věřili ve vymýcení křesťanství, avšak svou moc uplatňovali politickými a finančními prostředky, nikoli teroristickými činy. (MA_40)

- [58] *flinging itself down and expressing in the looseness of its attitude a readiness to take up with something new - whatever it may be that comes next to hand*
jak se v pádu uvolní a vyjádří tak nespoutaností svého chování ochotu věnovat se něčemu novému - čemukoli, co se zrovna naskytne (MA_26)

4.3.7 *May* + past infinitive translated by an epistemic particle

As with *may* denoting present possibility, *may* + past infinitive was mostly translated by the epistemic particles *možná* (5 occurrences), *snad* (1 occurrence) and *asi* (1 occurrence). Alternatively, in [59] and [61] the modal particle could be replaced with the modal verb *moci* (*mohlo to souviset/to mu mohlo bránit*).

- [59] *It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze.*

Třeba jsem se mýlil, ale asi to souviselo s mými ranami na bronzové desky. (MA_37)

- [60] *As I may have said, Setsuko spent much of the first day of her visit sitting out on the veranda, talking with her sister.*

Jak už jsem možná řekl, Secuko s Noriko si téměř celý první den povídaly na verandě. (MA_35)

- [61] *He was quite disturbed, of course, and perhaps that may have made it difficult for him to see the essential point.*

Byl přirozeně rozrušen a to mu snad bránilo, aby postřehl tuto zásadní věc. (MA_38)

4.3.8 *May* + past infinitive – not translated

In one case, the construction *may* + past infinitive was left untranslated. However, the possibility meaning of *may* is conveyed by the epistemic predicator *Myslím, že* and therefore there was no need for another modal mark. Incorporating a modal particle in the sentence would produce a rather awkward result.

- [62] „*Myslím, že do jisté míry jsem se je snažila napodobit.*“

“I think that at some level I **may** have been guilty of stereotyping, too.” (MA_1)

4.3.9 Wish constructions

In wish constructions *may* is translated into Czech by optative particles. In the material, two of them were encountered, *at'* and *kéž*. Both *may* and the Czech optative particles are always placed in a sentence-initial position. *Kéž* combines either with the indicative or conditional mood, while *may* occurs with the bare infinitive (Grepl et al., 1980: 366). In both languages, these constructions have a bookish flavor.

[63] “**May** his beard wither!”
„**At'** mu vypadají vousy!“ (MA_31)

[64] “**May** you ever appear where you are most needed and least expected!”
„**Kéž** se vždycky objevíte tam, kde je vás nejvíce zapotřebí, a kde jste nejméně očekáván!“ (MA_43)

4.3.10 *May* expressing permission translated as *moci*

The Czech modal verb *moci* was the most expected counterpart of the deontic *may*. The modal verb *smět*, which is a more polite and formal alternative of *moci*, did not occur in the material at all. As with *may*, *moci* is used either when asking for permission (example [66]) or when giving permission (example [65]). In [67] and [68], the translators changed the structure of the original, switching from first-person singular to second-person plural. In this case, a word-for-word translation would not be appropriate. In both cases, *dovolte* is a more favourable choice than *smím/mohu*. Both *dovolte* and *If I may* are polite phrases. The verb *dovolit* is also often used in combination with a conditional clause (*Jestliže dovolíte/Kdybyste dovolil, otevřu/otevřel bych na chvíli okno*). The conditional clause can equally be nominalised (*s vaším dovolením*) (Grepl et al., 1995: 605). English has no direct counterpart for the phrase *dovolte* (*Permit/*If you permit), except for the phrase *with your permission*.

[65] “I’m not sure I can answer, but you **may** ask.”
„Nejsem si jistý, jestli vám dokážu odpovědět, ale zeptat se mě **můžete**.“ (MA_32)

[66] “**May** I proceed?”
„**Můžu** číst dál?“ (MA_28)

[67] “**May** I remind you that when you address me, you are addressing this office.”
„**Dovolte**, abych vám připomněl, že když ke mně hovoříte, obracíte se k úřadu, který zastupuji.“ (MA_27)

[68] “If I **may**, Your Honor.”
„**Dovolte**, Vaše Ctihodnosti.“ (MA_29)

In the sentence below, the translator provides a free translation of the original, rendering the construction *If I may do so* as *Nerad bych*. While the translation maintains the tentativeness of the original, at the same time it is void of the deontic meaning (permission). With its almost apologetic tone, the Czech translation makes the statement more tentative than the original.

[69] “If I **may** do so, without appearing boastful, I think I can honestly say that our one small boat, during that week, caused more annoyance and delay and aggravation to the steam launches that we came across than all the other craft on the river put together.”
„Nerad bych, aby to vypadalo, jako že se vychloubám, ale mohu poctivě prohlásit, že naše lodička nadělala za ten týden parníkům, s nimiž se setkala, mnohem víc potíží, zdržovaček a nepříjemností, než všechna ostatní plavidla na řece dohromady.“
(MA_30)

4.3.11 **Might** expressing present possibility translated by the modal *moci*

In [70], *might* is used because of the sequence of tenses. The sentence is ambiguous in that *might* can either stand for *may* backshifted to the past tense or “the past tense form” *might*, which never undergoes the process of backshifting. In either case, *might* does not have past time reference. Past time is conveyed by the form *might* + past infinitive. In contrast to English, Czech does not have the sequence-of-tenses rule. Thus, in this case, *might* is more likely to be translated by the conditional mood (*by mohlo*) or present indicative (*může*).

[70] *Maybe, as Baley thought back upon it, Bentley’s beginnings **might** explain part of her unusual skittishness.*

*Když o tom Baley později přemýšlel, snad právě početí Bentleyho **mohlo** být příčinou její neobvyklé podrážděnosti. (MI_1)*

In sentence [71], *might* is rendered by the conditional mood of the modal *moci*. Both forms convey tentativeness or unreality. There are various types of unreality: condition, wish or uncertainty (Grepel et al., 1995: 321). In [71], the conditional mood implies a lesser degree of assurance than the indicative mood, making the proposition more tentative. Thus, the conditional mood is an appropriate equivalent of the tentative *might*.

[71] *She had saved his hide on the operating table, but she **might** still be inclined to flay it off him for his lying and spying.*

*Na operačním stole mu zachránila kůži, ale pořád **by mohla** mít sto chutí si to s ním vyříkat, že jí lhal a špehoval ji. (MI_2)*

In [72] and [73], *might* corresponds to the present indicative form of the modal *moci*. In comparison with the conditional mood, the indicative suggests a higher degree of probability. This applies to Czech as well as English. In both examples, the utterer admits the possibility that the proposition is valid. The sentences below have the meaning ‘It is possible that’ and are therefore instances of epistemic possibility.

[72] *There **might** be snags about, or weeds, I thought.*

***Mohou** tam být kořeny stromů nebo vodní řady, říkal jsem si. (MI_18)*

[73] *Becoming the mother of a distinguished professor’s child **might** be an uplifting change after having been the mother of the children of a deranged total failure.*

*Mít dítě s význačným profesorem na penzi **může** být povznášející změna poté, co měla děti s totálně vyšinutým budižkničemu. (MI_28)*

4.3.12 *Might* expressing present possibility translated by a modal particle

Similarly to *may* conveying present possibility, *might* was translated several times by means of a modal particle. While with *may*, the most common counterpart was the particle *možná*, in the case of *might*, it is *třeba* (4 instances) immediately followed by *možná* (3 instances). Compared to *may*, *might* is considered to express a slightly lesser degree of probability. However, Leech argues that there is little, if any, difference between *may* and

might in the sense of ‘possibility’ and in some case, the the modals are interchangeable (Leech, 2002: 76). The Czech translations do not seem to reflect any difference between the two modals. The Czech counterparts *možná* and *třeba* can be regarded as synonyms. Thus, the frequent choice *třeba* seems to be accidental. The same can be said about the particle *snad*.

[74] *It might not matter to you, but it matters to me.*

Tobě na tom třeba nezáleží, ale pro mě to je velmi podstatné. (MI_4)

[75] *His brother says that there's this ex-federal judge inside Trumble who's looked over his papers and thinks he might be able to knock off a few years.*

Jeho bratr říká, že v Trumble je prej bývalej federální soudce, co se díval do jeho papírů a tvrdí, že by mu snad dokázal pár let ubrat. (MI_8)

[76] *You might enjoy them more.*

Možná si je tím víc užijete. (MI_29)

4.3.13 *Might* expressing permission translated as *smět*

Might as a permission marker was encountered only once and it was rendered into Czech as the verb *smět*. The verb is a more formal alternative of the modal *moci*. Similarly, *might* is a more polite and tentative form of *may*. Presumably, the speaker in example [77] does not know the addressee very well and that is way he/she chooses the polite and formal verb *might* instead of *may*. The Czech equivalent *smím* is thus in accordance with the polite and tentative tone of the original.

[77] *“Might I ask what you were doing up in the mountains at all, and where you were coming from, and where you were going to?”*

„Smím se zeptat, co vůbec děláte tady v horách, odkud jdete a kam jste měli namířeno?“ (MI_42)

4.3.14 *Might* translated by a modal particle + *moci*

In three cases, the translation counterpart of *might* was a modal particle in combination with the modal verb *moci*. Twice it was the particle *možná* and once *snad*. In all of the three instances the modal *moci* is in the present conditional. By using the conditional mood, the

speakers express their uncertainty about the validity of the proposition. The combination of a modal particle and the modal *moci* serves to enhance the politeness and tentativeness of the proposition. Likewise, employing this double modal marking, the translators make a distinction between the meaning of *may* and *might*. Nevertheless, some translators render *may* and *might* in the same way, treating them as synonyms.

[78] *Considering the lack of success he was having with the “orb reference,” he **might** be able to use their expertise.*

*Vzhledem k tomu, že při luštění odkazu na chybějící kouli zatím neuspěl, **možná by mohl** využít i jejich znalostí. (MI_5)*

[79] *And once they'd covered the families, perhaps they **might** discuss exactly what on earth the boys saw out there.*

*A až by si vyříkali všechno o svých rodinách, **možná že by mohli** dojít na to, co ti chlapci, pro všechno na světě, vlastně viděli. (MI_11)*

[80] *Another time, Aunt Petunia had been trying to force him into a revolting old sweater of Dudley's brown with orange puff balls) -- The harder she tried to pull it over his head, the smaller it seemed to become, until finally it **might** have fitted a hand puppet, but certainly wouldn't fit Harry. Čím víc se snažila přetáhnout mu ho přes hlavu, tím se svetr zdál menší, až nakonec **by snad mohl** být leda nějakému maňáskovi, určitě však nebyl dost velký Harrymu.*

*Another time, Aunt Petunia had been trying to force him into a revolting old sweater of Dudley's brown with orange puff balls) -- The harder she tried to pull it over his head, the smaller it seemed to become, until finally it **might** have fitted a hand puppet, but certainly wouldn't fit Harry. (MI_41)*

4.3.15 **Might** expressing possibility translated by a lexical verb in the conditional mood

In the case of sentence [81], there was a need to look at the preceding context in order to determine the meaning of *might*. The preceding sentences indicate that the speaker refers to a hypothetical situation (if the person had traveled by a ship with a porthole, she could have looked through it six times). Sentence [81] may be regarded as an incomplete conditional as the condition is unexpressed. In this instance, *might* serves to express an unreal condition and functions as a substitute of *would* (Leech, 2004: 122). However, *might* is not

used with the past infinitive here as the modal denotes intrinsic or theoretical possibility, the latter being Leech's term (It would be possible for her to...). The translator also chose the present conditional which corresponds to the meaning of the past form *might* rather than to *might* + past infinitive.

In example [82], the form *might* is used instead of *may* because of indirect speech. Again, *might* was translated into Czech by the present conditional.

[81] *She **might** look through it six times on the voyage.*

*Vždyť **by** se jí podívala ven maximálně šestkrát za celou cestu. (MI_12)*

[82] *“Most of all, she noted bitterly,” he was glad to learn from your letter that there are no more ties between us that **might** give him reason to be jealous.”*

*„Ze všeho nejvíc,“ poznamenala hořce, „ ho potěšilo, že už mezi námi nejsou žádná pouta, jež **by** mu zavdávala důvod k žárlivosti.“ (MI_24)*

[83] *To znamenalo, že musela držet Giustinianu v bezpečné vzdálenosti od horkokrevných benátských patricijských mladíků, kteří **by** se jí pokoušeli svést jen pro zábavu a milostné hrátky, ale nikdy by si ji nevzali.*

*This meant she had to keep Giustiniana at a safe distance from hot-blooded young Venetian patricians - who **might** try to seduce her for the sake of intrigue and entertainment but would never marry her - while she looked out for a sensible if less glamorous match. (MI_26)*

4.3.16 *Might* expressing possibility translated by a different construction

In five cases, *might* was rendered by other means than those mentioned in the previous sections. In example [84], the translator uses the reflexive verb *dát se* conveying possibility, which was already touched upon in subsection 4.2.4. In this particular instance, the translator chose the past tense form *dalo se*.

Without any preceding context, *might* can be interpreted as a tentative for *may* referring to a present event as well as the “past tense form” resulting from backshifting. Taking into account the previous sentences, which are in past tense, the latter interpretation is the case. Therefore, the form *dalo se* is an appropriate counterpart of *might*.

Another verbal equivalent of *might* expressing possibility is *lze*. Similarly to *dá se*, *lze* occurs only in the third-person singular. The verbs *dá se* and *lze* share the same denotation

and can be paraphrased as ‘It is possible to.’ Contrary to *might*, and *lze* is used in subjectless clauses. The translator thus had to modify the structure of the sentence, using the vocative case *o jeho povaze*.

Example [85] combines the aforementioned means of expressing possibility, i.e. an epistemic particle (*možná*) and the reflexive verb *dát se* in the conditional mood. By using three modality markers, the translator emphasizes the tentativeness of the proposition.

In [86] the translator achieves the opposite effect. The epistemic meaning of *might* is conveyed by the modal verb *moci*, the lexical verb *stát se* and two adverbs (*docela* modifying *dobře*). The adverbs imply a higher degree of probability than the predicate *může se stát* does. In this case, *docela dobře* is used in the sense ‘fairly probable.’

Example [88] is unique in that it contains a two-word epistemic particle – *podle všeho*. So far, we have encountered solely one-word particles of the type *možná*, *snad*, *asi* etc. Contrary to *might*, the particle *podle všeho* implies a high degree of certainty. Yet, in view of the context, its use is perfectly valid here despite the fact that it does not normally have the same denotation as *might*. The person’s judgement is based on the evidence she discovered, hence the use of the particle suggesting a high degree of probability.

[84] *Even Welch’s ear **might** be expected to record the complete absence of one of the parts in such circumstances.*

*Za takových okolností se **dalo** očekávat, že i Welchovo ucho zjistí naprostou nepřítomnost jednoho z hlasů. (MI_49)*

[85] *For having lived in Westminster - how many years now ? over twenty, - one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that **might** be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes.*

*Když totiž člověk žije ve Westminsteru - kolik už je to? přes dvacet let - pociťuje i uprostřed všeho toho dopravního ruchu, nebo když se v noci probudí, Clarissa to ví jistě, takové zvláštní ticho, nebo snad vážnost, nepopsatelnou pauzu, napětí (ale to **by se možná dalo** přičíst srdci, které, jak jí řekli, oslabila chřipka), než se ozvou údery Big Benu. (MI_46)*

[86] *Even though you may only be trying to attract chickadees, you **might** come home one night to find the biggest bear in the forest standing on your deck. Přestože budete*

chtít krmít jenom sýkory, docela dobře se může stát, že jednoho večera přijdete domů a najdete na verandě největšího medvěda z celého lesa. (MI_47)

[87] *His temperament might be said to be just at the point of maturity.
O jeho povaze lze říci, že je na prahu zralosti. (MI_21)*

[88] *Marsha had found something in the paperwork about the head of the last animal on the day the meat for Becky's hamburger might have been slaughtered.
Marsha našla v podnikové evidenci jakési hlášení, podle kterého se toho dne, kdy odtud podle všeho odešlo maso na Beckyin hamburger, s jednou hlavou něco stalo - nějaká nehoda či co. (MI_37)*

4.3.17 **Might** expressing possibility – not translated

There were 8 instances in which the translators left *might* without a translation counterpart. In some cases, the omission distorts the original meaning, in others it is justifiable. Let us begin with the former. In example [89], the translator drops the modal marker and, in doing so, transforms the modalized proposition into a factual one. The implication of the translation is 'he will be unable to do it.' Thus, while the modal in the original clause conveys 'possibility,' its absence in the translation indicates 'prediction.'

As concerns sentence [90], the translator decided to omit the whole adverbial clause comprising *might* (*as you might guess*). Yet, despite the omission of the disjunct clause, the translation preserves some of the original meaning by means of the indirect object *mi*. Here the dative case arguably serves to establish and maintain contact between the speaker and the addressee. (Dušková et al., 2009: 3.52.2)

In [92], the translator drops the modal marker, in the original expressed by *might*, turning the modalized proposition into a factual statement. Instead of 'possibility,' the translation suggests the speaker's certainty about the validity of the proposition. The implication of the clause is *Možná se s ní moc často neseťká/Nemusí se s ní moc často setkat*.

Although the rest of the excerpts are lacking in a translation counterpart, that does not automatically mean that there was a need for one. In [91], *might* is arguably used in the sense of 'possible for's, thus the difference between *kdy ho opět uvidí* a *kdy ho opět bude moci vidět* is minimal.

As regards sentence [93], it was not necessary to find a direct counterpart for *might* as the meaning of 'possibility' is already implied by the adverbial *co nejdál* meaning *as far as*

possible. It is possible, but not necessary, to say *co možná nejdál* in order to make the meaning of ‘possibility’ explicit.

As for example [94], the translator preserved the modal meaning of the sentence even though he/she did not provide a direct counterpart of *might*. Given the fact that the sentence already contains one modal marker expressing the same meaning as *might*, another modal marking would be redundant and would sound unnatural.

In example [95], the translator provided no translation of *might* on the basis of the type of the clause. As was mentioned earlier, *might* as a part of concessive clauses is usually left without a translation in Czech. Here the most common counterparts of *might* such as an epistemic particle or the modal *moci* would be out of place.

[89] *One could tell a man that it was perfectly safe to walk a plank across an abyss - yet even if the structural calculations were impeccable, he **might** still be unable to do it.*
Člověku se může stokrát tvrdit, že přejít po prknu přes propast je naprosto bezpečné - i kdyby byly všechny výpočty bezvadné, pořád to nebude schopen provést. (MI_7)

[90] *“These requests are pouring in, as you **might** guess.”*
„Žádosti se mi jen valí.“ (MI_9)

[91] *Who knew when she **might** see him again.*
Kdo ví, kdy ho opět uvidí. (MI_13)

[92] *(In one of his more philosophical moments, Minty O'Hare had told his son to never look down his nose at a compliment - there **might** not be all that many.)*
(V jedné ze svých filozofických chviliek radil Mentolka O'Hare synovi, aby nikdy neohrnoval nos nad slušností. Moc často se s ní nesetká.) (MI_17)

[93] *They reached the strip of dry land between the lake and the cliffs: it was narrow, often hardly a dozen yards across, and encumbered with fallen rock and stones; but they found a way, hugging the cliff, and keeping as far from the dark water as they **might**.*
Dosáhli pruhu souše mezi jezerem a skalami; byl úzký, často sotva šest sáhů široký, a zavalený spadlými balvany a kamením, našli však cestu těsně podle skály a drželi se co nejdál od temné vody. (MI_43)

[94] *Possibly it **might** prove to have been a good move.*
Možná, že se jeho akce časem projeví jako dobrý tah. (MI_50)

[95] *But however a removal **might** fit in with the designs of his wizardry, there was no doubt about the fact: Frodo Baggins was going back to Buckland.*
Ale ať už se stěhování hodilo čaroději do krámu nebo ne, nebylo pochyb: Frodo Pytlík se vrací do Rádovska. (MI_32)

5 Conclusion

This BA thesis was concerned with the English modal verbs *may* and *might* and their Czech translation counterparts. The thesis aimed to examine the means of expressing modality that Czech translators tend to choose when rendering the two modals in question into Czech. The initial hypothesis was as follows: more often than not, the epistemic *may* indicating possibility (regardless of whether present/future possibility or that of a past happening) will tend to be translated by means of an epistemic particle rather than the modal *moci*. However, *might* in the same function was expected to be more frequently rendered by the indicative or conditional mood of the verb *moci*. This rendering is often indicative of tentativeness and a lesser degree of certainty on the part of the speaker. It was also presumed that the deontic *may* and *might* will occur less frequently than their epistemic counterparts and will typically be translated as *moci* or, in more formal contexts, *smět*. As regards the epistemic use, it was supposed that epistemic particles will generally prevail over the modal verb *moci*.

The expectations about the distribution of the epistemic and the deontic use were confirmed. Both *may* and *might* proved to be predominantly epistemic modality markers (86% of cases). The second most common use of *may* and *might*, 'permission' representing deontic modality, appears to be on the decline in present-day English (10%). Especially *might* as a permission modal (representing 2% of all occurrences) becomes increasingly rare nowadays and occurs only in extremely formal and polite contexts, as the results of the present analysis show. In comparison with 'possibility' and 'permission,' other meanings of *may* and *might* were in the minority in the corpus search. Among those was the concessive *may* (10%) and the archaic *may* as a part of wish constructions (4%) and *might* in clauses of purpose (1 occurrence, subsumed under the category of possibility). *Might* appeared neither in concessive constructions nor wish constructions, while *may* was never encountered in clauses of purpose.

Let us first consider the Czech translation counterparts of the modal *may*, encountered in the excerpted material. There were no significant differences between the translations of *may* modal expressing present / future possibility and possibility of a past happening. The two meanings were translated both by an epistemic particle and the modal *moci*/another verbal construction. *May* conveying epistemic modality ('possibility') was mostly translated as an epistemic particle such as *možná* (19 occurrences out of 50). This type of epistemic particles indicates a medium degree of certainty. In ten cases, it was rendered as the modal verb *moci*, five times as another construction (*dalo by se, lze, může se stát, je možné, měla bych*). Three examples were left without a counterpart. In two instances, the omission of the modal marker

contributed to a shifted meaning of the English sentence. Nevertheless, this was not the case with the third example, in which the absence of a translation equivalent was compensated for by the verb *Myslím* (*I think* in the original) conveying a medium degree of certainty just as the particles *možná, třeba, asi* etc. do.

As concerns the translations of the deontic *may*, it was twice rendered as *smět* and *moci*, two times translated by another means (*Dovolte*) and in one case corresponded to *nerad bych* (*If I may do so*). *May* occurring in wish constructions was translated as the particle *kěž* and *ať*. It is interesting to note, that English had no direct equivalents of those particles and expresses the meaning their meaning by verbs, be it *may* or *let*. *May* in concessive clauses mostly corresponded to the particle *možná* usually, but not necessarily, indicating the speaker's rather reluctant conceding of the validity of a proposition. There was one case in which *možná* was used despite the factual character of the proposition. Here it can be substituted by the concessive conjunction *sice*. Similarly to the English *may*, *možná per se* is not a marker of concessive but gains the concessive meaning through its combination with the conjunction *but*.

Regarding the verb *might*, its most frequent rendering into Czech was the modal *moci* (48%) used in the epistemic sense. The second most frequent equivalent was an epistemic particle (18%). These counterparts did not differ from those mentioned in connection with the epistemic *may*. Given that the epistemic *moci* and a particle of the type *možná* are semantically identical, it remains a question why the translators generally preferred to translate *may* by an epistemic particle, whereas *might* by the verb *moci*. If the translators aimed to emphasize the tentativeness of the proposition or weaken the degree of certainty on the part of the speaker, they chose both an epistemic modal and the modal *moci* (6%). Similar effect was achieved by the conditional mood of a lexical verb (10%). In 4 examples, the translators opted for another construction (*dalo se, by se možná dalo, docela dobře se může stát, lze, podle všeho*). As can be seen, some of the Czech counterparts (*docela dobře se může stát a podle všeho*) suggest a higher degree of certainty than the majority of them.

There arises a question as to why the Czech translators in some instances did not differentiate between the meanings of *may* and *might*, i.e. the two modals were several times translated identically. This can be partially explained by the rule of sequence of tenses or backshifting. In this process, *may* is backshifted, changing into the “past” form *might*, while the *might* does not undergo any such transformation.

Also, it is interesting to note that the English modal in some cases corresponds to more than one word and rarely even to a whole clause. This can be attributed to the fact that Czech

does not have any no such pair as *may* and *might* with a subtle shade of meaning. The deontic *might* was rendered into Czech as *smět*, which implies a high degree of politeness and indirectness. In 16% of cases, the translators did not provide any Czech counterpart for *might*. In some uses (concessive constructions with *wh-ever/however*) the omission of a Czech equivalent was an appropriate solution. However, in other examples, the meaning was usually slightly shifted.

Despite the fact that Czech has no pair of modals corresponding to *may* and *might*, it has a very rich repertoire of modal indicators, as the present analysis shows. These modal markers are able to express the meanings of *may* and *might*, including subtle shades of meaning. That being said, the Czech translations in this analysis do not always reflect these subtle semantic differences, which is perhaps indicative of the growing neutralization of the two modals, for which Collins argues for in his study (Collins, 2009: 117). Alternatively, this may be due the fact that the translators are not aware of the nuances or that they do not consider them significant.

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7 Resumé

Tématem této bakalářské práce jsou české překladové protěšky anglických modálních sloves *may* a *might*. Práce si klade za cíl zjistit, jaké prostředky vyjádření modalit mají čeští překladatelé tendenci volit při překladu těchto dvou sloves. Pracovní hypotéza byla taková, že epistémické *may* indikující možnost bude nejčastěji přeloženo pomocí epistémické částice typu *možná*, zatímco u epistémického *might*, které je zpravidla považováno za tentativnější formu *may*, budou překladatelé preferovat jiné prostředky implikující menší míru jistoty na straně mluvčího či tentativně vyjádřený postoj (např. kondicionál slovesa *moci*). Dále bylo možné očekávat, že *may* a *might* vyjadřující dovolení (dispoziční modalita) budou odpovídat českému *moci*, případně *smět*. Teoretická část podává stručnou charakteristiku anglického modálního systému a pojednává o morfologických aspektech, které jsou společné anglickým modální slovesům. Vedle formálních rysů sloves *may* a *might* se kapitola zabývá též jejich sémantikou. Daná kapitola se také v krátkosti zmiňuje o českých prostředcích vyjádření modalit, které jsou dvojího druhu – lexikální a gramatické. Praktická část sestává z analýzy sta výskytů sloves *may* a *might* excerpovaných z paralelního korpusu *InterCorp*. Nejprve jsou analyzovány významy těchto sloves a poté jejich české překladové protěšky.

V úvodu teoretické části je vymezen pojem modalita a její dva základní typy (jistotní a dispoziční). Obě slovesa mohou vyjadřovat jednak modalitu epistémickou, tedy stupeň jistoty mluvčího o reálné platnosti sdělení, a jednak modalitu dispoziční neboli dispoziční původce děje k jeho proveditelnosti (Dušková et al., 2009: 8.44). Následuje popis systému anglických modálních sloves. Pozornost je také věnována obecné morfologické charakteristice anglických modálních sloves. Následuje popis sloves *may* a *might* ze sémantického pohledu. Epistémické *may* a *might* vyjadřuje možnost, přičemž *might* značí nižší stupeň jistoty mluvčího než *may*, případně tentativní vyjádření postoje. Někteří lingvisté však namítají, že se tyto jemné rozdíly ve významu často stírají. *May* a *might* s dispozičním významem vyjadřuje dovolení, a to jak žádost o dovolení, tak jeho udělení. *Might* coby prostředek vyjadřující žádost o dovolení je považován za formálnější a zdvořilejší alternativu *may*. Dispoziční *might* je nicméně v současné angličtině spíše raritou a *may* ve stejném významu je rovněž užíváno v malé míře. Nejfrekventovanějším významem *may* a *might* je tedy možnost (jistotní modalita), a sice možnost realizace děje přítomného / budoucího nebo minulého.

Vedle těchto dvou základních významů je také zmíněno užití přípustkového *may* (*may* + *but*, *adjective* + *as/though* + *may*) a *may* jakožto součásti přacích vět typu *May the best man win!* Mezi další méně časté použití *may* a *might* se řadí vedlejší věty účelové. Častý

výskyt *may* je příznačný pro akademický styl. Takto užitá *may* je prosto specifického významu, jeho funkcí je pouze přitáhnout pozornost čtenářů. Teoretická část se také věnuje vzájemnému vztahu *may* a *might*.

Dále následuje podkapitola přibližující situaci v češtině. Tato část představuje české modální prostředky vyjadřující významy sloves *may* a *might*. Tyto prostředky mohou být gramatické či lexikální povahy. Uvedeny jsou zde také prototypické příklady v angličtině přeložené do češtiny.

Kapitola Materiál a metodologie, uvádí nejdůležitější sekundární zdroje použité pro účely této práce a zároveň popisuje jednotlivé kroky při excerpaci materiálu z korpusu *InterCorp*. Vzhledem k tomu, že *may* a *might* coby modální slovesa postrádají jakékoli flektivní tvary, nebylo třeba v tomto ohledu vyhledávání nijak omezovat. Všech sto dokladů bylo shromážděno náhodně, aby se předešlo případnému vlivu překladatelova idiolektu. Jelikož se práce soustředí na české protějšky anglických modálních sloves, byly vybrány výhradně texty v angličtině přeložené do češtiny. Příklady jsou čerpány z textů beletristického charakteru.

Čtvrtá kapitola Analýza je rozdělená na dvě části, z nichž první popisuje významy a užití sloves *may* a *might* na základě excerpovaného materiálu. Tato sekce se soustředí také na zastoupení jednotlivých významů. Slovesa byla rozříděna do čtyř významových kategorií – možnost přítomného / budoucího děje, možnost minulého děje, dovolení a přípustka. Výsledky prezentované v této podkapitole potvrzují počáteční hypotézu, že epistémický význam se v korpusu objeví podstatně častěji než dispoziční. *May* bylo užitá epistémicky v 88 % případů, zatímco jeho deontický protějšek pouze ve 12 % výskytů. Pokud jde o jistotní *might*, je tato tendence ještě patrnější. *Might* v jistotním významu se vyskytlo v 98 % příkladů, zato dispoziční *might* bylo zastoupeno pouhými 2 %. Potvrdila se tedy hypotéza, že dispoziční *might* se bude vyskytovat pouze okrajově. Naproti tomu dispoziční *may* nebylo zcela ojedinělé, i když také relativně řídké užívané. Co se týče frekvence významu možnosti přítomného / budoucího děje a možnosti děje v minulosti, častěji se vyskytl prvně zmíněný význam (u *may* v 70% a v případě *might* v 68%). Možný děj v minulosti se ve vyhledávání objevil v 18% (*may*) a v 30% (*might*).

Mezi další, méně frekventované, významy nalezené v korpusu patří přípustkové *may*, které bylo v této kapitole zařazeno do kategorie možnost, *may* coby součást zvolacích vět (4%) a *might* v účelové větě vedlejší (zařazeno pod kategorii možnost). Nežřídka se *may* a *might* vyskytovalo v kombinaci s dalším prostředkem vyjadřujícím modální význam, např. s

výrazem *I think* či epistémickou částicí typu *perhaps*. Takováto spojení zpravidla indikují tentativnost sdělení.

Druhá část analýzy se potom zabývá překladovými protějšky modálů *may* a *might*. Pozornost je soustředěna na realizační formy a přesnost českých ekvivalentů. Pokud se jedná o epistémicky užitý *may*, překladatelé nejčastěji volili epistémické částice (38% výskytů) jako *možná*, *snad*, *asi*, *třeba* etc., z nichž nejfrekventovanější bylo *možná*. Poněkud překvapivé bylo zjištění, že ve dvou případech se překladatelé uchýlili k částicím typu *nejspíše* a *jistě* vyjadřujícím vysoký stupeň jistoty. Dalším poněkud nepřesným protějškem *may* byl podmínkový slovesný tvar *měl bych*, jenž po významové stránce odpovídá anglickému modálnímu slovesu *should*.

Porovnáme-li *may* vyjadřující možnost přítomného či budoucího děje a *may* vyjadřující možnost minulého děje, nezaznamenáme žádný výrazný rozdíl ve způsobu překladu. Druhým nejfrekventovanějším protějškem jistotního *may* bylo modální sloveso *moci* (20%). Z těchto údajů je zřejmé, že v tomto případě epistémické částice dvojnásobně převyšují modální sloveso *moci*. Po sémantické stránce lze však tyto dva modální prostředky považovat za identické.

V jiných případech (6%) nebylo jistotní *may* přeloženo vůbec, což bylo někdy dáno tím, že se ve větě vyskytoval ještě jiný prostředek vyjádření modality (např. *I think, possibly*). V mnohých situacích by byly dva prostředky vyjadřující modalitu redundantní. V korpusu se nicméně objevily i překlady, kdy absence českého ekvivalentu přispěla k posunutí významu celé věty.

Přípustkové *may* bylo zpravidla přeloženo jako *možná* (8%) nebo bylo ponecháno bez českého protějšku, zejména pokud následovalo po výrazu *wh-ever, however* (2%). *May* coby součást pracích vět vždy odpovídalo částici typu *kež* či *at'*. Naproti tomu epistémické *might* bylo nejčastěji přeloženo pomocí modálního slovesa *moci* v indikativním či kondicionálním tvaru. Překlad pomocí kondicionálu odráží tentativnost epistémického *might*. Dispoziční *may* a *might* zpravidla odpovídalo českému slovesu *smět*, případně konstrukci *Dovolte*, pro niž angličtina nemá doslovný ekvivalent.

Epistémické *might* vyjadřující možnost (přítomného / budoucího či minulého děje) bylo oproti *may* se stejným významem nejčastěji přeloženo pomocí modálního slovesa *moci* (40%). Druhým nejfrekventovanějším ekvivalentem pak byla epistémická částice (18%). Tyto částice významově odpovídají těm, které byly zmíněny v souvislosti s *may*. Nejhojněji byly ve vyhledávání zastoupeny epistémické částice *možná* a *třeba*. Takto přeložené *might* významově zcela odpovídá tvaru *may*. Z českého překladu tedy nelze s určitostí vyvodit, zda

v anglické verzi figuruje *may* či *might*. Tyto překlady ukazují, že jejich autoři nezohledňují jemný významový rozdíl mezi oběma slovesy. Nabízí se otázka, proč tomu tak je. Tato tendence může být zčásti vysvětlena tím, že některá *might* jsou užita na základě pravidla souslednosti časové, tzn. že tento tvar může buď představovat *may* “posunuté” do minulosti nebo samotné *might*, které se v procesu “backshifting” nemění. Tvar *might* coby důsledek souslednosti časové tedy nemusí nutně signalizovat tentativnost vyjádření daného sdělení, ale může významově korespondovat s *may*, což by vysvětlovalo, proč překladatelé někdy diferencují mezi významem *may* a *might* a jindy ne.

U epistémického *may* jsme však mohli pozorovat opačnou tendenci. Překlad pomocí epistémické částice byl téměř dvakrát častější než překlad pomocí modálního slovesa *moci*. Jak již bylo řečeno, ze sémantického hlediska jsou však tyto formy zaměnitelné. Vystává tedy otázka, co překladatele vedlo k tomu převádět do češtiny *may* spíše jako modální částici a *might* spíše jako sloveso *moci*. Ve třech případech (6%) bylo *might* přeloženo spojením slovesa *moci* a epistémické částice. Tato kombinace obvykle činila sdělení tentativnější, zvláště pokud bylo sloveso *moci* užito v kondicionálním tvaru. Dalším ekvivalentem *might* bylo sloveso v podmínkovém tvaru (10%), jenž bylo zvoleno patrně také za účelem zdůraznění tentativnosti vyjádření mluvčího. Toto sloveso bylo také několikrát ponecháno bez překladového protějšku (16%) či bylo přeloženo jinou konstrukcí (8%). Mezi těmito konstrukcemi byly modální prostředky typu *dá se*, *lze* které nemají v angličtině obdobu. Analogii lze spatřovat mezi výrazy *je možné, že* a *it is possible that*. Absence českého ekvivalentu zpravidla mírně změnila význam původní věty, ale nikdy se nejednalo se o radikální změnu.

Analýza českých překladových protějšků *may* a *might* dokazuje, že v čeština v porovnání s angličtinou disponuje o něco bohatším repertoárem modálních indikátorů. Čeština je tedy s to vyjádřit různé významy těchto sloves, včetně jemných významových odstínů. Ukazuje se, v některých případech není překladový protějšek bezpodmínečně nutný (přípustkové konstrukce s *wh-ever / however*). Jindy však vynechání českého protějšku vede ke změně významu.

Pátá kapitola Závěr sumarizuje obsah dílčích kapitol. Jsou zde rovněž shrnuty a zhodnoceny výsledky korpusové analýzy.

Appendices

Appendix 1

	CZ	EN
MA_1	„Myslím, že do jisté míry jsem se je snažila napodobit.“	“I think that at some level I may have been guilty of stereotyping, too.”
MA_2	„Když jsme se postarali o záležitost, kterou jste měl na mysli, snad by vás zajímalo několik filmů, které jsme udělali na místě zločinu a o událostech, jež nastaly potom.“	“Having taken care of the matter on your mind, you may now be interested in some films we have taken of the scene of the crime and of the events immediately following.”
MA_3	Dnes asi zahynu rukou náboženství.	TONIGHT I MAY DIE AT THE HANDS OF RELIGION, he thought.
MA_4	„Protože já je asi budu muset nosit.“	“Cause I may have to get them.”
MA_5	„Když o tom tak přemýšlím , možná máš pravdu,“ povzdechl si.	“Come to think of it, you may be right,” he sighed.
MA_6	„Víte, pane, moje žena ho odkojila, a tak by se dalo říci, že jsem jako jeho nevlastní otec.“	“You know, sir, that my wife nursed him, and so I may say I am his foster-father.”
MA_7	„ Jistě si vzpomeneš, že jeho jméno tu před nějakou dobou padlo.“	“You may recall his name came up some time ago.”
MA_8	„Paní Lippmanová měla právníka, měl bych tady někde mít jeho navštívenku, podívám se po ní.“	“Mrs. Lippman had a lawyer, I may have his card somewhere, I 'll see if I can find it.”

MA_9	„Že zjevně není marnivý, možná ženy zprvu přitahovalo, ale posléze pokládaly jeho nedostatek pozornosti k obličejí za znak lhostejnosti k sobě samotným.“	“That he was clearly not vain may have attracted the women in the first place, but eventually they took his lack of attention to his face as a sign that he was indifferent to them.”
MA_10	„Možná, že kdybych to zkusil, samotného by mě dosah mého vlivu překvapil.“	“It may be that if I chose to put it to the test, I would again be surprised by the extent of my influence.”
MA_11	„I když se Šintaró v některých ohledech projevuje naivně, je to v každém případě slušný člověk.“	“In any case, even if Shintaro may at times display naivete about certain things, this is nothing to be disparaged, it being no easy thing now to come across someone so untainted by the cynicism and bitterness of our day.”
MA_12	„ Možná se vám zdá , že si v téhle epizodě připisuji příliš velkou zásluhu.“	“You may perhaps think I am taking too much credit in relating this small episode.”
MA_13	„Další příklady medvědích názorných ukázek možná nejsou na první pohled tak zřejmé, ale to jen do té doby, než zjistíte, oč běží.“	“Other examples of bear demonstrations may not be so obvious until you know what you’re looking for.”
MA_14	„ Snad je teď už mrtev!“	“He may be dead by now.”
MA_15	„Na tom může něco být, co říkáš, Králíčku,” řekl konečně.	“There may be something in what you say, Rabbit, ” he said at last.”
MA_16	„ Možná se ptáte, proč jsem se rozhodla sepsat svůj rodokmen.“	“You may wonder why I should write a genealogy.”
MA_17	„I když já mám nejmíň co mluvit, jak si nejspíš “	“Though I say it as shouldn’t,

	myslíte,“ pousmál se trpce, když zaznamenal Frodův pohled.	you may think,” he added with a wry smile, seeing Frodo’s glance.”
MA_18	„Spíš se bojím, co řekne těm druhým.“	“It is what he may tell others that I am afraid of.”
MA_19	Oni sami mají možná pravdu.	For themselves they may be right.
MA_20	Třeba mi můžete pomoci.	You may be able to help me.
MA_21	„Vidím, že tě obetkávají zvláštní příběhy,” řekl Denethor, „a opět se ukazuje, že vzhled může klamat u muže i u půlčíka.“	“I see that strange tales are woven about you,” said Denethor, “and once again it is shown that looks may belie the man - or the halfling.”
MA_22	„Věci se ale mohou změnit, až se vrátí Faramir.“	“But things may change when Faramir returns.”
MA_23	„Anebo taky nemusíme být,“ zahrozil Vrúmfondl na programátory.	“Though we may not be, said Vroomfondel waving a warning finger at the programmers.”

MA_24	To je ovšem náhodný aspekt redukcionismu a může se změnit.	At this moment in the history of science it appears that the best way to approach these laws is through the physics of elementary particles, but that is an incidental aspect of reductionism and may change.
MA_25	Může se ovšem stát , že budeme litovat, že s objevem finální teorie se příroda stala obyčejnější, méně divotvorná a tajuplná.	Still, with the discovery of a final theory we may regret that nature has become more ordinary, less full of wonder and mystery.
MA_26	jak se v pádu uvolní a vyjádří tak nespoutaností svého chování ochotu věnovat se něčemu novému - čemukoli, co se zrovna naskytne	flinging itself down and expressing in the looseness of its attitude a readiness to take up with something new - whatever it may be that comes next to hand.
MA_27	„ Dovolte , abych vám připomněl, že když ke mně hovoříte, obracíte se k úřadu, který zastupuji.“	“ May I remind you that when you address me, you are addressing this office.”
MA_28	„ Můžu číst dál?“	“ May I proceed?”
MA_29	„ Dovolte , Vaše Ctihodnosti.“	“If I may , Your Honor.”
MA_30	„ Nerad bych , aby to vypadalo, jako že se vychloubám, ale mohu poctivě prohlásit, že naše lodička nadělala za ten týden parníkům, s nimiž se setkala , mnohem víc potíží, zdržovaček a nepříjemností, než všechna ostatní plavidla na řece dohromady.“	“If I may do so, without appearing boastful, I think I can honestly say that our one small boat , during that week, caused more annoyance and delay and aggravation to the

		steam launches that we came across than all the other craft on the river put together.”
MA_31	„ At' mu vypadají vousy!“	“ May his beard wither!”
MA_32	„Nejsem si jistý , jestli vám dokážu odpovědět, ale zeptat se mě můžete .“	“I’m not sure I can answer, but you may ask.”
MA_33	Mohlo by se stát , že se nějaká loď přiblíží k ostrovu, ale neuvidí nás.	If a ship comes near the island they may not notice us.
MA_34	„Poslyš, Arthure, možná , že budeme chtít otisknout tvůj portrét - Muž, který udělal Boha deště.“	“Listen, we may want to do a feature on you, Arthur, the Man Who Made the Rain God Rain.”
MA_35	Jak už jsem možná řekl, Secuko s Noriko si téměř celý první den povídaly na verandě.	As I may have said, Setsuko spent much of the first day of her visit sitting out on the veranda, talking with her sister.
MA_36	Při těchto dvou pozorováních mohl být dalekohled různě zaostřen.	The telescope may have been focused differently in the two observations.
MA_37	Třeba jsem se mýlil, ale asi to souviselo s mými ranami na bronzové desky.	It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze.

MA_38	Byl přirozeně rozrušen a to mu snad bránilo, aby postřehl tuto zásadní věc.	He was quite disturbed, of course, and perhaps that may have made it difficult for him to see the essential point.
MA_39	Když jsme se postarali o záležitost, kterou jste měl na mysli, snad by vás zajímalo několik filmů, které jsme udělali na místě zločinu a o událostech, jež nastaly potom.	Having taken care of the matter on your mind, you may now be interested in some films we have taken of the scene of the crime and of the events immediately.
MA_40	Ilumináti možná věřili ve vymýcení křesťanství, avšak svou moc uplatňovali politickými a finančními prostředky, nikoli teroristickými činy.	The Illuminati may have believed in the abolition of Christianity, but they wielded their power through political and financial means, not through terrorists acts.
MA_41	„Chtěli bychom nyní upozornit, že následující záběry jsou mimořádně realistické a pro některé skupiny diváků může být pohled na ně nevhodný.“	“The images we are about to show are exceptionally vivid and may not be suitable for all audiences.”

MA_42	Po břehu běží stinná cesta , tu a tam obtečkovaná hezounkými malými chatami, až k „Ouseleyským zvonkům,“ což je malebná hospůdka - hospůdky na řece jsou většinou malebné - a navíc podnik, kde se můžete napít výtečného piva, jak říká Harris [.]	A shady road, dotted here and there with dainty little cottages , runs by the bank up to the “Bells of Ouseley,” a picturesque inn, as most up-river inns are, and a place where a very good glass of ale may be drunk - so Harris says [.]
MA_43	„ Kéž se vždycky objevíte tam, kde je vás nejvíce zapotřebí, a kde jste nejméně očekáván!“	“ May you ever appear where you are most needed and least expected!”
MA_44	„Jeden čas jsem tam bydlel a doposud se tam vracím, kdykoli je to možné .“	“I dwelt there once , and still I return when I may. ”
MA_45	A daleko snad najdem zem, kde srdce spočinou.	And far away will find a land where both our hearts may rest.
MA_46	Můžeme si být jistí, že jim nechtěl pomoci k útěku.	Not to help them to escape, we may be sure.
MA_47	Lidé jsou možná opravdu roztrpčeni, ale mně se zdá, že zacházejí příliš daleko.	Feelings may well be running high, but people seem to be going too far now.
MA_48	Věci se ale mohou změnit, až se vrátí Faramir.	But things may change when Faramir returns.

MA_49	Myslíte si ?třeba , že drogerie ve vaší ulici je daleko, ale proti vesmíru je to úplně houbu.	I mean you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space.
MA_50	„ Možná jsem poslední rok byla zavřená v kanceláři ve třetím patře Belvederova ústavu pro výzkum snů, ale nemusím být génius, abych dokázala vydedukovat, čemu jste se vy a vaše laboratorní krysy věnovali.“	I may have been stuck in an office on the third floor at the Belvedere Center for Sleep Research for the past year, but it doesn't take a genius to figure out what you and the lab rats were doing.

Appendix 2

MI_1	Když o tom Baley později přemýšlel, snad právě početí Bentleyho mohlo být příčinou její neobvyklé podrážděnosti.	Maybe, as Baley thought back upon it, Bentley's beginnings might explain part of her unusual skittishness.
MI_2	Na operačním stole mu zachránila kůži, ale pořád by mohla mít sto chutí si to s ním vyříkat, že jí lhal a špehoval ji.	She had saved his hide on the operating table, but she might still be inclined to flay it off him for his lying and spying.
MI_3	Kdyby do něj Langdon několikrát tvrdě kopl, mohl by blatník konečně odpadnout.	Langdon gave it a hard kick and sensed he might be able to break it off entirely.
MI_4	Tobě na tom třeba nezáleží, ale pro mě to je velmi podstatné.	It might not matter to you, but it matters to me.

MI_5	Vzhledem k tomu, že při luštění odkazu na chybějící kouli zatím neuspěl, možná by mohl využít i jejich znalostí.	Considering the lack of success he was having with the “orb reference,” he might be able to use their expertise.
MI_6	Naprosto neznámá oblast, přes niž přelétal, mu mohla připravit mnoho překvapení; co když tady jsou létající tvorové, kteří nebudou stát o to, aby se mezi ně vetřel?	The totally unknown region over which he was flying might produce any number of surprises; suppose there were flying creatures here, who objected to his intrusion.
MI_7	Člověku se může stokrát tvrdit, že přejít po prknu přes propast je naprosto bezpečné - i kdyby byly všechny výpočty bezvadné, pořád to nebude schopen provést.	One could tell a man that it was perfectly safe to walk a plank across an abyss - yet even if the structural calculations were impeccable, he might still be unable to do it.
MI_8	Jeho bratr říká, že v Trumble je prej bývalý federální soudce, co se díval do jeho papírů a tvrdí, že by mu snad dokázal pár let ubrat.	His brother says that there’s this ex-federal judge inside Trumble who’s looked over his papers and thinks he might be able to knock off a few years.
MI_9	„Žádosti se mi jen valí.“	“These requests are pouring in, as you might guess.”
MI_10	Seběhl po schodech, protože si představoval, že Hardy, FBI i ti ostatní by mohli okounět někde dole u výtahu a čekat, zda na něho náhodou nepadnou.	He used the stairs again because he figured Hardy and the FBI and the rest of the gang might be hanging around somewhere downstairs waiting for him to happen by.
	A až by si vyříkali všechno o svých rodinách,	And once they’d covered the

MI_11	možná že by mohli dojít na to, co ti chlapeci, pro všechno na světě, vlastně viděli.	families, perhaps they might discuss exactly what on earth the boys saw out there.
MI_12	Vždyť by se jím podívala ven maximálně šestkrát za celou cestu.	She might look through it six times on the voyage.
MI_13	Kdo ví, kdy ho opět uvidí.	Who knew when she might see him again.
MI_14	Možná, že se jeho akce časem projeví jako dobrý tah.	Possibly it might prove to have been a good move.
MI_15	Jestliže si vás doktor Lecter jednou zafixoval jako svého nepřítele (jak jste mi prve říkal), pak by zde byla jistá naděje, kdybych za ním šla sama.	If Dr. Lecter feels you're his enemy - if he's fixed on you, just as you've said - we might have more luck if I approached him by myself.
MI_16	Jestli můžete zvednout ten žebřík, abych se ho mohl chytit, třeba se mi podaří slézt dolů.	If you are able to lift the ladder, if I can just hold on to it, I might be able to get down.
MI_17	(V jedné ze svých filozofických chvil radil Mentolka O'Hare synovi, aby nikdy neohrnoval nos nad slušností. Moc často se s ní nesetká.)	(In one of his more philosophical moments, Minty O'Hare had told his son to never look down his nose at a compliment - there might not be all that many.)
MI_18	Mohou tam být kořeny stromů nebo vodní řady, říkal jsem si.	There might be snags about, or weeds, I thought.
MI_19	Nejpravděpodobněji se však román dotkne nejvíc právě jediné osoby, které se dotknout nechtěla, Allana.	The only person she cared about not offending, Allan, might be the very person

		whom My Last Bad Boyfriend was most likely to offend.
MI_20	Během celé té produkce zachovává tak hlubokou vážnost, až by se mohlo zdát, že zpívá něco tragického, ale tím větší je to ovšem legrace.	He was so intensely serious all through it that you might fancy he was reciting a tragedy, and that, of course, made it all the funnier.
MI_21	O jeho povaze lze říci, že je na prahu zralosti.	His temperament might be said to be just at the point of maturity.
MI_22	„Že třeba zaměstnává někoho jiného, aby pro něj kradl?“	“That he might employ others to do the stealing for him?”
MI_23	„Nevyčítaly mu to ani pohledem ani v srdci, nesly v sobě pouze vědomí, že musí zemřít, aby on mohl zůstat na živu, a to byla součást nevyhnutelného řádu věcí.“	“There was no reproach either in their faces or in their hearts, only the knowledge that they must die in order that he might remain alive, and that this was part of the unavoidable order of things.”
MI_24	„Ze všeho nejvíc,“ poznamenala hořce, „ho potěšilo, že už mezi námi nejsou žádná pouta, jež by mu zavdávala důvod k žárlivosti.“	“Most of all, she noted bitterly,” he was glad to learn from your letter that there are no more ties between us that might give him reason to be jealous.”
MI_25	Nespokojenost, kterou takový pustý a neplodný život vyvolává, se promyšleně odvede stranou a rozptýlí pomocí zařízení, jako jsou Dvě minuty nenávisti, a úvahy, které by snad mohly	The discontents produced by his bare, unsatisfying life are deliberately turned outwards and dissipated by such

	navodit skeptické anebo odbojné nálady, jsou už předem likvidovány vnitřní kázní, kterou si v dětství osvojil.	devices as the Two Minutes Hate, and the speculations which might possibly induce a sceptical or rebellious attitude are killed in advance by his early acquired inner discipline.
MI_26	To znamenalo, že musela držet Giustinianu v bezpečné vzdálenosti od horkokrevných benátských patricijských mladíků, kteří by se ji pokoušeli svést jen pro zábavu a milostné hrátky, ale nikdy by si ji nevzali.	This meant she had to keep Giustiniana at a safe distance from hot-blooded young Venetian patricians - who might try to seduce her for the sake of intrigue and entertainment but would never marry her - while she looked out for a sensible if less glamorous match.
MI_27	Přesto se stále ještě nevzdával hledání nových příležitostí, jež by mohly Republice navrátit trošku zdraví.	Still, he did not give up looking for new opportunities that might give the Republic another lease on life.
MI_28	Mít dítě s význačným profesorem na penzi může být povznášející změna poté, co měla děti s totálně vyšinutým budižkničemu.	Becoming the mother of a distinguished professor's child might be an uplifting change after having been the mother of the children of a deranged total failure.
MI_29	„To by mohlo jít,“ připustil Joe.	“That might work, Joe said.”
MI_30	Možná si je tím víc užijete.	You might enjoy them more.
MI_31	Guest často úředně docházel k doktorovi - znal se s Poolem a sotva mu asi zůstalo utajeno, že	Guest had often been on business to the doctor's - he

	pan Hyde je u Jekylla jako doma, ba dokonce si o té věci možná utvořil své mínění: neměl by si tedy přečíst dopis, který tu záhadu patřičně osvětluje?	knew Poole; he could scarce have failed to hear of Mr Hyde' s familiarity about the house; he might draw conclusions: was it not as well, then, that he should see a letter which put that mystery to rights?
MI_32	Ale ať už se stěhování hodilo čaroději do krámu nebo ne, nebylo pochyb: Frodo Pytlík se vrací do Rádovska.	But however a removal might fit in with the designs of his wizardry, there was no doubt about the fact: Frodo Baggins was going back to Buckland.
MI_33	I Moudrý se totiž může bát Devíti, když proti němu stojí všichni a vede je jejich sveřepý náčelník.	For even the Wise might fear to withstand the Nine, when they are gathered together under their fell chieftain.
MI_34	Potom by některé objekty mohly ze Země odpadnout na Slunce a jiné by se mohly odmrstit do mezihvězdného prostoru.	Some objects might then fall off the earth into the sun and others could be thrown off the earth into interstellar space.

MI_35	Předpokládám, že ve Vnějších Světech neznají krátkozrakost, neboť jinak by dospěli ke správnému řešení vraždy téměř ihned.	They don't have nearsightedness on the Outer Worlds, I suppose, or they might have reached the true solution of the murder almost at once .
MI_36	Ty dřívější otřesy byly možná falešný poplach - jenže tenhle byl bezpochyby záležitostí nanejvýš	Those earlier shocks might have been a false

	opravdovskou.	alarm - but this, surely, was the real thing.
MI_37	Marsha našla v podnikové evidenci jakési hlášení, podle kterého se toho dne, kdy odtud podle všeho odešlo maso na Beckyin hamburger, s jednou hlavou něco stalo - nějaká nehoda či co.	Marsha had found something in the paperwork about the head of the last animal on the day the meat for Becky's hamburger might have been slaughtered.
MI_38	Když Teda maminka přitahovala, obvykle navrhl, aby mu dítě společně s matkou stálo modelem - třeba pro příští knihu.	If Ted was attracted to the mother, he would suggest that the child, together with the mother, might like to model for him - maybe for the next book.
MI_39	Tak zásadní rozdíl v chování mohl podle mého souviset buď s odlišným pohlavím, nebo s individuální povahou každého jednotlivce. Protože jsem ale měl k dispozici jen dvě medvíďata, nemohl jsem toto dosti přesně posoudit.	Such a difference, I thought, might have been related to gender or to individual character, but with only two cubs it was impossible for me to tell.
MI_40	„Když jste odcházely z divadla,“ psal Andrea úzkostlivě, „dávala jsi mi nějaké znamení právě ve chvíli, kdy se tvá matka obrátila, a myslím, že to mohla zpozorovat.“	“When you left the theater,” Andrea wrote anxiously, “you signaled something to me just as your mother turned around, and I think she might have noticed that.”
MI_41	Čím víc se snažila přetáhnout mu ho přes hlavu, tím se svetr zdál menší, až nakonec by snad mohl být leda nějakému maňáskovi, určitě však nebyl dost velký Harrymu.	Another time, Aunt Petunia had been trying to force him into a revolting old sweater of

		Dudley's brown with orange puff balls) -- The harder she tried to pull it over his head, the smaller it seemed to become, until finally it might have fitted a hand puppet, but certainly wouldn't fit Harry.
MI_42	„ Smím se zeptat, co vůbec děláte tady v horách, odkud jdete a kam jste měli namířeno?“	“ Might I ask what you were doing up in the mountains at all, and where you were coming from, and where you were going to?”
MI_43	Dosáhli pruhu souše mezi jezerem a skalami; byl úzký, často sotva šest sáhů široký, a zavalený spadlými balvany a kamením, našli však cestu těsně podle skály a drželi se co nejdál od temné vody.	They reached the strip of dry land between the lake and the cliffs: it was narrow, often hardly a dozen yards across, and encumbered with fallen rock and stones; but they found a way, hugging the cliff, and keeping as far from the dark water as they might .
M I – 4 4	Podle jeho představy mohl například dopadnout na povrch Marsu silný meteorický déšť nebo tam mohlo dojít k rozsáhlé vulkanické erupci.	His idea was that meteorites might be falling in a heavy shower upon the planet, or that a huge volcanic explosion was in progress.

MI_45	Kdyby nám byl, sire Spaniele, osud přál, mohli jsme být svoji ...	We might have made a match of it, Sir Spaniel, had fortune favoured ...
MI_46	Když totiž člověk žije ve Westminsteru - kolik už je to? přes dvacet let - pociťuje i uprostřed všeho toho dopravního ruchu, nebo když se v noci probudí, Clarissa to ví jistě, takové zvláštní ticho, nebo snad vážnost, nepopsatelnou pauzu, napětí (ale to by se možná dalo přičíst srdci, které, jak jí řekli, oslabila chřipka), než se ozvou údery Big Benu.	For having lived in Westminster - how many years now ? over twenty, - one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes.
MI_47	Přestože budete chtít krmit jenom sýkory, docela dobře se může stát , že jednoho večera přijдете domů a najdete na verandě největšího medvěda z celého lesa.	Even though you may only be trying to attract chickadees, you might come home one night to find the biggest bear in the forest standing on your deck.
MI_48	„Jestli můžete zvednout ten žebřík, abych se ho mohl chytit, třeba se mi podaří slézt dolů.“	“If you are able to lift the ladder, if I can just hold on to it, I might be able to get down. ”
MI_49	Za takových okolností se dalo očekávat, že i Welchovo ucho zjistí naprostou nepřítomnost jednoho z hlasů.	Even Welch’s ear might be expected to record the complete absence of one of

		the parts in such circumstances.
MI_50	Protivivisekční zákony v téhle zemi jsou prý velmi přísné - mohli by ho popotahovat.	The laws of this country against vivisection were very severe - he might be liable.