

The Czech conditional *by* and its correlates in English

A parallel corpus study

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... by successive translations we come to understand the regularities in the languages that are compared and contrasted.

(Dwight Bolinger 1980: 381)

1. The aim of the study was to demonstrate the potential of aligned texts in a parallel corpus for research. It has been prompted by the fact that, at the moment, a coordinated effort is being made to build a parallel Czech-English and English-Czech corpus at Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno. There is no doubt that parallel corpora provide a unique opportunity and a powerful impetus for contrastive investigation. The study focuses on the conspicuously little explored subject of the diverse uses of the Czech conditional, or rather its morphological exponent *by* (a special form of the Czech verb *to be* subsuming six inflected forms), and its correlates in English. An interesting corollary is a comparison of the translation equivalents found in the texts with the equivalents offered by the largest and most recent Czech-English dictionary (Fronek 2002). As a matter of fact, the dictionary gives only two equivalents of the Czech conditional lexeme *by*, namely *would* and *should* (as the 1st person conditional and the central modal auxiliary of obligation, synonymous with *ought to*). The minicorpus of Czech-English texts is comprised of two parallel texts aligned by means of the Vanilla aligner: the original of a novel by the well-known contemporary Czech writer Michael Viewegh and its English translation made by a British translator (see References). The Czech original consists of 42 822 tokens/13 834 types (WordSmith Tools), the translation (56 127 tokens/8 107 types) is by 31 per cent longer in tokens, a fact which is partly due to some of the periphrastic equivalents of the Czech *by*.

First and foremost it was necessary to describe the uses of *by* in the Czech original, a task complicated by the fact that the semantics and distribution of the Czech conditional do not appear to have been systematically charted very much so far. In fact, their description in contemporary standard grammars of Czech (*Mluvnice češtiny* 1986: 166-9; *Příruční mluvnice češtiny* 1995: 321, 593-4) is somewhat skimpy. It is worth noting that in the Czech grammatical approach the primary function of the conditional is seen to be the expression of the so-called ‘objective mood of facticity’ realized in terms of opposition between non-conditional and conditional action. The latter involves either potential, hypothetic or unreal meaning (open and unreal condition), typically in the apodosis of the conditional sentence. This function contrasts with that of the non-conditional, factual indicative. Hence in Czech grammatical theory, the conditional is regarded as part of the three-member category of mood,

together with the indicative and the imperative. The other forms of modality expressed by the conditional, i.e. root (deontic, volitional, etc.) and epistemic modality, are regarded as secondary. These secondary modal uses connote uncertainty, irresolution, politeness, deference, modesty, etc., or simply tentativeness. By contrast, the status of *would* in standard English grammar books is different. Quirk et al. (1985: 219-237, 1010-1012), for instance, exclude it from the indicative-imperative-subjunctive mood system and deal with it under modals and conditional clauses. It does, however, label *would* and 1st person *should* as ‘mood markers’ of hypothetical meaning in certain contexts (conditional clauses, some nominal clauses). The pros and cons of the different treatment of the conditional in Czech and Anglo-American grammatical theory are discussed in Dušková’s paper (1999: 247-251), in which she argues for the re-inclusion of the conditional in the mood system.

For the purposes of the study the uses of the Czech conditional lexeme were divided into two categories, conditional and modal. The latter, called modal-tentative, lumps together all uses other than mood-marking, that is root and epistemic modality meanings, with the additional characteristic of tentativeness. In Czech the tentative conditional is typically found in directives, opinions, etc. The uses of *would*, its ostensible counterpart in English, are not only similar, but, if anything, even more complex (see, for example, Huddleston, Pullum 2002). The tentative *by/would* is characterized by the ‘neutralised opposition’ between the conditional and the indicative form (*Will/would you sit down, I think/I should think that*, etc.). In this respect, tentativeness is an important feature which may help distinguish the modal (epistemic, deontic) uses of *by/would* from the mood-marking conditional (hypothetical of open condition, unreal, etc.), though in Czech the replacement of the hypothetical *by* with the indicative in colloquial speech is not impossible, either.

2. The original text of Viewegh’s novel contained 150 instances of one or the other of the six word forms of the conditional lexeme (*by, bych, bychom, bys, byste, bysme*). In three cases the sentence with *by* was not translated and so the sample includes 147 correlates of *by*. The analysis covered four aspects: (a) type of equivalent; (b) function of the lexeme *by*, i.e. which of its uses—conditional or modal—prevailed; (c) the meaning or force of the utterances containing the lexeme *by* (i.e. were they requests, suggestions, etc.?) and (d) the syntactic contexts in which the lexeme *by* appeared. (For the description of the three types of equivalent see Appendix.)

2.1 It proved convenient to divide the equivalents of the Czech *by* into three groups: (a) *would/d* (1st person *should* did not appear; 61 occurrences, 41.5 per cent), (b) modal verb (including deontic *should*; 48, 32.6 per cent), and (c) alternative equivalents (other than *would*/modal verb; 38, 25.9 per cent). The modal verb equivalents included *can/could* (1/10), (deontic) *should* (11), *may/might* (1/12), *ought to* (10), *will* (2), and *must* (1). The alternative equivalents divide according to realization into three groups of roughly the same size: translations by means of the *indicative* (14), those by *non-finite* verb constructions with the *infinitive* (8) and the *-ing* form (5), and, third, complex lexico-syntactic solutions (10). There was only one case of the subjunctive *were*. It is worth noting that *would* and (deontic) *should*, offered by the Czech-English dictionary as the principle (in fact only) equivalents, represent just 72 cases, i.e. less than half of the total of correlates.

2.2 Of two functions distinguished—mood-marking or conditional and modal-tentative—the conditional uses proved to be in a minority. Their proportion is roughly 1 : 2 respectively. However, the problem with the Czech conditional forms is that conditional and modal uses are sometimes difficult to distinguish and so the figures must be taken with a pinch of salt. The distribution within the two function groups in Czech is as follows: (a) conditional uses (55, 37.4 per cent) – *would* (31), modal verb (9), others (15); (b) modal uses (92, 62.6 per cent) – *would* (30), modal verb (39), others (23). In the English translations the

distribution of the conditional and modal equivalents is somewhat different, especially due to alternative equivalents, though the ratio of conditional-to-modal uses is probably very much the same. The ratio raises the interesting question of whether the different treatment of *would* as a modal exponent in English may not be connected with the prevalence of modal uses.

We may say that *would/d* appeared as the equivalent of the conditional (i.e. hypothetical, unreal) uses significantly more often than any other type of equivalent and in this sense it may be seen as the primary means of expressing this function. Conversely, the modal and alternative equivalents are less frequently used to translate the conditional (mood-marking) uses of the Czech *by*. On the other hand, there were quite a few cases of *would/d* expressing modality and tentativeness as well. In sum, although the English *would* shares both mood-marking and modal meanings of the Czech *by* (apart from having some specific ones, such as insistence, willingness, future in the past, etc.), there seems to be a distinct asymmetry between the Czech *by* and the English *would* which is not caused only by the fact that some of the functions of *by* are assumed by modals or alternative equivalents in English. The alternative equivalents are interesting in that they are non-modal and non-tentative. In this respect Czech seems to prefer tentative forms of expression where English does not or cannot use them.

2.3 As regards the force of the utterances containing the Czech lexeme *by*, leaving hypothetical/irreal uses apart, the distribution of prominent types of illocution among equivalents was as follows: opinion, tentative claim (20; would 11, modal 4, others 5); attitudinal/expressive formula (15; would 5, modal 2, others 8); request, plea, suggestion (15; would 3, modal 9, others 3); tentative preference, volition (14; would 11, others 3); suggestion of obligation (13; modal 13); concession, tentative assent (4, modal 4); tentative inference (4; modal 4). The most frequent ones are utterances expressing opinion, assertion, suggestion, request, and dis/preference (or intention). The reason for the use of *by* is clear here – its tentative associations are employed in the pragmatic politeness strategy. Another distinct group consists of collocational units which serve as attitudinal, expressive discourse formulae (sometimes in the form of a rhetorical question) of viewpoint, conclusion, surprise, and so on (*tak to bychom měli – that's that then*). The use of the conditional in them is often a matter of usage. Their closeness to idiomatic units explains why they are frequently translated by various lexico-syntactic paraphrases. One other large group includes suggestions of obligation with *should* and *ought to*. Marginally *by* was used to express concession and inference.

2.4 As far as syntactic contexts are concerned, the Czech conditional (and its English correlate) may appear in simple sentences as well as complex or compound sentences, in main or dependent clauses of various kinds. Among the more frequent types are nominal-*that* clauses, adjectival relative clauses, adverbial clauses of comparison, and, of course, conditional clauses. While in some sentences (such as adversative [with *aniž*] or comparative [with *jako by, as if*]) the use of *by* is largely due to usage, in most other cases the correlation between syntactic structure and the use of the conditional is difficult to find.

3. To conclude, the study has shown in practice the advantages of research based on aligned texts of a parallel corpus, which allows the data to be gathered at greater speed and in greater abundance. The material obtained shows the unexpected range of uses of the Czech conditional on the one hand, and the astonishingly wide variety of its correlates on the other hand. The nuances of modality expressed by the conditional may sometimes be difficult to describe for a Czech speaker (as *Příruční mluvnice češtiny* concedes) and so, naturally, they represent a problem for the translator, too. In spite of the small size of the sample, the data it provided have far surpassed the accumulated wisdom of the current bilingual dictionary and underlined the insufficiency of its equivalents. In fact, the actual uses of the conditional in the texts markedly differ from the picture presented not only in dictionaries, but also in grammars

and textbooks. The principal findings may be summed up as follows: mood-marking is quantitatively not a primary function of the conditional (the ratio of mood-marking to modal uses of the conditional found in the texts rather vindicates its inclusion among modal verbs in British and American grammars); there is a distributional asymmetry between the Czech *by* and the English *would*; Czech seems to prefer tentative forms of expression where English does not or cannot use them.

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APPENDIX: Examples of the conditional *by* functions in the three types of equivalents

I. Would equivalents (61; 41,5 %). **Conditional uses** of the Czech *by* (hypothetical, unreal; 31) in the text mostly involve implicit condition (19). The criteria include the possibility to supply the implicit condition, the in/admissibility of alternation with the indicative and, of course, the meaning of the whole sentence. In some cases, the support for the analysis came from the translation which preferred and explicitly specified one or the other interpretation. It needs to be said that the boundary between a hypothetic and a modal use is sometimes indistinct. The figures are therefore only approximative. Examples of implicit condition:

- (1) *Není hluchá? napadlo mě. To by mi snad probůh řekli. – Maybe she's deaf, it struck me. But they'd have told me, [if she were] for heaven's sake.*
- (2) *Za pana prezidenta bych ruku do ohně dal, ale tahat z plamenů jeho fotku mi připadalo přepjaté – Now I would go through fire and water for our President, but at that moment, pulling his photo out of the flames seemed a bit excessive*

Among the 12 cases of explicit condition there are typical conditional sentences such as

- (3) *kdybych se mezi dveřmi zeptal na Toyen, na Sartra nebo na dějiny křesťanství, nehnula by brvou* – *if I had stood in the door and asked her about Toyen or Sartre or the history of Christianity, she wouldn't have batted an eyelid.*
- (4) „*Určitě bych se zabil, kdybych svářel autogenem.*” *Napomenula mne, ať mluvím vážně.* – “*I would definitely kill myself if I tried to use an oxyacetylene welder.*”
- (5) *Kdyby bývala pila u stolu kafe a četla Lidové noviny, nesvědčilo by to o ničem dobrém* – *Had she instead been sitting at the table drinking coffee and reading the Lidové noviny, it would have been a bad sign,*

alongside less common variants:

- (6) *Myslel jsem jenom, že by jí mohlo prospět, když nebude mít čas myslet jenom na sebe.* – *I just thought it would do her good if she didn't have the time to think only about herself* (where in Czech we find temporal *když* instead of the conditional conjunction *if* which appears in the translation)
- (7) *Hele, Doubku, povídali mi, bylo by dobrý, aby jim někdo jako ty, poděkoval.* – *Hey Doubek, they said, it'd be great if someone thanked them or something.* (Here the condition is introduced by the conjunction of purpose *aby*)
- (8) *neboť jsem usoudil, že vyslovit nahlas slovo šajny by mi patrně dělalo obdobné potíže jako kupříkladu povel Osmá cé ke mně* – *judging that I would have as much difficulty saying the word shinies as I would giving the order Line up, 8C* (the condition is expressed here by the infinitive *vyslovit* – cf. *kdybych měl vyslovit ... dělalo by mi to*)

A somewhat disputable hypothetical use appears in:

- (9) „*Jestli se takhle servilně chováte už k obyčejnému pinglovi, nechtěla bych vidět, jak mluvíte třeba s dopravákem...*,” – “*If you're as servile as that with an ordinary waiter, I'd hate to see how you behave towards a traffic cop...*,”
- (where the use of the conditional is probably connected with the verb of dis/preference)

Finally, hypothetical meaning may follow from the meaning of a noun serving as the antecedent of the postmodifying (appositive) clause:

- (10) *už jen pouhá představa, že bych ono poděkování učitelům musel i letos psát já sám, je pro mne takřka fyzicky odpudivá.* – *the mere thought that I myself would once more have to draft the thanks to the teachers made me almost physically ill.*

Modal/tentative uses (30). Contrary to the assumption that *would* will appear especially in sentences containing condition, there are many sentences with *by* of the modal type (though not so numerous as in the other types of equivalent) expressing a relatively wide range of modal nuances, epistemic, deontic with tentative, i.e. moderating, relativizing colouring. They may be divided into four groups:

(a) Opinion, deliberation conviction, assertion (11) relativized by the conditional *by* and expressed as subjective, noncommittal, possible, etc. Typical examples are

- (11) *Musel jsem vynaložit nemalé úsilí, abych ji přesvědčil, že by byla škoda to nyní vzdát* – *It took quite an effort on my part to convince her that it would be a pity to give up now*

- (12) *Napadá mne, že po tom, co jsem uvedl výše, by možná bylo dobré zdůraznit, že jde opravdu o nesmyslné jméno – It occurs to me, after what I said above that it would be worth stressing here that this is not a fabricated name*
- (13) *„Jak vypadal?” Zaváhal jsem: „Většina lidí by řekla, že velmi dobře.” – “How did he look?” I hesitated. “Very well, most people would say.”*

(b) Dis/preference, volition (11):

- (14) *Ráda bych věděla kteří?” – I’d like to know which ones.”*
- (15) *„Chtěl bych s váma mluvit,” požádal jsem ho. – “I’d like to talk to you,” I said.*
- (16) *ptal se mne, zda bych byl ochoten si o tom s tebou párkrát týdně povídat – he asked me if I’d be willing to talk to you about it a couple of times a week.*

(c) Attitudinal/expressive discourse formula (5):

- (17) *„Vy máte nějakou zkušenost s intelektuálkami?” zeptala se naopak jízlivě. „Kde byste k ní přišel?” – Instead she asked spitefully: “You’ve had dealings with female intellectuals, then? I’d be amazed to know where.”*
- (18) *„Řekl bych, že je to celkem v normě.” – “I’d say it’s fairly normal.”*

This particular group differs from the others partly in terms of form (often rhetorical question), partly in meaning which tends to be vague and very much context-dependent. Many of the formulae express opinion, attitude (and as such are close to group (a)), but they can also express assent (*To bych řekl*), surprise, disbelief (*Že by?*), etc.

(d) Request, plea, suggestion, proposal (3):

- (19) *„Směla bych vědět, kam jdeš?” – “Would you mind telling me where you’re going?”*
- (20) *„Promluvme si zcela konkrétně: Chodil byste sem čtyřikrát tejdě, od pondělka do čtvrtka, – “Let’s get down to brass tacks: You would come here four times a week*

II. Modal equivalent (48; 32.6%). Of the 48 cases only 9 involved hypothetical/irreal meaning, the remaining 39 instances fall into the tentative modal category. In 3 of the 9 **conditional uses** the condition was explicitly expressed within a conditional sentence. The conditional sentence was translated as such in only one case:

- (21) *co by se stalo, kdyby v daném okamžiku nějaký elegantní muž v bílé rokokové přistoupil k mé kolegyni a pošeptal jí kupříkladu slovo Bertramka. – what might happen if at that moment some elegant man in a white rococo wig were to approach my colleague and whisper to her the word Bertramka,*

In the other two the translator used a different solution:

- (22) *Pokud by se dalo o nějaké chybě vůbec mluvit, pak snad jedině o tom – ale to je opravdu prkotina –, že kalhoty měly červený lampas – The only fault one could possibly find – and it really is a triviality – was the red piping down the side of the trousers*
- (23) *Mohlo by nám prospět – i čistě umělecky –, kdybychom zařadili zpáteční rychlost – It may profit us – even aesthetically to reverse gears*

The remaining 6 may be regarded as hypothetical – the first two with an implicit condition:

- (24) *mohl bych samozřejmě Krále nechat odprásknout dvojicí ukrajinských mafiánů ... , ale cosi mi brání takto zacházet s žijícím člověkem – I could, of course, have Kral bumped off by two Ukrainian mafiosi in the U Holubu restaurant in Smichov, ... but something prevents me from treating a real person in that way*
- (25) *bylo tak jako tak lepší než všechno, co bychom si s Oskarem bývali mohli říci. Naštěstí se mi záhy podařilo usnout – which, however, was a lot preferable, I realised, to anything Oskar and I could have said to each other*

The next two are hypothetical comparisons:

- (26) *jako by hřbety většinou dobře známých knih, ..., mohly ono mé napětí bezpečně uzemnit – as if the spines of the books ... – most of them familiar titles – could somehow safely earth the tension I felt*
- (27) *hlad má, že by sežral i střeva svého nejbližšího kamaráda – he is so hungry he could even eat the guts of his closest comrade*

while in the last two cases the hypothetical meanings of *by* in adjectival relative clauses are related to the meaning of the antecedent (cf. hypothetical equivalents with *would*):

- (28) *Představa, že bych inventář našeho měšťáckého obývacího pokoje doplnil kupříkladu o polovinu ropného barelu, vyvolala na mé tváři úsměv – The thought that I might incorporate half an oil barrel in the inventory of our bourgeois living room brought a smile to my face*
- (29) *které ve mně vyvolalo iracionální naději, že bych z tohoto místa mohl snad někdy porozumět i románům Daniely Hodrové – which triggered off in me the irrational hope that from this position I might one day understand even the novels of Daniela Hodrova*

Modal-tentative uses. In the remaining 39 cases the conditional *by* occurs in a number of contexts that can be considered as expressing one type of modality or another. Among the most prominent semantic subgroups there were:

(a) Suggestion of obligation (13):

- (30) *Zalistoval jsem obsahem: Proč bych měl ctít svého otce a svou matku? – I turned up the contents page: Why should I honour my father and my mother?*
- (31) *Měl bych domy lásky pranýřovat, ne je navštěvovat. – I should pillory houses of pleasure, not patronise them.*

There was one interesting case of the conditional form of the verb *potřebovat* (to need), interpreted as obligation (*ought to*) in the translation. The support for it can be found in the *měla by* (she should) in the previous Czech sentence

- (32) *Měla by chodit do práce,” řekla vážně. „A za druhý by se potřebovala vdát.” – “And for another thing, she ought to get married.”*

(b) Request, plea, suggestion, proposal (9):

- (33) *„Dal bych si ještě panáka,” řekl jsem – “I could do with another drink,” I said*
- (34) *poprosil [jsem] ji, zda by ji pro příště nemohla nějak obejít – [I] asked her whether she might not avoid them in the future*

(35) „Zítřa byste mohli zajít do Ikey,” snil nahlas Král. – “You could go to IKEA tomorrow,” Kral mused out loud.

(36) *V případě tohoto románu by takový greenovský konec mohl vypadat kupříkladu takto – In the case of the present novel, a Greenian ending might run as follows*

(c) Opinion, deliberation, idea, assertion (4):

(37) „Tomu bych věřil,” řekl jsem smírně. – “I can imagine,” I said in a conciliatory tone.

(38) *napadá mě, zda bych neměl zdůraznit, že – it occurs to me that ought to point out that*

(39) *řekl cosi v tom smyslu, že holky by nás nikdy neměly překvapit – He ... said something along the lines of: girls should never surprise us*

(40) „To rád slyším,” řekl jsem. „Mohlo by to znamenat, že je opravdu dobrý.” – “I’m pleased to hear it,” I said. “That could mean that it’s actually good.”

(d) Concession, assent (4):

(41) *Oskar připustil, že z jistého úhlu pohledu by tomu tak skutečně mohlo být – Oskar conceded that that it might indeed be the case*

(42) *Možná by se to tak dalo říct,” řekl jsem otráveně – I suppose that might be the slang expression for it*

(43) *Je to jen takový momentální nápad, ale třeba by to stálo za úvahu. – It was only something that had just struck him at that moment, but it might be worth considering.*

(e) Inference, logical conclusion (4):

(44) *Měl by to logicky být některý z těch kluků před K-martem – Logically it must have been one of the fellows in front of the K-Mart,*

(f) Expressive discourse formula (2):

(45) *Museli byste je vidět! – You should have seen them!*

(46) „Něco se děje?” „Co by se dělo?” nechápal. – “Has something happened?” “What should have happened?” he said baffled

(g) Others (3) include cases which cannot be placed in any distinct group. The function of the conditional in the first Czech sentence—replaceable with the indicative—is rather difficult to define. Interestingly the translator used a result clause.

(47) *Tak mi aspoň poskytněte nějaké přijatelné vysvětlení, o které bych mohl opřít svůj pověstný sklon k sebeklamům – So at least come up with some acceptable explanation so that I might have something to bolster my notorious tendency to self-deception*

The two remaining repetitious instances involve a relative clause. The translation shows that the two negations in Czech result in the affirmative meaning and that the modality is most likely epistemic.

(48) *Není mrzáka, který by nenašel sobě rovného, a není nesmyslu, který by nenašel vhodného čtenáře – Every cripple will find a partner and every nonsense a suitable reader,*

The strong representation of obligation uses is quite natural given the specialization of the two modal verbs should and ought to in this type of modality.

III. Alternative equivalents (38; 25,9 %) represent ¼ of all equivalents in the text. Of the 38 cases, 15 are of the conditional type, 23 are modal. **Conditional uses** (hypothetical/irreal; 15) in this group are even more difficult to identify than in the previous two groups, which is no doubt related to the type of equivalent. There were only two cases of conditional sentences:

- (49) *Pokud nebudu na Slavíně, ležel bych klidně tady – Failing Poets' Corner, I'll be happy to lie here*
- (50) *Tahle by se myslím neusmála ani tehdy, když by vedle ní seděl James Thurber osobně – Though I don't think this one would have smiled even if James Thurber himself were sitting next to her*

A distinct subgroup consists especially of clauses (nominal object and relative) implying opposite meaning (5):

- (51) *„Neslyšel jsem, že by odpověděl.“ – “I didn't hear him reply.”*
- (52) *jsem ten poslední, kdo by neměl pro tento druh otcovské opatrnosti potřebné pochopení – I'd be the last one to criticise this sort of paternal caution*

Next, there is a group of comparative sentences with hypothetical meaning (6):

- (53) *tvářil se přibližně tak, jako by právě přeplaval La Manche v obou směrech – his face looked almost as if he had just swum the Channel both ways*
- (54) *Znělo to příkře. Veškerou vlídnost jako by vyčerpал při našich předchozích dvou schůzkách. – It sounded harsh, as if all the affability had been exhausted in the course of our two earlier meetings*

Modal-tentative uses (23) include mostly the same semantic groups as appeared in the previous two types of equivalent:

(a) Attitudinal, expressive discourse formulae (8):

- (55) *Tak to bychom měli, pomyslel jsem si. – That's that then, I thought to myself.*
- (56) *„To bych sám rád věděl.“ – “That's the question I ask myself,”*
- (57) *„Co by,” řekla Agáta. – “What d'you think,” said Agata.*
- (58) *„Kde by byly?” – “Where do you think?”*
- (59) *který – řekl bych – which – in my view*

(b) Opinion, deliberation, etc. (5). *By* often occurs in a clause following a verb describing the respective mental operation:

- (60) *Aktivnost básnického slova nesmí být ovšem vykládána tak, že by básnictví slovem vytvářelo skutečnost novou, svébytnou a umělou – One ought not, however, interpret the active nature of the poet's speech as meaning that poetry uses words to create a new, autonomous and artificial reality*
- (61) *Uvažoval jsem, jestli by náš rozhovor neměl mít trochu poetičtější dimenzi. – It occurred to me that our conversation lacked a certain poetic dimension.*

(c) Preference, volition (3):

- (62) *„Chápete už, co bych od vás chtěl?” – “Do you understand now what I want of you?”*
- (63) *„Rozhodně bych se totiž nechtěl dočkat autogramiády, kde – “You see I definitely don't relish the thought of book-signing sessions at which*

(d) Request, suggestion (3):

- (64) *Snažte se ho trochu rozveselit – mohli byste mu třeba vyprávět, jak vám spadla koloběžka do žumpy... – Try and cheer him up – how about telling him about how your scooter fell in the cesspit...*
- (65) *proto jsem požádal svou babičku–kožešnici, zda by mi na ně neušila nějaký návlek – I asked my furrier grandmother to sew me up some kind of loose cover*

(e) Others (3):

- (66) *Neviděl jsem jediný důvod, proč bych tu rozmazlenou primadonu měl jakkoli šetřit. – Lekci jsem zahájil Radam – I could see not the slightest reason to spare this spoiled primadonna in anyway.*

The difficulty with the interpretation of the conditional in these sentences is enhanced by the fact that in some cases *by* may be a formal feature without a semantic implication. Apparently this is the case in compound sentences where *by* occurs in adversative clauses (and may alternate with the indicative):

- (67) *V jedné chvíli si dokonce slyšitelně upšoukla, aniž bych jí přitom stál třeba jen za omluvný úsměv. – There was a moment when she broke wind audibly without considering me worthy of even an apologetic smile.*

The high incidence of lexical-syntactic paraphrases in this group obviously correlates with the high incidence of so-called set phrases or formulae which represent anomalous irregular expressions in language and as with idioms they will rarely be translated by systemic means.