

## MODALITY IN TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH INTO ROMANIAN

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### **Abstract**

*Modality is a large chapter of the English grammar which has at its disposal a variety of lexical and grammatical means to express different modal meanings. All levels of language may serve as playground for modality; they all bear some modality mark in a way or another. Therefore, it can be expressed phonologically, grammatically, lexically semantically, pragmatically and stylistically. In translation it has never been easy to find the best ways to express modality in the same way in two different language systems. This is because modality implies attitudes and feelings, which means that certain sensitivity is involved, and two different languages cannot have the same linguistic means to render such a delicate aspect in the same way. However, attempts and studies have been made and solutions have been found. That is why translation specialists mention notions such as equivalence or correspondence in translation. Whereas the SL has at its disposal certain lexical verbs, modal verbs or modal expressions to express a certain modal concept, the TL may not have the exact same means of expression. It is therefore, the translator's task to find those appropriate linguistic means that could create in the TT the same emotions as in the ST. In order to do that, he/she needs to take into consideration all text constituents and characteristics*

**Key words:** *modality, modal verbs, translation, equivalence, stylistics*

### **Introduction**

The main aim of the present paper is to provide an overall perspective on the way modality may be expressed at the level of text. Since this is a rather complex topic, we will limit our analysis to the main things to be considered in the translation of a text: the field, the tenor and the mode of discourse. We will look into how modality is expressed according to the topic of the text, to the formality and to the communicative purpose of the text. The corpus used is based on literary excerpts taken from the novels of David Lodge (Deaf Sentence, 2009, Small World, 1993, 2001 and Man of Parts, 2012, 2011), Keyes (Flowers for Algernon, 2007, 2016) and Thackeray (Vanity Fair, 1992, 2001, 2013). The method used is the comparative contrastive analysis since our main interest is not only that of simply analyzing the way modality can be expressed, but also of highlighting the similarities and the differences between English and Romanian ways of expressing modality at the level of the same text.

### **Findings**

In the economy of the translation such things as the field of discourse, the tenor and the mode of discourse, all related to register need to be considered.

The field of discourse refers to the type of text, the subject matter of the text, and it is the collocation of lexical and grammatical items that characterises it. Let us consider the following two excerpts of literary texts and their Romanian translation, where, not only the structure but also the construction of the text, imply a certain modality. Sample 1, below, is an excerpt from the novel “Flowers for Algernon” (2007) and Dan Rădulescu’s translation (2016). The character is a disabled young man who undergoes a surgery to boost his abilities and to improve his intelligence. The excerpt below illustrates the initial condition of the character, just immediately after the operation whereas the following one (Sample 2) witnesses the considerable improvement of his condition and

intelligence later after the surgery. The way the texts are written points to the condition of the character in both stages of evolution.

SAMPLE 1

<i>ST</i>	<i>TT</i>
<p><i>Well I told her that made me kind of feel bad I thot I was going to be smart rite away and I <b>could</b> go back to show the guys at the bakery how smart I am and talk with them about things and <b>maybe</b> even get to be an asistint baker. [...] They <b>would</b> be surprised to see how smart I got because my mom always wanted my 2oo be smart to. <b>Maybe</b> they <b>wouldnt</b> send me away no more if they see how smart I am. I told Miss Kinnian I <b>would</b> try hard to be smart as hard as I <b>can</b>.</i></p> <p><i>(Keyes, 2007,18)</i></p>	<p><i>Și iam zis că asta numi place fincă mam gndit că osa fiu deștept ciar acum șică o sămă duc la brutaria să learăt ce deștept sunt și să vorbesc de toate lucrur și <b>poate</b> ciar sămă facă ajutor de brutar. [...]</i></p> <p><i>Sar mira să vadă ce deștept sunt că mama tot timpul vrea să fiu deștept. <b>Poate</b> nu mar mai goni dacă vede cât de deștept sunt. Iam zis lu dra Kinnian cam săncerc mult să fiu deștept cât <b>pot</b> de mult.</i></p> <p><i>(Keyes, 2016,20, transaltion by Dan Rădulescu)</i></p>

In Sample 1 there are no punctuation marks, the words are misspelled intentionally to resemble the uttered sounds and the grammatical rules are broken. However, the inner thoughts and hopes of the character are rendered by means of using modal verbs such as *can*, *could* and *would*, as well as modal adverbials such as *maybe*. The usage of the epistemic *could* in the construction *I **could** go back to show the guys at the bakery how smart I am* creates ambiguity as it may be interpreted as either suggesting the character's *possibility* of going back or his *ability* of doing so. The character might be projecting his wish of finally having the possibility to go back to the bakery and show the others his improved abilities. The Romanian translation lacks these nuances, as no type of modal marker is used. Using the modal verb *a putea* would have managed to better recreate the character's hopes sustained by his present condition. Therefore, a better alternative would have been *osa fiu deștept ciar acum șică o **să pot** samă duc la brutaria să learăt ce deștept sunt și să vorbesc de toate lucrur și **poate** ciar sămă facă ajutor de brutar*. The repetition of the modal verb **pot** and the adverbial **poate** would place more emphasis on the character's future intentions and it would be closer to the ST meaning. It is also worth mentioning the repetitive use of the modal verb *would* in hypothetical structures such as *They **would** be surprised, they **wouldnt** send me away, I **would** try hard*, meant to suggest the character's present desires. The modal adverb, *maybe* reinforces the epistemic modality of possibility, managing to render the circular character of the speaker's repetitive thoughts.

Sample text 2 is the expression of a totally different character, and yet he is the same as in sample 1, this time, fully aware of the intellectual abilities and the knowledge he possesses.

## SAMPLE 2

ST	TT
<p><i>I think she <b>could</b> tolerate another woman, but not this complete absorption in something she <b>can't</b> follow. I was afraid it <b>would</b> come to this but I have no patience with her now. I'm jealous of every moment away from work – impatient with anyone who tries to steal my time. (Keyes, 2007,236)</i></p>	<p><i><b>Cred</b> că mai degrabă ar tolera o altă femeie decât sa fiu complet absorbit de ceva ce <b>nu poate</b> urmări. Mi-era frică să nu ajungem aici, dar acum nu mai am răbdare cu ea. Sunt gelos pe orice clipă petrecută în afara lucrului – enervat de oricine care încearcă să-mi fure din timp. (Keyes,2016,203)</i></p>

The language is the one of an intellectual who uses well build sentences and phrases. We are going to concentrate on the use of modal verbs in this excerpt, which are used to express the same *epistemic values* of *ability* and *impossibility*. What is different however, is the change of perspective. If in Sample 3 the character mentioned his inner thoughts and hopes in relation to the people around, in Sample 2 the character makes suppositions and logical deductions about the people around with the attitude of an experienced person. Therefore the use of modal verbs **could** and **can** suggest not only the modal concepts of ability and impossibility, but the beliefs that spring out of the logical deduction of our main character. The Romanian translation, **Cred** că mai degrabă ar tolera o altă femeie decât sa fiu complet absorbit de ceva ce **nu poate** urmări, although faithful to the original text, may be improved by using the English correspondent of the ST modal verb, *could* – **Cred** că mai degrabă **ar putea tolera** o altă femeie decât sa fiu complet absorbit de ceva ce **nu poate** urmări. - which would definitely render the same intensity of feelings as in the ST and would improve the stylistic value of the TT, too. The modal verb *would* in the construction *I was afraid it **would** come to this* is no longer used to express hypothesis but rather certainty, as a past equivalent of *will*, implying that the character can project things as a result of personal logical deduction.

If we compared the modalities of the two excerpts we could notice that epistemic possibility is implied by both texts, but whereas in Sample 1 there is some ambiguity between the concepts of possibility and ability, in sample 2, it is the modality of impossibility that is implied as a feature associated with the improved sensibility of the character. There is a type of modality implied by the way the text is built. Therefore, in text sample 1, there is the epistemic doubt implied by the misspelled words and by the broken grammar, in sample text 2, certainty is enhanced by the perfect language constructions used by the character.

A further, very important aspect is the attitude of the speaker/addresser towards the message itself, mainly expressed by a wide variety of modal items ranging from nouns, adjectives, adverbs and lexical verbs to modal verbs. For all these, the translator needs to find the most appropriate equivalent forms in the target language. Since modality characterises each and every discourse, be it spoken or written, the first step the translator has to do is to analyse the modal items present in the ST, thus identifying the overall tenor of the ST and then he/she needs to find the most appropriate equivalent forms for the TT.

Hedging, for example, involves such constructions as *passive followed by **that** clauses* or *subject + passive + infinitive* and bears the modality of non-commitment:

- (1) *It has been reported that natural herbs are of much use in this condition. (my example)*
- (2) *Natural herbs have been reported to be of much use in this condition. (my example)*

(3) *Se spune/se crede că plantele medicinale sunt folositoare pentru această afecțiune.*(my translation)

The Romanian translation of these structures in (3) above uses the quotation markers among which *se zice, cică, ar fi* range and which imply the fact that the information has been taken from sources the speaker does not commit to.

The following example (4) is worth analysing from the point of view of translation equivalence:

(4) *The scene fades, but from that time Norma spent all her free moments with her friends, or playing alone in her room* '(Keyes, 2007,119)

(5) *“Scena se estompează, dar se știe că de atunci încolo Norma și-a petrecut tot timpul liber cu prietenele ei jucându-se singură în odaia ei”*(Keyes, 2016,103, translation by Dan Rădulescu)

Note should be made here, of the presence of the fixed phrase *se știe* in the TT in (5) with no correspondent in the ST at (4). The tone in the ST is rather neutral in the absence of any modal markers, whereas the TT reinterprets the situation in the ST by adding some unnecessary epistemic modal value of certainty by the presence of the mentioned fixed phrase.

The writer may indicate his/her point of view by means of the attitudinal adverbs used such as *naturally, frankly, fortunately, obviously, surely, surprisingly*, etc. This is another modal indicator that the translator needs to have in mind when translating a text in order to preserve the tone from the ST. The following sentences (6), (7) represent an example of equivalence in translation from English into Romanian where the adverb *unfortunately*, used in the ST to express the author's attitude towards the situation he is in, is translated into Romanian by a corresponding adverbial phrase *din nefericire* which manages to convey the same meaning in the TT. The existence of a correspondent word in the TL makes things easier for the translator, but please note that the structure of the constructions in the ST cannot be similar on account of specific linguistic peculiarities. In the example below the adverb *unfortunately* interrupts the phrase *But her increasingly bizarre and disconcerting requests cannot – unfortunately – be blamed on defective hearing*, in order to emphasise the unexplainable bizarre and disconcerting nature of her requests. Although the Romanian sentence structure, would allow a similar position of the adverb *din nefericire*, especially for stylistic purposes, we chose to place it at the beginning of the sentence due to reasons of frequency and common use.

(6) *“But her increasingly bizarre and disconcerting requests cannot – unfortunately – be blamed on defective hearing. So much for growing old gracefully...”*(Lodge, 2008, back cover)

(7) *Dar, din nefericire, cerințele ei dezarmant de ciudate nu pot fi puse pe seama surzeniei/deficienței de auz. S-a zis cu îmbătrânirea frumoasă...*(my translation)

Generally, in Romanian there are plenty of similar modal adverbs or adverbial phrases and therefore, there may not be any difficulty in rendering in the TT the same attitude towards the character as in the ST. However, cases of non-equivalence in translating attitudes may occur. For example, let us consider examples (8) and (9) below:

(8) *“He obviously felt this was knock-down argument against my frivolous suggestion, and I did not contest it”* (Lodge, 2009,62)

(9) *”Acest ultim argument împotriva frivolei mele sugestii a fost spus pe un ton care nu admitea replică, așa că nu l-am contrazis.”* (Lodge, 2009, 74, translation by Roxana Marin)

In this case, the adverb *obviously* in the ST has been skipped altogether on grounds of a reinterpreted equivalent translation of the whole phrase with greater stylistic and expressive purpose. However, the translation proposed above misses stating the authorial attitude towards the situation and we think that, by including the adverb *evident* as a correspondent of the ST *obviously* in the translation of the excerpt would do nothing but improve the final effect on the target reader: *A simțit în mod evident că argumentul lui împotriva sugestiei mele neserioase/lipsite de fond nu putea fi contracarat așa că nu l-am mai contrazis.*

Modality as expressed by modal verbs cannot be omitted from the present paper and the following example is an excerpt from David Lodge's novel "Man of parts" (2012) together with the correspondent translation into Romanian proposed by Oana Frantz(2012). What is to be highlighted is the number of modal verbs used in such a short space. They all contribute to creating a tense atmosphere and to rendering the intensity of the character's feelings in a situation where apparently each had to make sure that they had no blame for.

## SAMPLE 3

ST	TT
<p>'Uncle Reginald <b>must</b> have followed me here from the Camden Town post office that day. <b>Did you think I would tell them?</b>'</p> <p>'No, no', he said, 'not <b>willingly</b>, but I thought they <b>might</b> have bullied you.'</p> <p>'<b>I wouldn't have told</b> them if they had used thumbscrews,' she said [...] (Lodge, 2012:105)</p>	<p>- <b>Précis</b> m-a urmărit unchiul Reginald când m-am întors atunci de la poșta. <b>Credeai</b> ca le-aș fi spus-o eu?</p> <p>-Nu, nu, zise el nu de bunavoie, dar m-am gândit ca <b>poate</b> te-au intimidat.</p> <p>-Nu le-aș fi spus-o <b>nici</b> dacă mi-ar fi strâns degetele în menghină, îl <b>asigură</b> ea [...] (Lodge, 2011 :101)</p>

Modals such as *must*, *would* and *might* are all used with their epistemic value of possibility and inference. Other modal markers such as the adverb *willingly* or the set phrase *do you think* are all used with the same purpose. The Romanian translation uses a similar gathering of modal markers in an attempt to recreate the same tension as in the ST. The modal adverbs *précis*, *poate* and the verb *credeai* in its past form manage to convey the same atmosphere as in the ST. The use of the perfect negative verbal form *wouldn't have told* in the ST and the elliptical metaphor "*I wouldn't have told them if they had used thumbscrews*", implying the strong refusal of the character, comes as a certainty meant to clarify the situation and wind up things. Owing to the absence of a similar correspondent in the TT, the Romanian alternative manages to create equivalence by using the negative adverb *nici* followed by a conditional clause meant to suggest the determination of the character not to reveal the secret of his address even in hypothetical painful situations as the one mentioned in "*Nu le-aș fi spus-o nici dacă mi-ar fi strâns degetele în menghină, îl asigură ea [...]*". The verb *asigură* comes as a further insurance of her refusal.

*The tenor of discourse* refers to the level of formality of language influenced by the specific social situation or by the relationship between the participants in the communication. The different levels of formality identified by Martin Joos (cited by Urlych, 1992:86) such as *frozen*, *formal*, *consultative*, *casual* and *intimate* and illustrated by the following examples can be seen as instances of synonymous sentences:

(10) *Frozen* Students should go down the ground floor by way of the staircase.

- (11) *Formal* Students should go down to the ground floor.  
 (12) *Consultative* Would you mind going downstairs?  
 (13) *Casual* Time you went downstairs.  
 (14) *Intimate* Down you go, chaps!

Obviously, these sentences have the same meaning but the degree of formality is different in each of them, ranging from very formal (11) to very informal (14), which means that they are used in different types of situations. When translating each of them, different formality markers need to be used in the TL. Furthermore, the degrees of formality and familiarity, as well as the politeness strategies have to be considered. The next sample text (3) is an excerpt from W. Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair* and the first translated alternative (a) belongs to Sinziana Mihalache, whereas the second (b) is by Constanta Tudor and Ion Frunzetti. The fragment under analysis is an example of formal letter addressed from Mrs Pinkerton to Amelia Sadle's mother on the latter quitting Mrs Pinkerton's establishment.

SAMPLE 4

<i>ST</i>	<i>TT (a)</i>	<i>TT(b)</i>
<p>“Miss Sharp accompanies Miss Sedley. It is <b>particularly</b> requested that Miss Sharp’s stay in Russell Square <b>may not</b> exceed ten days. The family of distinction with whom she is engaged desire to avail themselves of her services as soon as possible.”(Thackeray,2001,4)</p>	<p>Domnișoara Sharp o însoțește pe domnișoara Sedley. Se solicită în <b>mod special</b> ca domnișoara Sharp să nu ramână la Russel Square mai mult de zece zile. Distinsa familie în slujba căreia se află dorește a beneficia de serviciile dânei in cel mai scurt timp posibil. (traducere de Sinziana Mihalache, 2013,5)</p>	<p>Domnișoara Sedley este însoțită de domnișoara Sharp. <b>Vă rugăm foarte mult</b> ca șederea domnișoarei Sharp la Rusell <b>să nu treacă de zece zile.</b> Distinsa familie care a angajat-o dorește să beneficieze de serviciile sale cât mai repede cu putință. (traducere de Constanta Tudor,Ion Frunzetti, 1992,5)</p>

The ST register is obviously formal with all its characteristics: impersonal passive voice structure *it is particularly requested*, stylistically used here to avoid mentioning the real author of the request, the negative form of the modal verb *may* used with its deontic meaning of lack of

permission, and the modal adverbial *particularly*, used here to place emphasis on the importance of fulfilling the request to follow. On the whole, stylistically, the idea of prohibition is most and foremost implied. Throughout the note, the reader manages to infer a certain feature of Mrs Pinkerton's attitude towards Mrs Sharp, that of superiority.

As compared to TT (b), where the Romanian corresponding passive structures is used, *Domnișoara Sedley este însoțită de domnișoara Sharp*, in TT (a) the Present Indicative form *Domnișoara Sharp o însoțește pe domnișoara Sedley*, is used. Thus, note that this change of structures determines a difference of emphasis. The former emphasises Miss Sedley as the beneficiary of the action, whereas in the latter, it is Miss Sharp who is most emphasised as the direct performer of the action.

Further on, the formal tonality of the ST is rendered into the TT (a) by means of the impersonal reflexive voice verbal form *se solicită*, followed by the adverbial phrase *în mod special* to emphasise the importance of the request in the construction *Se solicită în mod special ca domnișoara Sharp să nu ramână la Russel Square mai mult de zece zile*, whereas in TT (b) the active structure *Vă rugăm foarte mult ca șederea domnișoarei Sharp la Rusell să nu treacă de zece zile* is less formal and more familiar than the former.

Moreover, note should be made of the use of the Romanian Infinitive or the Sunjunctive moods following the verb *a dori* in both TT (a) and TT (b) - *dorește a beneficia/ să beneficieze*. Such constructions are synonymous, they imply the same, but the Subjunctive mood is considered more personal, whereas the Infinitive mood attaches a more general, detached meaning to the context. Consequently TT (a) is closer in formality to the ST than TT (b).

The formal but, confrontational and direct lack of permission expressed in the ST by the modal verb *may not* is not explicitly rendered into neither of the two proposed translations, which can be, both, considered neutral with respect to the level of intensity of the atmosphere in the ST. By using the correspondent structures with the Romanian modal verb *a putea* a third translation is possible, which we consider more suitable and closer to the meaning implied by the ST: *Domnișoara Sharp o însoțește pe domnișoara Sedley. Specificăm că cea dintâi nu poate rămâne la Russel Square mai mult de zece zile deoarece distinsa familie în slujba căreia se află dorește a beneficia de serviciile dânzei în cel mai scurt timp posibil.* (our translation)

*The mode of discourse* refers to the way language is used to serve a certain communicative purpose. It concerns the final purpose of a text which can be spoken or written. Here is an example (Sample 5) of an informal text written to be spoken, an excerpt from the novel *Small World* written by David Lodge (1993) and its translation by George Volceanov (2001,52-53):

#### SAMPLE 5

ST	TT
<p>“Hallo, Professor Zapp,” he said, drawing level. “Are you taking a stroll?”</p>	<p>“- Vă salut, dom profesor Zapp, zise el, ajungându-l din urmă. Ați ieșit la plimbare?”</p>
<p>“Oh, hi, Percy. No, I’m on my way to visit my old landlord. I spent six months in this place, you know ten years ago. I even thought of staying here once. I must have been out of my mind. Do you know it well?”</p>	<p>- Ah, ura, Percy! Nu, mă duc să-mi vad fosta gazdă. Am locuit aici șase luni, știi, sunt zece ani de-atunci. La un moment dat mă bătea gândul să mă stabilesc aici. Cred că-mi lipsea o doagă. Cunoști bine orașul ?</p>

- “I’ve never been here before, but I have an auntie living here. Not a real aunty, but related through cousins. My mother said to be sure to look her up. I’m on my way now.” - *N-am mai fost în viața mea în Rummidge, dar am o mătușă care locuiește aici. Nu mi-e mătușă direct ci prin alianță între very. Mama m-a rugat s-o caut neapărat. La ea mergeam acum.*
- “A duty call, huh? I take a right here.” - *O datorie de onoare, ai? Eu o iau la dreapta aici.*
- Persse consulted the map. - *Și eu, spuse Persse, după*
- “So do I.” - *ce își consultă schița.*
- “How d’you like Rummidge, then?” - *Ei, și cum îți place Rummidge?*
- “There are too many street-lights.” - *Are prea multe felinare.*
- “Come again?” - *Ce-ai zis?*
- “You can’t see the stars properly at night, because of all the street-lights,” said Persse. (Lodge, 1993, 47) - *Noaptea stelele nu se văd ca lumea din cauza felinarelor, îl lămurii Persse.” (Lodge, 2001,53 traducere de G. Volceanov)*

The dialogue in the text above is the best example of a text written to be spoken. There are many such texts written for a variety of purposes: dialogues in narrations, adverts with a strong phonological content, lectures that are to be presented, etc. However, the text above is an example of an informal text written to be spoken which includes ellipses (*So do I*), contracted forms (*I’m, I’ve never been, you’d like*), idioms (*I must have been out of my mind, I’m on my way, Come again?*), all of which can create problems for the translator. If there is no problem in the case of ellipsis or the contracted forms, for the idioms used in the ST the translator has to find other lexical means to convey the same meaning. Sometimes the TT may possess similar idioms as those in the ST, such as the modal idiom - *I must have been out of my mind* - translated by - *Cred că-mi lipsea o doagă*. Note here the non-equivalence between the use of the modal verb *must* in the ST to express presupposition and logical deduction and the TT epistemic verb *cred* which does not imply the same degree of deduction, but which is specific to such speech acts in Romanian. Another issue to be noticed here is the negative form of the modal verb *can* in the last line of the dialogue expressing a general inability due to the external conditions *You can’t see the stars properly at night, because of all the street-lights*, which has been translated into the TT by “*Noaptea stelele nu se văd ca lumea din cauza felinarelor*”, where the modality of the externally triggered inability has been skipped altogether, giving it a rather impersonal tone. A much closer alternative to the ST and a more acceptable one from our point of view would have been “*nu poți să vezi/vedea stelele ca lumea noaptea din cauza felinarelor*” since this one uses the correspondent modal verb *a putea*. In this way, the modal characteristics of the ST are preserved and the meaning in the TT manages to convey that of the ST in a more faithful manner.

On the other hand there are texts written to be read such as those in scientific journals or scientific books. The following text (Sample 6) is such an example:



## SAMPLE 6

<i>ST</i>	<i>TT</i>
<p><i>But let us hold constant the abilities of all individuals. If it were true that groups always hold an advantage over individuals, then the individuals could voluntarily band together in just that sort of manner. The point is, there is no such thing as a group of people, apart from the individuals who comprise it. As for government being so advantageous, if this were true, why is it necessary to employ violence to get people to join? One wonders if Hardin would be willing to follow the logic of his argument to world government. (Walter Block, <a href="http://www.walterblock.com/">http://www.walterblock.com/</a>)</i></p>	<p><i>Considerând abilitățile individuale ca fiind constante, dacă ar fi adevărat că grupul este superior individului, atunci indivizii ar putea să se adune voluntar în acest scop. Ideea este că, nu există grupuri de oameni în absența indivizilor care le alcătuiesc. Și mai departe, dacă ar fi adevărat că guvernul poate fi o alternativă mai avantajoasă pentru individ, de ce e nevoie de violență pentru a-i determina pe oameni să se alăture acestuia? Și de aici întrebarea dacă Hardin ar fi dispus să aplice propriul raționament la organizarea globală. (my translation)</i></p>

It is obvious that this text (SAMPLE 6) is different from the one that was written to be spoken (SAMPLE 5). First of all it abounds in complex sentences; there are no short forms or elliptical devices, or idioms. But, as for the modality implied, note should be made of the repetitive hypothetical structures with the Subjunctive *if it were true* which is translated by the Romanian Conditional mood in the structure *dacă ar fi adevărat*, which is a fairly common alternative. However, the fact that the structures are used repeatedly in both texts points to the epistemic modality implied by the situation. The modal verb *could* is ambiguous as it may be understood as suggesting the *ability* of the individuals of banding together or as their *possibility* of doing so. The translation manages to preserve the ambiguity by using the Romanian correspondent modal verb *a putea*, with the same interpretation. Another modal verb to be mentioned is the modal *would* in the structure *would be willing to follow*. Here, the modal *would* expresses willingness and it is doubled by the modal construction *be willing* reinforcing the modality of willingness. The Romanian alternative, *ar fi dispus să*, lacks the modal force of the ST since there is no similar modal in

Romanian and the lexical construction *a fi dispus*, which could be an equivalent of *to be willing*, is rather neutral and therefore does not convey the same modal intensity as in the ST.

### Conclusions

The paper brought to the fore a perspective of approaching modality at the level of text and in translation from English into Romanian. Sample excerpts from different novels and the way they were translated from English into Romanian were analysed with the view to comparing the way modality may be expressed at the level of the source text and target text.

The first step to be taken when translating a text is the identification of the attitude of the speaker/addresser towards the message itself, which is mainly expressed by a wide variety of modal items ranging from nouns, adjectives, adverbs and lexical verbs to modal verbs. For all these, the translator needs to find the most appropriate equivalent forms in the target language, especially where no exact corresponding forms exist.

The register is highly important as it is essential in “how meanings are activated and how language functions in a given situation.” (Ulrych, 1992,97). In other words, what has happened in the text, who participated and what medium has been used are essential in the process of context reconstruction as a further step in the process of translation.

Any type of text, be it written or spoken, bears a certain modal meaning since its author always adopts a certain attitude towards the content of the communication.

Being such a complex topic, there are different perspectives and different approaches to tackle modality, but we chose to limit our analysis to its study at the level of the translated text from the perspective of the text register, considering the field, the tenor and the mode of discourse.

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