

Šípková, Milena

The English equivalents of the Czech modal verb "mít"

Brno studies in English. 1985, vol. 16, iss. 1, pp. 109-121

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/104468>

Access Date: 22. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS OF THE CZECH MODAL VERB 'MÍT'

Milena Šípková

The present thesis attempts to distinguish the principal semantic values of the modal verb *mít* in contemporary Czech, to outline their characteristic features, and to present their English equivalents. I am not interested in the verb *mít* in its sense of 'habere' (to possess) but am going to pay attention only to its **modal** semantic values.

In the sphere of modality, my work results from the conclusions reached by Czech linguistics. I should like to state and summarize the principal means that are used to express the individual semantic values in English. Simultaneously, I shall take into account synonymous means of expression and I shall try to describe or at least to state the differences between them.

My thesis is based on an analysis of texts of a literary character drawn from original Czech and English (not American) works of fiction and their translations into English/Czech. In some cases I had to use examples taken from contemporary colloquial Czech/English. I have also consulted native speakers about this material.

Simultaneously with a short characterology of each semantic value of the modal verb *mít* I shall also try to decide into which aspect of modality the semantic value belongs. In doing so I follow the conclusions of the Czechoslovak treatment of modality.

Nowadays modality is regarded as an obligatory feature of every utterance. Linguists divide the sphere of modality in different ways. I shall follow the conception of Grepl, who distinguishes three aspects within the complex of modality (1980:18).

1. Communicatively intentional modality (komunikativně intenční modalita) (= CIM)

CIM is identical with the modal communicative intention of the speaker. Simultaneously together with the factual content the speaker makes his utterance convey his attitude to the expressed reality. According to the attitude of the speaker, four types of sentence are distinguished: declarative, interrogative, imperative and desiderative. CIM is of a communicatively constitutive character. The

basic means of realization of CIM are the mood forms, sentence intonation and sometimes particles.

2. Probability modality (jistotní modalita (=PM))

PM expresses different degrees of subjective assurance of the speaker in terms of the reliability of the content of an utterance. PM attitudes are realized within the framework of declarative and interrogative sentences. The scale of PM values contains a great range of degrees, including the value of full assurance. The basic PM means of expression in Czech are modal particles. But PM can also be indicated by means of the modal verbs *muset* (must), *mít* (ought to) and *moci* (can), which are frequently found in the form of the conditional.

3. Modality of disposition (voluntativní modalita) (=MD)

MD is a modification of the action in terms of possibility, necessity or desirability. It expresses the actor's disposition to the realization of the action as seen from the speaker's point of view. MD can be found in declarative, interrogative and desiderative sentences, but only optionally.

The basic means of realization of MD in Czech are the modal verbs *muset* (must), *moci* (can), *smět* (may), *mít* (ought to), *chtít* (will, want) and *hodlat* (be going to), and what we call the modal predicatives *schopen* (be able), *nucen* (be forced), *povinen* (be obliged).

In M. Grepl's conception, CIM and PM belong to the sphere of **subjective modality**, which is characterized by the attitudes of the speaker to the content of an utterance. MD, on the contrary, belongs to the sphere of **objective modality**, which is understood as a semantic modification of the content of the proposition.

Besides Grepl, Buráňová is the main author interested in the sphere of MD. In her terminology MD is called predicate modality (slovesná modalita); a later paper (1979) refers to it as modality of disposition (dispoziční modalita).

One very important feature is her semantic classification within the group of modal verbs based on the criterion of the initiator of modality. Benešová distinguishes cases in which the initiator of modality is identical with the initiator of the action (IM = IA) and cases in which the initiator of modality is different from the initiator of the action, i.e. the initiator of modality is identical either with another individual or with the objective circumstances (IM ≠ IA). Grepl points out that on condition IM ≠ IA, further differentiation must be taken into account; i.e. whether the initiator of modality is identical with the speaker (IM = speaker) or another (third) individual or the objective circumstances.

Finally, Adamec (1974) tries to sum up the principal semantic values of the modal verb *mít*, which is (like *must*) the most frequent means of expressing the modal category of obligation.

My thesis is based on the semantic classification of the modal verb *mít* made by Adamec. But I treat the semantic value of advice, expressed by a specific form of the conditional, and the value of indecision, implied in deliberative questions, as separate semantic values and I enlarge the scale by adding another, specific meaning of the verb *mít* — the semantic value 'nearly' (málem).

To sum up, I distinguish seven principal semantic values of the modal verb *mít*.

1. The semantic value of **plan** (implying obligation). The semantic value of plan belongs to the sphere of MD; the semantic features $IM \neq IA$ and simultaneously $IM \neq \text{speaker}$ are applicable here. This semantic value splits into two shades:

a) a real plan

(1) Petr má jet zítra do Prahy

(Peter has to-go tomorrow to Prague = Peter is to go...)

b) a certain norm resulting from the experience of a human in society

(2) Definice má být jasná

(The-definition has to-be clear = ... should be...)

All the other semantic values are regarded as the attitudes of the speaker, i.e. they belong either to the sphere of CIM or to the sphere of PM.

2. The semantic value of **somebody else's opinion**. This semantic value is connected with the sphere of PM. It is limited to utterances having an assertive communicative function. Within the framework of this semantic value it is possible to distinguish two subcategories:

a) somebody else's opinion proper

(3) Má to být zajímavý film

(Has it to-be interesting a-film = It is supposed to be...)

b) strong probability

(4) Měl by být touto dobou doma

(Should-have-he *cond. form* to-be by-this time at-home = He should be...)

3. The semantic value '**nearly**'.

This semantic value of the modal verb *mít* concerns colloquial Czech. It expresses a very high degree of assurance of the speaker of the content of an utterance. That is why I am going to treat this value within the sphere of PM.

(5) On do mě strčil a já jsem měl spadnout

(He to me pushed and I had to-fall = ... I nearly fell...)

4. The semantic value of **mediated command**.

This semantic value belongs to the sphere of CIM (mediated command via the speaker //mediated order via the addressee).

(6) Máš jít k děkanovi

(Have-you to-go to the-dean's-office = You are to...)

(7) Ať jde Petr k děkanovi

(Let go-he Peter to the-dean's-office = Peter is supposed to go...)

5. The semantic value of **advice**.

This semantic value belongs to the sphere of CIM as well.

(8) Měl bys mu pomoci

(Should-have-you *cond. form* him to-help = You should help him)

Both the semantic value of mediated command and the value of advice have one thing in common, i.e. a future action (expressed by the future tense) that is predicated in the content of an utterance.

Within the semantic value of advice two features can be distinguished:

a) to make the addressee do the action,

b) to persuade him that the realization of the action is in his own interest.

6. The semantic value of **the non-realization of a desirable action** (or, **the realization of an undesirable action**) which is evaluated as a mistake leading to undesirable consequences.

(9) Neměl jsi mu to říkat

(Not-had you him it to-tell = You should not have told him...)

This semantic value is applicable not only to the addressee, but also to the speaker and another (third) individual.

7. The semantic value of **indecision**.

The semantic value of indecision is connected with deliberative questions that belong to the sphere of PM.

In Czech, there exists a specific form expressing this meaning in the framework of both *yes-no* questions and *wh*-questions. It is the form containing the verb *mít*.

(10) Mám (máš, má) se mu omluvit?

(Have-I (have-you, has-he) *refl.* pron. to-him to-apologize? = Am I (are you, is he) to. . .)

(11) Kdy tam mám (máš, má) jít?

(When there have-I (have-you, has-he) to go? = When should I (should you, should he) go. . .)

PLAN (IMPLYING OBLIGATION)

In its primary function the modal verb *mít* can be regarded as a means of expressing the semantic value of plan (implying obligation) within the sphere of MD. This value splits into the following two semantic shades: 1. a real plan; 2. a certain norm resulting from the experience of a human in society.

1. Within the semantic shade of real plan there are two semantic features to be found: $IM \neq IA$ and simultaneously $IM \neq$ speaker. The aim of the speaker is only to inform the listener of the actor's disposition to the realization of an action. In our case, it is the objective information about the actor's obligation, about something that has been planned. The planning was either done by another (third) individual or was caused by some objective circumstances. Even when the speaker is identical with the actor (speaker = IA), the plan must have been made by someone else.

In Czech the semantic shade of a real plan can be expressed by the present or the past indicative of the modal verb *mít* both in the positive or the negative form. Since the verb *mít* has no future tense form, it is the present indicative that refers to the action in the future. The same situation can be seen in English where it is usually the construction *modal verb + simple or continuous infinitive* that directs the action to the present or the future.

The most frequent equivalent is the modal construction *to be + infinitive*. Its principal meaning is 'a previously arranged plan or obligation resulting from this arrangement'.

(12) Chlapec má jít po prázdninách do Čech na gymnasium. (ON-124)

The boy is to go to a gymnasium in Bohemia after the holidays. (OR-114)

The past tense of the verb *to be* commonly expresses "plan", "obligation" but it also refers the action to the future in the past.

The English modal verbs *should* and *ought to* are further frequent equivalents of the verb *mít* in the semantic shade of real plan. In addition the verb *ought to* carries the idea of moral, personal duty (13). When *should* is used, generally no condition is expressed and it can occur (like *ought to*) in all persons.

(13) But she will be agreeable, I think. She ought to be. (HW-178)

Ale myslím, že svolí, aspoň by měla (HL-132)

(14) Rozhodně nesmíte zdržovat někoho, který má vyjít na svobodu. (HO-328)
Definitely you have no right to detain anyone who should be set free.
(HG-322)

The constructions *should* + *perfect infinitive*; *ought* + *perfect infinitive* indicate the non-realization of a desirable action (cf. p. 118); in the foreground, however, they may contain a suggestion of plan, duty. They indicate that the planned action was not carried out.

- (15) Podle maršrúty měli jsme už dostat na několika stanicích večeři a nedostali jsme nic. (HO-520)

According to our march schedule we ought to have got supper at several stations, but instead we got nothing at all. (HG-536)

Another frequent equivalent is the verb *to have* (*got*).

- (16) Mužstvo má zde dostat 15 deka ementálského sýra (HO-496)

The men have to get fifteen dekagrams of Emmentaler cheese here. (HG-508)

English *infinitive clauses* are another means of expressing the above semantic shade.

- (17) 'It's bad stuff to get drunk on,' says Dick (...) (MB-72)

"A takovou bryndou se má člověk opíjet," říká Dick (...) (MA-109)

The verb *to be going to* is used to express intention, the future fulfilment of the present plan.

- (18) Potom pozítří má přijít jedna slečna (HO-200)

And then the day after, a young lady is going to come. (HG-179)

The construction *to be supposed to* is another quite common means of expressing the semantic shade of a real plan.

- (19) Vy všichni víte, že dnes máme demonstrovat proti válce. (ZR-59)

You all know that to-day we are supposed to demonstrate against the war. (ZG-68)

2. The semantic shade of a certain norm resulting from the experience of a human in society is at the level of the form indicated by the generic (20) or the general subject (21). In Czech it is usually expressed by the present indicative of the modal verb *mít*. The English equivalents of this semantic shade correspond to frequent equivalents of the semantic shade of a real plan (*to be, to have* (*got*), *should, ought to*).

- (20) Každý voják si má svého představeného vážit, třeba by ten byl i v jiném stavu. (HO-346)

Every soldier has got to respect his superior even if he's half-seas over. (HG-342)

- (21) Má se vždycky mluvit jasně a zřetelně a ne v žádných takových oklikách. (HO-695)

People ought always to speak clearly and distinctly and never in any kind of conundrums. (HG-732)

In both the semantic shades of the basic semantic value of plan, it is possible in the present tense to replace the indicative by the conditional in a majority of cases without causing a major semantic shift in the matter-of-fact content of an utterance. With regard to the fact that by the use of the conditional of the verb *mít* the speaker expresses a certain degree of his persuasion about the validity of the content, it is possible to rank the modified semantic value of plan among the phenomena of the sphere of PM.

- (22) Mám jet zítra do Bratislavy.

(Have-I to-go tomorrow to Bratislava)

(= it has been planned and I take it into account).

- (23) Měl bych jet zítra do Bratislavy.

(Should-I-have cond. form to go tomorrow to Bratislava = I should go to...)

(= it has been planned but I do not think I shall go there, i. e. I am not sure).

In English the forms of the indicative and the conditional are interchangeable as well.

SOMEBODY ELSE'S OPINION

Analyzing the semantic value of somebody else's opinion, I leave the sphere of objective modality and I am going to pay my attention to the individual categories of subjective modality, in this case, the category of PM. The specific function of the modal verb *mít* is to express a subcategory of PM, the semantic value of somebody else's opinion. While in colloquial Czech this semantic value is rendered by the modal verb *mít*, in the standard language it is expressed by the modal particle "prý".

- (24) Má to být zajímavá kniha.
Prý je to zajímavá kniha
(They-say is it interesting a-book)

It is possible to distinguish the following two semantic shades within this semantic value: 1. somebody else's opinion proper; 2. strong probability.

The semantic shade of somebody else's opinion proper contains two features: a) the general semantic feature suggesting that the statement is mediated, taken over assumed; b) the modal feature suggesting that the speaker does not bear the responsibility for the statement, i.e. that the statement is unguaranteed.

Some of the synonymous expressions that can be found in Czech correspond to the means of expressing this semantic shade in English.

- (25) // Říkají, že je to zajímavá kniha.
They say that it is an interesting book.
(26) // Říká se, že to je zajímavá kniha.
It is said to be an interesting book.
(27) // Předpokládá se, že je to zajímavá kniha.
It is supposed to be an interesting book.

All the examples given above imply that the statement has been mediated, i.e. that its validity is, from the point of view of the speaker, only presupposed.

The most frequent means of expression in English are the constructions *they say* // *it is said* and *to be supposed* + *infinitive*. There is nothing similar to the Czech particle 'prý'.

- (28) Zítra má pršet.
It is supposed to rain tomorrow.
(29) Mají být zdražené jízdenky.
It is said that the fare will be more expensive.

When we replace the indicative by the conditional form of the modal verb *mít*, two kinds of interpretation of the meaning are possible:

1. a modification of assurance on the part of the speaker; a lower degree of the speaker's certainty.

- (30) Měla by to být zajímavá kniha, už na ni přijímají objednávky.
It's supposed to be an interesting book; they are taking orders for it already.

In English the same means of realization is used to express this modification.

2. the speaker's wish.

- (31) Měla by to být zajímavá kniha, abych se nenučil.
I hope it is an interesting book so that I won't be bored.

To express a personal wish in English, the construction *I'd like* + *infinitive* or the verb *to hope* are used. This case, however, belongs to the sphere of CIM.

When the degree of the speaker's supposition is a little bit stronger, the modal auxiliary *should* is used. It corresponds to both the indicative and the conditional forms of the verb *mít* in Czech.

- (32) Má to být tento dům.
 (33) Měl by to být tento dům.
 It should be this house.

2. The second semantic shade implies "strong probability". On the basis of his knowledge of the world, his deduction, the speaker concludes that the validity of the content of the proposition is highly probable.

- (34) Měl by být v tuto dobu už doma.
 He should already be at home by this time.

In comparison with *must*, which is commonly used to indicate a strong probability, *should* and *ought to* weaken the force of *must* and suggest that the speaker has doubts about the soundness of his conclusions.

'NEARLY'

It seems that within PM it is possible to distinguish another, more or less individual semantic value of the Czech modal verb *mít*. This is the semantic value "nearly". In this case the modal verb *mít* operates as a means of expressing a very high degree of assurance on the part of the speaker as to the validity of the propositional content. This semantic value almost reaches 100% in the scale of the PM values. There are cases where it is even possible to replace the modal verb *mít* by the modal adverbs *určitě* (definitely), *jistě* (certainly).

Both in Czech and in English, the extent of possible means of realization is very broad.

- (35) Uklouzl jsem a měl jsem spadnout.
 I slipped and nearly fell.

In Czech the synonymous means of expression are the following: Uklouzl jsem a *div že* jsem nespádl. Uklouzl jsem a *tak tak že* jsem nespádl. Uklouzl jsem a *málem že* jsem nespádl. Uklouzl jsem a *málem* jsem spádl.

In English this semantic value is frequently expressed by the adverbs *nearly* and *almost*.

In the following type of sentence, the realization of the action depends on some condition. It is possible to transfer the sentences to the form of the conditional clause. In these cases we may use the modal words *definitely*, *certainly*, etc.

- (36) Ještě jeden krok a měl jsem spadnout.
 One more step and I would have fallen.
 (37) Ještě jeden krok a určitě jsem spádl.
 One more step and I definitely would have fallen.
 = If I had taken one more step I would have fallen.

It is quite interesting that in constructions of this type it is impossible to use the adverb *nearly*. It does not seem to be possible to use this adverb in connection with the unreal condition in the past.

MEDIATED COMMAND

In its secondary function the modal verb *mít* operates as a means of expressing the semantic value of a mediated command within the sphere of CIM. There are two semantic features to be found here: IM \neq IA and simultaneously IM \neq speaker. The aim of the speaker here is that of an interpreter. The realization of the action is desirable, but the action has not been realized yet.

The basic equivalent of this semantic value in English seems to be the construction *to be + infinitive*.

(38) Máte hned jít k panu hejtmanovi Ságnerovi. (HO-474)

You are to go at once to Captain Ságner. (HG-485)

The command can be mediated via several individuals before it reaches its destination. This fact is often indicated in Czech by means of the particle 'prý' (= they say).

There are also other means of expressing this meaning. In the English texts I have also come across the following modal phrase:

(39) Mother, you're wanted on the phone. (MB-112)

Mamí, máš jít k telefonu. (MP-132)

The basic synonymous expressions of the modal verb *mit* in Czech are the following:

(40) Máš jít k děkanovi.

// Jdi k děkanovi.

(Go-you imperative form to the-dean's office)

// Děkan ti vzkazuje, abys k němu přišel.

The-dean to-you sends-a-message that-you should cond.

form to him come = to come to him)

The semantic value of a mediated command relates to the second and the third person only.

(41) You are to go there.

(42) Peter is to go there.

To express the semantic value of a mediated command, it is not possible to use the conditional form. If the conditional were used here, it would result in a shift in the semantics of the verb *mit*. The conditional represents a way of expressing one of the aspects of the exclamatory attitudes — the semantic value of the advice of the speaker.

Máš jít k děkanovi — Měl bys jít k děkanovi

(Should-have you cond. form to-go the-dean's-office =
You should go...)

The same semantic characteristics can be found in the group of **yes-no questions**. They also state that the realization of an action is needful but the action has not been realized yet. The same semantic features can be applied here: IM ≠ IA; IM ≠ speaker. The desirability of an action has been caused by someone different from the speaker. The dominating feature in *yes-no* questions is the intention of the speaker to learn whether the content of an utterance is valid or not. We speak about the neutral polarity of the question.

The most typical representative of this semantic value is the modal verb *shall*.

(43) Mám vám dát něco zahrát? (HO-128)

Shall I get them to play something for you? (HG-102)

In interrogative sentences with the verb *shall*, the meaning of obligation may be found. *Shall* is used with the first and the third persons to inquire about the will of the person addressed. Its use in *yes-no* questions indicated the meaning "would you like me (us) to?"

Sometimes this meaning is explicitly expressed in the question.

(44) Mám pustit Sultána? (ZR-34)

Do you want me really to let Sultan loose? (ZG-42)

The verb *to be* appears to be another frequent equivalent. Its occurrence in constructions of this type can be explained by the same semantic characteristics as in the case of a mediated command. Once again, it is someone different from the speaker that is the initiator of modality, and the speaker just inquires about

his will or order. Examples of this type can only be supported by the translations from Czech to English.

- (45) *Mám se vystěhovat z Koločavy, rabbi?* (ON-118)
Am I to leave Koločava, Rabbi? (OR-144)

In *yes-no* questions the use of the indicative seems to be interchangeable with the use of the conditional without changes of meaning.

- (46) *Ty tedy myslíš, že bychom se o to měli pokusit?* (ZR-362)
So you think we should try it? (ZG-386)
(47) *Mám slézt z chodníku?* (HO-51)
Should I step down from the pavement? (HG-14)

The use of *should* and *ought to* in the above examples results from the semantic characteristic of *yes-no* questions that is in correspondence with the shade of meaning of the above verbs; it is the shade of desirability.

ADVICE

The semantic value of advice expressed by the modal verb *mit* within the framework of CIM is connected with exclamatory attitudes. Their dominating feature is the intention of the speaker to make the addressee realize the content of the proposition.

In both Czech and English, this semantic value can be explicitly indicated by means of the verb to advise (*radit*).

- (48) *Radím ti, aby sis to rozmyslel (rozmyslet si to).*
I advise you to think it over.

While in Czech the propositional content can be in the form of either the object clause or the infinitive clause, the only possible form in English is that of the infinitive clause.

This semantic value can be indicated implicitly by the form of the morphological imperative. To express the semantic value of advice particularly, it is combined with the particle 'raději'. This combination corresponds to the English construction *had better* + *infinitive*.

- (49) *Raději si to rozmysli.*
You'd better think it over.

But also other, non-imperative indications are possible. The following sentence construction used in Czech has the English equivalent in the conditional clause.

- (50) *Já (na tvém místě) bych si to rozmyslel.*
If I were you I would think it over.

The semantic value of advice is, however, expressed also by the conditional form of the modal verb *mit*. The form of the conditional does not function as conditional in constructions of this type; it is used here as a means of expressing the semantic value of advice. In the content of an utterance it is the future action that is predicated.

The intention of the speaker is not only to make the addressee perform the action; he simultaneously intends to persuade him that the realization of the action is in his (= addressee's) interest.

The most frequent means of expressing the semantic value of advice in English is the modal auxiliary *ought to*.

- (51) *You ought to take a little holiday on your way (...)* (MB-196)
Měla byste si vzít po cestě menší dovolenou. (MP-222)

The semantic value of advice can be expressed by means of the modal construction *should* + *infinitive* as well.

- (52) To byste neměli dělat. (ZR-242)
You shouldn't do that. (ZG-255)

Further, a quite common equivalent of the construction *mít* + *infinitive* within the semantic value of advice is the construction *had better* + *infinitive*, which signifies a strong recommendation.

- (53) „Měl bys přece jen radši zde počkat,“ řekl Švej k Vodičkovi (...)
(HO-364)
'I think you'd better wait here,' said Švej to Vodička (...) (HG-364)

THE NON-REALIZATION OF A DESIRABLE ACTION OR, THE REALIZATION OF AN UNDESIRABLE ACTION IS EVALUATED AS A MISTAKE

In its secondary function the modal verb *mít* may appear as a means of expressing the evaluative attitude of the speaker. The speaker expresses his disappointment concerning the non-realization of a desirable action, and — at the same time — he evaluates this non-realization as a mistake leading to undesirable consequences.

According to the prevailing feature this semantic value can acquire additional semantic shades of expectancy, evaluation, wish, disappointment, regret. Each of them can be expressed by linguistic means.

It is possible to find the following synonymous realizations of this semantic value in Czech:

- (54) Měl přijít dřív.
(Had-he to-come earlier = He should have come...)
(55) // Že nepřišel dřív.
(That did-not-he-come sooner = Hm, he did not come...)
(56) // Škoda, že nepřišel dřív.
(It-is-a-pity that he-did-not-come sooner)
(57) // Kéž by byl přišel dřív.
(If-only he had *cond. form* come sooner)
(58) // Když on nepřišel dřív.
(When he did-not-come sooner = what can I do?)

The actor of the action may be either the speaker or the second or the third person.

The modal verb *mít* as a means of expressing the evaluative attitude of the speaker is usually in the form of the past indicative. The present tense form is rather rare.

In English this semantic value is frequently expressed by the modal auxiliaries *should* and *ought to* in connection with the perfect infinitive. *Should* and *ought to* are often used to express a judgement of an emotional character (a disagreeable judgement, indignation...) concerning some action. They emphasize the speaker's personal attitude towards the fact described in the utterance.

- (59) Neměli jsme se tenkrát rozcházet. (ZR-174)
We shouldn't have broken ranks then. (ZG-195)
(60) He ought to have married you, Marty, (...) (HW-341)
Měl si vzít tebe, Marty (...) (HL-277)

The meaning of the combination of *should* or *ought to* with the perfect infinitive depends on whether the sentence is affirmative or negative. In an affirmative sentence it indicates that a desirable action was not carried out, the duty was not fulfilled (60). In a negative sentence they serve to show that an undesirable action was carried out (59).

The use of a *wish clause* as another frequent equivalent is based on the fact that in the semantic structure of this semantic value, it is implied that the speaker wishes the action not to have happened. This is an unfulfilled wish, regret; the speaker can do nothing about it.

- (61) I wish you hadn't told me! (HW-80)
Nemélas mi to radši ani říkat. (HL-45)

The semantic value of the non-realization of a desirable action can be found in the present tense as well. In this case the speaker expresses what he — at the very moment of the utterance — would do in a different way. In English the construction *should* + *simple infinitive*, *ought* + *simple infinitive* are used.

- (62) Máš pracovat pečlivěji.
(Have-you to-work more-carefully = You should work...)

INDECISION

Finally I take the modal verb *mit* that functions as a means of expressing the semantic shade of indecision within the framework of deliberative questions in the sphere of PM. Under the term deliberative questions I understand questions that the speaker asks simultaneously both the addressee and himself or only himself. The modal verb *mit* adds the semantic shade of indecision to the semantic value of uncertainty, which all the deliberative questions have in common.

Both in Czech and in English the semantic shade of indecision can be expressed by either the indicative or the conditional form of the modal verb *mit* without any shift in the meaning.

- (63) Má (měl by) tam jít?
(Has-he (should-he-have *cond. form*) there to-go?)
Is he to (should he) go there?

In case it is the speaker who is the potential initiator of the action, an infinitive clause is used in Czech.

- (64) Jít tam?
(To-go there?)

When the actor is different from the speaker, the construction *mit* (in the indicative or the conditional form) + *infinitive* is used. But the finite form of the modal verb *mit* can be used even when it is the speaker who is the initiator of the action.

- (65) Co (mám) dělat?
(What (have-I) to-do?)

In English the use of the infinitive is rather rare and archaic.

Within deliberative questions it is possible to distinguish the two basic types of question, i.e. *yes-no* questions and *wh*-questions.

The most frequent English equivalent of the construction *mit* + *infinitive* of the above semantic value seems to be the modal construction *to be* + *infinitive*.

- (66) Mají své životy spojovat s jeho? (ON-180)
Are they to join their lives with his? (OR-162)

Further frequent equivalents are the modal verbs *should* and *ought to* expressing desirability or advisability. These two verbs are very much alike and are often interchangeable. A suggestion may be that *ought to* is used to indicate more doubt.

- (67) Má ho udati nyní? (ON-123)
Should he inform on him now? (OR-113)
(68) Ought she to try to overcome her pruderies? (HJ-227)
Měla by se snažit překonat takovou přecitlivělost? (HN-202)

Further equivalents are the modal auxiliaries *can* and *could*. It seems that these

verbs expressing the semantic shade of indecision or doubt occur only in questions. The modal auxiliary *could* with reference to the present implies more uncertainty or indecision than *can*.

(69) How could he face her now? (HJ-144)

Jak se jí má teď podívat do očí? (HN-125)

(70) Jakpak se v tom máme vyznat my, obyčejní havíři? (ZR-134)

How can we ordinary miners understand a thing like that? (ZG-150)

The occurrence of the modal verb *shall* in deliberative questions is not very common as its primary function is within the sphere of *yes-no* questions (cf. p. 116). Its use in deliberative questions indicates that in asking advice the speaker addresses an imaginary person.

(71) Which way shall I turn? (MB-68)

Kam mám běžet? (MP-105)

The construction *will I + infinitive* expressing the semantic shade of indecision is rather rare in English; it corresponds to the construction *to be + infinitive*.

(72) „Mám, nemám,“ uvažuje (...) (ZR-95)

“Will I or won't I” he considered (...) (ZG-107)

The last equivalent I have come across is the construction *had better*.

(73) Mluvit s ním nebudu! Snad přece bych měl? (ZR-208)

I'll not speak to him. Perhaps I'd better after all? (ZG-232)

CONCLUSION

In the present thesis I have tried to find English equivalents comparable to the Czech means of realization that are used to express the partial semantic values of the Czech modal verb *mít*. These semantic values have been summarized and described in a synthetic paper by Adamec. On the basis of the invariant semantic value of obligation, his article brings a classification of the principal semantic values (functions) that the Czech modal verb *mít* acquires in different contexts. It is necessary to realize that in the system of English there is no correspondent modal verb that would cover all the semantic values of the Czech modal verb *mít*.

This thesis is to be understood as the first step toward a contrastive analysis of Czech and English in this sphere. The results I present here are far from being definitive; it may turn out that the semantic field of the modal verb *mít* presented in this study is not complete and exhaustive. Further research in this sphere will have to:

- a) widen the examined material;
- b) check the individual possibilities of expressing the given semantic values in English with native speakers.

It turns out that also in English within each semantic value it is possible — in the terms of Kuryłowicz — to set up the basic form (means) of expression that would be more or less adequate to the given semantic value.

At this stage of research, it is very difficult to draw complex conclusions. It would not be of any use to present here all the English possibilities of expressing the individual semantic values of the modal verb *mít*; the partial results were offered in the course of the previous discussion.

REFERENCES

- Adamec, P. (1974). *Muset nebo mít? (Must or ought to?)*, *Konfrontační studium ruské a české gramatiky a slovní zásoby*, 133–52 (Prague).
- Bauer, J.—Grepel, M. (1980). *Składba spisovné češtiny (The syntax of standard Czech)* (Prague).
- Buráňová, E. (1979). *Vztah mezi pravděpodobnostní, dispoziční a záměrovou modalitou (The relation between probability modality, modality of disposition and intentional modality)*, *Slovo a slovesnost* 2. 98–101 (Prague).
- Grepel, M. (1979). *K podstatě modalnosti (To the essence of modality)*, *Otázky slovanské syntaxe* III. 23–38 (Brno).
- Grepel, M. (1979). *Imperativní postoje a imperativ (The imperative attitudes and the imperative)*, *Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity A* 27. 165–74 (Brno).
- Grepel, M. (1979). *Některé problémy jistotní modalit (Some problems of probability modality)*, *Slovo a slovesnost* 2. 102–4 (Prague).
- Grzegorzczkova, R. (1973). *Czasowniki modalne jako wykładniki różnych postaw naddawcy*, *Otázky slovanské syntaxe* III. 201–4 (Brno).
- Kuryłowicz, J. (1955). *Zamietki o znaczeniu słowa*, *Voprosy jazykoznanja* 3. 73–81 (Moscow).
- Leech, G. N. (1971). *Meaning and the English verb* (London).
- Leech, G. N. (1971). *Towards a semantic description of English* (London).
- Palmer, F. R. (1974). *The English verb* (London).
- Panevová, J.—Benešová, E.—Sgall, P. (1971). *Čas a modalita v češtině (Time and modality in Czech)*, (Prague).
- Svoboda, K. (1967). *Dvě úvahy ke spisu K. Welkeho o „modalních“ slovesech v němčině (Two considerations concerning the paper by K. Welke on “modal” verbs in German)*, *Slovo a slovesnost* 28. 430 (Prague).
- Hardy, T. (1975). *Jude the Obscure* (HJ) (London).
- Hardy, T. (1963). *Neblahý juda* (HN), translated by Marta Staňková (Prague).
- Hardy, T. (1975). *The Woodlanders* (HW) (London).
- Hardy, T. (1975). *Lesáci* (HL), translated by Hana a Aloys Skoumalovi (Prague).
- Hašek, J. (1954). *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* (HO) (Prague).
- Hašek, J. (1974). *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* (HG), translated by Cecil Parrot (Harmondsworth).
- Mansfieldová, K. (1975). *Bliss and other stories* (MB) (Harmondsworth).
- Mansfieldová, K. (1958). *Blaho a jiné povídky* (MP), translated by Aloys Skoumal (Prague).
- Mansfieldová, K. (1975). *Aloe* (MA), translated by Hana and Aloys Skoumalovi (Prague).
- Olbracht, I. (1955). *Nikola Šuhaj loupežník* (ON) (Prague).
- Olbracht, I. (1954). *Nikola Šuhaj Robber* (OR), translated by Roberts Finlayson-Samsour (Prague).
- Zápotočský, A. (1951). *Rudá záře nad Kladnem* (ZR) (Prague).
- Zápotočský, A. (1954). *Red Glow over Kladno* (ZG), translated by Jessie Kocmanová (Prague).

ANGLIČKÉ EKVIVALENTY ČESKÉHO MODÁLNÍHO SLOVESA „MÍT“

V práci jsem se pokusila najít pro dílčí významy českého modálního slovesa *mít* anglické ekvivalenty srovnatelné s výrazovými prostředky v češtině. Tyto významy shrnul a popsal v syntetické studii P. Adamec; na bázi invariantního významu obligatornosti definuje základní sémantické funkce, kterých nabývá modální sloveso *mít* v různých kontextech. Tato práce představuje první pokus o konfrontaci češtiny a angličtiny v této oblasti. Je třeba si uvědomit, že angličtina nemá odpovídající modální sloveso, které by pokrývalo všechny významové hodnoty českého modálního slovesa *mít*. Výsledky, které jsem předložila, považuji sama za předběžné, tedy nikoli definitivní, ale na druhé straně soudím, že v dané oblasti mohou představovat jistý pokrok.

