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Epistemic Modality in Newspaper Discourse

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Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem bakalářské práce je prostudovat užití anglických modálních sloves vyjadřujících epistemickou modalitu v diskursu novinových zpráv. Student nejprve na základě relevantní odborné literatury definuje pojem "modalita" a stručně uvede hlavní kategorie modality. Zaměří se především na anglická modální slovesa vyjadřující různé stupně jistoty, podrobně popíše jejich morfosyntaktické rysy, sémantiku a užití. Dále představí diskurs novinových zpráv, jeho funkce a typicky používané jazykové prostředky. Následně provede analýzu novinových článků s cílem popsat kontexty, ve kterých se modální slovesa vyskytují, a zhodnotit kontextové faktory určující jejich epistemickou interpretaci. Na závěr student objasní výskyt, užití a interpretace analyzovaných modálních sloves s ohledem na funkce diskursu novinových zpráv.

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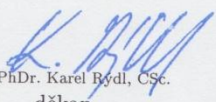
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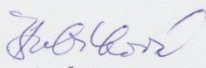Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **PhDr. Petra Huschová, Ph.D.**

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Seznam odborné literatury:

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Prohlašuji:

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

V Pardubicích dne 28. 6. 2017

Jiří Kočvara

ANNOTATION

This bachelor paper deals with English modal verbs expressing epistemic modality in newspaper discourse. The paper presents modality with its main categories together with modal verbs that are later analysed. Modal verbs expressing epistemic possibility, which express different degrees of certainty, are the main focus of the paper. After that, newspaper discourse is introduced. The analysis of newspaper articles focuses on describing contexts in which modal verbs occur with regard to the function of newspaper discourse.

KEYWORDS

modality, epistemic, modal verbs, newspaper discourse, possibility, may, might, could

NÁZEV

Epistemická modalita v diskursu novinových zpráv

ANOTACE

Bakalářská práce se zabývá užitím anglických modálních sloves vyjadřujících epistemickou modalitu v diskursu novinových zpráv. V práci je popsána modalita s jejími hlavními kategoriemi spolu s modálními slovesy, které jsou později analyzovány. Hlavní zaměření práce jsou anglická modální slovesa, která vyjadřují různé stupně jistoty. Dále je představen diskurs novinových zpráv. Analýza novinových článků se zaměřuje na popis kontextů, ve kterém se modální slovesa vyskytují s ohledem na funkce diskursu novinových zpráv.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

modalita, epistemická, modální slovesa, diskurs novinových zpráv, možnost, may, might, could

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Introduction

This paper deals with epistemic modality in newspaper discourse with the main focus on modal verbs expressing epistemic possibility. The thesis is based on a small corpus where epistemic possibility meanings of modal verbs in newspaper discourse are investigated. The main focus of this investigation is on syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the modals. It also focuses on frequency of their occurrences based on quantitative analysis that turns into qualitative one. Another focus is on analyzing the context in which modal verbs are used and on commenting factors that give those findings an epistemic sense. At the end, this analysis is compared to the main functions of newspaper discourse.

This work is divided into two parts, the first dealing with theoretical issues and the second dealing with practical issues concerning analysis of the corpus plus its commentary. The theoretical part starts with a brief discussion of the relation between mood and modality. After that, modality is the main focus, where the term modality is defined. Then the concepts of necessity and possibility are presented together with their differences. Moreover, categories of modality are set according to some selected linguists that dealt with modality. Even though deontic modality is not the analysed type of modality in this paper, the epistemic and deontic contrast, of course, has to be discussed and presented as well because of the fact that the investigated modals may express both meanings. Then, the term epistemic modality is dealt with. Also, Palmer's view of epistemic modality and its categorization is briefly discussed by using terms such as speculative, deductive and assumptive.

The following chapter deals only with modal verbs. Firstly, their groups as well as basic formal features are generally observed. Because of the focus on modals that express epistemic possibility, the main centre of attraction are modals such as *may, might*, and *could*. They are individually characterized according to their possibility meaning. Their semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic aspects are observed together with examples that support or indicate the presented points.

The practical part is based on an analysis of a small corpus that contains newspaper articles in which epistemic modal verbs occurred. The investigation focuses on tense, form, and other features such as negation, concessive use, aspect as well as hypothetical meaning. The results of the investigation are then observed in accordance with newspaper's purpose.

In addition, it is important to point out that conclusions of this paper have set boundaries because of the length that set limitations to the size of the sample. The size would, of course, have to be greater to be sufficient for making general conclusions about the usage of modal verbs in newspaper discourse. Nevertheless, conclusions made in this paper could create a starting point for greater investigation of this matter.

1 Modality and Mood

Modality and mood co-occur in the majority of studies dealing with modality mainly because, as Palmer's suggests, mood and modal system are two sub-categories of modality. (2001: 4) Huddleston and Pullum (2005) mostly see mood as "a grammatical category associated with the semantic dimension of modality" and liken mood to modality as tense to time: "tense and mood are categories of grammatical form, while time and modality are the associated categories of meaning". (2005: 53) When talking about mood, it is usually expressed as a contrast between indicative and subjunctive while the best way to illustrate modal system is by using modal verbs. (Huschová 2008: 5)

Palmer sees a prototypically binary system of Realis and Irrealis. A distinction between indicative that marks clauses as Realis (*John is in the kitchen*) and the subjunctive marking them as Irrealis (*John may/must/should be in the kitchen*). (Palmer 2001: 1, 2)

Huddleston and Pullum (2005) provide examples of sentences with and without modal verbs. When the sentence does not contain any modal *(non-modal)*, it simply states a fact *(she saw him)* or an assertion *(he leaves today).* But by using modals, it is possible to change the notion of the sentence to possibility *(she might have seen him),* an inference *(she must have seen him)*, an obligation *(he must leave today),* or permission *(he can/may leave today).* Therefore, it is clear that by using different modal verbs, it is possible to express different types of mood. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005: 53) In addition, when we express possibility, we mostly tend to use some emotions or opinions in the process of making the utterance as could be seen in the Palmer's examples above about John.

According to Leech (2004), the category of mood is not important now in the English language as it once was. "By distinct forms of the verb, older English was able to discriminate between the Indicative Mood – expressing an event or state as a fact, and the Subjunctive – expressing it as a supposition." (2004: 114) To sum this up, it is now preferable to use modal verbs to express modality.

2 Modality

This chapter deals with modality and the description of its main types. Modality is one of a number of semantic-grammatical features such as grammatical number or tense. As Palmer quotes Lyons, modality is concerned with the opinion and attitude of the speaker. (1990: 2) To emphasize it: "modality is centrally concerned with the speaker's attitude towards the factuality or actualization of the situation expressed by the rest of the clause. The core concepts in modality are necessity and possibility." (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 173)

The terminology for types of modality differs throughout works interested in this matter, but you can see a certain degree of similarity among them. For example, Biber at al. (1999) divided modality into intrinsic and extrinsic.

> Intrinsic modality refers to actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control: meanings relating to permission, obligation, or volition (or intention). Extrinsic modality refers to the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood: possibility, necessity or prediction. (Biber at al. 1999: 485)

On the other hand, Leech (2004) uses terms epistemic and root modality, where root modality has the features of Biber's intrinsic modality and the epistemic one copies the extrinsic group of modality.

In Palmer (2001), you can see a more detailed distinction, in which he has two main groups, further divided into subgroups. The first group – propositional modality is concerned with the speaker's judgment of the proposition and is further divided into evidential and epistemic modality. With evidential modality speakers indicate the evidence they have for its factual status *(one can see you were sick)*, whereas with epistemic modality they express their judgments about the factual status of the proposition *(John may be in his office)*. The second group - event modality is concerned with the speaker's attitude towards potential future events and is divided into deontic and dynamic modality. Deontic modality relates to obligation *(you must go now)* or permission *(you can go now)*, coming from an external source, whereas dynamic modality relates to ability *(he can swim)* or willingness *(I can help you)*, which comes from the individual concerned. (Palmer 2001: 8-10)

According to Tarnyikova, there are more ways of expressing modality, for example by using adjectives *(possible, certain, sure)*, adverbials *(possibly, perhaps)*, and modal verbs which are the most common in English. (1985: 13) The most crucial thing for the purpose of this paper

are modal verbs because of the focus on modal verbs expressing epistemic possibility in newspaper discourse.

To conclude, there are two consistent groups, one that relates to permission and obligation (deontic/non-epistemic/root modality), whereas the second one relates to the speaker's judgment about the likelihood of a situation (epistemic). In this bachelor paper, the Epistemic x Deontic distinction will be used because of dealing with modals expressing epistemic possibility and showing the contrast, for example between the epistemic use of *may* and the deontic one.

2.1 Possibility and Necessity

Possibility and necessity are taken as the central notions of traditional modal logic. (Lyons 1977: 787) This concept in modality is crystal clear. Possibility indicates that some things could have been different. For example, h*e might have had an accident*. This example can be paraphrased as – *it is possible that he had an accident.* On the other hand, necessity does not offer options. For instance, *John is in his office,* but this will not be paraphrased as *it is necessary that John is in his office*, because the word necessary itself is not used in an epistemic sense. Therefore, *it is necessarily the case that John is in his office* is used. (Palmer 2001: 89)

The relationship between these two terms, possibility and necessity, is oppositeness. Possibility is the opposite of necessity and vice versa. For better understanding, there is an illustration made by Leech – *someone has to be telling lies = not everyone can be telling the truth.* (2004: 82)

This relation may also be seen in Palmer's (1990) system for the logical equivalence, when he speaks about negation. He states that it is possible to distinguish two ways of negation – negation of the modality and negation of the proposition.

Possible not = Not necessary

Necessary not = Not possible

Due to this logical relation, you can use *not necessary* to negate *possible not* and *not possible* instead of *necessary not*. (1990: 9)

This concept of necessity and possibility can be expressed by using different modal verbs by which you can express different things.

a) *John may be home (possibility) – it is possible that John is at home*
b) *John should be home by now (high probability) – it is probable that John is at home by now*
c) *John must be home by now (certitude, we are sure that he is at home) – it is necessarily the case that John is at home*

These examples above are interpreted epistemically and it is clear that the modals express various degrees of the speaker's certainty. In the first example *(a),* I do not know that John is home, but I also do not know that he is not, so there is a possibility for him to be there. In the second example *(b),* I still do not know whether he is at home or not, but the probability and my expectation is that he will be there. Lastly, in *(c),* I may not know that he is home, but I'm inferring that he is. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005: 54)

To see the contrast, there are some examples that are interpreted deontically.

d) *John must tell the truth – it is necessary for John to tell the truth*
e) *John may go out when he wants – it is possible for John to go out when he wants*
f) *John should call his grandmother – it is necessary for John to call his grandmother*

The meanings of these examples above have to do with various kinds of permission and obligation. To be specific, the examples interpreted deontically have to do with authority and judgment rather than knowledge and belief as the examples interpreted epistemically. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005: 54)

Huddleston and Pullum (2005) comment on the difference between epistemic and deontic possibility and necessity by saying that *"with epistemic modality, necessity and possibility relate to whether or not something is the case, is true, whereas with deontic modality they relate to whether or not something happens, or is done."* (2005: 55) This difference may be seen between *(c)* and *(f).*

2.2 Epistemic/Deontic Contrast

According to Palmer, it is easy to distinguish epistemic from other types of modality even though some modals are used for epistemic as well as for deontic modality, and the meaning

must be derived from the context. (2001: 69) For example, we can use *may* for expressing both epistemic and deontic - *the teacher may come later to the class = it is possible that the teacher will come later to the class (epistemic possibility)* or that - *the teacher is allowed to come a little bit later (deontic permission).*

Regarding the differences mentioned in previous chapters, you can say that these two modalities are characterized in terms of subjectivity. In epistemic possibility, speaker's emotions, opinions or evidence are influencing his uncertainty so it is subjective, while deontic possibility uses facts –*"graduate students can check out books for the whole semester"* (Bybee and Fleischman 1990: 4*) = it is possible for them to check out books for the whole semester*. This example suggests that the speaker did not use subjectivity but rather a general fact about conditions for students.

As has been mentioned in the previous subchapter (see 2.1), there are differences for paraphrasing epistemic and deontic utterances. Deontic uses infinitive constructions *(it is possible / necessary for),* whereas epistemic uses that-clauses *(it is possible that, it is necessarily the case that).* (Palmer 1990: 8) Leech (2004) indicates this aspect between modals *may* and *can* in their possibility meanings in terms of 'factual and theoretical possibility'. The paraphrase of factual possibility, which is represented by epistemic *may*, is followed by that-clauses, whereas theoretical possibility represented by deontic *can* is followed by a *(for* + noun phrase) + *to* + infinitive construction. It can be seen in his examples:

Factual: the road may be blocked = 'it is possible that the road is blocked' = 'the road might be blocked'

Theoretical: the road can be blocked = 'it is possible for the road to be blocked' = 'it is possible to block the road'

Also, situations in which these sentences can be used are quite different. The first one, factual possibility, is more urgent because "the actual likelihood of an event's taking place is being considered *(a dialogue between a married couple that are expecting visitors – the road may be blocked by flood water = 'that possibly explains why our guests haven't arrived'),"* whereas the example of theoretical possibility describes a "theoretically conceivable happening *(a sentence said by one police officer to another – the road can be blocked by police = ' and if we do this, we might intercept the criminals')*." (2004: 82) There is also a

difference in terms of strength, which can be seen in Leech's examples - *this illness can be fatal / this illness may be fatal*. The first of these examples states a theoretical possibility, whereas the one with *may* states that the event could actually happen. Therefore, it would be reasonable to start worrying as a patient receiving the second statement. (Leech 2004: 83)

Another important difference lies in the scope of negation. Deontic possibility only negates the modality, whereas epistemic possibility can negate both modality and proposition. It is clearly illustrated on Palmer's examples below (1991: 39):

Epistemic: *John may not be in his office. = It is possible that John <u>is not in his office</u>*

Deontic: *John may not come to his office. = It is <u>not possible</u> for John to come to his office.*

The purpose of this paper is to examine the usage of epistemic modality in newspaper discourse. However, because of limited space, the paper will focus only on possibility, more precisely on modal verbs expressing epistemic possibility. Therefore, the following chapters are in accordance with the purpose of the paper.

2.3 Epistemic Modality

Before modal verbs are presented, it is necessary to introduce epistemic modality. According to Palmer, epistemic modality is the simplest of modalities to deal with, in both its syntax and its semantics, because it is most clearly distinct from others and has the greatest degree of internal regularity and completeness. (1990: 50)

Most linguists (Palmer 1990, Huddleston, Leech, Biber et. al.) understand epistemic modality similarly. For example, Huddleston says that this modality comprises meanings which relates to possibility, necessity or prediction on the basis of what we know or assume and they could differ in the speaker's belief about the statement being true. (Huddleston 2002, 54)

As you could see in previous chapters, Palmer uses the term propositional modality to characterize epistemic modality. "Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition."(Palmer 2001: 8) According to Leech "epistemic modality is more oriented towards logic dealing with statements about the universe, and constraints of likelihood on their truth and falsehood."(Leech 2004: 84)

The function of modal verbs expressing epistemic modality is to make judgments about the possibility that something is or is not the case. In Palmer's book (1990), you can also see the difference between epistemic and non-epistemic modality. "Epistemic modality is, that is to say, the modality of propositions, in the strict sense of the term, rather than actions, states, events, etc."(Palmer 1990: 50) He also divides epistemic modality into 3 subtypes – Speculative, Deductive and Assumptive. (Palmer 2001: 24) These are the three additional groups that denote types of judgment, which may be clearly seen in his examples:

- *John may be in his office (speculative)*
- *John must be in his office (deductive)*
- *John will be in his office (assumptive)*

The first example indicates that speculative expresses uncertainty, because the speaker is not sure whether John is in his office. The second one suggests that the speaker is more certain about his judgment, but some type of evidence is needed, for example that the speaker can see light or hear noises coming out of the office. Therefore, Deductive deals with high probability based on evidence that the speaker has. In the third example, the speaker concludes that John will be in the office based on "what is generally known" about John, an example could be that John is always at work at the particular time. Therefore you can say that Assumptive uses generally known information to make "a reasonable conclusion". (Palmer 2001: 24-25)

Even though the three examples are clear and logical, difficulties may occur when recognizing Speculative from Assumptive. Mostly because more context is needed in order to decide whether a speaker is assuming based on generally known information or just purely speculating. However, because of the limited space, this matter will not be examined in the practical part of this paper.

3 Modal Verbs

The aim of this chapter is to present what modals are and what their important grammatical properties are, while deciding what modals will be investigated. According to Palmer (2001), modal verbs are used in all types of modality. They may express likelihood, ability, permission, and obligation.

It is clear that English has a set of modal verbs that can be formally defined. The core modals that may be called 'central modal verbs' are *may, might, can, could, must, will, would, shall* and *should*. Also, some linguists (Palmer 2001, Huddleston and Pullum 2005) think of *need* and *dare* as marginally related to modals. The central modals share the so called NICE properties, which is an acronym made by Huddleston, meaning negation *(I may not come),* inversion *(May I come?)*, 'code' *(he can swim and so can she)* and emphatic affirmation *(he will be there)*. (Palmer 2001: 60)

Modal verbs share these properties with other auxiliary verbs (*be* and *have),* but modals also have their own formal features, which may be seen for example in Palmer (2001: 100-101) or Huddleston and Pullum (2005: 39-40). Modal verbs do not co-occur and they are always the first word in the verb phrase. There is no **will may come, *may shall be*, etc. Also, they show no agreement with the subject, having a single present tense form. They have no *–s* forms for their third person singular (no **he mays come, *coulds, *mights,* etc.). They do not have non-finite forms (no **to might, *maying, *I hope to could come tomorrow)*. Also, imperative is not used for modals (no **could be here! * may come now!*).

Biber et al. (1999) discuss modals that are used to express epistemic possibility, namely *could, may,* and *might.* Even though *may* is not used frequently in conversation, he states that if they occur in conversation, they "typically mark logical possibility rather than permission." In addition, when it is used in the written form, they mostly relate to logical possibility rather than permission or ability. (1999: 491-492) On the other hand, Palmer (1990: 59) states that it is possible to use *should* in what appears to be an epistemic possibility sense expressing extreme likelihood, as in *(1)*.

> 1. *"It was a little bit disappointing because there were at the time other kids we thought **should** really get in on the merits, and they did not.''* [1]

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[1] Golden, Daniel. 2016. "How Did 'Less Than Stellar' High School Student Jared Kushner Get Into Harvard?" The Guardian, November 18. Accessed November 23, 2016.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/18/jared-kushner-harvard-donald-trump-son-in-law

= we thought the kids will probably get in on the merits, but they did not.

When considering what modals to include or not in the research of the newspaper discourse, *should* had to be observed individually. Most of its meanings are comparable with *must,* "except that should does not express confidence, but rather lack of full confidence, in the fulfillment of the happening described by the main verb." (Leech 2004: 100)

Leech (2004) sees the epistemic sense more towards logical necessity rather than possibility, because it can be compared with *must*. He is aware of its probability meaning, but he prefers to call it "weakened logical necessity". (2004: 101) On the other hand, Palmer (1990) suggests that *should* does not express necessity - "it expresses rather extreme likelihood or a reasonable assumption or conclusion." (1990: 59) You can think about this in the example *(2)* below.

> 2. *Even if you have one of the later versions, any current Windows netbook or laptop __should__ outperform it.*[2]
>
> *=it is probable that any current Windows netbook or laptop will outperform it*

This can be supported by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), where they suggests that s*hould* can be compared with *probable* in terms of certainty and that it involves inference. (2002: 186)

Should is mostly being used in deontical sense, which is further supported by the fact that most of occurrences of epistemic *should* also have deontic meaning as well. If you take the example *(2)* above, you can see that it could also be paraphrased as: *it is necessary for any current Windows netbook or laptop to outperform it*.

Therefore, *should* will not be included in the research of this paper. Thus, with regard to the purpose of the work, the next chapters will be focused on modals *may, might* and *could*, where their individual characteristics will be presented in accordance with their epistemic possibility meanings.

3.1 May

As stated in Leech (2004), *may* is one of the middle-frequency modals with two possible meanings, but one meaning (possibility) is more frequent in present-day English than the

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other one (permission). (2004: 76) Huddleston and Pullum (2002) explain that epistemic modals including *may* are mostly used subjectively. It is possible to see them in objective uses, but the difference between them is not that significant, because the objective use is more about public knowledge than the speaker's knowledge. (2002: 181)

May, in its possibility sense, is mostly used in statements, but it does not occur in questions. Therefore, there is no question with *may* for the statement *John may be his in office – it is possible that John is in his office*. *Can* or *could* could be used to ask a question about this statement – *Can/Could be John in his office?* (Leech 2004: 92) It is also possible to refer to habitual activity – "*He may go to London every day.*" (Palmer 1990: 52) In addition, there is the concessive use of *may* that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Some factors can be seen relating to syntactic patterns that support the interpretation of *may* as epistemic. Firstly, stative and linking verbs usually occur in sentences together with the epistemic modal. The verb *be* followed by an evaluative expression is one of the more frequent ones. It is also possible for epistemic *may* to be followed by a lexical auxiliary. Secondly, it also co-occurs with inanimate subjects, existential or general human subject or with anticipatory it. (Huschová 2008: 75) As in *(3)* and *(4)*, *may* co-occurs with inanimate subjects and it is followed by *be* in both cases.

3. *But some estimate that Modi's $137bn (£111bn) <u>commitment</u> over his five-year term to upgrade India's railways <u>**may**</u> not <u>**be**</u> enough to bring creaking trains and railway infrastructure up to standard. (Corpus May, example 1)*

   =it is possible that the commitment to upgrade India's will not be enough…

4. *<u>France</u> <u>**may be**</u> the birthplace of the Michelin star, but it is possible to eat very well there without splashing the cash. (Corpus May, Example 33)*

   =It is possible that France is the birthplace of the Michelin star…

As has been briefly mentioned (see 2.1), there are two ways of negation that apply even to epistemic possibility. "For possibility the proposition is negated by may not (It is possible that … not …), while the modality is negated by can't (It is not possible that …)." (Palmer 1990: 60) Clear examples may be seen in Leech (2004: 93):

he can't be serious – it is not possible [that he is serious].

he may not be serious – it is possible [that he is not serious].

Therefore, it is clear that the modal verb *may* cannot negate modality but only the proposition.

When the modals are used together with present infinitive, they are usually used in order to refer to the present or future. For modality referring to future, modal verbs do not have a special construction and *may* is not an exception so it is unchanged when expressing future time. "When an 'event verb' is combined with an auxiliary, we generally assume that the event referred to is in the future, even when there is no time adverbial to point in that direction." (Leech 2004: 96) This can be observed in *(5)* where *may* is followed by an event verb while referring to the future.

> 5. *They agreed to stay in regular contact throughout the Brexit process to keep a constructive approach and seek to lower tensions that **may arise**, also when talks on some issues like Gibraltar inevitably will become difficult, one source said. (Corpus May, example 18)*
>
> *=it is possible that tensions will arise…*

As stated in Palmer (1990), it is often ambiguous to decide whether a modal verb is used epistemically or deontically when it is used with a simple form of the verb that follows it (*John may come tomorrow*). On the other hand, when using the modal verb *might*, it is clearly epistemic. Also, it is possible to refer to present and future actions in progress, because the use of progressive form usually implies an epistemic interpretation. (1990: 66-67) It can be seen in the example *(6)* below, where *may* is interchangeable with *might*.

> 6. *Her poems are periodically quoted by Nixon in voiceover and, with these shrewd selections, Davies **may be** playfully **suggesting** that their seductive rhythmic canter has a tiny technical echo with Longfellow, whom Emily professes to despite. (Corpus May, Example 30)*
>
> *= it is possible that Davies is suggesting that their seductive canter has a tiny technical echo…*

Expressing modality and proposition in the past differs with different types of modality. In epistemic modality, only the proposition can be in the past and it is indicated by using *have* after modal verbs, more specifically by using the perfect infinitive. The modality cannot be in the past because epistemic modal verbs make "a performative judgment at the time of speaking." (Palmer 1990: 44) Therefore, it would be strange to say – *John may be there yesterday vs. John may have been there yesterday*. Even though *might* is the past form of the modal verb *may*, it cannot be used to make a judgment in the past. (Palmer 1990: 10, 11)

As stated in Leech (2004), perfect and progressive aspects are only compatible with epistemic modals, because "they concern the likelihood of truth and falsehood, expressed through such notions as possibility, necessity and predictability. In these modal uses, the modal itself expresses a current state of mind, while the main verb and what follows it describe an event or state which has variable time and aspect." (2004: 99, 100) These constructions apply the modal meaning, again, on the proposition.

Moreover, there is another use of *may* and it is the concessive one, Leech (2004) calls this 'Quasi-Subjunctive'. Palmer (2001) states that "with a concessive clause the speaker does not indicate doubt about the proposition, but rather accepts it as true, in order to contrast one state of affairs with another." (Palmer 2001: 31) Therefore, he sees this use of *may* in terms of presupposition. It can be used in the sense of *although* when it is combined with the conjunction *but* for example in *(7):*

> 7. *Muggles **may** be called 'No-Majs' in Fantastic Beasts, **but** much of Harry Potter's wizzarding lingo remains unchanged – or un-Americanized. (Corpus May, Example 8)*
>
> = *although muggles are caller 'No-Majs' in Fantastic Beast, much of Harry Potter's wizzarding lingo remains unchanged…*

Another type can be found in concessive subordinate clauses that begin with *whatever, whenever, however*, etc. For example – "*our task is to deal with the customer's complaints, however unreasonable they may be*."   Here, again, the speaker presupposes that some of the complaints probably will be unreasonable. The third type is in concessive sentences that are introduced by *although, though, while* or *whilst,* which can be seen on the example *(8)* below: (Leech 2004: 77, 78)

> 8. *Staffers say that **although** the proportion **may** seem small compared with the rest of the company. They are determined to increase it. (Corpus May, Example 16)*
>
> = *even though the proportion seems small compared with the rest of the company, they are determined to increase it.*

As has been mentioned (see 2.2), this modal verb can be used to express both epistemic as well as deontic meaning. According to Palmer (2001), the distinction is quite clear because "there are some formal distinctions between the modal verbs in their two uses.

- *May not* negates the modality when deontic (no permission), but the proposition when epistemic ('it may be that it is not so').

- *May* followed by have is always epistemic, never deontic
- *May* is replaceable by *can* only in the deontic use, though *cannot* may be epistemic." (Palmer 2001: 103)

To summarize this, *may* can be used for both modalities, but is more frequent in its epistemic sense. It is used in statements but does not occur in questions. Stative and linking verbs are commonly used together with *may*, while the subject is mostly an inanimate object, anticipatory it or a general human subject. *May* cannot negate modality in its epistemic sense, only the proposition and it may construct concessive clauses. It is also used to express uncertainty about past proposition when combined with the perfect infinitive.

3.2 Might

There is a widespread agreement that *may* and *might* can both be used in the same way in non-past contexts. "*May* in the sense of 'possibility' can be replaced by *might* with little or no difference in meaning." (Leech 2004: 76) Which can be supported by Palmer (1990): "*Might* is used exactly as *may* is. It merely indicates a little less certainty about the possibility." (1990: 58) Also, *might* is usually described as a past tense form of *m*ay that lost the past meaning. The only use where *might* still refers to the past is in reported speech. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 202)

It is clearly seen from Palmer's examples below, where the first two sentences containing *might* are not used to refer to the past, but as a more 'tentative' or 'unreal' forms of *may*. The third example makes a judgment in the present that is about past proposition and this supports the idea from the previous chapter that there are no past judgments created by using *may*.

> *John might come.*
>
> *John might be there.*
>
> *John may have been there yesterday.* (1990: 10)

Factors relating to syntactic patterns that help to interpret *might* as epistemic are similar to the indicators of *may*. There often occur inanimate or general subjects, a linking verb or a verb in the infinitive, and it can be used in the same way as the concessive *may* is, as can be seen in the example (9) below:

> 9. *OK, so Jane Birkin **might be** way too referenced far too often as style inspo on Instagram, **but** she's not done yet. (Corpus Might, Example 16)*

=Although she is way too referenced, she is not done yet

Furthermore, epistemic *might* expresses factual possibility similarly as *may* does. (see 2.1 Epistemic/Deontic Contrast) You can also observe this from the example *(9)* above, because you can say that – it is possible that Jane Birkin is way too referenced.

As has been previously mentioned, *might* can also be used in non-past context similarly as *may* is, which is clearly seen from the three examples below:

10. *Around 500 lambs are expected to arrive over the next month or two and lucky visitors **might** even get to watch one being born. (Corpus Might, Example 19)*

   = It is possible that visitors will get to watch one being born.

11. *It **might** be time to buy some bigger jeans. (Corpus Might, Example 13)*

   = Perhaps it is time to buy some bigger jeans.

12. *Many parents, whose children have a much lower attendance rate, can't afford the luxury of a tutor, or **might not** even be bothered to make up the time lost in school (Corpus Might, Example 17)*

   = It is possible that parents are not bothered to make up the time lost in school.

In the first example *(10)*, *might* refers to the future while in the other two *(11, 12)* to the present time. Therefore, it is sure that *might* can be used to make a reference about present or future time as well. Furthermore, the third example suggests, that *might not* negates the main verb similarly as *may* does. However, even though these two modal verbs can be used similarly in non-past contexts, there are still some differences. *Might* is always thought to be different concerning degrees of the speaker's certainty about the proposition being true. When you compare *might* and *may*, *might* often makes the proposition a little less certain. (Palmer 1990: 58) Also, spoken American English prefers *might* when expressing possibility over *may*. (Leech 2004: 76)

This runner may win. / This runner might win. These examples show the difference in certainty degrees between the two modals (*may > might*). The first sentence containing *may* expresses that it is likely that the runner will win. However, in the second one with *might*, there is only a possibility that the runner will win, but the speaker is not very sure.

In addition, *might* contrary to *may* may be very occasionally used in questions – *Might it have been left at the bus station*? (Leech 2004: 130) However, there is not a similar case in the corpus. Similarly, you could express a more negative utterance by using might – *you might*

stop looking at me for a change, (Leech 2004: 131) but this case is for two people that know each other.

Might can also be used to refer to past time, when they are together in a sentence with a past verb form, but as stated in Huddleston and Pullum (2002), "this use is very rare, and somewhat formal or literary in style." (2002: 197) As Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 197) continue, "for many speakers *might* is restricted to the backshifted and modal remoteness senses." Palmer (2001: 34) also restricts the usage of *might* in the past time reference only to reported speech.

Reported speech is, of course, used to report what someone already said and the reported sentence has to be 'backshifted', for example – *I like playing video games -> he said that he liked playing video games.* This can be supported by Leech (2004). There are two types of backshift, the first where the present tense changes to the past or the present perfect tense changes to the past perfect tense and the second where the past tense changes to the past perfect tense. Also, when the utterance in direct speech has a verb in the past perfect, there is no possibility of backshift, because there is no double perfect in English, so it remains unchanged. In his words, "the time of the original speech, which is 'now' for direct speech, becomes 'then' for indirect speech, and all times referred to in the speech accordingly become shifted back into the past." (Leech 2004: 107, 108)

Because of this change of time (now becomes then), *might* often occurs in reported speech, because the primary modals are backshifted in their secondary (tentative) forms. However, there is an exception where secondary forms cannot be used. As stated in Leech (2004), "For semantic purposes, neither *may, must* nor *shall* have past tense equivalents, and their special nuances of meaning cannot therefore be expressed in the past tense." (2004: 98) Let's think about this example – *it may rain today.* If the reporter reports this utterance at the same day, it can be reported as - *he said that it might rain today*, because its time reference is still relevant. However, if it is reported the day after, it cannot be backshifted as -h*e said that it might rain yesterday* because it is not the direct past tense equivalent of the direct speech. Therefore, Leech suggests that the best available past tense translation of *may* is *could - he said that it could rain yesterday,* which clearly refers to the past tense. (2004: 98, 110)

As with *may*, you can express uncertainty with the past time reference by using *might +* perfect infinitive when the speaker is uncertain about past events and situations. As in *(13)*,

where the speaker shows that he is not sure who caused his blood disorder, but he has doubts about the man.

> 13. "I've always got that doubt in my head: has that man caused me to have this blood disorder? It **<u>might not have been</u>** him, but the doubt's always there." (Corpus Might, Example 6)
>
> = it is possible that/Perhaps it was not him, but the doubt is always there.

Also, all tentative modals including *might* can express hypothetical meaning as can be seen in the example *(14)* below:

> 14. "It's up to her whether she wants to stand again … but if I were here and I were German and I had a vote, I **<u>might</u>** support her," he said with a smile." (Corpus Might, Example 1)
>
> = it is possible that/Perhaps I would support her.

In *(14)* the speaker clearly thinks about unreal possibility, where you can see its process. The speaker also urges that he would probably support her, if the three conditions (being here, being German, and having a vote) were fulfilled.

Moreover, this hypothetical meaning can be indicated with the past time reference by using the *might* + perfect infinitive construction, see the example *(15)* below.

> 15. "Well, it's not just bad luck, because you are more likely to suffer from bad luck if you're older," she says. "But who knows? This **<u>might have happened</u>** to me if I'd got pregnant when I was younger. I just would have had more time afterwards to get pregnant again." (Corpus Might, Example 11)
>
> = It is possible/Perhaps this would have happened to me, if I had got pregnant when I was younger.

The speaker here *(in 15)* says that this might have happened to her, (but it did not) if she had got pregnant (but she did not). Leech's argues that "the past hypothetical meaning and the use of the modals is one of the most difficult areas of English not only for non-native speakers, but also for native speakers." (Leech 2004: 127)

He also observes that this past hypothetical possibility is related to a "contrary to fact" meaning. In fact, sometimes this *might* + perfect infinitive construction loses its past time reference because of the fact that the imaginary situation is taking place in the future. Therefore, the "contrary to fact" meaning is the only meaning left here, for example – *I might have enjoyed meeting my mum next Friday, but I am afraid, I will be away.* (Leech 2004: 128)

Moreover, this usage of contrary plus the hypothetical modal verb is to shift it towards a more tentative meaning – *our team might still win the race,* which can be paraphrased as "barely possible" or "possible, but unlikely". (Leech 2004: 130)

To sum up, *might* is the more tentative and unreal form of *may* that expresses a different degree of certainty. It has similar syntactic patterns and is used in non-past contexts as *may* is. It is often referred to as the past time of *may*, but its past time meaning remained only in reported speech. It can also express hypothetical meaning and can evaluate the speaker's certainty about past proposition, as *may* can, when used with the perfect infinitive.

3.3   Could

As stated in Downing and Locke (1992), *might* and *could* may be interchangeable in their epistemic meanings "with little difference to the message. Factors such as speakers' age and social dialect, and the degree of formality or informality of the situation, undoubtedly influence the choice of modal." (1992: 384) This belief is supported by Quirk et al. (1985: 233), where they see these two modals as equivalent in meaning.

Some linguists see this from a different perspective and suggest that they are different in the degree of uncertainty. (Biber et al. 1999: 491) In addition, Leech (2004) see *could* as a tentative form of *may* as in – *"The weather has been terrible up there in the mountains. You could find climbing very difficult."* (2004: 132)

When thinking about this example – *It might be John/It could be John*, you can see some difference. The first sentence feels as if the speaker had some kind of evidence, for example John said that he would come today. More precisely, the speaker is waiting for him to come, whereas the second example with *could* seems to be tentative. To support this, Coates (1983) states that *could* unlike *may* and *might* can express solely tentative epistemic possibility. (1983: 165)

There are some syntactic differences between the two modals. One of them is that they are not interchangeable in backshifted structures because *could* does not express epistemic possibility in this case.

There is, however, low frequency of *could* used in the epistemic possibility sense in texts, which can be supported by Coates (1983) who states that "epistemic could is still relatively

infrequent," (1983: 167) and Huschová's (2008) research where epistemic *could* occurred only in 3.4% of her findings. (2008: 71) On the other hand, Biber et al. (1999) observed frequent usage of *could* in spoken English.

There is a study made by Gresset (2003), who questions the nature of *could* as an epistemic modal. But it seems that most linguists do not relate to the study. It is, of course, certain that the main usage of *could* is the deontic one.

16. *This **could** be the night he smiles. (Corpus Could, Example 8)*

   = It is possible that this will be the night he smiles

17. *Setting up co-ops **could** be more difficult in the UK, which has weaker city governments, less availability of philanthropic capital and the looming shadow of austerity. (Corpus Could, Example 7)*

   = It is possible that setting up co-ops will be more difficult in the UK…

18. *The nuclear-powered Carl Vinson's presence in the area coincides with speculation that North Korea **could** be preparing to conduct its sixth nuclear test to coincide with key dates in the country's history, including the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il-sung, on Saturday. (Corpus Could, Example 6)*

   =It is possible that North Korea is preparing to conduct its sixth nuclear test…

As you can see, *could* may express present *(18)* and future *(16, 17)* time, while it is also possible to indicate progressive aspect, as in (18). According to Huschová (2008), it is even possible to refer to the past by using *could* followed by the perfect infinitive (2008: 71).

To sum this up, *could* is primarily a deontic modal, but it has its epistemic meaning, which is close to the meaning of *might*.

4 Newspaper Discourse

Before the analysis of the data, it is necessary to describe the field where the data are collected. Therefore, this chapter introduces newspaper in general and continues with its main features and discusses its objectivity.

There are three different groups that can be recognized at British newspapers. There are newspapers such as the Times or the Guardian in the first group, and they are called broadsheet newspapers. The second group is called middle range tabloids, e.g. the Daily Mail, and the last one is represented by newspapers such as the Sun, which is recognized as tabloids. (Reah 2003: 2)

According to Allan Bell, these groups are different in terms of who their readers are. He suggests that broadsheets and middle range tabloids are mostly read by upper-middle, middle-middle and lower-middle classes, whereas tabloids have 80% of their readers from the working classes. Due to this diversity, those groups of newspapers are also different in style. (Bell 1991: 109) It is believed (Crystal and Davy 1969) that tabloids use more eye-catching strategies such as more pictures, photos, bigger headlines, and they tend to play with letters. On the other hand, broadsheets use more formal language compared to the tabloids. More precisely, broadsheets do not use as many features of spoken language as tabloids do.

Because of these characteristics, it would be reasonable to choose tabloids as the analyzed material, because they are less formal and contain more features of spoken language. Thus, it could be expected that modality should be more frequent here than in broadsheets. However, the interest to observe the state of modality in broadsheets was higher. Mainly due to the fact that they are more formal and thought to be more objective (as mentioned farther in this chapter). Therefore, it could be interesting to see how the three modal verbs are used there, or whether they are restricted only to direct and indirect speech.

The style of newspapers is often called *Journalese*, but Crystal and Davy see this term negatively because it does not refer to everything that the style has to cover. In newspapers, you may find "articles, reviews, imaginative writing of various kinds, advertising, competitions, and much more." (Crystal and Davy 1969: 173) Therefore, they observed the language of newspaper according to its central function, which is to "present a certain number of facts in as interesting a manner as possible to the audience," while presenting the information in a limited space where the writer avoids ambiguity and clarify everything he

wants. (Crystal and Davy 1969: 174) According to Reah (2003), these reports provide "information about recent events." (Reah 2003: 4)

To follow this function, there is a tendency to use "concise, clear, and plain language." (Busa 2013: 102) Thus, writers replace multi-word expressions with single words. As an example, *although* would be used instead of *despite the fact that*. This style also avoids using words that the reader may be unfamiliar with such as slang, jargon, and words of different origin. Writers also tend to use active voice rather than passive voice, because it is more direct and easier to understand. However, passive voice is used in situations, where the performer is unknown. (Busa 2013: 103-109) This style often uses indirect and direct speech in order to state facts or use it as evidence. Also, the writer may distance from the utterance, for example if the utterance is inappropriate, because direct speech represents newsmaker's own words. (Bell 1991: 207-209)

When thinking about the form of newspapers, they are always divided into paragraphs, which might be its most characteristic feature. But according to Bell, journalists use fragmented structures so the article is not cohesive. He also adds that "the ideal news story is one which could be cut to end at any paragraph. It is thus common for cohesion between paragraphs to be unclear or non-existent." (Bell 1991: 172)

It could be presupposed that newspapers should be objective and that there will not be much space for modality. But they are not objective. As Fowler (2003) comments on the objectivity of newspapers:

> The institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle. The structure of the medium encodes significances which derive from the respective positions within society of the publishing or broadcasting organizations. (2003: 10)

This point of view is supported by Bell (1991), who says that newspapers are not neutral, nor are their production and processes. (1991: 212) Moreover, Crystal and Davy comment on newspapers' objectivity as "there is always the danger of bias in any writing: the attitudes of the writer towards his subject tend to creep in." (1969: 191) It is also necessary to know that news is still a business with making a profit as its main goal. (Fowler 2003; Bell 1991) Therefore we could assume, that modality could actually occur frequently in newspapers discourse, because writers use it to create comments, speculation, or attitudes in their texts. (Fowler 2003: 85; Reah 2003: 92)

According to Bell (1991), "speakers design their talk for their hearers." He connects this statement to the overall state of newspapers. He explains that writers write newspapers directly for their audience. They shift the style of their writing according to people they are writing for. Bell further interprets that this idea is based on the fact that positions of two people communicating together are changing. In a conversation, the two people exchange ideas so their status of whether they are the speaker or the hearer changes. On the other hand, this concept is very different in the way in which newspapers communicate. Here, it is "largely one-way traffic." (Bell 1991: 104-107)

He also deals with a concept that supports his idea presented in the previous paragraph. In a face-to-face conversation, the speaker receives feedback from the hearer, which mostly does not happen in newspapers, because most of the readers do not contact the media with their suggestions. Therefore, if people read the news, they approve of the writer's style. If they do not like the style, they will find different news. In Bell's words, "if the style does not shift to suit the audience, the audience will shift to a style that does suit." (Bell 1991: 107)

An additional aspect of the newspaper is that writers try to somehow affect readers' opinions and feelings by using different strategies. Therefore, "approval seeking has been recognized as a prime motive in accommodation. This is very powerful in mass communication, where we assume that communicators are always in some sense trying to win the approval of their audience (McQuial 1969b)." (Bell 1991: 106)

The process of creating a newspaper is an elaborated system, because media report events that are newsworthy. They take a report and analyze its values. "The more newsworthiness criteria an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported." (Fowler 2003: 13) As stated in Bell (1991), a story may get input from eight different people who influence the language of the story. (1991: 46)

To summarize about newspapers, there are three groups, the style of which is slightly different in language and in form, but their function, to report information, remains the same. They all have to work with limited space while using similar strategies to communicate the information. Even though the main function is just to transmit the information to the reader, it is mostly impossible to be objective, because the attitudes of the writer are present. Also, you have to realize that the process of making news is thorough and that more than one person participate in this process while they try to affect reader's opinions.

5 Practical Part

The main focus of the practical part was to create a corpus of epistemic possibility occurrences of modal verbs *may, might*, and *could* in newspaper discourse. They are firstly analyzed quantitatively, which would later reflect in the qualitative analysis, where it is commented on factors giving epistemic sense to those occurrences. Furthermore, the purpose and functions of newspaper discourse are discussed.

At the beginning, the corpus had to be created. The idea was to collect one hundred cases of epistemic possibility *may, might*, and *could* together. There are two reasons for this approach. The more important one is that this approach gives an opportunity to know which of the modals is most frequently used in newspaper discourse and to comment on why it is so.

The examples were taken from two online newspaper sources, namely The Time and The Guardian. The vast majority of the findings are from The Guardian newspaper. The reason for choosing broadsheets instead of tabloids as the source of findings was solely the interest in observing how the modal verbs are used in the environment that is not as friendly as the one of tabloids towards the modals. (see chapter 4)

Random articles were chosen without preference for any genre and gone through in order to find epistemic possibility occurrences of the three modals. The corpus is divided into three smaller ones according to the modal they contain. Therefore, they are named May, Might, and Could. Their individual findings are numbered.

In order to stay relevant, every article had to be quoted. Therefore every one of the three smaller corpuses has their own list of references, where articles are quoted. There are always the source and numbers of examples that were found in the particular article.

Every example has been analyzed from the same perspectives. Firstly, its context was observed. By the word "context" it is meant whether they occur in reported, direct speech, or a descriptive part made by the writer himself, more precisely a text that is not reported or direct speech. The reason for that was to see to what extent journalists are objective and how much subjective utterances they tend to use. Moreover, this classification made it possible to see differences between the frequency of the modals in spoken and written language. Another factor was time reference, whether they refer to past, present, or future time, which helped to see the nature of the modals and newspaper discourse. After that, negation, aspects,

hypothetical meaning, and concessive use were analyzed to show usual contexts of epistemic occurrences that differentiate epistemic from deontic interpretations.

5.1 Frequency of the Modals

Table 1 - Frequency of the Modals

Modal verb	Number	Percentage
May	56	56%
Might	36	36%
Could	8	8%
Total	100	100%

According to Table 1, *may* is the most frequently used modal verb, which supports the belief that it is the most common modal expressing epistemic possibility. *Might*, as the tentative form of *may*, is also used very frequently, whereas *could* is not. The reason for the low frequency of *could* is that it is mainly used to express deontic modality. (see 3.3) Moreover, *may* as well as *might* are mainly connected with epistemic sense so it could be presupposed that *could* will not be as frequent compared to the other analysed modals.

In addition, these examples were all collected out of 55 articles. Therefore, we could say that there are almost two (1.8) examples of a modal expressing epistemic possibility per one article. However, it is not correct, because articles that did not contain any epistemic possibility modals were unfortunately not counted.

5.2 Time Reference

Table 2 - Time Reference

	Past		Present		Future	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
May (66)	8	14.29%	11	19.64%	37	66.07%
Might (36)	10	27.75%	7	19.44%	19	52.78%
Could (8)	0	0%	2	25%	6	75%
Total (100)	18	18%	20	20%	62	62%

As previously mentioned (see 3.1), it is generally assumed that modal verbs refer to the future. Therefore, all of the three modals are mainly used for the future reference (62 out of 100 cases) while past and present reference have almost equal amount of occurrences. The

reason for this may be the fact that journalists often make judgments about what might happen in the future by speculating, as in *(19, 20):*

19. *"Assuming that it passes, watching dour sides like Switzerland **might** soon be more enjoyable in Canada" (Corpus Might, Example 29)*

   = It is possible that watching dour sides will be soon more enjoyable in Canada

20. *Sites such as Politifact.com and Factcheck.org **may** become sources for warning labels attached to stories that have been deemed untrustworthy. (Corpus May, Example 7)*

   = It is possible that those sites will become sources…

Both of these examples (19, 20) speculate about what may/might happen in the future. Contrary, journalists may use past time reference to speculate about the past. In the analyzed articles, the past time reference is always constructed by either *may* or *might* followed by the perfect infinitive, which supports the idea of Huddleston and Pullum (2002) that past time reference expressed by *might* followed by a past verb form is not common (see 3.2). Journalists may express two different things by using *might* + perfect infinitive, which you can see in these examples below *(21, 22)*:

21. *"I've always got that doubt in my head: has that man caused me to have this blood disorder? It **might** not have been him, but the doubt's always there." (Corpus Might, Example 6)*

   =It is possible that it was not him…

22. *The United States have been dogged by uneven performances at World Cups and it seems hard to imagine a better result than their quarter-final showing at Korea Japan 2002, which of course **might have gone** one round further had the referee Hugh Dallas spotted Torsten Fring's handball (but that's neither here nor there). (Corpus Might, Example 28)*

   =Perhaps their showing would have gone one round further, if the referee spotted…

The example *(21)* represents possibility about the past, whereas the example *(22)* points out a hypothetical event in the past that did not happen and it also occurs in a conditional clause – *had the referee Hugh Dallas spotted Torsten Frind's handball, the quarter final might have gone one round further*. There is, however, no example of *could* referring to the past.

5.3   Context

Table 3 - Context

	Reported speech		Direct speech		Descriptive part	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
May (66)	11	19.64%	12	21.43%	33	58.93%
Might (36)	1	2.78%	20	55.56%	15	41.67%
Could (8)	1	12.5%	2	25%	5	62%
Total (100)	13	13%	34	33%	53	54%

The analysis suggests that the preferred context for the three modal verbs is the descriptive part (53%), where newspaper writers make subjective speculations or present their opinions. Also, it means that there were more examples of written language than spoken language. This further supports the idea that newspapers are not fully objective and that subjectivity always tends to occur (see 4).

> 23. *Setting up co-ops* ***could*** *be more difficult in the UK, which has weaker city governments, less availability of philanthropic capital and the looming shadow of austerity. (Corpus Could, Example 7)*
>
>   = *It is possible that it will be more difficult in the UK*
>
> 24. *The 52-year-old* ***might*** *soon get his wish. (Corpus Might, Example 8)*
>
>   = *It is possible that he will soon get his wish*
>
> 25. *But if sport and training on holiday is your thing, this* ***may*** *well be Nirvana. (Corpus May, Example 27)*
>
>   = *It is possible that this will be your Nirvana*

Examples *(23, 24, 25)* are all clearly subjective and express the writer's opinions. These modals can also occur in utterances not made up by journalists themselves. Thus, there are together 34 examples of modals occurring in direct speech and 13 examples in reported speech. The example *(26)* shows that reported speech is always introduced by a reporting verb, which is *"accepts"* in this case, whereas direct speech *(27)* is usually indicated by quotation marks. There are, however, two examples of direct speech *(Corpus Might, Examples 17, 18)* without quotation marks. They are in an article that presents statements of different people about one matter, where everyone has his own paragraph.

> 26. *But he* <u>***accepts***</u> *there* ***may*** *be a drop in surgery overall (if not by 40%). (Corpus May, Example 26)*

=*It is possible that there is a drop in surgery overall*

27. *"Men who are violent toward their female partners often are violent guys in general – that **might** be the issue," she wrote. (Corpus Might, Example 24)*

= *It is possible that it is the issue*

The most usual was *may* with 23 examples. However, you have to take into account that there were 56 examples of *may* with 41.07% usage in non descriptive parts, whereas *might* appeared there in 58.31% of its entire examples. Therefore, you could say that *might* is preferable here. It is, however, interesting that *might* is thought to be the past form of *may* in reported speech, but it basically did not occur in such utterances. It only occurred once in reported speech, which you can see in *(28)*.

28. *Before, he says, someone **might** come "to have some liposuction of saddlebags, as well as having some skin removed from their lower tummy and maybe some breast surgery, [but] now they're just having one of those things done. (Corpus Might, Example 15)*

= *He says that before it was possible that someone will come to have…*

It could be due to the fact that *might* is used to express epistemic possibility more frequently in spoken language than *may* is, which helps to explain the high percentage of *might* in direct speech. (Biber et al. 1991: 491) You can also compare them according to Table 4, in which *may* appeared in direct speech less often than *might* (21.43% < 55.56%).

On the other hand, the use of *may* in reported speech was quite common (19.64%), even though it has its past time form for this use. The reason is that journalists often tend to leave a reporting verb in present so the backshift is not necessary any more, as in *(29, 30)*.

29. *They argue consumers don't need the superfast speeds the upgrade from current 4G technology promises, and many in the industry believe that logistical issues mean that 5G **may** not be properly rolled out in the UK for decades. (Corpus May, Example 13)*

= *they believe that it is possible that 5G is not properly rolled out…*

30. *Staffers say that although the proportion **may** seem small compared with the rest of the company, they are determined to increase it. (Corpus May, Example 16)*

= *Staffers say that perhaps the proportion seems small compared with the rest of the company they are determined to increase it.*

In examples *(24, 25),* the modal verbs always occur in reported speech that is introduced by reporting verb that is in the present. According to Bell (1991), this form of indirect speech is

now common and it helps the writer "to create the impression of immediacy." (1991: 210) There are, however, occurrences, in which the reporting verb is in the past, but *might* is not used instead of *may,* which can be seen in the example below *(31):*

> 31. *But a top official at a leading conservative group suggested in an interview that there* **may** *be room to negotiate on the tax credits*. (Corpus May, Example 12)
>
> *= He suggested that there will be room to negotiate…*

You could explain it in terms of "now and then". More precisely, when the top official made this utterance *(31),* he pointed towards the future and at the time of creating this newspaper article, the moment or event in the future, which the top official referred to, still refers to the future. Therefore, exchanging *may* for *might* was not necessary.

Even though there are only 8 examples of *could,* it showed its capability to occur in all three types of context, while the descriptive part of articles occurred regularly in 62% of the examples, as *in (32):*

> 32. *The sun begins to set over the Albert Park lake and, coupled with the rather appropriate Michelin Man clouds that punctuate the pinkening sky, it's a sight to behold. It affords a rare moment of reflection:* **could** *Melbourne indeed be the centre of the sporting universe? (Corpus Could, Example 4)*
>
> *= Is it possible that Melbourne is the centre of the sporting universe?*

5.4   Negation

Table 4 - Negation

	Negation	
	Number	**Percentage**
May (66)	7	12.50%
Might (36)	4	11.11%
Could (8)	0	0%
Total (100)	11	11%

The investigated modal verbs were negated only in 11% of all examples. Both *may* and *might* were used in negative structures similarly often, whereas *could* was not used even once. The reason could be the possible shift in the scope of negation. If *may (33)* or *might (34)* are negated, the proposition is in their scope of negation.

33. *The fresh investigation into Livingstone **may** not satisfy many in the party, given the first disciplinary inquiry about his comments has taken a year. (Corpus May, Example 35)*

=It is possible that the investigation will not satisfy…

34. *Many parents, whose children have a much lower attendance rate, can't afford the luxury of a tutor, or **might** not even be bothered to make up the time lost in school. (Corpus Might, Example 17)*

=It is possible that many parents are not even bothered…

However, if we negate *could,* its focus shifts from the proposition to the modality.

35. *The nuclear-powered Carl Vinson's presence in the area coincides with speculation that North Korea **could** be preparing to conduct its sixth nuclear test to coincide with key dates in the country's history, including the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il-sung, on Saturday. (Corpus Could, Example 6)*

= It is possible that North Korea is preparing to conduct…

You can try to negate the example above *(35) – North Korea could not be preparing to conduct*, which can be paraphrased as – *It is not possible that North Korea is preparing to conduct*. After the negation is implemented in the sentence, it negates modality rather than the proposition.

5.5 Progressive aspect

Table 5 - Progressive aspect

	Progressive aspect	
	Number	**Percentage**
May (66)	1	1.79%
Might (36)	0	0%
Could (8)	1	12.50%
Total (100)	2	2%

There were only two occurrences of the progressive aspect among one hundred examples, which suggests that these modals are not used frequently with it.

36. *Her poems are periodically quoted by Nixon in voiceover and, with these shrewd selections, Davies **may be** playfully **suggesting** that their seductive rhythmic canter has a tiny technical echo with Longfellow, whom Emily professes to despise. (Corpus May, Example 30)*

= It is possible that Davies is playfully suggesting…

39

On the other hand, they both *(35, 36)* occurred in descriptive parts made by journalists themselves, by which they make judgments about an action in progress.

5.6   Concessive and Hypothetical Use

	Concessive		Hypothetical	
	Amount	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
May (66)	8	14.29%	0	0%
Might (36)	7	19.44%	13	36.11%
Could (8)	0	0%	0	0%
Total (100)	14	14%	13	13%

As Table 6 suggests, *could* was not used in concessive clauses or to express a hypothetical meaning. The concessive use is relevant to *may,* because linguists usually discuss these two terms together. The concessive *may* occurred in 14.29% of its examples. It is most commonly used with the conjunction *but (Corpus May, Examples 8, 9, 25, 33, 51, 52)*, but there are two examples that are introduced by *while* and *although,* as in *(37, 38)*

> 37. *While they realise this **may** take decades, there are already some signs it is paying off. (Corpus May, Example 55)*
>
> = *Although they realize this perhaps will take decades, there are…*

> 38. *Staffers say that although the proportion **may** seem small compared with the rest of the company, they are determined to increase it. (Corpus May, Example 16)*
>
> = *Although the proportion perhaps seems small compared with…*

The concessive use enables journalists to contradict the first proposition with the second one, while the first one is being considered almost as the truth or a fact rather than belief of the writer or speaker, which you could see in the two examples above. In *(37),* the first proposition indicates that it will take decades, and in *(38),* it indicates that the proportion seems small compared with the rest of the company. Even though concessive is mostly discussed with regards to *may*, there are, however, seven examples of *might* occurring in what appears to be concessive clauses *(Corpus Might, Examples 6, 16, 20, 22, 26, 32, 34).*

> 39. *France **may** be the birthplace of the Michelin star, but it is possible to eat very well there without splashing the cash. (Corpus May, Example 33)*

> *= Although France is perhaps the birthplace of the Michelin star, it is possible to eat very well there…*

40. *Other operating systems **might** pretend to be PC gaming capable, but for the most part it's all about Windows. (Corpus Might, Example 20)*

   = Although other operating systems perhaps pretend to be PC gaming capable, it is all about Windows for the most part

When you compare the two examples above *(39, 40),* you can see that they are similar. The second clauses introduced by *but* contradict the first ones, in which the modals appear. Moreover, *might* in *(40)* may be even substituted by *may* without changing the meaning of the proposition – *Other operating systems may pretend to be pc gaming capable, but for most…* The possibility that *might* could occur in concessive use is explained by the fact that they are used very similarly in non-past contexts (see 3.2), or even interchangeably with little or no difference.

The hypothetical use is merely restricted for *might*, because as Table 6 suggests, there are no such occurrences of *may* and *could*. Also, *could* in hypothetical use "is used merely in its root possibility sense," (Huschová 2008: 115) while *may* cannot convey such meaning. On the other hand, *might* is often used in such a way mostly for speculating about unreality, which is a common feature of newspapers, as in *(41, 42).*

41. *If cloning were an option, former trade minister Peter Mandelson **might** find himself duplicated several times, if only to fill meetings with more experienced heads than the UK has at the moment. (Corpus Might, Example 10)*

   = It is possible that Peter Mandelson would find himself duplicated, if cloning is an option

42. *"Well, it's not just bad luck, because you are more likely to suffer from bad luck if you're older," she says. "But who knows? This **might** have happened to me if I'd got pregnant when I was younger. I just would have had more time afterwards to get pregnant again." (Corpus Might, Example 11)*

   = It is possible that it would have happened to me if I had got pregnant when I was younger

The above examples (*41, 42*) appear both in conditional clauses, which helps to indicate the hypothetical interpretation, but it is not the rule for it, because it can convey hypothetical use even out of the conditional clauses, as in *(43).*

43. *"I was honestly concerned he **might** lie about the nature of our meeting, so I thought it important to document," he said. (Corpus Might, Example 36)*

= It is possible that he would lie…

5.7 Epistemic Could

The epistemic possibility expressed by *could* looks as if it is limited in its use, because every finding of the corpus occurs together with an inanimate subject and a linking verb *be,* which can be seen in *(44)*.

44. This **could** be the night he smiles. *(Corpus Could, Example 8)*

    =It is possible that this is the night

5.8 Indeterminate Cases

The main reason for discussing concessive and hypothetical use together is that there are examples of *might* occurring in concessive uses that can be read in two different ways *(Corpus Might, Examples 6, 16, 20, 22, 26).*

45. Mexico **might** *have struggled to host 80 matches by itself but easily has enough infrastructure for 10 fixtures. (Corpus Might, Example 26)*

If you paraphrase *(45)*, you can create two different meanings. The first – *Although Mexico struggled to host 80 matches by itself, it easily has enough infrastructure for 10 fixtures*, whereas the second one – *It is possible that Mexico would have struggled to host 80 matches by itself but it easily has enough infrastructure for 10 fixtures.* The first is clearly a concessive clause that considers the proposition as a fact rather than belief, but the second one speaks about a hypothetical situation.

Another problem with *might* is that its examples are sometimes unclear whether they have simply future reference or are used hypothetically, which you can see in the example *(43)* above. Both readings are possible as – *it is possible that he will/would lie,* but it does not significantly change the meaning.

Even the modal verb *may* is not always crystal clear in its use. Sometimes, the modal verb conveys both an epistemic and deontic sense, as in the example below *(46),* where both paraphrases are possible *(Corpus May, Examples 3, 5, 19, 34).*

46. Ethics watchdogs **may** *still try to sue Trump if they can find conflicts of interests with his business, apparent nepotism for his children, or efforts to promote his or his children's brands from the presidential podium. (Corpus May, Example 3)*

    = Epistemic – It is still possible that ethics watchdogs will try to sue Trump if they can…

> *= Deontic – It is still possible for ethics watchdogs to try to sue Trump if they can find…*

In addition, there are examples of *could* that can also be discussed in this chapter.

> 47. *Professor William Webb, an academic and former Ofcom director, has been outspoken in warning that 5G **could** be a case of the "emperor and his supposed new clothes". (Corpus Could, Example 1)*
> 48. *The sun begins to set over the Albert Park lake and, coupled with the rather appropriate Michelin Man clouds that punctuate the pinkening sky, it's a sight to behold. It affords a rare moment of reflection: **could** Melbourne indeed be the centre of the sporting universe? (Corpus Could, Example 4)*

For these examples above *(47, 48),* both paraphrases are possible. For *(47), it is possible that 5G will be a case*, or *it is possible for 5G to be a case*, which signals some kind of ability. Similarly, this applies to *(48), is it possible that Melbourne is the centre?*, or *is it possible for Melbourne to be the centre?*

6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary of the paper's research, which focused on modal verbs expressing epistemic possibility, namely *may, might*, and *could*. Their time reference was observed to see the nature of the modals and newspaper discourse. Secondly, their context was analyzed to see the part of newspaper discourse that conveys subjectivity. After that, other factors like negation, aspects, hypothetical meaning, and concessive use were analyzed to differentiate epistemic interpretations from deontic ones. All of the examples were collected from newspapers The Time and The Guardian, which are considered to be broadsheets that tend to be more formal and objective than tabloids.

The research proved that *may* is the most frequent modal verb used in broadsheets, mainly because *may* is generally connected with epistemic possibility. On the other hand, *could* was not used as often in the epistemic sense because of its general deontic sense.

Also, you could see that the used modals primarily refer to the future, because of the nature of the modals and the fact that newspaper discourse often makes speculations. Therefore, future time reference was superior to past and present time references. Past time reference, unlike future time reference, has its special form created by *may/might* + perfect infinitive, which was the only way used for the past time reference. Also, the perfect aspect can be used to express possibility about the past or hypothetical event in the past that did not happen, which frequently occurred in conditional clauses.

The newspaper broadsheets proved to be subjective as well, because 53% of the modals occurred in descriptive parts made by journalists themselves. This also means that there were more examples of the modals used in written language than spoken language. The rest of the examples were found in direct and reported speech. *May* was very often used in descriptive parts, while *might* primarily occurred in direct speech, because it is usual for expressing epistemic possibility in spoken language. Also, *may* in reported speech was quite common, even though *might* is considered to be its past time form in this use. Journalists tend to use reporting verbs in the present so backshifting is not used. This is a strategy by which writers create immediacy in their articles. *Could* showed its capability of being used among all three contexts while the descriptive part was the preferred one.

Negation and progressive aspect proved that all of their examples are clearly epistemic. There are examples of negated *may* and *might*, but not even one of *could*, because if this is negated, it becomes deontic because the scope of negation moves from the proposition to the modality.

Therefore, you can say that epistemic *could* is restricted only to positive statements. In addition, the epistemic possibility meaning of *could* seems limited only to occurrences with inanimate objects followed by the linking verb *be*, because there are no examples that would oppose to this statement.

As it could be expected, *may* often occurred in concessive clauses. They were mainly introduced by the conjunction *but*, but there were also examples introduced by *while* and *although*. This concessive use of the modal enables journalists to contradict one proposition with another while the first one is taken rather as a fact or truth instead of the writer's belief. Also, there were seven examples of similar use with *migh*t instead of *may*. It was used to contradict propositions and was interchangeable with *may*, which supports the idea that *may* and *might* are used very similarly in non-past contexts. Speculating about unreality is a very common feature of newspapers, but the hypothetical use is merely restricted to *might* as there were no examples of *may* and *could* in this use, because *could* is used hypothetically only in the deontic sense and *may* is not capable of such meaning. *Might* is often used hypothetically in conditional clauses, but can convey such meaning even without them.

The senses of the three modals are not always fully clear. Some examples of *might* occurring in concessive clauses could be understood in two different readings. It was not always clear whether it is the concessive use or the hypothetical one. Also, in some of *might*'s examples it was unclear whether they refer only to the future or are, again, hypothetical. On the other hand, *may* and c*ould* were sometimes indeterminate between epistemic and deontic possibility, because both readings were possible, while the deontic reading usually dealt with ability or capability of the proposition.

To sup this up, the analysis proved *may* to be the most frequently used modal in broadsheet newspapers to express epistemic possibility. The modals were usually referring to the future, for which there is no special verb form unlike the past time reference, which has the perfect aspect. It was also proved that broadsheets are to some extent subjective, because modal verbs frequently occurred in descriptive parts. *Might* was often used in direct speech because of its common usage in spoken language. On the other hand, for reported speech, it was *may* that was frequent. In this paper, examples of negation, aspects, concessive and hypothetical uses were factors that helped to interpret modals as epistemic. In addition, the concept of epistemic versus deontic is not always clear because indeterminate cases occurred in the analyzed corpus.

7 Resumé

Cílem práce je provedení výzkumu zabývající se výskytem modálních sloves *may, might* a *could* , která vyjadřují možnostní modalitu v diskursu novinových zpráv.

Práce je rozdělena na část teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část této bakalářské práce se zabývá studiem modality podle odborné literatury. Pojem „modalita" je definován společně s představením jejich skupin. Dále poukazuje na rozdíly mezi jistotní a disfunkční modalitou, potom se dále zaměřuje na modalitu jistotní. Také zkoumá charakteristiku výše zmíněných modálních sloves vyjadřujících možnostní modalitu a představuje diskurs novinových zpráv. Praktická část se soustředí na vytvoření korpusu a jeho analýzu z několika hledisek.

Kapitola 1 pojednává o slovesném způsobu (mood) ve spojitosti s modalitou a dochází k tomu, že se již v anglickém jazyce příliš nevyužívá, jelikož je tato funkce plněna modálními slovesy. Druhá kapitola charakterizuje modalitu, jež se zabývá názory a postoji mluvčího k výpovědi (propozici), a dále se zabývá rozdělením modality na skupiny, které se liší terminologií různých autorů. Ke konci kapitola dochází k závěru, že jsou konsistentně dvě skupiny. První je jistotní (epistemická), která se zaměřuje na názor mluvčího ohledně pravděpodobnosti situace. Druhá je disfunkční modalita, která vyjadřuje svolení nebo povinnost a je také označována jako „deontic, non-epistemic, root." Následující podkapitola 2.1 pojednává o možnosti a nutnosti jakožto hlavních pojmech modální logiky. Představuje jejich rozdíly a jejich opačný vztah.

Podkapitola 2.2 ukazuje rozdíly mezi epistemickou a deontickou modalitou. Popisuje epistemickou modalitu jako subjektivní, jelikož je spojena s názory mluvčího, zatímco deontická používá fakta, takže je objektivní. Dále radí, jak je možné tyto dvě modality od sebe odlišit. Jedna z možností je faktickou a teoretickou možnost parafrázovat *(it is possible that p / it is possible for p to)* a druhá je zaměřit se na jejich negování, jelikož se liší v oblasti, kde se negace aplikuje (scope of negation). Epistemická modalita ovlivňuje výpověď mluvčího, zatímco deontická neguje modalitu. Toto rozdělení bylo základní, protože všechny tři modální slovesa mohou vyjadřovat oba typy modality.

Další podkapitola 2.3 definuje pojem epistemické modality, která se zaměřuje na možnost, nutnost a predikci na základě toho, co víme nebo předpokládáme a může se mezi různými mluvčími lišit. Není tedy založena na akcích, stavech či událostech. Dále představuje Palmerovo pojmenování - výpovědní modalita a představuje jeho rozřazení do tří podskupin – spekulující, dedukující a předpokládající.

Kapitola 3 představuje modální slovesa. Pojednává o jejich gramatických vlastnostech a vybírá modální slovesa vhodná pro analýzu. Byla vybrána slovesa *may, might* a *could*, která jsou schopna vyjádřit možnostní modalitu. Jako další bylo rozmýšleno o slovesu *should*, které podle Palmera (1991) také vyjadřuje tento typ modality, avšak u příkladů *should* je většinou přítomen i jeho disfunkční smysl, takže bylo toto modální sloveso v analýze vynecháno. Tato část má tři podkapitoly, které se zaměřují na jednotlivá slovesa, zkoumají jejich využití, sémantiku a kontextové rysy.

Kapitola 4 se snaží představit diskurs novinových zpráv, jejich hlavní funkce a pojednává o jejich objektivitě. Nejprve je rozdělí na tři skupiny (broadsheets, middle range tabloit a tabloits), které jsou zaměřeny na různé typy čtenářů. Důsledkem toho je, že mají i různé styly, například broadsheets jsou více formální a objektivní a tabloidy využívají více vlastností mluveného jazyka. Avšak jejich funkce jsou stejné. Musí prezentovat určité množství informací v zajímavě napsaném textu, který je omezen délkou, vyhnout se nesrovnalostem a objasnit vše, co má. Proto se také užívá jednodušší jazyk nebo přímá a nepřímá řeč. Novinové zprávy nejsou zcela objektivní, jelikož je obtížné zabránit, aby se subjektivní názor spisovatele neprojevil. Tudíž se dá předpokládat, že se bude modalita vyskytovat poměrně často, jelikož novinové zprávy často komentují, spekulují nebo prezentují jejich postoje, čímž se do nějaké míry snaží ovlivnit čtenáře. Dále se tato kapitola zabývá tím, že novinové zprávy připomínají komunikaci dvou lidí, kdy mluvčí přizpůsobí svoji mluvu pro daného posluchače. Avšak role mluvčího a posluchače se nemění a tak nedochází ke zpětné vazbě, proto se předpokládá, že čtenář souhlasí s novinami, které čte.

Kapitola 5 uvádí praktickou část této práce. První popisuje tvoření korpusu, pro který bylo najito dohromady sto výskytů určených modálních sloves. Články byly vybrány bez preference v oblastech ze stránek Time.com a TheGuardian.com. Přestože by bylo rozumnější vybrat za zdroje tabloidy, možnost prozkoumat užití modálních sloves v prostředí, které není tak přátelské k možnostní epistemické modalitě, byl hlavní důvod pro výběr broadsheetů. Z výskytů modálních sloves byly utvořeny tři korpusy, které jsou po nich pojmenované. Každý korpus má také svůj seznam odkazů.

U každého výskytu se analyzovala časová reference, aby se zjistila povaha modálních sloves a novinových zpráv. Dalším zaměřením byl kontext, tím se myslí, jestli se daný příklad objevoval v přímé nebo nepřímé řeči, nebo zda byl v popisné části (descriptive part), kterou napsal novinář. Z tohoto můžeme vidět, zda se v těchto pasážích modální slovesa objevují,

což by potvrdilo subjektivitu novinových zpráv. Také ukázalo poměr, jestli se užívají více v mluveném či psaném jazyce. Ostatní vlastnosti jako negace, aspekty, koncesivní a hypotetické užití byly pozorovány, aby ukázaly časté kontexty epistemické modality a odlišil je od modality deontické.

Podkapitola 5.1 se zabývá pouze četností výskytů modálních sloves, při čemž *may* bylo nejčastější s 56 %. To podporuje myšlenku, že *may* je nejobvyklejší modální sloveso pro vyjádření epistemické možnosti. *Might* bylo také poměrně časté s 36 %. *Could* se objevilo pouze v 8 % výskytů, což může být objasněno tím, že je to primárně deontické modální sloveso na rozdíl od *may* a *might,* které jsou primárně epistemická slovesa.

Podkapitola 5.2 se zaměřila na časovou referenci. Můžeme z ní vidět, že modální slovesa byla nejčastěji používána při referenci do budoucnosti. Důvodem může být povaha modálních sloves nebo to, že novinové články často spekulují o tom, co se může stát. Samozřejmě mohou spekulovat i o minulosti. To má svou speciální slovesnou formu tvořenou *may/might* s perfektním infinitivem, což byla jediná forma užitá k referenci do minulosti a dává nám dvě možnosti, které můžeme vyjádřit. První vyjadřuje jen možnost v minulosti a druhá hypotetickou situaci v minulosti, která se nestala.

Podkapitola 5.3 potvrdila, že jsou broadsheety z části subjektivní, protože se 53 % výskytů objevilo v popisných částech vytvořených novináři, což také znamená, že je tu více výskytů psaného jazyka než mluveného. Zbytek příkladů byl nalezen v přímé a nepřímé řeči. *May* bylo velmi často užívané v popisných částech, zatímco *might* se primárně objevovalo v přímé řeči, protože se obvykle užívá v mluveném jazyce pro vyjádření epistemické možnosti. Naopak *may* bylo časté v nepřímé řeči, i když se v teoretické části popisuje, že *might* se v nepřímé řeči využívá místo *may*. Je to hlavně tím, že novináři nechávají oznamovací sloveso v přítomném čase, takže se další část nemění a *may* se nemusí vyměnit za *might*. To pomáhá vytvořit bezprostřednost článku. *Could* ukázalo schopnost být užito ve všech třech typech kontextů s tím, že popisná část byla nejčastější.

Negace a progresivní aspekt ukázaly v podkapitole 5.4, že všechny jejich výskyty byly čistě epistemické. Jsou zde příklady *may* a *might*, které jsou negovány, ale není tu příklad s negovaným *could*. Když se totiž toto modální sloveso zneguje, změní se z epistemického na deontické. Příčinou je, že se místo aplikace negace (scope of negation) změní z propozice na modalitu. Proto můžeme říci, že epistemický význam slova *could* je omezen pouze na pozitivní tvrzení. Navíc je dále omezen tím, že se ve všech výskytech objevuje s neživotným

podmětem a propojujícím slovesem *be* a nejsou tu jiné výskyty epistemického *could*, které by to vyvrátily.

Další podkapitola 5.5 potvrdila, že *may* se často objevuje v koncesivních větách. Nejčastěji byly uvedeny spojkou *but*, ale byly tu dva příklady uvedené spojkami *while* a *although*. Toto koncesivní použití umožňuje novinářům vyvracet jedno tvrzení druhým, zatímco to první je myšlené spíše jako fakt než spisovatelova domněnka. Také tu bylo sedm nálezů *might*, které se využívají koncesivně. Jsou zde použity k odporování mezi tvrzeními a mohou být zaměněny za *may* bez změny významu. Toto podporuje myšlenku, že *may* a *might* jsou používány velmi podobně v kontextech nereferujících do minulosti.

Spekulování o nereálných věcech je častá funkce novin, ale hypotetické užití epistemických modálních sloves je omezeno pouze na *might,* jelikož tu nebyly žádné takové výskyty *may* nebo *could*. Hlavně proto, že hypotetické *could* je užito jen v deontickém smyslu a *may* není schopné takový smysl vytvořit. *Might* je často užito hypoteticky v podmínkových větách, ale dokáže to vyjádřit i mimo ně.

Podkapitola 5.6 se zabývala nálezy, které nebyly vždy jasné, jelikož několik příkladů *might* v koncesivních větách může být chápáno ve dvou možných výkladech. Proto nebylo vždy jasné, zda je to koncesivní užití nebo čistě hypotetické. Také u nějakých příkladů *might* nebylo zřetelné, jestli jen vyjadřují budoucnost nebo jsou hypotetické. Na druhou stranu u *may* a *could* je někdy neurčité, zda se jedná o epistemickou nebo deontickou možnost, protože jsou možné oba výklady. Když se jednalo o deontický výklad, mělo to co dočinění se schopností.

Analýza potvrdila, že *may* je nejčastěji užívané modální sloveso v broadsheet novinových zprávách pro vyjádření epistemické možnosti. Modální slovesa obvykle referovala do budoucnosti, pro což není žádná speciální forma na rozdíl od minulosti, která má perfektní infinitiv. Dále bylo potvrzeno, že broadsheety jsou z části subjektivní, protože modální slovesa se často objevila v popisných částech. Might bylo mnohokrát užito v přímé řeči. To poukazuje na časté užití *might* v mluveném jazyce. V nepřímé řeči se nejčastěji objevilo *may*. Navíc v této práci byly aspekty, negace, koncesivní a hypotetické užití vždy ukazatelem epistemické modality. Jelikož jsou tato modální slovesa užívána pro oba typy modalit, objevují se zde případy, které mohou nést oba významy.

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Corpus

Term	Code
Reported Speech	RS
Direct speech	DS
Descriptive part	TXT
Negation	N
Progressive Form	ING
Concessive Form	CF
Past Time Reference	PA
Present Time Reference	PR
Future Time Reference	FU
Hypothetical Meaning	H

May

1. But some estimate that Modi's $137bn (£111bn) commitment over his five-year term to upgrade India's railways **may** not be enough to bring creaking trains and railway infrastructure up to standard. (FU, N, RS)

2. This **may** not even change much once Trump holds the Oval Office. (FU, N, TXT)

3. Ethics watchdogs **may** still try to sue Trump if they can find conflicts of interests with his business, apparent nepotism for his children, or efforts to promote his or his children's brands from the presidential podium. (FU,TXT)

4. Though Trump has defied protocol in the limbo before his inauguration – holding court in a skyscraper, shutting down central Manhattan – his deviations **may** be shocking, and nothing more. (PR, TXT)

5. Some Trump surrogates have voiced support for the idea in the past week, leading to fears that the incoming administration **may** pursue such a policy. (FU, TXT)

6. "The use of strong encryption in personal communications **may** itself be a red flag."(FU, DS)

7. Sites such as Politifact.com and Factcheck.org **may** become sources for warning labels attached to stories that have been deemed untrustworthy.(FU, TXT)

8. Muggles **may** be called "No-Majs" in *Fantastic Beasts*, but much of *Harry Potter*'s wizarding lingo remains unchanged — or un-Americanized. (PR, CS, TXT)

9. He **may** wish to return to Poland but there would need to be assurances that he remained on medication so he did not lapse into psychosis and pose a danger to the public, whether in Poland, in the UK, or any other country in future.(PR, CS, TXT)

10. Having consistently led Trump in public opinion polls for months preceding election day in all three midwestern states, Clinton narrowly lost Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and **may** yet lose Michigan, where a final result has still not been declared.(FU, TXT)

11. "The person who received the most votes free from interference or tampering needs to be in the White House," said Chalupa. "It **may** well be Donald Trump, but further due diligence is required to ensure that American democracy is not threatened." (FU, DS)

12. But a top official at a leading conservative group suggested in an interview that there **may** be room to negotiate on the tax credits. (FU, RS)

13. They argue consumers don't need the superfast speeds the upgrade from current 4G technology promises, and many in the industry believe that logistical issues mean that 5G **may not** be properly rolled out in the UK for decades. (FU, N, RS)

14. Webb is not convinced that the industry obsession with faster speeds is matched by consumer demand. He also believes mobile operators **may** be in danger of investing billions in 5G networks that they may struggle to recoup their costs from. (FU, RS)

15. Webb is not convinced that the industry obsession with faster speeds is matched by consumer demand. He also believes mobile operators may be in danger of investing billions in 5G networks that they **may** struggle to recoup their costs from. (FU, TXT)

16. Staffers say that although the proportion **may** seem small compared with the rest of the company, they are determined to increase it. (PR, CS, RS)

17. The mixture needs to hold together when squeezed into a ball, so you **may** need to add a tablespoon of water to help it along. (FU, TXT)

18. "They agreed to stay in regular contact throughout the Brexit process to keep a constructive approach and seek to lower tensions that **may** arise, also when talks on some issues like Gibraltar inevitably will become difficult," one source said. (FU, DS)

19. Displaying pictures of children killed in the attack at the UN in New York, she suggested that if the UN fails to respond to the atrocities the US **may** act to stop further chemical attacks by the Assad regime. (FU, RS)

20. Others suggested Jalilov **may** have been a "mule" used by others without being told that he was actually carrying a bomb. Little information has been announced officially. (PA, RS)

21. Ryanair flights **may** have to be suspended if Theresa May fails to agree an early bilateral Brexit deal, the airline says. (FU, RS)

22. While easyJet would otherwise forfeit 40% of its traffic, Ryanair's UK flights were only 2% of its business, said Sorahan. "The decision **may** be not to go for an AOC but just abandon UK domestic flying." (FU, N, DS)

23. It added: "Smaller, deposit-funded and less diversified banks would be hurt most, which could increase the pressure to consolidate. As banks reach for yield at home and abroad, new financial stability challenges **may** arise in their home and host markets. These hypotheses are supported by the experience of Japanese banks." (FU, DS)

24. Even if you've been eschewing cocoa for the past six weeks, chewing your way through a rubbish egg **may** take the shine off the happy reunion. (FU, TXT)

25. Chocolate snobs **may** turn their noses up at milk chocolate, but more fool them: this 65% cocoa single-origin Madagascan egg is utterly glorious. (FU, CS, TXT)

26. But he accepts there **may** be a drop in surgery overall (if not by 40%). Surgeons are reporting a reduction in the number of procedures a patient has at one time. (PR, RS)

27. But if sport and training on holiday is your thing, this **may** well be Nirvana. (FU, TXT)

28. We arrived at La Santa, which is on the rugged west of the island of Lanzarote, far away from the main tourist areas, in early September. It **may** well have been the perfect time to go, with temperatures in the high 80s during the day but cool enough at night not to feel stifling. (PA, TXT)

29. Your choice to go wonky **may** not have quite such important art world issues at stake, but still. (PR, N, TXT)

30. Her poems are periodically quoted by Nixon in voiceover and, with these shrewd selections, Davies **may** be playfully suggesting that their seductive rhythmic canter has a tiny technical echo with Longfellow, whom Emily professes to despise. (PA, ING, TXT)

31. Maybe in a couple of years' time, we **may** think differently, but when they're in year two, I don't think it matters. (FU, DS)

32. These venues lie in the shadows of the skyscrapers that mark out the city's CBD and the proximity of it all **may** well be part of Melbourne's broad appeal to sports fans. (PR, TXT)

33. France **may** be the birthplace of the Michelin star, but it is possible to eat very well there without splashing the cash. (PR, CS, TXT)

34. Do say: Supplier agreement, eg: "Your supplier agreement **may** be terminated if you continue to fail to meet the service delivery standards." (FU, DS)

35. The fresh investigation into Livingstone **may** not satisfy many in the party, given the first disciplinary inquiry about his comments has taken a year. (FU, N, TXT)

36. Hello and welcome to this week's Money Talks – a roundup of the week's biggest stories and some things you **may** have missed. (PA, TXT)

37. A detachable such as the HP x2 **may** be what Stephen is looking for. (FU, TXT)

38. You **may** need to use the same SD card solution if you buy an Android tablet, because most have only 16GB or 32GB of storage. (FU, TXT)

39. "We hope that it **may** be possible, if we get evidence, that those responsible for unleashing those chemical weapons should be [subject to] sanctions," he told the BBC, adding that there was widespread support for sanctions if the investigation confirmed Syrian or Russian responsibility. (FU, DS)

40. Doctors and aid workers who had examined the wounded of last week's massacre, which provoked the first US military strikes against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, said they exhibited symptoms of exposure to a nerve agent similar to sarin, as well as a second chemical that **may** have been chlorine. (PA, RS)

41. Trump has been accused of being a Russian puppet by some and a militarist by others, but the reality **may** be scarier than either: he has no idea what he's doing, and can be cajoled into supporting wildly contradictory policies by anyone, including but not limited to Russia. (FU, TXT)

42. However, the letters **may** not see the light of day for quite some time. (FU, N, TXT)

43. Russia stressed it would in future be tracking the coalition's jets, not shooting them down, but added that "a threat for those jets **may** appear only if they take action that poses a threat to Russian aircraft". (FU, DS)

44. "It **may** one day fall for consideration whether a very highly paid footballer, who is very good at his job but may be no more skilful than past greats, such as Stanley Matthews or Bobby Charlton, makes a special contribution or is merely the lucky beneficiary of the colossal payments now made possible by the sale of television rights." (FU, TXT)

45. "It may one day fall for consideration whether a very highly paid footballer, who is very good at his job but **may** be no more skilful than past greats, such as Stanley Matthews or Bobby Charlton, makes a special contribution or is merely the lucky beneficiary of the colossal payments now made possible by the sale of television rights." (PR, TXT)

46. Using language that inadvertently acknowledges the confrontation inherent in the situation, it states that, if no passengers agree voluntarily to give up their seats in exchange for compensation, "other passengers **may** be denied boarding involuntarily". (FU, DS)

47. Rule 21 of United's contract states that removal of a passenger **may** be necessary if their conduct is deemed to be "disorderly, offensive, abusive or violent." (PR, RS)

48. Canada and Mexico hosting at least a quarter-final each **may** have been a sop to those constituencies. (PA, TXT)

49. Kim said, in a speech at the London School of Economics on Tuesday. "But I worry that if there's no opportunity to achieve these aspirations, frustration **may** well lead to fragility, conflict, violence and eventually migration." (FU, DS)

50. One of the common problems in cancer treatment is that when surgeons remove a tumour, they **may** leave residual tumours behind. (FU, TXT)

51. The humanoid creations of the 20th century **may** well have excited wonder in their hey-day but the shiny metal bodies of Eric and George, Britain's first robots from the 1920s and 1940s, appear to us almost laughably stiff. (PA, CS, TXT)

52. Science **may** have handed victory to the materialist view on human life but we have yet to find all the links to explain how the machinery revealed in intricate detail by modern molecular biology gives rise to the conscious beings who experiment and wonder. (PA, CS,TXT)

53. After Brexit, it **may** become even easier for public institutions to pick local suppliers over international ones, without the European procurement law that requires contracts to be tendered widely. (FU, TXT)

54. Rankin sees the developments so far as a part of a wider programme of getting wealth to remain local that includes attracting outside investment from corporations that **may** take their profits elsewhere. (FU, TXT)

55. While they realise this **may** take decades, there are already some signs it is paying off. (FU, CS, TXT)

56. "My sister has tried to remember every instant of the drama ... we don't understand why he hasn't been found in the hospitals despite the photograph that has been circulated to help identify him. That adds to the worries we have. We fear that the collision with the terrorists' van **may** have thrown him into the Thames. The more time that passes the more we fear the worst and our hopes dwindle." (PA, DS)

Might

1. "It's up to her whether she wants to stand again … but if I were here and I were German and I had a vote, I **might** support her," he said with a smile. (FU, DR, H)

2. "Harrison didn't laugh, but he looked as though he **might** have if he'd been made a different way." (PA, DR, H)

3. "I mean, weird and grumpy as he **might** have been, he wasn't a bad human." (PA, DS)

4. "I'm sure on our relative lists of priorities, I **might** have ranked as high as number 15 on his agenda, while Harrison was my number one." (PA, DS)

5. His whole transition is a train wreck. Some things will be different when he is in power, but not to the extent some people **might** expect or like. (FU, TXT)

6. "I've always got that doubt in my head: has that man caused me to have this blood disorder? It **might** not have been him, but the doubt's always there." (PA, N, CS)

7. "I don't even know I'm doing it. I can have little periods where I am fine but then something **might** trigger it off." (FU, DS)

8. The 52-year-old **might** soon get his wish. (FU, TXT)

9. The focus has been on an agreement with the US, but given the probable complications of negotiating with self-proclaimed master dealmaker Donald Trump, Israel **might** be first to sign on the dotted line. (FU, TXT)

10. If cloning were an option, former trade minister Peter Mandelson **might** find himself duplicated several times, if only to fill meetings with more experienced heads than the UK has at the moment. (FU, TXT, H)

11. "Well, it's not just bad luck, because you are more likely to suffer from bad luck if you're older," she says. "But who knows? This **might** have happened to me if I'd got pregnant when I was younger. I just would have had more time afterwards to get pregnant again." (PA, DS, H)

12. Republicans **Might** Use the 'Nuclear Option' to Confirm Neil Gorsuch. What's That? (FU, TXT)

13. It **might** be time to buy some bigger jeans. (PR, TXT)

14. A few years ago, you **might** have volunteered for studies done in the US by Frederick Zugibe, who died in 2013. (PA, TXT)

15. Before, he says, someone **might** come "to have some liposuction of saddlebags, as well as having some skin removed from their lower tummy and maybe some breast surgery, [but] now they're just having one of those things done. (FU, RS)

16. OK, so Jane Birkin **might** be way too referenced far too often as style inspo on Instagram, but she's not done yet. (PR, CS, TXT)

17. Many parents, whose children have a much lower attendance rate, can't afford the luxury of a tutor, or **might** not even be bothered to make up the time lost in school. (PR, N, DS)

18. They told us to just say he's sick. I wanted to tell the teacher in advance, because I need to know if there's work he **might** need to catch up with, but if you go through the formal process you'll get into trouble. (FU, DS)

19. Around 500 lambs are expected to arrive over the next month or two and lucky visitors **might** even get to watch one being born. (FU, TXT)

20. Other operating systems **might** pretend to be PC gaming capable, but for the most part it's all about Windows. (PR,CS, TXT, H)

21. The drawback is that you **might** soon have to pay for a replacement battery, cost unknown. (FU, TXT)

22. Whatever Tillerson **might** hope to achieve in Moscow could turn out to be less important given the influence of officials inclined to look for military solutions to problems like Syria. (FU, CS, TXT, H)

23. What this suggests is that to whatever extent Trump's campaign and initial administration **might** have been "pro-Russian," its current orientation is the same as Clinton's, or any of Trump's conventional Republican rivals such as Marco Rubio, would have been. (PA, TXT)

24. "Men who are violent toward their female partners often are violent guys in general – that **might** be the issue," she wrote. (PR, DS)

25. "If it were me, I **might** have sought to promote a different solution [to allow] the crew to travel. I suspect a crew was 'out of hours' [about to exceed its working-hours limit] or sick or injured somewhere else on the network and the decision was therefore a little late to send them

on that aircraft. I think the reputational damage from the events on Facebook will be significantly worse than a delay – even significant – elsewhere." (PA, DS, H)

26. Mexico **might** have struggled to host 80 matches by itself but easily has enough infrastructure for 10 fixtures. (PA, CS, DS, H)

27. In this case, the Canadian Soccer Association **might** overcome scheduling conflicts with other events to secure the nation's largest venues for the men. (FU, DS)

28. The United States have been dogged by uneven performances at World Cups and it seems hard to imagine a better result than their quarter-final showing at Korea Japan 2002, which of course **might** have gone one round further had the referee Hugh Dallas spotted Torsten Frings' handball (but that's neither here nor there). (PA, DS, H)

29. Assuming that it passes, watching dour sides like Switzerland **might** soon be more enjoyable in Canada. (FU, DS)

30. The capture of time by the springs and gears of clockwork, and of the planetary orbits by Newton's gravitational theory, brought early glimpses that the world **might** be understood in terms of a grand mechanism. (PR, TXT)

31. The fictional exploration of the possibility that robots **might** one day surpass their human designers evidently retains a powerful grip as in this season's hit TV series Westworld. (FU, TXT)

32. Hickson says. "For us, taking a vegetable box to central Preston **might** not be worth it, but if there was a food hub it might be worthwhile – not profitable, but economically viable." (PR, N, CS, DS)

33. Hickson says. "For us, taking a vegetable box to central Preston might not be worth it, but if there was a food hub it **might** be worthwhile – not profitable, but economically viable." (FU, DS, H)

34. "I have big travel dreams but I am realistic. I recognise that I **might** not go everywhere but I should definitely go everywhere I can, and so should you!." (FU, N, CS, DS,)

35. "We were worried that, if he was still alive, the jihadists **might** go and look for him at home or at work." (FU, DS, H)

36. "I was honestly concerned he **might** lie about the nature of our meeting, so I thought it important to document," he said. (FU, DS, H)

Could

1. Professor William Webb, an academic and former Ofcom director, has been outspoken in warning that 5G **could** be a case of the "emperor and his supposed new clothes". (FU. TXT)

2. "There **could** be a situation where you're going to have get comfortable with staycations for the summer of 2019: those trips down to Portugal and Spain, unless you can swim, aren't really going to happen." (FU, DS)

3. But Sorahan said that even if May changed her stance, Ryanair had to make contingency plans as the EU had said there **could** be no Brexit deal until all parts of the arrangement were agreed. (FU, RS)

4. The sun begins to set over the Albert Park lake and, coupled with the rather appropriate Michelin Man clouds that punctuate the pinkening sky, it's a sight to behold. It affords a rare moment of reflection: **could** Melbourne indeed be the centre of the sporting universe? (PR, TXT)

5. "But the question of how that ends and the transition itself **could** be very important in our view to the durability, the stability inside of a unified Syria." (FU, DS)

6. The nuclear-powered Carl Vinson's presence in the area coincides with speculation that North Korea **could** be preparing to conduct its sixth nuclear test to coincide with key dates in the country's history, including the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il-sung, on Saturday. (PR, ING, TXT)

7. Setting up co-ops **could** be more difficult in the UK, which has weaker city governments, less availability of philanthropic capital and the looming shadow of austerity. (FU, TXT)

8. This **could** be the night he smiles. (FU, TXT)

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