

# *I Wish You Would: A Corpus-based Study of Sentences with *Wish* and their Czech Equivalents*

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**Abstract:** Finite clauses following the verb *wish* are often analyzed as content clause complements. In this paper I will try to demonstrate the modal function of the *I wish* phrase through a close analysis of its Czech translations in a parallel translation corpus (InterCorp). While literal translations with a main clause can be found (*přeju si* “I wish”, *přál bych si* “I would wish”), and a dependent clause also follows other Czech verbs in the conditional mood (*chtěl bych* “I would want”, *byl bych rád, kdyby* “I would be glad if...”, *rád bych* “I would gladly...”), these are not the dominant translations: there are also contracted composite sentences with conjunctions *kdyby* (*to kdybych věděl* “I wish I knew”) or *aby* (*už aby – it’s high time*), and a significant frequency of the optative particle *kéž* and of particle-like expressions. The expression *škoda* (“pity”), for example, comes up not only as an equivalent of *I wish* followed by a clause with a verb in the past perfect or with *could* followed by a perfect infinitive, but also of *I wish I could* followed by the present infinitive and it is theoretically possible also with verbs in the past tense (*I wish you were here. Škoda že tu nejsi*. “Pity you are not here.”) In these translations then, as well as in those where *I wish* is translated with impersonal accusative/dative constructions *mrzí mě, že* or *je mi líto, že* (“I am sorry that”) the Czech sentence has a reversed polarity, which supports theses often stated in linguistic literature about negative entailments or presuppositions of the *I wish* complements (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1009). Variance can be found in translations of *wish* complemented by a clause with *would* (see Searle 1975: 65), where one Czech translation has

a verb in the imperative. Interestingly, the same cannot be said about translations of phrases with *wish* in the past tense. Translations with reduced main clauses are very infrequent, verbs in the main clauses are in the past tense, not the conditional form. This, along with the fact that the subject of the finite clause following *wish* is often the same as the subject of *wish*, suggests that *I wished*, *he wished*, and *she wished* has a reporting rather than a modal function.

## 1 Introduction

Finite clauses following the verb *wish* are typically analyzed as content clause complements in the function of direct object. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1003) deal with sentence (1a) in the chapter called “Content clauses and reported speech”, and for Quirk et al. (1985: 1183) it is a case of monotransitive complementation in which *wish* is complemented by a finite clause.

(1) a *I wish (that) she were here.*

In sentence 1b taken from the British Component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB), what follows *wish* is annotated as a clause in the function of a direct object (Figure 1):

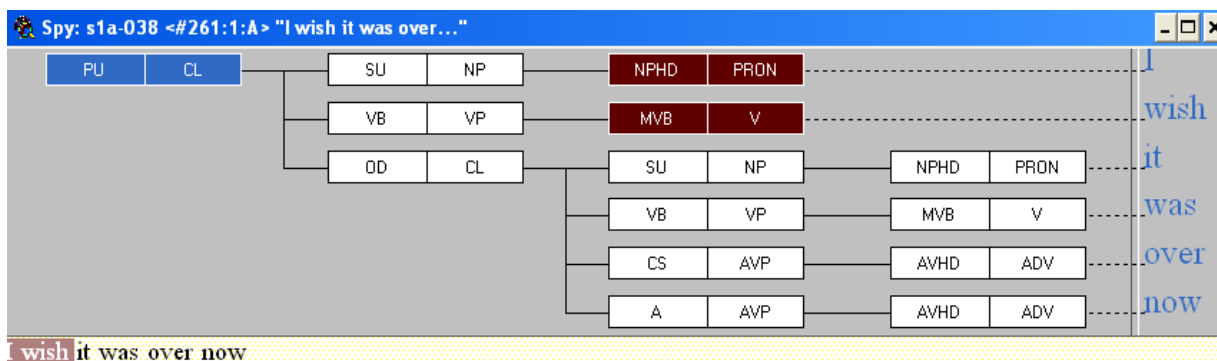


Figure 1. Tree structure for an ICE-GB sentence with *wish* followed by a finite clause

b *I wish it was over now.* [ICE-GB S1A-038]

According to Biber et al. (1999: 661-2), *wish* is one of “relatively common” verbs controlling *that*-complement clauses, or more specifically, a mental verb with emotive/affective content.<sup>1</sup> Quirk calls such *wish* a “hypothesis verb” (1985: 1183).

However, there are certain patterns of grammatical behaviour which clearly differentiate *wish* from other verbs in the same group, even from the ones that, like *wish*, tend to attach the *that*-complement asyndetically.

A. While the finite clauses after other verbs can be the focus of pseudo-cleft constructions (2), no token of a pseudo-clefted finite clause after *wish* was found in the British National Corpus (BNC).

(2) *So what I thought was that it was quite important to look at all these organisations that do seem to me really to have nothing to do with Oxford or Oxfordshire.* [BNC KS1 402]

B. While sentences with other verbs commonly complemented by a finite clause can be passivized and the finite clause complements extraposed (3), clauses following *wish* usually cannot. Biber et al. (1998: 481) list *wish* among “verbs uncommon in the passive”, or more specifically, verbs which “occur in the passive voice less than 2% of the time”.

(3) *Once Labour controlled Parliament it was thought that it would no longer be necessary.* [BNC EE9 870]

C. While verbs complemented by a finite clause are freely negated (4a), *wish* preceded by a negated Mod/Aux verb (in the BNC there are 190 contracted forms and 785 non-contracted forms) is never complemented by a finite clause, but by a PP, an NP,<sup>2</sup> or most commonly by a *to* infinitive (4b). In Quirk's terms, "*wish* allows transferred negation in infinitive clauses, but not in finite clauses" (Quirk et al. 1985: 1034):

(4) a *I don't think she knew either.* [BNC A0F 2905]

b *You are a walking germ-factory! I don't wish to see any more of you today!*

[BNC CH4 1956]

D. Taking the clause following *wish* for a dependent clause would mean that what contains *wish* is the main clause. In a significant number of these "main clauses" (58 in the whole BNC), however, the subject is elided, that is, the clause containing *wish* undergoes reduction. 34 of these tokens were found in the spoken part of the BNC (5a, 5b):

(5) a *Wish you boys would make your minds up!* [BNC KD5 8889]

b *Wish I could find my glasses she said.* [BNC KBD 7129]

It must be noted here that the subject elided is always the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun *I*.

E. Research in the BNC reveals that with different subjects, *wish* has also different complements. For example, of all personal pronouns, *I* is not only the most frequent subject of *wish* in the BNC (2,286 tokens), but *I wish* also has the highest proportion of finite clauses (66.5%). *You wish*, the second most frequent phrase (1,457 tokens) tends to be complemented

by a *to*-infinitive (62.4%) rather than by a finite clause (only 4.5%). A relatively high proportion of finite clauses was also found after *I wished* (61.5%), *she wished* (66.6%) and *he wished* (36.3%), but here the absolute frequencies are much lower than the one of *I wish* (270, 446 and 513 tokens respectively).<sup>3</sup> Asymmetries exist also in the distribution of pronouns and tenses in the finite clauses following *wish*: for example, after *I wish* there is a predominance of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal pronouns, that is, of pronouns denoting direct participants in conversation; there is a high frequency of constructions *I wish I could* and *I wish you would*, and a relatively high frequency of *would* with 3<sup>rd</sup> person personal pronouns. *I wish I would* is not common. Past tenses are used only with a restricted set of state verbs (*be, know, have*). Wishes about past time are systematically expressed by verbs in the past perfect tense. For details, see Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of pronouns and tenses in finite clauses after *I wish* in the BNC

<i>I wish...</i>	past perfect		<i>would</i>			<i>could</i>		past tense	subj. <i>were</i>	other verb form
	'd (-en)	<i>had</i> (-en)	'd (inf)	<i>would</i> (inf)	<i>would have</i> (-en)	<i>could</i>	<i>could have</i> (-en)			
<i>I</i>	97	62	2	0	1	237	8	179	23	6
<i>you</i>	15	16	65	58	1	13	9	39		5
<i>he</i>	6	8	20	19	0	6	0	14	1	0
<i>she</i>	0	5	7	8	0	2	0	7	0	0
<i>it</i>	0	11	0	9	0	3	0	27	10	1
<i>we</i>	5	13	1	0	1	21	1	32		0
<i>they</i>	0	5	31	18	0	2	1	3		0
<i>somebody</i>	15	2	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>people</i>	11	1	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0

All asymmetries observed during the study of the subjects and complements of *wish*, along with the fact that finite clauses as complements of *wish* cannot be pseudo-clefted, cannot

become the subject of a corresponding passive sentence, the fact that clauses with *wish* are often reduced in form, and that *wish* complemented by a finite clause is not negated, seem to question the main clause status of the phrases with *wish*, as well as the dependent clause status of what follows *wish*. Instead, they suggest that these phrases with *wish* contribute to the sentence modality, and raise the question of the function of these phrases in communication.<sup>4</sup> This aspect, however, is difficult to study systematically in a monolingual corpus. As Johansson puts it (2007: 57), “in monolingual corpora we can easily study forms and formal patterns, but meanings are less accessible”. Since “one of the most fascinating aspects of multilingual corpora is that they can make meanings visible through translation” (Johansson 2007: 57), I will turn to a parallel translation corpus to verify what analyses of formal patterns in the BNC only suggested. That is to say, in this paper, through a systematic study of Czech translations, I will investigate the modal character of the *I wish* phrase as compared to that of other phrases with *wish* often followed by a finite clause (*I wished, she wished, he wished*). Is there any difference in translating *I wish* and translating *I/he/she wished*, i.e. is the *wish* in *I wish* different than *wish* in *I wished, she wished, he wished*?

## **2 Methods**

I worked with parallel English-Czech texts from the InterCorp project, developed at the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University in Prague. InterCorp is a multilingual corpus of 23 languages with Czech as the pivot language, i.e. Czech is either the source, or the target language. English texts have 4,705,000 words; their Czech parallels consist of 4,041,000 words. English is the source language in 25 texts, mostly fiction, and the target language in 7 novels and one academic text. In this study, only translations from English to Czech were analyzed systematically.<sup>5</sup> All tokens of the phrases most frequently followed by finite clauses, that is, *I wish, I wished, She wished* and *He wished*, were downloaded with their

Czech translations, and subjected to a systematic analysis.<sup>6</sup> The corpus was accessed via the web interface called *Park*.

### 3 Data analysis

Though the numbers in InterCorp are quite low (67 tokens of *I wish* followed by a finite clause), the frequencies of particular tenses and modal verbs in the clauses following *I wish* for individual personal pronouns as subjects of these clauses reflect the general situation in the BNC. Wishes are most often addressed back to the speaker (Grepš and Karlík 1998: 487), i.e. *I* is the most frequent subject (30 tokens), followed by the verb *could* (16 tokens). As to *I wished*, *he wished* and *she wished*, there are 33 tokens with finite clauses in InterCorp. Not all personal pronouns were found as the subjects of the finite clause; in 25 tokens the subject of the finite clause is the same as the subject of *wish*, followed by *could* in 9 of these tokens. In general, there is a high frequency of verbs in the past perfect tense (16 tokens).

A closer look at the Czech translations reveals that translating phrases with *wish* complemented by a finite clause is by no means an easy task. There are 19 different Czech equivalents of the phrase *I wish* complemented by a finite clause and 12 different equivalents of such phrases with *wish* in the past tense (*I/he/she wished*). Moreover, if a verb in the past perfect tense was used in English to express a wish about past time, Czech translators sometimes opted for the somewhat dated past conditional form in Czech.<sup>7</sup>

#### 3.1 Czech translations of *I wish* followed by a finite clause

Table 2 presents all 67 Czech translations of *I wish* followed by a finite clause in InterCorp:

Table 2. Czech translations of *I wish* followed by a finite clause in InterCorp

<i>I wish...</i> __ →	Σ	I	you	she	it	we	they	NP	there	some-body
<i>kéž by</i> - <i>if only / may</i> [OPTAT. PARTICLE would]	18	11	2			1	1	2		1
<i>už aby</i> - <i>it's high time</i> [already that-would]	1							1		
<i>kdyby (tak) if only</i> [if-would]	4	3				1				
imperative form	1		1							
<i>škoda že</i> [pity that]	5	1	1					3		
<i>mrzí mě, že</i> - <i>I am sorry / regret that</i>	2	2								
<i>je mi líto, že</i> - <i>I am sorry / regret that</i>	1	1								
<i>lituju, že</i> [I regret that]	1	1								
<i>přeju/i si, aby</i> [I wish that-would]	2							2		
<i>přál(a) bych si, aby</i> [I would wish that-would]	12	1	1		1			6	3	
<i>přál(a) bych si</i> inf [I would wish inf]	3	3								
<i>chtěl(a) bych, aby</i> [I would want that-would ]	2		1						1	
<i>chtěl(a) bych</i> inf [I would want inf]	1	1								
<i>chci, abychom</i> [I want that-would]	1					1				
<i>domnívám se, že by měla</i> [I think that she should ]	1			1						
<i>byl bych rád, kdyby</i> [I would be glad if-would]	4		3						1	
<i>ráda bych, abychom</i> - <i>I would like us to...</i> [I would gladly that-would]	1					1				
<i>(moc, tak, velmi) rád bych</i> l-form [I would gladly V]	6	6								
<i>potěšilo by mě, kdybys</i> [it would please me if-would]	1		1							

The *I wish* construction followed by a finite clause is not always translated into Czech by a main clause; **translations with main clauses** cover less than half the tokens of *I wish* followed by a finite clause in InterCorp (27 out of 67). Like all main clauses in Czech, they are separated from the dependent clauses by a comma. Expressions used in these Czech main clauses are called modal predicators in Grepl and Karlík (1998: 154). Most frequent is the literal translation of the verb *wish*, i.e. the verb *přát si*. In two sentences the present tense form of *přát si* was used, and in fifteen the conditional form, followed either by the infinitival



form (6a), or more commonly by a clause introduced by the conjunction *aby* (6b), i.e. a conjunction containing the conditional auxiliary *by* (part of the analytical conditional verbal form). Also the verb *chtít* (“to want”) occurs once in the present tense and three times in the conditional form (6c).

(6) a *I wish I had a daughter so I could forbid her to marry one ...* (Adams)

*Přál **bych** si mít dceru a zakázat jí, aby si ho vzala ...*

b *Vivian darling, I wish there were something, just something I could do.* (Hailey)

*Vivian, drahoušku, moc **bych** si přál, **abych** mohl něco - aspoň něco málo udělat!*

c *I wish you could come back for good.* (Steel)

*Chtěla **bych**, **abys** tu zůstal napořád.*

Then there are phrases with the adverb *rád* (“glad”), preceded by the verb *be* in the conditional mood and followed by the conjunction *kdyby*, which again contains the conditional auxiliary *by* (*byl bych rád /radši, kdyby* “I would be glad /glad<sub>comp</sub> if”).

(7) *“I wish you’d stop sulking about that bloody planet,” said Ford.* (Adams)

*Byl **bych** rád, **kdybys** už jednou přestal skuhrat kvůli tý zatracený planetě.*

Sometimes, the *-l* form of the composite conditional form is elided (*rád bych, aby*):

(8) *I wish we were meeting under more pleasant circumstances.* (Brown)

*Ráda **bych**, **abychom** se poznaly za mnohem příjemnějších okolností.*

In six sentences, the word *rád* is attached directly to the conditional form of the verb used in the English finite clause, that is, *I wish* is no more translated into Czech with a main clause:

(9) *“I wish I knew what this means!” he burst out angrily.* (Rowling)

*“Rád bych věděl, co tohle má znamenat!” vybuchl hněvivě.*

In five cases, the finite clauses following *I wish* are rendered into Czech as standalone sentences introduced by conjunctions containing the conditional auxiliary *by*. It is again either the conjunction *kdybych* (10a), sometimes followed by the particle *tak* (“so”), or the conjunction *aby* intensified<sup>8</sup> by the temporal particle *už* (“already”). Constructions such as these are called in Czech grammars **contracted composite sentences**.<sup>9</sup>

(10) a *I wish I knew.* (Fielding)

*To kdybych věděla.*

b *I wish I could show it to some of my students.* (Clarke)

*Kdybych to tak mohl předvést některým svým studentům.*

c *“I wish the play didn’t run in my head,” she said.* (Woolf)

*“Už aby mi ta hra přestala znít v hlavě,” řekla.*

Reductions are also translations of *I wish* as *škoda že*, which were found in five sentences. *Škoda že* is a reduced form of the phrase *Je škoda, že* (“it’s a pity that”), where the predicate verb, and often also the comma separating the “main clause” from the “dependent clause”, are lost. All these sentences with *škoda že* exhibit a reversed polarity, as compared to the

English originals, which confirms that all content clauses complementing *wish* have “a negative entailment or presupposition” (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1009).<sup>10</sup>

The phrase *škoda že* was used not only when the original English finite clauses contained verbs in the past perfect tense and *could* with the past infinitive,<sup>11</sup> as in 11a and 11b:

(11) a *I wish you'd asked!* (Franzen)

*Škoda že ses nezeptal!* [Pity you **didn't** ask]

b *I wish I could've done it for m'self, but I didn't know then what I do now.* (Lindsey)

*Škoda, že jsem to neudělala sama, ale to jsem nevěděla to co dneska.*

[Pity I **didn't** do it myself...]

but also *could* with the present infinitive (12a):

(12) a *I wish that all of life could be that simple.* (Angell)

*Škoda že v životě nejde všechno tak jednoduše.* [Pity **not** everything...]

Theoretically, *škoda že* could also translate *I wish* followed by clauses with a verb in the past tense or the past subjunctive *were* (12b):

b *I wish you were here.*

*Škoda že tu nejsi.* [Pity you are **not** here]

The most frequent Czech translation of finite clauses introduced by *I wish* (18 tokens), however, is the one with the **optative particle** *kěž*.<sup>12</sup> In most cases, the subject is the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun (11 tokens of *I*, one token of *we*), but other pronominal or even nominal subjects can also be found (13):

(13) *Good God, I wish more women thought like that.* (Lindsey)

*Kěž by bylo víc žen, které by uvažovaly jako vy.*

My final examples are those where the Czech equivalent is a sentence with a **verb in the imperative form**:

(14) *"I wish you'd stop saying that," shouted Ford* (Adams)

*"Přestaň s tím pořád otravovat," houkl na něj Ford.* [Stop bothering me with that]

(14) is a very good example of a situation in which a sentence introduced by *I wish* may be interpreted as an appeal: the subject of the finite clause following *I wish* is *you*, and the verb *would* follows.<sup>13</sup> The speaker is irritated and wants a change. As Leech puts it, "*would* in this position can have volitional colouring: *we wish you would come and stay with us. I wish you wouldn't drink so much.* Such remarks often have the force of requests or commands" (Leech 2004: 123). For Searle (1975: 64-5), sentence (15) is one of the sentences "conventionally used in the performance of indirect directives".

(15) *I wish you wouldn't do that.*

If the subject is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person personal pronoun, or a noun phrase, a **periphrastic imperative with the optative particle *at'***, parallel to the English *let*, can be used. Unfortunately, tokens of this were only found in the Czech source texts:<sup>14</sup>

(16) *At' jde k čertu!* (Kundera) [Let him go to hell]

*I wish he'd go to hell!*

### 3.2 Translations of *I wished, he wished, she wished* followed by a finite clause<sup>15</sup>

Table 3 presents Czech translations of all phrases with *wish* in the past tense (*I/he/she wished*) followed by a finite clause in InterCorp:

Table 3. Czech translations of *I/he/she wished* followed by a finite clause in InterCorp

	$\Sigma$	<i>I wished</i> <i>I</i>	<i>I wished</i> <i>they</i>	<i>he wished</i> <i>he</i>	<i>she wished</i> <i>she</i>	<i>she wished</i> <i>he</i>	<i>she wished</i> <b>NP</b>	<i>she wished</i> <i>they</i>	<i>she wished</i> <i>it</i>
<i>mrzí mě, že - I am sorry / regret that</i>	1	1							
<i>mrzelo mě, že</i> <i>I was sorry / regretted that</i>	2	2							
<i>(za)litoval(a) jsem, že,</i> <i>litoval(a) toho</i> [X was sorry that / about it]	6	1		2	1		1		1
<i>přál(a) (jsem) si, aby(ch)</i> [X wished that-would]	12		1	5	4	1	1		
<i>přál(a) (jsem) si inf</i> [X wished inf]	2	1			1				
<i>přála by si, aby</i> [she would wish that-would]	1						1		
<i>toužila, aby</i> [she desired that-would]	1							1	
<i>toužil(a) (jsem) inf</i> [X desired inf]	2	1		1					
<i>býval by raději, kdyby</i> [he would have been glad <sub>comp</sub> if-]	1			1					

would]									
( <i>moc, tak, velmi</i> ) <i>rád by(ch)</i> 1-form [X would (so, very) gladly V]	3	1		2					
<i>radši měla</i> inf [she rather should have –en]	1				1				
<i>kéž by</i> [OPTAT.PART. would] <i>if only / may</i>	1					1			

Phrases with *wish* in the past tense, i.e. *I wished, he wished, she wished*, are in 24 sentences out of 33 translated with a main clause. The verb *přát si* (“to wish”) is used in the past tense (17a), not in the present tense or in the conditional mood, except when a reporting verb is overtly mentioned (17b):

(17) a *She wished she'd worn a bra, and some better clothes.* (Irving)

*Přála si, aby měla podprsenku a nějaké lepší oblečení.*

b *She told Andrea she wished the old man “would just leave us in peace”.*

*Řekla Andreovi, že by si přála, aby ten stařec “nás nechal na pokoji”.*

[She **told** Andrea she **would** wish that...]

One additional verb occurs, i.e. the verb *toužit* (“long for”), three times in the past tense.

Phrases translating *to be sorry / regret* with reversed polarity are also in the past tense (18), never in the conditional mood and just once in the present tense. They are more frequent than in the translations of *I wish* (9 tokens out of 33).

(18) *Sometimes she wished she had married.* (Woolf)

*Někdy litovala, že se nevdala.* [sometimes she regretted that she did **not** marry]

No reductions occur. Standalone sentences introduced by *kdyby tak*, or *už aby* are not used, and nor is the particle-like expression *škoda*, unless a reporting verb were overtly mentioned. *Škoda* then would have to be expanded into its original finite clause form, as in (19):

(19) *Říkala, že je škoda, že...* [she said **that** it was a pity **that...**]

These sentences, however, are avoided in translation, as the repetition of the obligatory conjunction *že* is stylistically infelicitous.

Imperatives are never used, and optative particles are not common; there is just one sentence introduced by *kěž*:

(20) *God, she wished he wasn't so damned handsome that her fingers itched to touch him.*

(Lindsey)

*Kěž **by** nebyl tak hezký! Kěž **by** se ho netoužila dotknout!*

[OPTAT. PARTICLE he would not be so pretty! OPTAT. PART. she would not long to touch him!]

What thus remains as a non-main clause translation is just the one with *rád* (“gladly”) attached directly to the verb in the conditional form (three tokens, e.g. 21):

(21) *As long as he was here he wished he had a bug to plant.* (Brown)

*Když už tam byl, rád **by** jí napíchl telefon.* [... he would gladly bug her telephone]

All of this shows that phrases with *wished* in the past tense have a reporting rather than a modal function, i.e. sentences with *wish* in the past tense are only reported wishes with the original illocutionary force lost.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4 Conclusions**

A systematic analysis of Czech translations of the English *I wish* phrase followed by a finite clause confirmed its modal character, showing it in a more transparent and overt way. In less than half the tokens (27 out of 67) the phrase *I wish* is translated with a main clause; the rest are contracted composite sentences or translations with optative particles or particle-like elements; there is even one translation with a verb in the imperative form. Wishes can be addressed to the speaker him/herself, which they often are. If they are addressed to a direct participant in conversation (the subject of the finite clause following *wish* is *you*), they might be interpreted as appeals, which only confirms that a sentence with *I wish* may function as an indirect directive. If they are addressed to somebody who is not a direct participant in conversation (the subject of the finite clause following *I wish* is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun or a noun phrase) and *would* is used in the English sentence, Czech translations show an irritation or annoyance of the speaker, who wants a change. As for phrases with *wish* in the past tense, though they are also often followed by a finite clause, they are not modal markers. In 24 sentences out of 33 they are translated into Czech with a main clause, never with an imperative sentence or a contracted composite sentence and just once with an optative particle. All of this, along with the fact that the subject of the English finite clause is in most cases the same as the subject of *wish* (not only in InterCorp but also in the BNC), suggests that these sentences are only reported wishes which have lost their original illocutionary force.



A close analysis of Czech translations of phrases with *wish* followed by a finite clause, that is, a “systematic exploitation of the bilingual intuition of translators” (Johansson 2007: 52), has thus brought supporting evidence about the modal character of the *I wish* phrase and revealed a non-modal, reporting function of phrases with *wish* in the past tense, which an analysis of a monolingual corpus did not and perhaps could not reveal.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> “The verbs that take a *that*-complement clause in post-predicate position fall into just three major semantic domains: **mental verbs**, mainly of cognition (e.g. *think, know*), but including a few with emotive/affective content (e.g. *hope* and *wish*); **speech act verbs** (e.g. *say, tell*); and **other communication verbs** that do not necessarily involve speech (e.g. *show, prove, suggest*)” (Biber et al. 1998: 661-2).

<sup>2</sup> i. *The day begins early and hours of endless sunshine stretch ahead with miles of perfect beach just yards from the Club, the dedicated sunbather couldn't wish for more.* [BNC AMW 953]

ii. *I didn't have a lot of affection for her, but I wouldn't wish such a fate on my worst enemy.* [BNC AVC 1146]

<sup>3</sup> These asymmetries seem to shed a new light on the sweeping statement about *wish* found in Biber et al. (1999: 989) that “the verbs *wish* and *expect* are grammatical with both *that*-clauses and *to*-clauses, but they have a stronger lexico-grammatical association with *to*-clauses (being about ten times more common controlling that type of complement clause)”.

<sup>4</sup> According to Biber et al. (1999: 974), sentences such as *I wish it was Friday though* express an “attitudinal stance”.

<sup>5</sup> There are two reasons for this: first, texts translated from Czech into English are under-represented in InterCorp, and second, the distribution of *to*-infinitives and finite clauses after phrases with *wish* in English texts translated from Czech does not reflect the general distribution of these complements in the BNC; i.e. *to*-infinitives dominate in InterCorp

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English target texts after all phrases with *wish*. Finite clauses occur only after *I wish* and *she wished* and in a much lower percentage than in the BNC (6 out of 14 tokens and 4 out of 11 tokens, respectively). This might suggest that translators from Czech to English are not perhaps fully aware of the whole spectrum of constructions Czech uses to express what English phrases with *wish* do. However, systematic translational implications of the research presented in here are beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>6</sup> InterCorp examples quoted in this paper come from the following texts: A. Hailey: *The Final Diagnosis*; D. Adams: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*; S. Brown: *Hello, Darkness and The Crush*; J. Fielding: *Puppet*; A. C. Clarke: *Rendezvous with Rama*; V. Woolf: *Between the Acts* and *A Haunted House*; J. K. Rowling: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*; J. Franzen: *The Corrections*; J. Lindsey: *A Loving Scoundrel*; C. Day: *The Circus in Winter*; J. Irving: *A Widow for a Year*; J. Angell: *Callgirl*; D. Steel: *Johnny Angel*; M. Kundera: *Žert (The Joke)*.

<sup>7</sup> As the Czech past conditional is dying out, the present conditional is ambiguous between a wish about present time and a wish about past time, and the translations show that. After *I wish*, only 3 verbs out of 14 in the past perfect tense were translated with a past conditional (i), after *I/he/she wished* 2 out of 16 (ii).

i. *I wish I'd met him first!* (Irving)

*Kéž bych ho byla potkala první!*

ii. *Now he wished that he'd never agreed to give such a speech in the first place.* (Irving)

*Nyní si především přál, aby byl s přednesením téhle řeči nikdy nesouhlasil.*

<sup>8</sup> As Grepl and Karlík (1998: 489) put it, the speaker is impatiently awaiting a change.

<sup>9</sup> In Grepl and Karlík's terms (1998: 600), "stažené souvětné konstrukce".

<sup>10</sup> Polarity is also reversed in translations of *I wish* with impersonal accusative/dative constructions *mrzí mě* and *je mi líto* [I am sorry], which were used if the complementing finite clause contained a verb in simple past (i) and in the past perfect (ii):

i. *I wish I knew where my mother was so I could tell her that.* (Day)

*A tak je mi líto, že **nevím**, kde žije moje máma, protože bych jí to ráda řekla.* [I am sorry I **don't** know...]

ii. *"I wish I'd had a nice big swimming pool like that when I was growing up," the boss said.* (Franzen)

*"Mrzí mě, že jsem **neměl** takový krásný veliký bazén, když jsem byl malý kluk," poznamenal šéf.* [I am sorry I

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**didn't** have...]

It is just these translations with polarity reversed that systematically differentiate between wishes about present time (*i*) and past time (*ii*), expressed in English by simple past and past perfect respectively.

<sup>11</sup> According to Dušková (1994: 607), this form of a Czech wish clause (“přací věta”) often corresponds to an English sentence with *wish*.

<sup>12</sup> Traditional Czech grammars (*Mluvnice češtiny* 1987: 352) recognize “přací věty” (wish-clauses) as sentences with a special communicative function, perhaps because this communicative function is quite conventionalized in special optative forms (Grepl and Karlík 1998: 487). However, this criterion is formal rather than functional and when it comes to strictly defining this communicative function, grammar books admit that it has a relatively difficult conceptual structure and it is composed of many subjective attitudes (*Mluvnice češtiny* 1987: 352). Besides, dictionaries of standard Czech (e.g. *Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost* 1994) mark *kěž* as bookish (“knižní”).

<sup>13</sup> Let me remind that in the BNC *would* follows *I wish you* in 55.7% of sentences where *you* is the subject of the finite clause after *I wish*.

<sup>14</sup> Czech translations of sentences with *would* after 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects show the annoyance or irritation of the speaker. As ELT materials suggest, “we use *I wish... would...* when we want something to happen or when we want somebody to do something. The speaker is not happy with the present situation” (Murphy 1994: 80).

“*I wish you'd wait and eat here once in a while,*” his mother said. (Steel)

“*Byla bych radši, kdybys počkal a najedl se až doma,*” **povzdychla** si matka. [I would be glad<sub>comp</sub>, if..., **sighed** his mother]

<sup>15</sup> It needs to be reminded that there are only 37 such sentences in InterCorp, and by no means do all personal pronouns occur as the subjects of the finite clause (see Table 5).

<sup>16</sup> One brief look back into the BNC reveals that the subject of the clause following *wish* in the past tense is most often the same pronoun as the subject of *wish* which again confirms that *I wish* is being reported here.

	<i>I</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>they</i>
<i>I wished</i>	<b>80</b>	10	11	5	8	4	8
<i>he wished</i>			<b>95</b>	11	7		4
<i>she wished</i>			35	<b>145</b>			