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**Translation of Verbs Introducing the  
Direct Speech in Agatha Christie's  
Detective Fiction: A Corpus-based Study**

M.A. Major Thesis

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently, using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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I would like to express thanks to my supervisor, PhDr. Jarmila Fictumová, for her valuable advice.

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## 1. Introduction

My thesis is about translation of Agatha Christie's work in seventeen years, between 1991 and 2008. With the exception of 1998, at least one new translation occurred in the Czech market every year of the period concerned. That makes Agatha Christie perhaps the most translated Anglophone writer of the past two decades. Christie's readership does not seem to be affected by any mass hysteria (such as Potter-mania). Her Czech readers were able to "consume" some sixty books and they still seem to want new translations. Moreover, Agatha Christie is so popular that four of her books were simplified and published as bilingual editions for learners of English.

The popularity of Christie's detective stories resulted in another interesting phenomenon; the amount of work for translators of Agatha Christie is so large, that Christie has no "brand-translator." Since 1995 Christie was monopolized by the "Knižní klub" publishing house, publishing the majority of some sixty books. Despite the general tendency of publishing houses to assign all books by a single author to a single translator, "Knižní klub" published so many of Agatha Christie's books (sometimes five in a single year) that a single "brand translator" would simply not be able to handle such a big amount of work.

So unlike Pavel Medek or Jan Kantůrek, who were able to monopolize J.K. Rowling and Terry Pratchett, Christie's forty-six books translated into Czech were translated by thirty translators (the bilingual editions were made by three translators not participating in any of the previous translations). Some of these translations are reprints, but most of them are new translations, created for the modern reader of Agatha Christie.

However, only forty books were chosen to make the Agatha Christie corpus, while the remaining were excluded from the corpus. The four bilingual books were left out because the language in a mirror edition is simplified and learner centred, and thus

unsuitable for making a literary corpus. Two of these books were published under Agatha Christie's pen name Mary Westmacott – these are not detective stories. The rest of the books excluded are reprints of translations made in the 1960s. Because the primary aim of the corpus is to collect translations in up-to-date language, these two are considered too old.

Another very interesting fact is that twenty-eight books – i.e. more than three fifths of the total number – were translated by female translators.

In light of these facts, I think it was important to create a parallel corpus of Agatha Christie's work; on one hand restricted to one author only and thus quite homogenous in style and genre, on the other hand containing texts by over thirty translators, thus ensuring heterogeneity of approach to the texts translated.

The research itself, however, deals with translation of phrases introducing direct speech. I would like to pay special attention to the translation of the verb “to say”; in English, it is a neutral introduction of direct speech and its repetitive use is considered normal. In Czech, nevertheless, repetitive use of the functional equivalent of the verb “to say” – “řici” would seem rather strange and unintelligent. The translator has to translate the verb “say” creatively, using various synonyms of the verb “řici.”

However, Agatha Christie did not only use “say” in front of direct speech; her repertoire was much wider also including verbs such as exclaimed, whispered, shouted, remarked, etc. These too must be brought into consideration.

I hope that in using my corpus I was able to identify the most popular strategies applied by translators to deal with the difficult word “say.” Hopefully, I was also able to point out the “pet” synonyms of various translators, the most creative ideas and show the different approach (if there is any) between male and female translators as well as between individual translators and teams of translators.

Chapter two of this thesis deals with Agatha Christie. It contains a short biography of Agatha Christie as well as, in the theoretical part, the detective novel and short story is discussed from the stylistic as well as literary point of view.

Chapter three form the necessary theoretical background of this thesis. The first sub-chapter discusses the corpus linguistics together with the universals of translation. The second sub-chapter concentrates on the problems the translators face when translating a detective story. The third sub-chapter is dedicated to direct speech; both Czech and English rules are discussed together with the introductory verbs.

The fourth chapter contains the outcomes of the research. The first sub-chapter discusses the creation of the corpus together with some problems I was faced with when creating and working with my corpus. However, the second sub-chapter contains the results of the research – the use of introductory verbs by Agatha Christie was measured and compared to the use of introductory verbs by her translators in an attempt to identify a general strategy. Subsequently, three sub-corpora were formed out of the general corpus, the sub-corpus of translations carried out by female translators, the male translators' sub-corpus and a sub-corpus of translations by translator teams. These were processed, compared and the male, female and translator team strategies were identified. Moreover, two special micro-corpora were created; the short story micro-corpus and the novel micro-corpus. Comparing these two micro-corpora, I was able to identify different approaches towards the translation of introductory verbs, depending on the form.

Out of the forty books forming the corpus, twenty-eight (sixty-eight percent) are Poirot novels and short-stories collections, four are novels with no great detective, three books are Marple novels, three feature Tommy and Tuppence, two are Superintendent Battle novels and one book is a book of short stories about Parker Pyne. Although this fact has

more to do with the publisher's policy and general taste of the readership than with the choice of translators, it certainly is worth mentioning.

## **1.1 Hypothesis**

When reading a book by Agatha Christie, the reader is instantly confronted with two details; the use of dialogues and the variety of verbs introducing the direct speech. Agatha Christie used dialogues intensively for an obvious reason – the detective needs to interview all the suspects and witnesses and the second half of her detective stories usually consists of these interviews (a new interview meaning a new chapter) and the concluding explanatory monologue of the detective. Because of her intensive use of dialogues Agatha Christie needed a lot of introductory verbs; she used the verb “said” quite intensively, but nevertheless, when reading a story by Agatha Christie the reader gets an impression that Christie used a great amount of introductory verbs and cannot be accused of repetitiveness.

These details are closely connected to this thesis. I expect my research to show that Agatha Christie used the introductory verb “said” quite often, but she also used a wide variety of other introductory verbs to avoid being repetitive.

The hypothesis therefore is that the translators used roughly the same number (or just only a little less) of introductory phrases as Christie did. The main difference between them and Agatha Christie is the relative number of uses of the word “say” in the source language part of the corpus compared to the relative number of uses of its closest Czech equivalent “řici” in the target language part of the corpus.

Because Czech writers do not use the introductory “řici” as often as the English writers use the introductory “say,” I expect that the translators translated approximately half the amount of “say” as “řici.” I expect the second half to be divided between synonyms to

“říci” and other introductory verbs and certain part “lost in translation”, being omitted for the sake of “naturalness” and coherence of the text in the TL.

Stemming out from the previous paragraph, I also discussed the influence of translation universals on the translating of introductory verbs from English into Czech in my thesis. Out of the three universals of translation (simplification, normalization and explicitation), two – normalization and simplification – play a distinctive role in the process of translation of introductory verbs. The theoretical foundation of the translation universals’ concept can be found in chapter 3.1.1, the individual cases are discussed in chapters 4.2.1 – 4.2.6.

## **2. Agatha Christie and her work**

This chapter deals with the life, personality and literary significance of Agatha Christie, her life, work and her style. Although this is not a thesis in literature, a short introductory biography together with a discursive subchapter is needed, because Agatha Christie is the only writer whose works (together with their translations) form the corpus.

The first subchapter is in fact a short biography of Agatha Christie and the second subchapter is a short literary discourse of Christie’s work. The third subchapter deals with the unique features of Christie’s style, the use of dialogues in particular.

### **2.1 Agatha Christie – short biography and some basic facts**

Born in 1890 in Torquay, Devon, Agatha Christie was the youngest child of Frederick and Clara Miller. She was educated mostly by private tutors and in 1914 she married Archie Christie. During the First World War she served as a voluntary nurse and later an apothecary – hence her detailed knowledge of poisons. Her first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was published in 1921 and meant an instant success. After her divorce

with Archie in 1928 she married an archaeologist Max Mallowan in 1930. During the Second World War Agatha Christie again volunteered into the auxiliary nursing corps as an apothecary. Even during her war effort she still published new books. The after-war era saw the second peak of Agatha Christie's career, with Christie successfully publishing almost until her death. She died in 1976 at the age of eighty-five. During her long and active literary life she wrote eighty crime novels, dozens of short stories, plays and other fiction. She was awarded the Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1971.<sup>1</sup> According to the UNESCO statistics, Agatha Christie is the most translated individual writer in the world,<sup>2</sup> her works being translated into approximately fifty-six languages.

## **2.2 Literary discourse of Christie's detective stories**

Agatha Christie began her literary career in the 1920s publishing her first novel, *The Affair at Styles*, in 1921. The 1930s saw the first peak of her career. During the Second World War Agatha Christie remained active, but the true second peak of her career were the 1950s and 1960s. Her work is very closely connected with the English middle class; in fact Christie's profile is the one of a middle class author writing for a middle class audience, giving her audience a plenty of reading for pleasure. Her close ties with the British middle class can be best seen in the characters of her two most famous Great Detectives – Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple.

During the Golden age of the detective story (1920s and 1930s), Agatha Christie became a literary superstar mainly thanks to her first Great Detective, Hercule Poirot. He appeared in her very first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, and stayed with

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<sup>1</sup> For more biographical information about Christie see for example [www.agathachristie.com](http://www.agathachristie.com) or Christie, Agatha. *An Autobiography*. London: Collins, 1977. (Also in Czech as Christie, Agatha. *Vlastní životopis*. Translated by Marta Stanková, Praha: Odeon, 1987.)

<sup>2</sup> <http://databases.unesco.org/>, visited 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010.

Christie for the rest of her life. Poirot attracted the English reader because, unlike Sherlock Holmes, he was not a typical (yet somewhat extravagant) representative of the upper class. Poirot, although he is a WW1 refugee from Belgium, is nevertheless a hero originating in the British middle class, which has arisen after the WW1. The steep rise of this new class made the old, upper class Sherlock obsolete, and the middle class wanted a brand new detective, who would suit it better. By ridiculing Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie has given the British audience its own middle class Great Detective.

The 1930s gave birth to another Great Detective of Christie's, Miss Jane Marple. Unlike Poirot, this solitary spinster lived for her entire life in one place and is pictured as one of the last relics of the glory of the inter-war middle class. Miss Marple, with her strange hat and almost Victorian manners, is thrown right into the world of radio, television and new housing estates. However, she is not only capable of survival, but she is also capable of restoring order to the society by unmasking a whole series of murderers.

Although Agatha Christie gave life to other detectives (superintendent Battle, Mr Quinn, Tommy and Tuppence), Poirot and Marple are the most famous and occupy the majority of Christie's work.

Poirot and Marple stories form a substantial part of the corpus. There are twenty-eight Poirot books and five books feature Miss Jane Marple. The rest is divided between novels with no Great Detective (five books), Tommy and Tuppence books (three), Superintendent Battle novels (two) and a book of short stories with Parker Pyne.

In terms of literary value, Agatha Christie does not present any innovation to the genre. However, she is credited for intelligent and credible plots in most of her books.

### **2.3 Distinctive features of Christie's style**

Most of Agatha Christie's crime novels are written as third-person narratives, the narrator narrating the story from the past. However, Agatha Christie used in some of her novels first person narrators; these were mostly sidekicks of the Great Detective, but in one novel of hers, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Christie employed the murderer as the narrator.

Although consistency in this pattern can be traced easily throughout her work, there are some distinctive features which highlight the difference between the Poirot stories and the rest of Agatha Christies work. In the following sub-chapter the main features connected to the research topic of this thesis are discussed.

The novels and short stories with Hercule Poirot are quite distinct in several ways, most notably the settings and also the language which is closely interconnected with the settings. The 1920s and 1930s Poirot stories usually take place in higher society (or at least among the British upper-middle class). Although being a foreigner who will obviously never master English, Poirot as an educated person with a wide range of interests adopts the vocabulary of the classes he mingles with, and even Christie's narrator tends to use vocabulary associated with these social strata – it is the vocabulary of an educated Englishman, with lots of long words and a very wide vocabulary in general. However, in the formal level, the Poirot stories are narrated in the same way Sherlock Holmes was. The narrator is usually a third-person shadow of the Great detective (occasionally turning into first-person Capt. Hastings or another sidekick of Poirot's) who is able to see only the things the Great detective is also familiar with.

Reading a Hercule Poirot book and focusing on verbs introducing the direct speech, the reader gets the image of creativity. In Poirot books, although "say" remains the main introductory verb, Christie used many introductory verbs along with "say." However, the image of creativity is also achieved by the use of modifying adverbs with "say."

However, in sharp contrast to the Poirot stories stand those featuring her second Great Detective, Miss Jane Marple, and her other detectives. Marple is rather an uneducated spinster who has lived in the same place her whole life and her vocabulary is thus rather limited. The narrator is much more straightforward and does not use such a wide variety of expressions. On the formal level, the narrator usually remains a third-person shadow, the same as in Poirot stories, although some of the Marple books are written in the first-person, narrated usually by a person who collects evidence for this great armchair detective.

Agatha Christie's stories were written for the British middle class, and together with the change in this social stratum the narrator changed as well. Although Christie's style remained nearly the same throughout her long literary career, there were slight changes in the voice of the narrator. In her later works, the narrator is closer to the general public in the choice of words. On the lexical level, the first books by Agatha Christie contain a high amount of bookish expressions. As she gradually became a famous and established author, her lexical choice swung closer to the everyday language of the middle class.

Another factor, which influenced Agatha Christie's lexical choice, was the age of the narrator. Christie was literally obsessed with young people and youth in general. The main characters of her novels are usually young people in their twenties or thirties. Old people are allowed to appear in Christie's novels, but only the young people really matter. The only old people, whom are credited a sort of importance, are the detectives, doctors and various experts. If Agatha Christie wanted the dialogues to sound credible, she had had to use the language used by her young contemporaries.

However novel and even "iconoclastic" Agatha Christie was she never adopted the all-knowing narrator who emerged in the 1960s. Until the very end of her literary career her narrator still was the third-person (or sometimes first-person) shadow of the great

detective, allowing the reader to see only as much as the detective was able to. The only deviation of this rule was in her World War 2 novel *Towards Zero*, where she experimented with the narrator able to see into the villain's mind. Nevertheless, judging from the novels she published after the second World War, this experiment was a dead end for Agatha Christie.

Close reading of Agatha Christie's novels reveals another peculiarity concerning her style; Christie was very fond of dialogues. Her novels scarcely contain long uninterrupted descriptive passages in the later detective story fashion. On the contrary, her books are full of dialogues and at the very end of each book there is usually a monologue in which the Detective unmasks the villain. From this point of view, the books by Agatha Christie represent a great material for a case study in dialogues and/or verbs introducing the direct speech.

### **3. Theoretical background**

This chapter lays the theoretical background of this thesis. The first subchapter is a brief overview of the development the corpus-based translation studies has gone through in the last two decades together with the concept of translation universals. The second subchapter deals with the problems translators are facing when translating Agatha Christie's work. The use of direct speech in Czech and English literary prose is the main topic of the third subchapter. The individual sub chapters forming this chapter present the necessary theoretical background; without this background it would be impossible to understand and interpret the results of the research.

#### **3.1 Computer aided research in translation studies**

When translation studies emerged as an individual discipline in the 1960s, the scholars specialized in prescriptive studies, trying to distinguish the "right" and "wrong"

translations and giving advice how to produce the “right” one. The theoretical foundations of prescriptive studies were made by Jiří Levý in his book *Umění překladau* (Levý 1963), Eugene Nida in his *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida – Taber 1969), and others.

However, during the 1970s there was a shift from prescriptivism to descriptivism. The question changed from “Is this translation right/correct?” to “What are the features of this translation?” The most influential was perhaps Gideon Toury with his book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Toury 1995).

The DTS led to a new concept, emerging in the 1980s, the translation universals. Close comparison of individual translations led some scholars to forming a thesis that there are general patterns in the behaviour of translators, which can be traced across languages. These patterns are called translation universals and there are three of them - normalization, simplification and explicitation. The theoretical foundation of this concept was laid by Vanderauwera (1985).

In the 1990s and 2000s translation studies saw a revolution. Descriptive translation studies described only general patterns, which could be clearly seen in translations without any possibility to base the research on any kind of quantitative data. However, the rise of computers and word processing tools made it possible for translation studies to base some of their findings on quantitative analyses of the texts. The influential works are by Mona Baker (2001), Sara Laviosa-Braithwaite (2002) and others.

Some linguistic books like *Corpus Linguistics. Investigating Language Structure and Use* define corpus analysis as:

empirical, analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts; utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts as the basis for analysis; depends on

both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. (Biber - Conrad - Reppen 2000: 4)

In translation studies, the situation is somewhat complicated by the fact that there are in fact two parts of the corpus, the SL part and the TL part, which need to be analyzed separately. After the analysis, the results are brought together and compared. Only after this twofold analysis and the necessary comparison conclusions may be drawn.

There are two types of computerized corpora used in translation studies; the parallel corpus and the comparable corpus. A comparable corpus is formed by original texts on both the SL and TL part. The other type is a parallel corpus; a corpus formed by the authentic texts on the SL part and their translations on the TL part.

In translation studies, computerized corpora have been used to identify the relationship of the source text and target text by the means of statistical analysis of the collected data; everything that could be counted (types, tokens, type/token ratio, mean sentence and paragraph length) was counted in both the ST and TT.

Findings of this research led to further anchoring of the concept of translation universals.<sup>3</sup> In past few years, there have been tendencies to identify the style of individual translators by means of computerized corpora.

### **3.1.1 Universals of translation in the corpus**

This thesis is, in a way, also a work dealing with translation universals; the main aim is to discover, whether or not there is a universal pattern (among translators dealing with Christie's detective fiction) in translating the introductory verb "say" into Czech. The most probable translation universal to be found in the Czech part of the corpus is

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<sup>3</sup> See for example: Sara Laviosa-Braithwaite (2001) "Universals in translation". In: Baker, Mona ed. *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge. 2001.

normalization; Czech prose uses the introductory verb “řici” far less often than the English equivalent “say” appears in English prose and so do the translators (in order not to sound unnatural).

Vanderauwera in her study of translation universals defines normalization as:

A tendency towards textual conventionality.(Vanderauwera 1985: 24)

The *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* further adds to this definition that normalization is usually represented by:

shifts in punctuation, lexical choice, style, sentence structure and textual organization (Baker – Malmkjaer eds., 2001: 289-290)

Gideon Toury calls this notion of translators “the law of growing standardization” and argues that:

In translation, source-text textemes tend to be converted into target-language (or target-culture) repertories. (Toury 1995: 267-8)

However, normalization concerning the translation of the introductory verb “say” can be seen on two levels; on the level of lexical choice and on the level of style. Normalization certainly plays an important role in the translation of introductory verbs, but it cannot be described as normalization on stylistic or lexical level only; these two levels are in many cases closely interconnected and cannot be separated. Thus, wherever

normalization appears in this corpus, it is described as normalization on the stylistic/lexical level.

Another translation universal which has a strong influence on the translation of introductory verbs is simplification. Simplification, according to *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*, is a translation universal which is defined very simply as “making do with *less* words” (Baker – Malmkjaer eds., 2001: 288). *Routledge Encyclopaedia* states further that simplification:

operates according to six principles or strategies:

- 1) Use of superordinate terms when there are no equivalent TL hyponyms
- 2) Approximation of concepts expressed in the ST
- 3) Use of “common-level” synonyms
- 4) Transfer of all functions of a SL word to its TL nearest equivalent
- 5) Use of circumlocution instead of high-level equivalents
- 6) Use of paraphrase where there is a cultural gap

(Baker – Malmkjaer eds., 2001: 288)

In the corpus, simplification can be found on the level of books – books in the SL part of the corpus are bigger than their translations – the average difference between a book and its translation is 6,000 tokens. Such a great difference brings forward the question of mean sentence length and mean paragraph length. I think that together with these two categories (well-established in translation studies) this corpus needs another special category – the mean book length.

The mean book length can be, at least in the case of my corpus, a valid category for several reasons. The mean sentence length and the mean paragraph length show the

average number of tokens in a sentence or a paragraph. However useful these categories may seem, they can be misleading. In translations, the mean sentence length and the mean paragraph length can be influenced by TL norms as well as (to a somewhat lesser degree) by the style of the translator. The mean book length can, backed by a corpus of thirty-nine books and forty translations, help to identify some of the general strategies of translators of detective stories.

Together with the mean sentence length and mean paragraph length, the mean book length can shed light on the behaviour of translators and it can be of much help in understanding the process of translating the introductory verbs.

However, simplification on the level of books can (and I think it actually did) influence the translation of introductory verbs as well. Although certain loss in the total number of introductory verbs in the TL part of the corpus can be attributed to creative solutions of the translators (*creative* meaning the use of verbs that are not primarily seen as introductory), part of the loss must be attributed to simplification and translation through omitting.

The third translation universal, explicitation, could also have some influence on the translation of introductory verbs. However, the influence of explicitation cannot be identified as easily as that of normalization and simplification. Whereas the numbers (the total number of words in the corpus, the mean book length, the number of introductory verbs used, etc.) are necessary to identify normalization and simplification, explicitation cannot be measured. Explicitation is defined as:

The use of interjections to express more clearly the progression of the characters' thoughts or to accentuate a given interpretation, expansion of condensed passages, addition of modifiers qualifiers and conjunctions to achieve

greater transparency, addition of extra information, repetition of previously mentioned details for the purpose of clarity, precise renderings of implicit vague data, the provision of more accurate descriptions, the explicit naming of geographical locations and the disambiguation of pronouns with precise forms on identification. (On some occasions) translators also insert additional background information in the target text in order to fill in a cultural gap. (Baker – Malmkjaer eds., 2001: 289)

Yet saying something explicitly does not mean using either more or fewer words. Explicitation cannot be identified by means of statistics, it has to be identified individually in the TT. This, however, can hardly be done given the fact that the TL part of the corpus alone contains more than twenty thousand uses of the introductory verbs. So although the influence of explicitation has to be mentioned, it is not dealt with in my thesis.

### **3.2 Problems of translating a detective story**

A translator translating a detective story may be faced with numerous problems beginning with the terminology and ending with the names of characters.

Although both of the abovementioned features are present in Agatha Christie's work, they are a minor problem, if they are a problem at all. The main difficulty arises with the settings and culture present in Christie's work. Agatha Christie's detective stories take place among the British middle class, depicting its life, work, standards, manners, customs and leisure activities. Of course some of these culturally marked expressions, such as "bridge" or "five o'clock tea", are familiar to the Czech reader, but there are still

many others which need to be dealt with. However, these problems were discussed in connection with the universals of translation in the previous chapter.

There are some meanings (or shades of meaning) which cannot be transferred from one language into another. For example the British class system, which is one of the background leitmotifs of all Agatha Christie's novels. Czech translators are usually torn between the notions of adapting these expressions to the Czech cultural standard (and risking that the reader would not accept the story because it is too Czech) and translating the expression unchanged (and risking the readers not understanding or misunderstanding the whole concept).

Agatha Christie set nearly all of her novels in London or the English countryside which can also be a problem for a foreign reader. A native Briton has at a least a vague image of London and its boroughs, but a foreigner without a city plan on his/her knees while reading, can get lost easily. Again the translator has to decide whether to use explicitations, explaining the reader the geography of England and London, or whether the option not to explain anything is enough to convey the message.

### **3.3 Direct speech in Czech and English texts**

The transcription of direct speech has almost the same rules in both English and Czech; by definition the direct speech is:

used to give the exact words used by another speaker. The words are given between quotation marks (" ") in writing.<sup>4 5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> UsingEnglish.com, Direct Speech, 6. Aug. 2009, 26. Feb. 2010  
<<http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/direct-speech.html>>

<sup>5</sup> Internetová jazyková příručka, ÚJČ AVČR, Uvozovky, 26. Feb. 2010  
<<http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz/?id=162>>

The only difference is the use of quotation marks; quotation marks in English are written on the top of the line, whereas Czech quotation marks start at the bottom of the line and end at the top (, “).

The only thing grammar books deal with is the position of the introductory verb in the sentence. According to these sources the introductory phrase can be positioned in front of the direct speech and separated by a colon (He said: “I will kill him.”), at the back of the direct speech (“I will kill him,” he said.) or in the middle of the direct speech (“I will” he said, “kill him.”). However, the introductory “say” may be accompanied by adverbs such as gently, silently etc., which modify it and reduce the need for using synonyms. This strategy can be used in Czech to modify the introductory “řici” as well. Nevertheless, in a dialogue, the introductory verbs may be omitted. This is a stylistic device employed by authors to give their dialogues the highest possible degree of fluency; omitting the introductory verbs leads also to the illusion that the dialogue happens in front of the reader and the reader is psychologically drawn in as a “silent observer.” This stylistic device was often employed by Agatha Christie and can be found in almost every novel of hers. Just one example to illustrate this thesis from *Lord Edgware Dies*.

‘So that is Lady Edgware? Yes, I remember—I have seen her act. She is belle femme.’

‘And a fine actress too.’

‘Possibly.’

‘You don’t seem convinced.’

‘I think it would depend on the setting, my friend.(...)’

And the Czech translation of the dialogue from *Smrt lorda Edgwarea*, translated by Marek Roesel.

„Takže tohle je lady Edgwareová? Ano, už si vzpomínám - viděl jsem její hru. Je to *belle femme*.“

„A také dobrá herečka.“

„To je možné.“

„Nevypadáte příliš přesvědčeně.“

„Já myslím, příteli, že to závisí na její úloze ve hře.(...)“

As can be clearly seen, Marek Roesel preserved the dialogue without adding any introductory verbs. Although it is only one example, it suggests that translators did not add introductory verbs into the TT.

However, concerning individual introductory verbs, the grammar books either omit them completely or switch from prescriptivism to descriptivism and employ a lot of hedging. *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* (Sinclair, John ed., 1990) goes as far as naming one hundred and four verbs which can be used to introduce both direct and indirect speech (Sinclair, John ed., 1990: 315, Appendix B – interestingly enough, *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* does not mention the verb “nod”, which was one of the most frequent introductory verbs used by Agatha Christie). Stylistic books in both Czech and English are concerned with the direct speech itself and not with the introductory verbs. For example a Czech handbook on stylistics, *Současná stylistika* (Čechová – Krčmová - Minářová, 2008) and a comparable handbook on English stylistics *Style in Fiction. A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Leech - Short, 2007), when discussing the direct speech in fiction, concentrate on various stylistic aspects, such as the cohesion and coherence of the dialogue and so on. The use of introductory verbs is left untouched.

To sum up, in both Czech and English hard and fast rules only exist for the punctuation of the transcription of direct speech; the use of introductory verbs is a field left to the creativity of individual authors.

## 4. The findings of the research

This chapter deals with the research and the results the research brought. The actual research was done on several levels; the first, and perhaps the most important, was the level of the general corpus, which consists of forty-two books in English and their Czech translations. The next step was the division of the general corpus into three parts. Three sub-corpuses were created; the female translator corpus, the male translator corpus and the corpus of books translated by teams of translators.

Out of the forty books, five are short stories collections – *The Labours of Hercules*, *Partners in Crime*, *Parker Pyne Investigates*, *The Listerdale Mystery* and *Poirot's Early Cases*.

### 4.1 Creating the corpus

The corpus was created between September 2009 and March 2010. The SL part of the corpus was created by using PDF files downloaded from rapidshare.com<sup>6</sup>, whereas the TL part was scanned from books borrowed from public libraries, mostly from the Jiří Mahen Library in Brno. Although the corpus will be accessible for future research, it is not violating the copyright, because the corpus was created for academic purposes, not for further distribution to general public.

The SL part of the corpus is formed by forty-one books and the TL part consists of forty-two books. This is caused by the fact that one of Marple novels, *Hickory Dickory Dock*, was translated twice; for the first time by Marek Roesel as *Zlatá brána otevřená* (1994), and for the second time by Edda Němcová as *Nástrahy zubařského křesla* (2008). The complete list of the books and their translations can be found in the Bibliography section of this thesis (Primary Works, p. 65).

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<sup>6</sup> www.rapidshare.com

#### **4.1.1 The software used to create and process the computerized corpus of Agatha Christie**

The books which form the TL part of the corpus were scanned into the PDF format, using the ABBY Fine Reader 9.0 Professional Edition. These PDF files were then converted into Microsoft Word 2003 documents (again with ABBY Fine Reader 9.0 Professional Edition) and then again converted into PDF with the PDF Creator version 0.9.1. This PDF-.doc-PDF conversion was necessary, because the original PDF files were saved as scanned images and thus illegible for word counting software. The counting software used for both word counting and frequency computing was the PractiCount & Invoice 3 (Standard). This program was chosen because it can handle large corpora and it is also possible to make a queue of the documents to be counted. This feature is particularly useful when the main corpus is divided into several sub-corpus.

When speaking about a corpus in translation studies, one large .doc or PDF file is usually meant. However, this corpus was left in eighty-three PDF files, each novel and each translation standing individually. Leaving the novels in their original files was motivated by two factors: A) modern word counting software makes it possible to queue a list of documents to be counted and there is no longer the need for creating one big file of all the works involved in the study. B) I expect that so big a corpus can be used by other translation studies students and scholars as a base of their research as well. By preserving the individual PDF files, it is possible for the future users of my corpus to pick and study only some of these files, creating their own corpora.

#### **4.1.2 Problems with processing the corpus**

The first technical problem when doing corpus-based research is lemmatization. As Agatha Christie's situated her stories into the past, all the words introducing the direct

speech are in the past tense. The software used for dealing with the corpus has its limitations. However, the corpus itself is so large – more than five million tokens – that use of an online corpus (for example <http://ucnk.ff.cuni.cz/intercorp/>) is nearly impossible. The online corpora offer only a limited space and my corpus is simply too huge to post it permanently on the internet. A solution to this problem may of course be processing one part of my corpus online, deleting it, processing another part and so on, and so on. The software used (PractiCount & Invoice 3 (Standard)) was the only software I had that can handle such a large corpus. Although it does not have a tool for lemmatization, this can be handled with quite easily. The “Word Frequency” tool can display individual words appearing in the text in alphabetical order, so the individual words of a lemma appear in the list together.

Another problem stems directly from Agatha Christie’s style. For example in her novel *The Secret of Chimneys* Christie used more than thirty words to introduce the direct speech of her characters.<sup>7</sup> It was Christie’s passion for dialogues that made her use a wide variety of introductory words. However, some of them were used only once or twice in the whole novel, making them statistically insignificant. For the analysis of the corpus, only words reaching 0.005% of relative count (around 170 uses in absolute numbers in the general corpus) were taken into consideration.

#### **4.2 The Agatha Christie parallel corpus itself**

The corpus was formed of thirty-nine books, the list of which can be found in the bibliography (Primary Works, p. 65) and their forty-one translations. The originals come in alphabetical order with their translations listed under them. A table of these

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<sup>7</sup> Said, asked, added, murmured, nodded, remarked, inquired, complained, continued, agreed, returned, pursued, suggested, confessed, whispered, interrupted, cried, ejaculated, observed, gasped, laughed, hinted, grumbled, grunted, admitted, muttered, announced, snapped, grumbled, replied and roared.

books can be found in the Appendices (Appendix A). In this table, the books are sorted according to the year of publication in Czech.

#### **4.2.1 The whole corpus**

The whole parallel corpus of the forty-one books amounts to more than 2.6 million words.<sup>8</sup> Out of these words the most common is “the” with 3.715%.

As was mentioned above, Agatha Christie used a wide variety of words to introduce the direct speech. However, in the SL part of the corpus only twenty-one of them are of significance. In the TL part, the number of relevant introductory verbs reaches twenty-eight. The only relevance criterion is the relative count; to be considered relevant, the lemmatized introductory verb must form at least 0.005% of the corpus. This criterion was applied on the general corpus and on all the sub-corpora.

However, there are some other data that might be considered worth mentioning. These are the total number of the selected introductory verbs and their relative count in the corpus. Nevertheless, these data must be accompanied by the mean book length criterion. The mean book length and the total number of tokens in the SL part of the corpus compared with the same data from the TL part proved worthy in identifying another translation universal in the corpus, simplification.

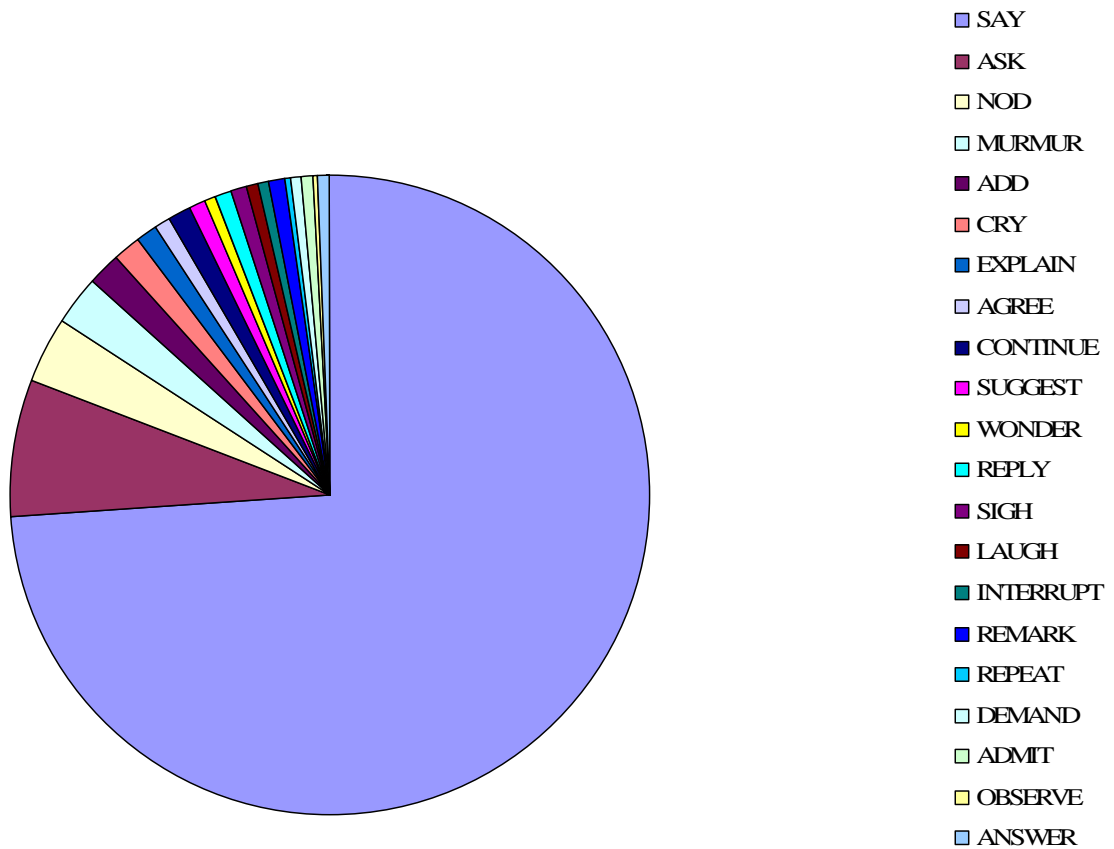
Simplification on the level of books is present in every translation in the corpus and it is also present on the level of introductory verbs.

The following graph and table show the relative as well as the absolute count of the introductory verbs in the SL part of the corpus after lemmatization.

#### **Fig. 1: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the general corpus**

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<sup>8</sup> Precisely 2,616,913 words.



**Table 1: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the general corpus**

Word	% in corp.	Absolute count	Word	% in corp.	Absolute count	Word	% in corp.	Absolute count
SAY	1.037	27,137	AGREE	0.012	327	INTERRUPT	0.008	218
ASK	0.095	2,486	CONTINUE	0.012	320	REMARK	0.008	212
NOD	0.046	1,205	SUGGEST	0.012	312	REPEAT	0.007	191
MURMUR	0.036	945	WONDER	0.011	297	DEMAND	0.007	187
ADD	0.021	557	REPLY	0.011	296	ADMIT	0.007	183
CRY	0.021	543	SIGH	0.01	264	OBSERVE	0.006	164
EXPLAIN	0.015	391	LAUGH	0.009	239	ANSWER	0.006	157

All the introductory verbs together form 36,631 in absolute numbers and 1.401%. When these numbers are compared with the corpus, the introductory verbs put together reach the seventh place behind the sixth “and” (1.855%) and just above “was” (1.4%).

Although the variety of introductory verbs is indeed quite large, from the graph can be clearly seen that nearly three quarters are formed by the word “say” (with 27,137 tokens and 1.037%).

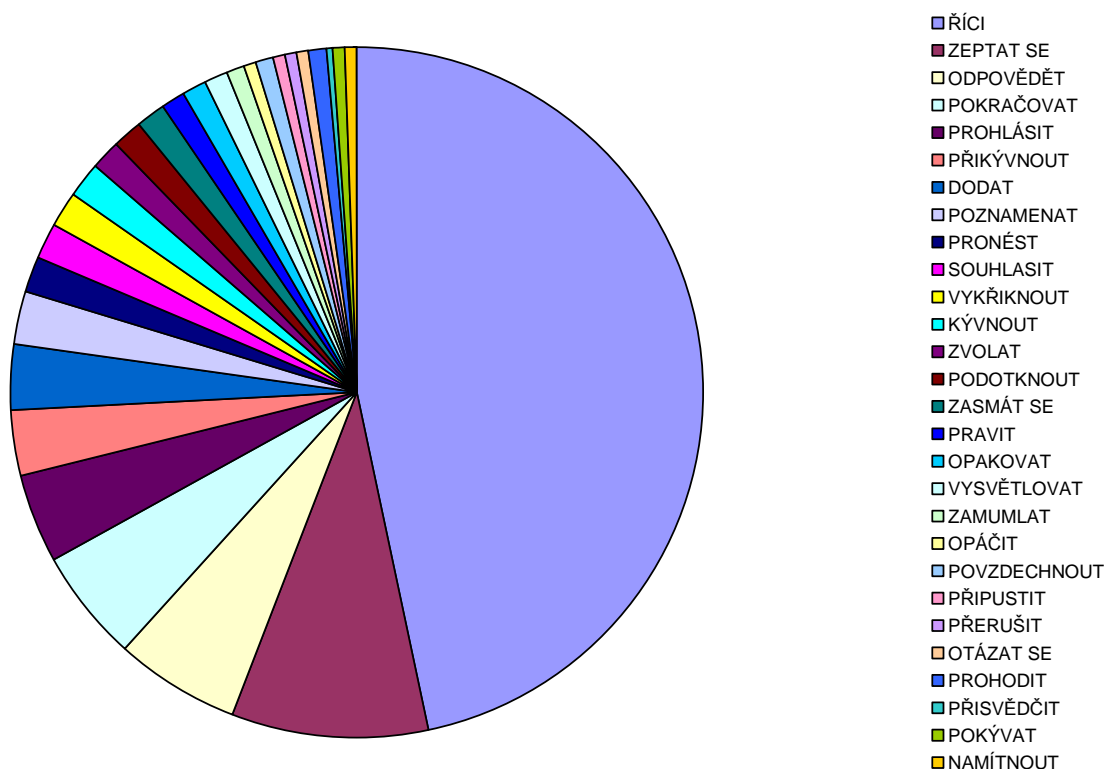
The introductory verb “ask” – unsurprisingly – is in the second place; the investigating detective needs to ask a lot of questions. However, with only 2,486 tokens and 0.095% it is far beyond the verb “say.”

The “big four” (lemmas with more than 900 uses) is completed by “nod” (1,205 tokens, 0.046%) and “murmur” (945 tokens and 0.036%). These four introductory verbs with more than 900 tokens form together a majority of 84.64% of all the introductory verbs used in the corpus.

These results strongly suggest that Agatha Christie preferred using a variety of adverbs with the introductory “say” to using a high number of introductory verbs frequently to make the text varied.

When these data are compared to the data from the TL corpus analysis, the results are indeed very different. Figure 2 together with Table 2 show the results of the analysis of the TL part of the corpus.

**Fig. 2: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the general corpus**



**Table 2a: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the general corpus**

WORD	Total count	% in corp.	WORD	Total count	% in corp.	WORD	Total count	% in corp.
ŘÍCI	10,861	0.524	VYKŘIKNOUT	382	0.017	POVZDECHNOUT	157	0.008
ZEPTAT SE	2,192	0.105	KÝVNOUT	374	0.016	PŘIPUSTIT	144	0.007
ODPOVĚDĚT	1,338	0.063	ZVOLAT	341	0.015	PŘERUŠIT	143	0.006
POKRAČOVAT	1,248	0.058	PODOTKNOUT	335	0.015	OTÁZAT SE	138	0.006
PROHLÁSIT	935	0.044	ZASMÁT SE	313	0.014	PROHODIT	136	0.006
PŘIKÝVNOUT	720	0.033	PRAVIT	254	0.012	PŘISVĚDČIT	124	0.006
DODAT	718	0.033	OPAKOVAT	241	0.011	POKÝVAT	116	0.005
POZNAMENAT	560	0.026	VYSVĚTLOVAT	235	0.011	NAMÍTNOUT	114	0.005
PRONĚST	411	0.019	ZAMUMLAT	193	0.009			
SOUHLASIT	411	0.019	OPÁČIT	189	0.009			

Comparing the TL and the SL parts of the corpus, the first noticeable difference is the size; SL part of the corpus with its 2,616,913 tokens is much bigger than the TL part with only 2,171,728 tokens (despite the fact that the TL contains forty-one translations and the SL part only forty original books). The mean book length in SL part is 65,423

tokens. However, the same criterion in the TL part reaches only as high as 55,685 tokens. This represents an enormous loss of nearly 10,000 tokens per book – in other words, nearly one sixth of each book was “lost in translation.” This general loss must have had an impact on the occurrence of introductory verbs in the translation.

Table 2b shows some of the most frequent Czech equivalents of the introductory verbs used in by Agatha Christie in the SL part of the corpus.

**Table 2b: The introductory verbs used and their Czech equivalents**

Verb	Czech equivalent(s)
Say	říci, odpovědět, podotknout, poznamenat, pravit, povědět, prohlásit
Ask	ptát se, zeptat se, tázat se, otázat se, vyzvat, dotázat se
Nod	kývnout, přikývnout, pokývat
Murmur	zamumlat, zamručet, zahuhlat
Add	dodat
Cry	volat, vykřiknout
Explain	vysvětlit, vysvětlovat, vyložit
Agree	souhlasit, připustit
Continue	pokračovat
Suggest	navrhnout, naznačit
Wonder	žasnout, podívat se, divit se, chtít vědět
Reply	odpovědět, odvětit, opáčit
Sigh	vzdychat, vzdechnout, povzdechnout
Laugh	zasmát se
Interrupt	přerušit, skočit do řeči
Remark	poznamenat, podotknout
Repeat	opakovat
Demand	požadovat, vyžadovat
Admit	přiznat, připustit, uznat
Observe	poznamenat, podotknout
Answer	odpovědět, reagovat

The data in the table 2b were taken from *Velký anglicko-český, česko anglický slovník* (Fronek 2007) and two online English-Czech dictionaries, Seznam<sup>9</sup> and Google<sup>10</sup>. Tables 2a and 2b, when compared, show these facts; A) the introductory English “say” can be translated by seven individual Czech words, out of which six were used in the

<sup>9</sup> www.slovník.seznam.cz

<sup>10</sup> www.translate.google.cz

TL part of the corpus. B) There are two introductory verbs, “suggest” and “wonder”, which do not have their Czech equivalents in the TL part of the corpus. The introductory “wonder” can be translated as “chtít vědět”

The TL part of the corpus shows very different data compared to the SL part. The number of introductory verbs with at least 0.005% relative count is twenty-eight. This number alone suggests that the translators used synonyms to avoid repetitiveness.

The total number of introductory verbs is 23,323 tokens - 1.102% of the corpus. There is a considerable loss of 16,000 tokens. This loss can be attributed (at least to some extent) to the loss of tokens in general. However, the relative count dropped 0.3% of its SL amount (some 9,000 tokens in absolute numbers), suggesting a great shift in the use of introductory verbs. A part of these lost tokens may be divided between unusual or creative solutions of the translators. However, such a big drop cannot be explained by the creativity alone. When interpreting these numbers, it becomes clear that simplification was a favourite strategy of translators when translating the introductory verbs.

Nevertheless, Christie’s translators opted for greater variety, with the introductory verbs – this is due to the translators searching for synonyms not only of the verb “say”, but also synonyms of other introductory verbs. For example the introductory verb “nod” can be translated as “přikývnout” or “kývnout” (the case of “nod” is discussed later). The obvious data – twenty-one introductory verbs reaching 0.005% the relative number in the SL part of the corpus compared to twenty-eight introductory verbs reaching the 0.005% in the TL part of the corpus – suggest that to avoid repetitiveness, translators opted for greater diversity. This notion can be again viewed as normalization on the level of lexis.

The most used introductory verb is “řici” with 10,861 tokens and 0.524%. When compared to “say”, the result is that less than a half of the total number of the introductory verb “say” was translated into Czech as “řici”. If concentrating on relative number, the number is nearly half – in the SL part of the corpus, the lemmatized “say” reached 1.039%, whereas lemmatized “řici” in the TL part reached only 0.524%. Even if the general loss of words during the translation process is not taken into consideration, there are nevertheless 0.515% of the introductory “say” that were translated differently than by using “řici”, and, to some degree, were omitted.

The other three most common introductory verbs in the SL part of the corpus underwent a shift as well. In the case of introductory “ask” (2,653 tokens and 0.095% in the SL part) the translators seem to be translating far more literally than in the case of the introductory “say”. The closest Czech equivalent “zeptat se” reached 2,192 tokens and 0.105% of the relative count.

The situation with the third verb on the list, the introductory verb “nod” is nearly the same. “Nod” with 1,285 tokens and 0.046% of the relative count has two Czech equivalents which appear in the corpus; “kývnout” (374 tokens, 0.016%) and “přikývnout” (720 tokens, 0.033%), which together form 1,094 tokens (0.049%). In the case of “nod”, the loss of tokens can be attributed to the general loss of tokens.

Nevertheless, the fourth most common introductory verb “murmur” has different results. In the SL part of the corpus, “murmur” has 1,005 tokens (0.035%). Its closest Czech equivalent “zamumlat” appeared only 193 times (0.009%) in the TL part of the corpus.

The verb “add” displays again a totally different view. In the SL part of the corpus, “add” with 630 tokens forms 0.021% of the corpus. “Add” has one Czech equivalent appearing in the TL part of the corpus – “dodat”. “Dodat” with 718 tokens (0.033%)

suggests that in some cases this introductory verb was probably used by the translators as a translation of “say”.

The introductory verb “cry” is in a very similar situation; its two equivalents “vykřiknout” and “zvolat” combined together reach 723 tokens (0.033%), whereas the original “cry” was used only 624 times (0.021%) by Agatha Christie.

On the other hand there are two introductory verbs in the SL part of the corpus that have do not have their functional equivalents in the TL part of the corpus. These introductory verbs are “suggest” (10<sup>th</sup> place, 330 tokens, 0.012% of the corpus) and “wonder” (11<sup>th</sup> place, 0.011% of the corpus, 311 tokens). The equivalents of “suggest” – “navrhnout”, “navrhovat” and “naznačit” – does not belong to the same stratum in Czech as “suggest” in English.

Nevertheless, the introductory “say” did not just dissolve in small bits all over the TL corpus. In the TL part of the corpus the verb “odpovědět” occupies the third place with 1,338 tokens (0.063%). “Odpovědět” can be viewed as an equivalent of two introductory verbs from the SL part, “answer” and “reply”. However, these two introductory verbs together appeared in the whole corpus only 471 times. That means that more than 850 uses (i.e. nearly 65%) of the introductory verb “odpovědět” are not translations of its closest functional equivalents. The majority of these tokens are most probably translations of the introductory “say”.

The findings of the research show that the translators have most probably distributed a distinct part of the lost 0.515% of the introductory “say” among other introductory verbs – “odpovědět”, “zvolat”, etc. However, this must be considered only a hypothesis, because the translation of the introductory verb “say” depends very much on its surroundings; the introductory verb “say” can be translated as nearly any of the verbs mentioned.

These figures can lead to a hypothesis. It is believed that the universals of translation are interconnected. Nevertheless, when interpreting data from the English-Czech parallel corpus of Agatha Christie's detective stories, following conclusions may be drawn: when translators translate introductory verbs, they are influenced by two universals of translation – simplification and normalization. These two translation universals are in some cases interconnected and influence one another.

As an example of this let's take the introductory verb "murmur". Agatha Christie used "murmur" quite often (the average occurrence is 24.512 uses per book), whereas the translators used its closest Czech equivalent "zamumlat" quite rarely (only 5.216 uses per book). The reason for this loss is normalization – in Czech "zamumlat" belongs to a different language stratum than "murmur" in English. Normalization causes an internal drive to sound natural (normal) in the minds of translators. In the case of "murmur" this internal drive resulted into simplification; "murmur" was simplified/omitted for the sake of being more TL-like. In this case simplification appears to be led by normalization.

To sum up, there seems to be no rule or pattern in the behaviour of translators translating the introductory verbs. Translation universals – simplification and normalization – have certain influence on the translators. Nevertheless, the influence of translation universals restricts itself to individual introductory verbs (and in some cases this influence might be very strong indeed), but it certainly cannot be described as general.

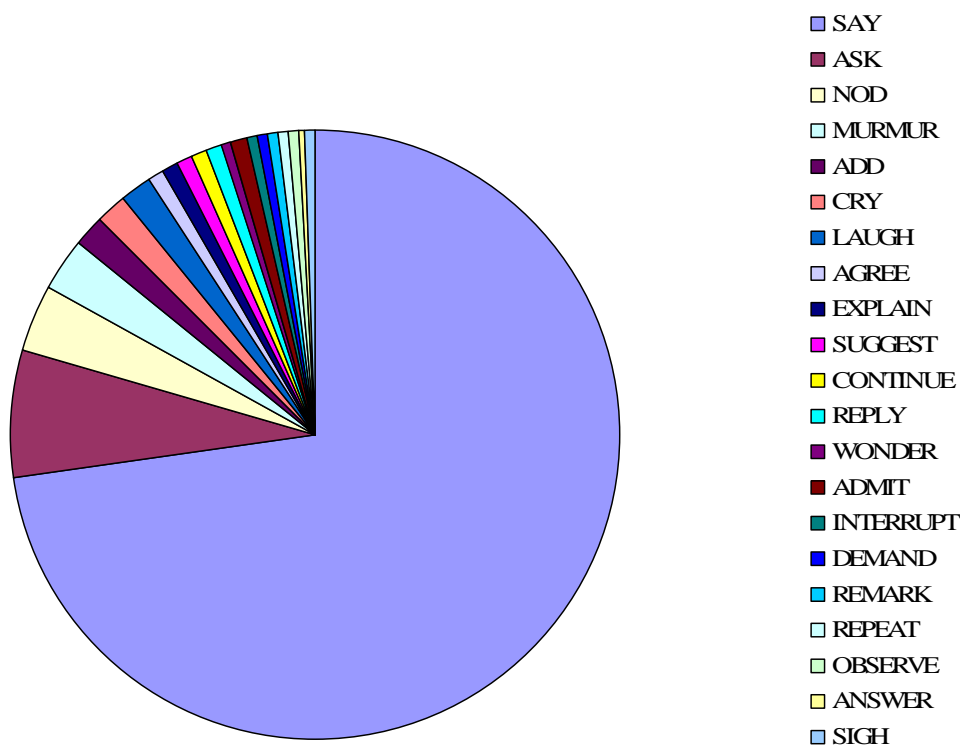
#### **4.2.2 Female translators' corpus**

Out of the forty books concerned, twenty-nine were translated by female translators. This sub-chapter will try to identify, whether there is any shift in the use of introductory verbs. The SL sub-corpus has 1,912,362 words (i.e. some 73% of the general corpus).

The most common is “the” with 71,093 tokens and 3.754%. For the analysis of the female sub-corpus, introductory verbs counting more than 0.005% relative count (around 100 tokens) were taken into consideration.

Figure 3 and Table 3 show the use of introductory verbs by Agatha Christie in the SL part of the corpus.

**Fig. 3: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the female translators’ sub-corpus**



**Table 3a: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the female-translators sub-corpus**

Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.
SAY	19,769	1.034	CONTINUE	228	0.012	ADMIT	165	0.009
ASK	1,796	0.094	REPLY	227	0.012	INTERRUPT	162	0.008
NOD	974	0.051	SUGGEST	224	0.012	REMARK	151	0.008

MURMUR	747	0.039	AGREE	224	0.012	REPEAT	149	0.008
CRY	472	0.025	EXPLAIN	223	0.012	ANSWER	133	0.007
ADD	457	0.024	WONDER	199	0.01	SIGH	130	0.007
LAUGH	401	0.021	DEMAND	170	0.009	OBSERVE	120	0.006

The total amount of introductory verbs in the female corpora is 27,121 tokens and 1.418%. The results, when compared with the results from the general corpus, show only minor changes. “Say” with 19,769 tokens and 1.034% is the most common introductory verb. The second, third and fourth most common introductory verb is “ask” (1,796 tokens, 0.094%), “nod” (974 tokens, 0.051%) and “murmur” (747 tokens, 0.039%). The first four introductory verbs form a total amount of 23,286 tokens (85.86% of the introductory verbs). The numbers (both total and relative) are comparable to the statistics of the general corpus.

More or less the same numbers are also in the TL part of the corpus. These twenty-nine Czech translations were carried out by nineteen translators.

**Table 3b: List of Agatha Christie’s books and their Czech translations forming the female-translators sub-corpus**

<b>Book in English</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Czech translation</b>	<b>Czech publisher and year of publishing</b>
<i>Dead Man’s Folly</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Hra na vraždu</i>	Knižní klub, 2001
<i>Partners in Crime</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Zločiny pro dva</i>	Knižní klub, 2002
<i>The Secret Adversary</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Tajemný protivník</i>	Knižní klub, 2004
<i>After the Funeral</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Po pohřbu</i>	Knižní klub, 2004
<i>Peril at the End House</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Dům na úskalí</i>	Knižní klub, 2005
<i>They Came to Baghdad</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Sešli se v Bagdádu</i>	Knižní klub, 2008
<i>Murder on the Links</i>	Běla Dintrová	<i>Vražda na golfovém hřišti</i>	Odeon, 1992

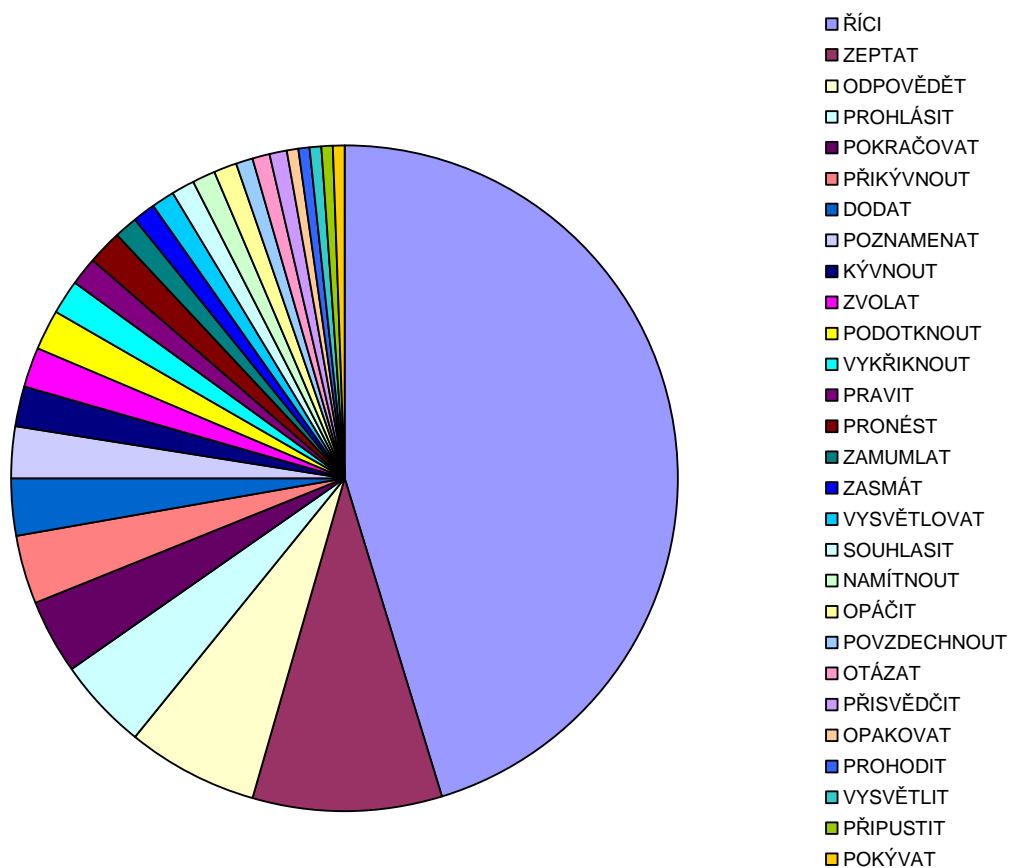
<i>The Mirror Cracked from Side to Side</i>	Běla Dintrová	<i>Prasklé zrcadlo</i>	Melantrich, 1994
<i>ABC Murders</i>	Eva Kondrysová	<i>Vraždy podle abecedy</i>	Knižní klub, 1993
<i>Murder on the Orient-Express</i>	Eva Kondrysová	<i>Vražda v Orient-expresu</i>	Knižní klub, 1994
<i>The Listerdale Mystery</i>	Lenka Uhlířová	<i>Záhadné zmizení lorda Listerdalea</i>	Knižní klub, 2005
<i>Death Comes at the End</i>	Lenka Uhlířová	<i>Nakonec přijde smrt</i>	Knižní klub, 2007
<i>Cat among the Pigeons</i>	Edda Němcová	<i>Kočka mezi holuby</i>	Knižní klub, 2007
<i>Hickory Dickory Death</i>	Edda Němcová	<i>Zlatá brána otevřená</i>	Knižní klub, 2008
<i>The Big Four</i>	Karla Andělová	<i>Velká čtyřka</i>	Knižní klub, 2001
<i>Death on the Nile</i>	Hana Blažejová	<i>Smrt na Nilu</i>	Knižní klub, 1993
<i>The Labours of Hercules</i>	Věra Heroldová-Štovíčková	<i>Herkulovské úkoly pro Hercula Poirota</i>	Knižní klub, 1994
<i>Hercule Poirot's Christmas</i>	Vlasta Hofbauerová	<i>Vánoce Hercula Poirota</i>	Knižní klub, 1999
<i>Cards on the Table</i>	Eva Lapáčková	<i>Karty na stole</i>	Knižní klub, 2002
<i>The Last Weekend</i>	Věra Limburská	<i>Poslední víkend</i>	J. Lukasík a spol., 1991
<i>Poirot's Early Cases</i>	Michala Marková	<i>Rané případy Hercula Poirota</i>	Knižní klub, 2007
<i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i>	Eva Outratová	<i>Vražda Rogera Ackroyda</i>	Knižní klub, 1993
<i>The Dumb Witness</i>	Hana Petráková	<i>Němý svědek</i>	Knižní klub, 2006
<i>The Mystery of the Blue Train</i>	Věra Poláčková	<i>Záhada modrého vlaku</i>	Knižní klub, 1999
<i>Death in the Clouds</i>	Eva Ruxová	<i>Smrt v oblacích</i>	Československý spisovatel, 1991

<i>Evil Under the Sun</i>	Ivana Štěpánková	<i>Zlo pod sluncem</i>	Knižní klub, 2003
<i>Elephants Can Remember</i>	Zuzana Tausingerová	<i>Sloni mají paměť</i>	Knižní klub, 1994
<i>Murder is Easy</i>	Gita Zbavitelová	<i>Vždyt' je to hračka</i>	Knižní klub, 2002

These five translators translated fourteen books from the twenty-eight-book corpus. This means that the corpus, although bringing together works by one author only, is nevertheless diverse concerning the styles and preferences of the translators.

Figure 4 and the succeeding table show both the total and the relative count of introductory verbs with more than 0.005% present in the TL part of the sub-corpus.

**Fig. 4: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the female-translators sub-corpus**



**Table 4: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the TL part of the female-translators sub-corpus**

Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.
ŘÍCI	6,618	0.475	PODOTKNOUT	269	0.019	POVZDECHNOUT	129	0.009
ZEPTAT SE	1,380	0.098	VYKŘIKNOUT	235	0.016	OTÁZAT SE	112	0.008
ODPOVĚDĚT	926	0.065	PRAVIT	230	0.016	PŘISVĚDČIT	106	0.007
PROHLÁSIT	660	0.047	PRONĚST	218	0.015	OPAKOVAT	92	0.006
POKRAČOVAT	532	0.037	ZAMUMLAT	175	0.012	PROHODIT	86	0.006
PŘIKÝVNOUT	492	0.034	ZASMÁT	174	0.012	VYSVĚTLIT	85	0.006
DODAT	397	0.027	VYSVĚTLOVAT	172	0.012	PŘIPUSTIT	84	0.006
POZNAMENAT	356	0.024	SOUHLASIT	168	0.012	POKÝVAT	78	0.005
KÝVNOUT	302	0.02	NAMÍTNOUT	158	0.011			
ZVOLAT	274	0.019	OPÁČIT	152	0.011			

The translations form a sub-corpus of 1,502,528 words. The introductory verbs form 1.035% of the TL part of the sub-corpus with 14,660 tokens.

As in the general corpus, the very first obvious fact is the high number of introductory verbs. Agatha Christie used twenty-one introductory verbs with more than 0.005% relative count (the same as in the general corpus). However, the female translators of hers used twenty-eight introductory verbs which form more than 0.005% of the sub-corpus.

Another fact worth mentioning is the use of the closest functional equivalent to the verb “say” – “říci”. Whereas “say” forms 0.987% of tokens (and 75% of introductory verbs) used in the SL part of the corpus, “říci” in the TL part amounts only 0.475% (45% of all the introductory verbs used). More than a half of the tokens of the verb “say” (0.512%) were translated into Czech differently than by “říci”.

The second most used introductory verb, “ask”, compared to its functional equivalent, “zeptat se”, lost only slightly more than four hundred tokens. “Ask” with 1,796 uses forms 0.089% of the SL part sub-corpus. However, “zeptat se” in the was used 1,380 times in the TL part of the sub-corpus and it forms 0.098% of the sub-corpus. The case

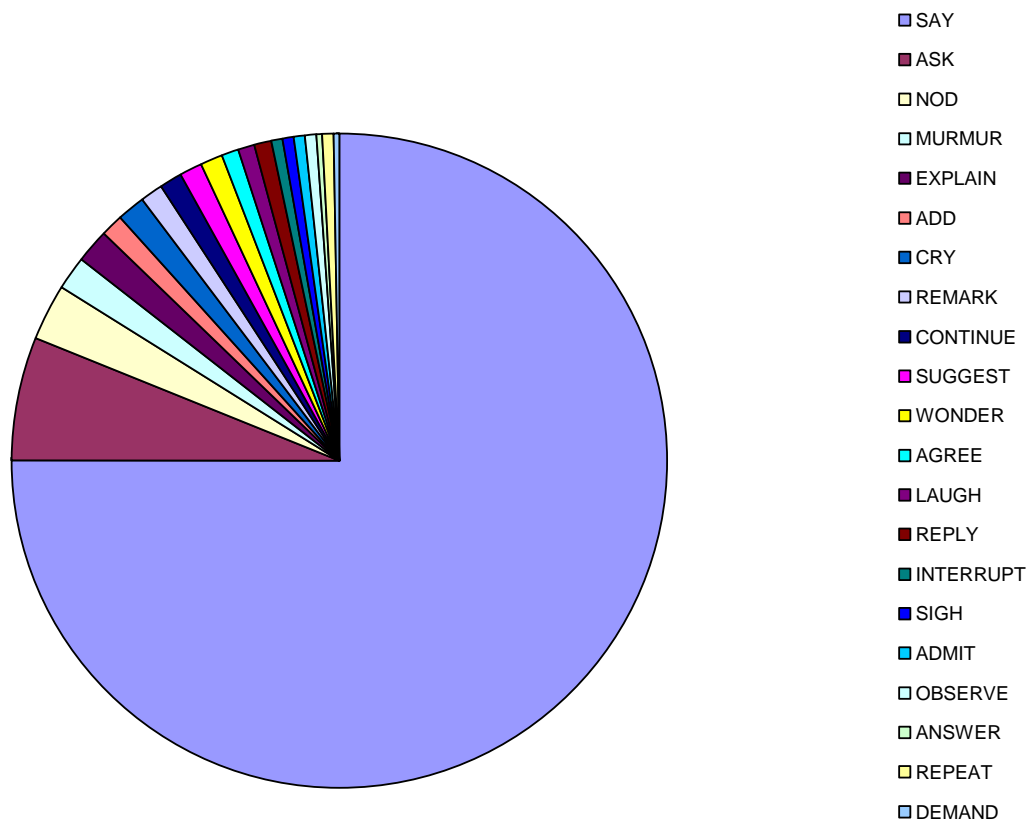
of “ask” and “zeptat se” shows that sometimes the way to achieve diverse and non-repetitive target text leads through preserving the original verbs and not seeking synonyms or paraphrases.

The mean book length in the SL part is 65,944 tokens. In the TL part this number reaches as high as 55,649 words.

#### **4.2.3 Male translators’ corpus**

Male translators translated ten books out of the forty-two-book general corpus. These books form a sub-corpus of 633,999 words. The most common word is “the” with 23,445 tokens and 3.719% relative count. The following graph and table show the absolute numbers as well as the relative count of the introductory verbs used in the corpus.

**Fig. 5: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the male-translators sub-corpus**



**Table 5a: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the male-translators sub-corpus**

Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.	Word	Total count	% in corp.
SAY	7,272	1.147	REMARK	114	0.018	INTERRUPT	58	0.009
ASK	604	0.095	CONTINUE	112	0.018	SIGH	57	0.009
NOD	261	0.041	SUGGEST	112	0.018	ADMIT	57	0.009
MURMUR	180	0.028	WONDER	94	0.015	OBSERVE	54	0.009
EXPLAIN	143	0.023	AGREE	94	0.015	ANSWER	38	0.006
ADD	122	0.019	LAUGH	80	0.013	REPEAT	37	0.006
CRY	122	0.019	REPLY	60	0.009	DEMAND	35	0.006

The research has shown that the most common introductory verbs are the same as in the general corpus and the female sub-corpus.

The total amount of the introductory verbs in the SL part of the male translator sub-corpus is 9,706 tokens (1.531%). The most common introductory verb is “say” with

7,272 tokens and 1.147%. “Say” forms 75% of all the introductory verbs used in the SL part of the sub-corpus.

The first four verbs counted together form 8,317 tokens (85.69% of the introductory words used). The numbers in the Table 5a are nerly the same as those in Table 1.

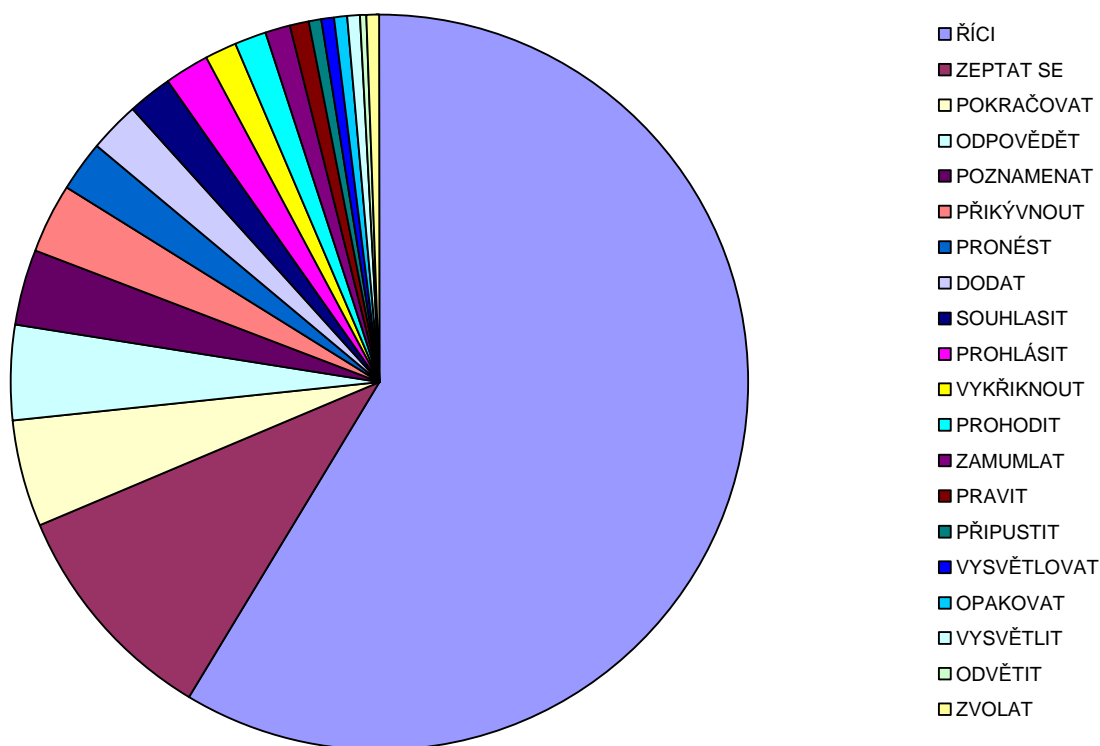
The TL part of the sub-corpus was translated by seven translators. The Table 5b shows Christine’s eorks and the translations forming the male-translators sub-corpus.

**Table 5b: List of Agatha Christie’s books and their Czech translations forming the male-translators sub-corpus**

<b>Book in English</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Czech translation</b>	<b>Czech publisher and year of publishing</b>
<i>Sad Cypress</i>	Jan Čermák	<i>Temný cypřiš</i>	Knižní klub, 1999
<i>Why Didn't They Ask Evans?</i>	Jan Čermák	<i>Proč nepožádali Evanse?</i>	Knižní klub, 2000
<i>One, Two, Buckle My Shoe</i>	Jan Čermák	<i>Nástrahy zubařského křesla</i>	Knižní klub, 2001
<i>Lord Edgware Dies</i>	Marek Roesel	<i>Smrt lorda Edgewarea</i>	Zeras, 1993
<i>Hickory Dickory Death</i>	Marek Roesel	<i>Zlatá brána otevřená</i>	Zeras, 1994
<i>The Seven Dials Mystery</i>	Jan Klíma	<i>Záhada sedmi ciferníků</i>	Knižní klub, 1995
	Pavel Krejčíř	<i>Dům u kanálu</i>	Knižní klub, 2001
<i>The Mystery at Styles</i>	Jaroslav Matějka	<i>Záhada na zámku Styles</i>	Knižní klub, 2001
<i>The Secret of Chimneys</i>	Ivan Němeček	<i>Tajemství Chimneys</i>	Knižní klub, 2006
<i>Murder at the Vicarage</i>	Karel Voleský	<i>Vražda na faře</i>	Melantrich, 1991

The TL part of the corpus has 556,304 tokens. Compared with the SL part of the sub-corpus, the loss in mean book length is again very high (63,400 in the SL part compared to 55,630 in the TL part). Male translators lost approximately eight thousand tokens while translating Christie’s detective stories.

**Fig. 6: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the male-translators translator corpus**



**Table 6: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the TL part of the male-translators sub-corpus**

WORD	TOTAL	%	WORD	TOTAL	%	WORD	TOTAL	%
ŘÍCI	4,087	0.73	DODAT	154	0.025	PŘIPUSTIT	47	0.008
ZEPTAT SE	698	0.124	SOUHLASIT	134	0.023	VYSVĚTLOVAT	37	0.006
POKRAČOVAT	345	0.061	PROHLÁSIT	124	0.021	OPAKOVAT	36	0.006
ODPOVĚDĚT	274	0.048	VYKŘIKNOUT	109	0.019	VYSVĚTLIT	35	0.006
POZNAMENAT	231	0.04	PROHODIT	85	0.014	ODVĚTIT	33	0.005
PŘIKÝVNOUT	217	0.037	ZAMUMLAT	74	0.013	ZVOLAT	32	0.005
PRONĚST	170	0.03	PRAVIT	61	0.01			

Comparing the TL part of the sub-corpus with the SL part, several interesting details can be pointed out. Firstly, it is the number of introductory verbs used by male translators. The total number of all the introductory verbs used in the SL part of the

male sub-corpus is 6,983 tokens (1.231% of the corpus). Although, compared to the TL part, the introductory verbs lost some 2,700 tokens, the loss in relative count is only 0.3% (the same as in the general corpus). However, the real loss is in the introductory verbs themselves; where Agatha Christie used twenty-one introductory verbs, her male translators used only twenty.

The most used introductory verb is “říci” with 4,087 tokens and 0.73%. Although “say” in the SL part has 7,272 tokens and 1.147%, “říci” in this sub-corpus forms a majority of introductory verbs – 59%. Christie’s male translators had indeed translated 3,185 uses of “say” differently than “říci”, however, they translated 56% of the verb as “říci”. “Ask” – the second most used introductory verb in the SL part of the sub-corpus – compared to its TL counterpart “zeptat se” loses with 604 tokens (0.095%) to 698 tokens (0.124%). This difference suggests that at least some of the 94 tokens, which cannot be considered as a translation of “ask”, are in fact translations of the introductory “say”.

The third and the fourth verbs, “pokračovat” and “odpovědět”, are in a very similar situation. Whereas “pokračovat” is third on the list with 354 uses (0.061% of the corpus), its functional equivalent “continue” occupies the ninth place with only 112 uses (0.017%). “Odpovědět” with 274 tokens (0.048%) is fourth in the TL introductory verb list, but its equivalent nineteenth with as little as 38 tokens (0.006%). This rocket jump (adding 240 TL tokens in both cases) can be attributed to some extent to the loss of tokens of the introductory “say”.

#### **4.2.4 Teams of translators corpus**

Teams of translators translated only two books out of the general corpora. Some might argue that such a small sub-corpus (in comparison with the previous two sub-corpora)

does not make sense. Nevertheless, the existence of this sub-corpus is justified by the fact that the teams contained both male and female translators. This is the main reason for not adding these two translations to one of the previous two sub-corpus, but handle them as a separate sub-corpus.

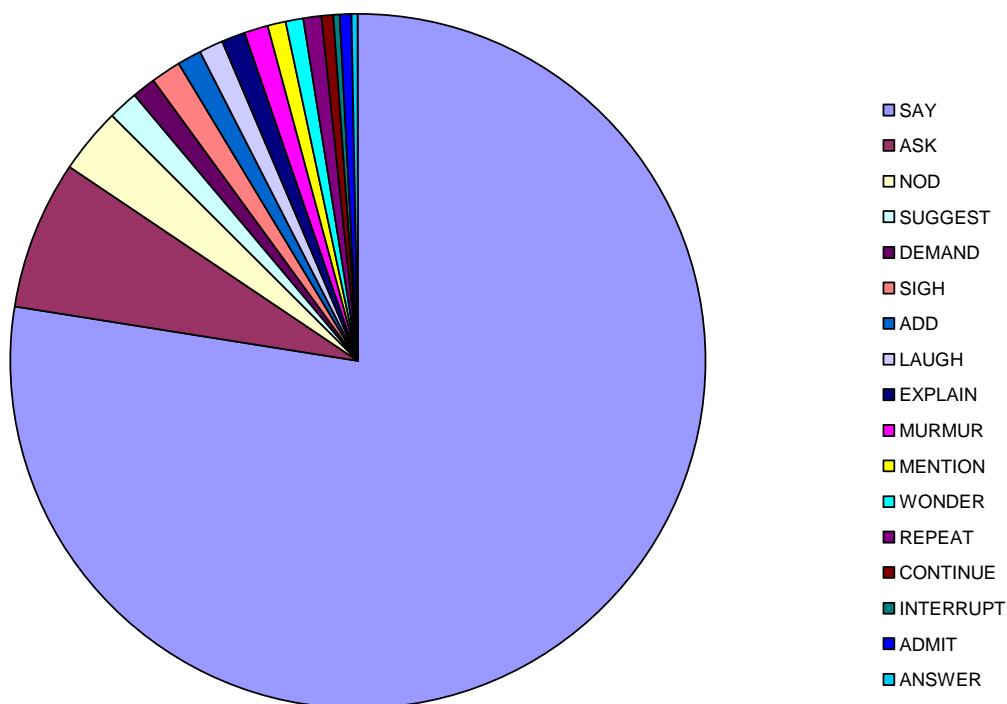
The following table shows the books and the translations which form the sub-corpus.

**Table 7a: List of Agatha Christie’s books and their Czech translations forming the translator team sub-corpus**

<b>Book in English</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Czech translation</b>	<b>Czech publisher and year of publishing</b>
<i>Parker Pyne Investigates</i>	Pavla and Matouš Iblovi	<i>Parker Pyne zasahuje</i>	Knižní klub,
<i>The Clocks</i>	Olga Muellerová and Pavel Krejčíř	<i>Hodiny</i>	Knižní klub,

The SL part of the sub-corpus has 127,526 words. The following graph and table show the relative proportion and absolute count of the introductory verbs in this sub-corpus.

**Fig. 7: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the teams-of-translators sub-corpus**



**Table 7b: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the teams-of-translators sub-corpus**

Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
SAY	1,458	1.142	ADD	22	0.017	REPEAT	13	0.01
ASK	133	0.103	LAUGH	22	0.017	CONTINUE	11	0.008
NOD	56	0.025	EXPLAIN	21	0.016	INTERRUPT	8	0.006
SUGGEST	25	0.019	MURMUR	21	0.016	ADMIT	7	0.005
DEMAND	23	0.017	MENTION	16	0.012	ANSWER	7	0.005
SIGH	23	0.017	WONDER	16	0.012			

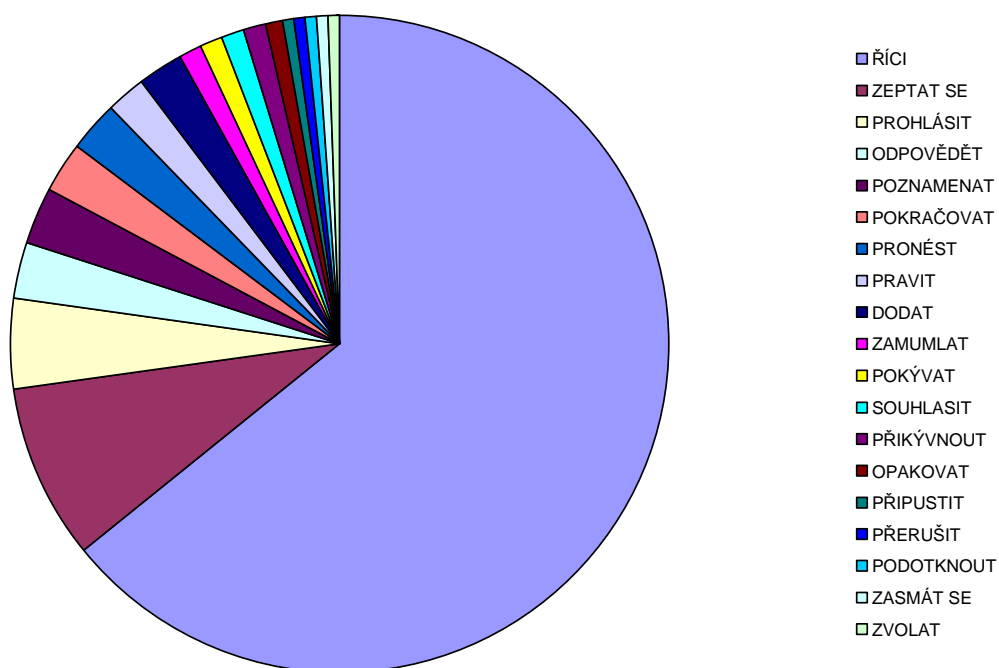
In the two books forming this sub-corpus Agatha Christie used only seventeen introductory verbs that reached at least 0.005%. All the introductory verbs together form 1,882 tokens and 1.442% of the corpus.

The most common introductory verb is of course “say”, which with 1,458 tokens and 1.142% forms 77% of all the introductory verbs used.

The SL part of the sub-corpus contains only 112,896 tokens. This means that the mean book length of the SL part (63,763) is again far greater than the mean book length of the TL part (56,448).

Figure 8 and Table 8 show the relative and absolute numbers of the introductory verbs in the TL part of the sub-corpus.

**Fig. 8: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the teams-of-translators sub-corpus**



**Table 8: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the TL part of the teams-of-translators sub-corpus**

Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
ŘÍCI	816	0,72	PRAVIT	27	0,023	PŘIPUSTIT	8	0,007
ZEPTAT SE	108	0,094	DODAT	26	0,022	PŘERUŠIT	7	0,006
PROHLÁSIT	57	0,049	ZAMUMLAT	16	0,013	PODOTKNOUT	7	0,006
ODPOVĚDĚT	37	0,031	POKÝVAT	15	0,013	ZASMÁT SE	7	0,006

POZNAMENAT	35	0,029	SOUHLASIT	14	0,012	ZVOLAT	6	0,005
POKRAČOVAT	31	0,026	PŘIKÝVNOUT	13	0,011			
PRONÉST	31	0,026	OPAKOVAT	11	0,009			

Teams of translators used nineteen introductory verbs to translate seventeen introductory verbs used in the SL part of the corpus. All these verbs number 1,272 tokens (1.108% of the sub-corpus).

The most common introductory verb in the SL part of the sub-corpus is “řici” with 816 tokens (0.72%). Although more than 600 tokens of the introductory “say” were lost, “řici” still forms 64% of all the introductory verbs used by the teams of translators.

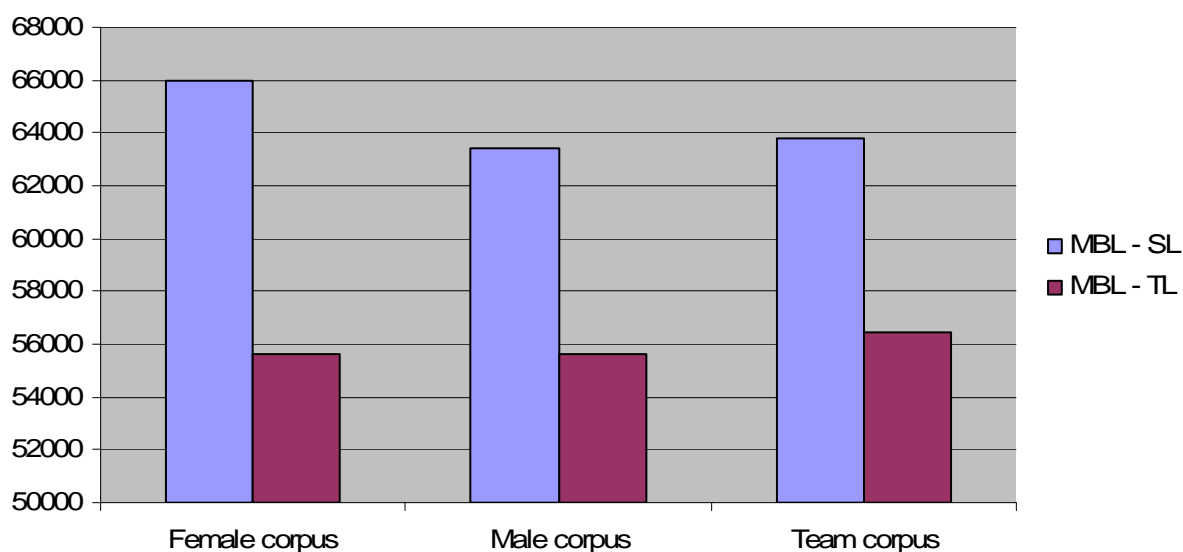
The second most common introductory verb in the TL part is “zeptat se” with 108 tokens and 0.094%. The loss of tokens in the case of “ask” is nevertheless not so great as in the case of “say”. “Ask” has only twenty-five tokens more than “zeptat se”.

Overall, the teams of translators hover somewhere between the male and female translators. The comparison of these three groups is the main topic of the subsequent sub-chapter.

#### 4.2.5 Comparison of the sub-corpus

To identify general patterns in the behaviour of translators, the results of the research must be compared. The first level of comparison is the level of mean book length. The mean book length will help with identifying some general patterns. Figure 9 shows the mean book length of the male, female and translator team sub-corpus.

**Fig. 9: Comparison of the mean book length in the sub-corpus**



**Table 9a: Comparison of the mean book length in the sub-corpora**

	Female corpus	Male corpus	Team corpus
MBL - SL	65,944	63,400	63,763
MBL - TL	55,649	55,630	56,448
Loss	10,295	7,770	7,315

The graph and the table clearly show the difference between female and male translators and teams of translators. All the translation sub-corpora contain a high degree of simplification on the level of mean book length. However, the female translators are the ones most inclined towards simplification. The male translators and teams of translators, although simplifying heavily, seem to be more literal.

In each of the sub-corpora the introductory “say” forms a majority of the introductory verbs used by Agatha Christie, its relative count never dropping under 70% all the introductory verbs. In the TL sub-corpora, “říci” is the most common introductory verb.

**Table 9b: Comparison of some features of the individual sub-corpora**

	Female translators	Male translators	Teams
% of int. verbs in the SL part	1.343	1.524	1.447
% of int. verbs in the TL part	1.035 (-23%)	1.231 (-19%)	1.108 (-23%)
“řici”	45%	59%	64%
No. of verbs used in the SL	21	21	17
No. of verbs used in the TL	28	20	19

As can be clearly seen from Table 10, each group of translators used fewer introductory verbs than Agatha Christie. The relative count of the introductory verbs in the TL part of each sub-corpus dropped universally by approximately 0.3%. This means that the translators used circa four fifths of the original introductory verbs used by Agatha Christie.

The last two lines of the table show different results. Female translators were the ones who, together with the smallest proportion of “say” translated as “řici”, also used the highest number of synonyms. The use of twenty-eight Czech introductory verbs to translate twenty-one English introductory verbs can be interpreted as a strong normalization.

Male translators, on the other hand, simplified the number of introductory verbs, using only twenty Czech introductory verbs as equivalents to their twenty-one English counterparts. The normalization used by female translators (and causing them to use

more introductory verbs in the TT than there were in the ST) does not seem to have any effect on male translators. Rather than normalization, they opted for simplification and a shift in the relative use of the introductory verbs in the corpus.

The translator teams present an interesting amalgam of both approaches. On the one hand, they translated seventeen English introductory verbs by using nineteen Czech introductory verbs. The teams did not seem to feel the same urge for using a wider variety of introductory verbs as the female translators did. However, they normalized the text, producing a higher number of introductory verbs in the TT than there was in the ST. On the other hand, in the translator teams TL part of the sub-corpus “řici” forms 64% of all the introductory verbs used, thus preserving the highest relative number of the introductory “say” translated as “řici”.

Each group dropped approximately one fifth of the introductory verbs used by Agatha Christie in the SL part of the corpus, and each group preserves “řici” as the most common introductory verb the TL part of the corpus. Nevertheless, male and female strategy in translating the introductory verbs can be clearly identified. Female translators translate approximately half of the introductory “say” as “řici” and the other half is then distributed among other introductory verbs. Although female translators preserved “řici” as the most common introductory verb, they reduced its relative count almost by one third, from 73% “say” formed of all introductory verbs to 45% of “řici”. They also used the highest number of introductory verbs, presumably to avoid being repetitive. However, male translators chose a different approach; “say” in the original formed 75% of all the introductory verbs used by Agatha Christie and “řici” in the TT forms 59% of all introductory verbs used by her translators.

#### **4.2.6 Short story micro-corpus compared to novel micro-corpus**

The male/female/teams of translators, however useful, should not be seen as the only possible division criterion for my corpus. The issue of translation of introductory verbs can be discussed in terms of a collection of short stories compared to novels. Focus on the form is another logical step in doing research on the corpus. A short story, with its limited range, presents for both the author and the translator quite a different challenge compared to that presented by a novel.

Yet to compare the solutions the translators came with, the researcher needs two micro-corpuses formed from the general corpus – a parallel micro-corpus of collections of short stories and a parallel micro-corpus of novels. The general corpus includes five collections of short stories: *The Listerdale Mystery* (London: Collins, 1934.), *Parker Pyne Investigates* (London: Collins, 1934.), *The Labours of Hercules* (London: Collins, 1947.), *Poirot's Early Cases* (London: Collins, 1974.) and *Partners in Crime* (London: Collins, 1929.). The micro-corpus of the novels was formed out of four novels, which in the SL have the same (or nearly the same) number of tokens as the collections of short-stories. These four novels are *Sad Cypress*, *The Secret Adversary*, *Evil under the Sun*, *Death on the Nile* and *Murder at the Vicarage*. The criterion of length was chosen mainly because in roughly the same number of tokens Agatha Christie used approximately the same number of introductory verbs.

**Table 10: List of Agatha Christie's books and their Czech translations forming the short story micro-corpus and the novel micro-corpus**

Short story book in English	Translator	Czech translation	Czech publisher and year of publishing
<i>Parker Pyne Investigates</i>	Pavla and Matouš Iblovy	<i>Parker Pyne zasahuje</i>	Knižní klub, 2004
<i>The Labours of Hercules</i>	Věra Heroldová-Št'ovíčková	<i>Herkulovské úkoly pro</i>	Knižní klub, 1994

		<i>Hercula Poirota</i>	
<i>Poirot's Early Cases</i>	Michala Marková	<i>Rané případy Hercula Poirota</i>	Knižní klub, 2007
<i>Partners in Crime</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Zločiny pro dva</i>	Knižní klub, 2002
<i>The Listerdale Mystery</i>	Lenka Uhlířová	<i>Záhadné zmizení lorda Listerdalea</i>	Knižní klub, 2005
<b>Novel in English</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Czech translation</b>	<b>Czech publisher and year of publishing</b>
<i>Sad Cypress</i>	Jan Čermák	<i>Temný cypřiš</i>	Knižní klub, 1999
<i>The Secret Adversary</i>	Veronika Volhejnová	<i>Tajemný protivník</i>	Knižní klub, 2004
<i>Evil under the Sun</i>	Ivana Štěpánková	<i>Zlo pod sluncem</i>	Knižní klub, 2003
<i>Death on the Nile</i>	Hana Blažejová	<i>Smrt na Nilu</i>	Knižní klub, 1993
<i>Murder at the Vicarage</i>	Karel Voleský	<i>Vražda na faře</i>	Melantrich, 1991

These five collections of short stories form together a corpus of 349,370 tokens in the SL and their translations with 300,823 tokens form the TL part of the corpus. The corpus made from the novels amounts to 336,034 tokens in the SL and 282,054 tokens in the TL.

**Fig. 10: Number of tokens and mean book length in the short-story micro-corpus and novel micro-corpus (in thousands)**

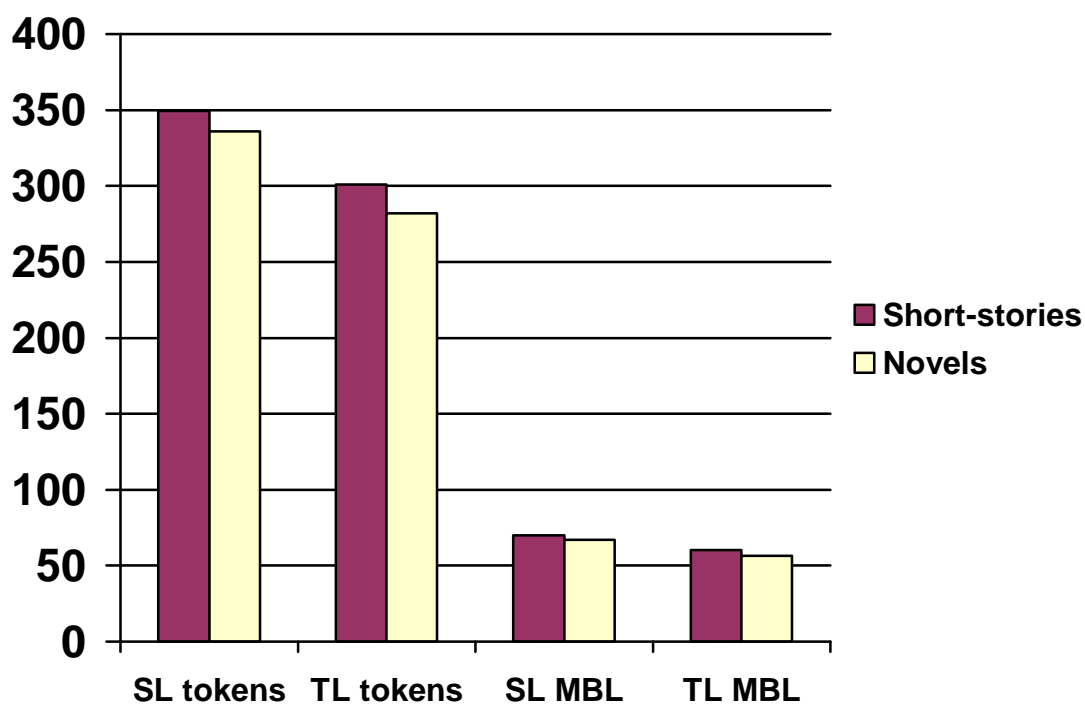
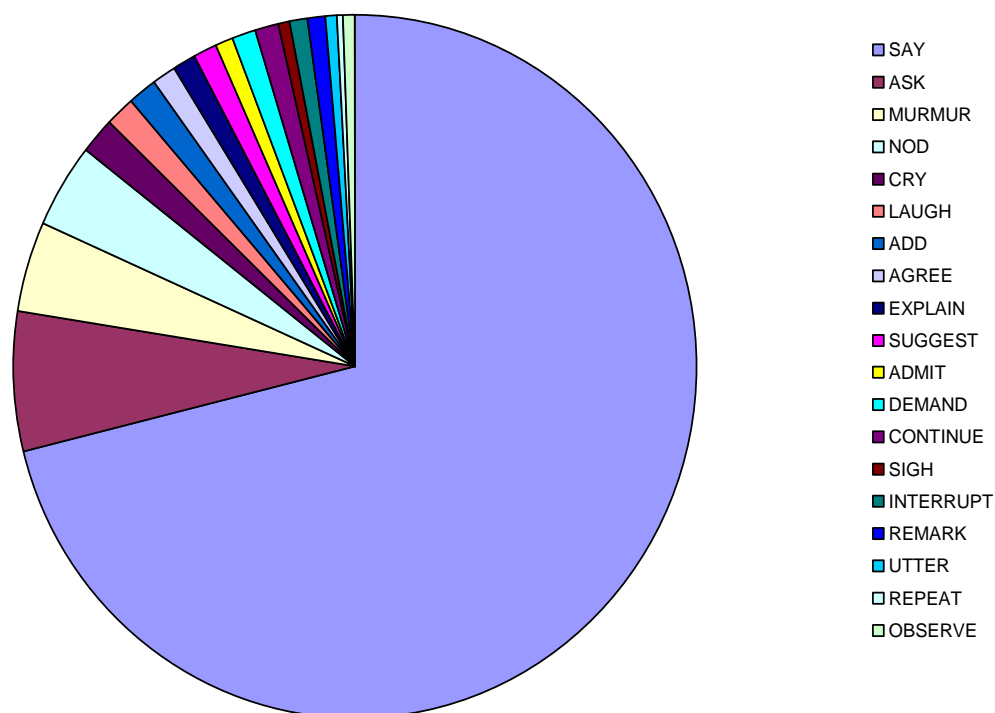


Fig. 10 clearly shows that the general pattern for the mean book length (as shown above) is valid for both of these micro-corpora. However, the mean book length cannot be the only criterion in comparing these two micro-corpora. The following graphs and tables show the frequency and relative count of introductory verbs in these two micro-corpora.

**Fig. 11: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the short story micro-corpus**



**Table 11: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the short story micro-corpus**

Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
SAY	3,392	0.971	AGREE	53	0.015	INTERRUPT	35	0.01
ASK	305	0.087	EXPLAIN	51	0.015	REMARK	32	0.009
MURMUR	192	0.055	SUGGEST	49	0.014	UTTER	27	0.008
NOD	183	0.052	ADMIT	48	0.014	REPEAT	24	0.007
CRY	82	0.023	DEMAND	48	0.014	OBSERVE	21	0.006
LAUGH	71	0.02	CONTINUE	47	0.014			
ADD	64	0.018	SIGH	38	0.011			

In her collections of short stories, Agatha Christie used nineteen introductory verbs reaching more than 0.005% of the SL part of the micro-corpus. All the introductory verbs number 4,762 tokens and form 1.363% of the corpus.

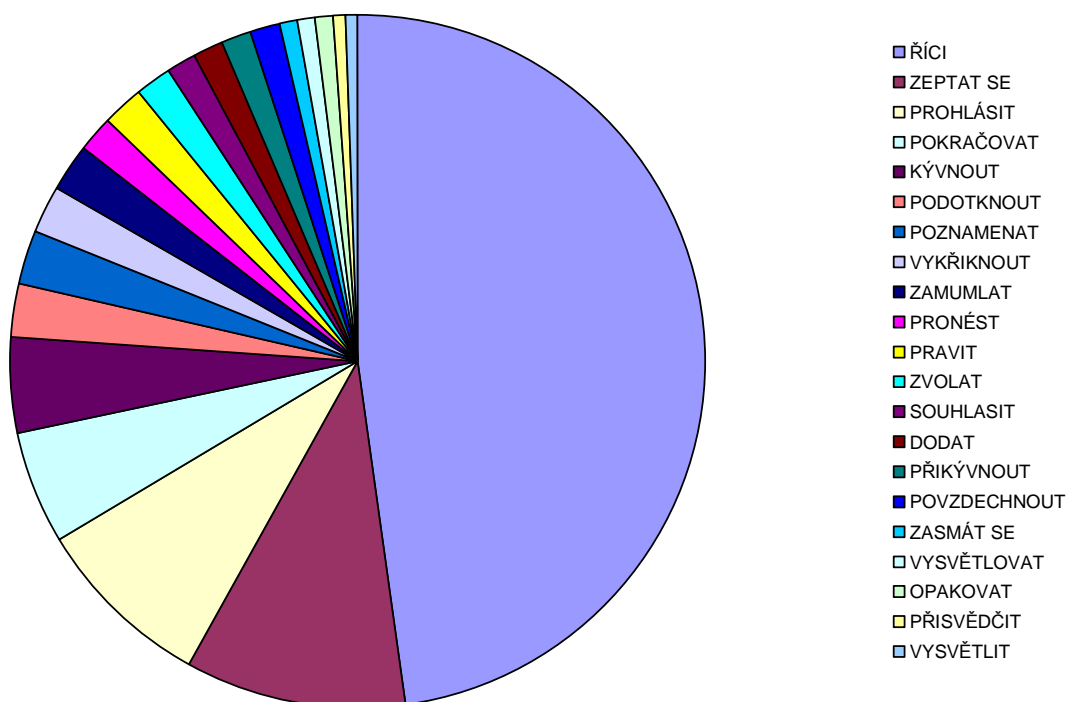
The most used is the introductory verb “say”, which with 3,392 tokens and 0.971% of the relevant part of the corpus, forms 71% of all introductory verbs used.

The second most used introductory verb is again “ask” with 305 uses (0.087%).

The third and fourth introductory verbs are “murmur” (192 uses and 0.055%) and “nod” (183 tokens and 0.052%).

The only difference (apart from the “disappearance” of introductory verbs “wonder”, “reply” and “answer”) to the general corpus is the appearance of the introductory verb “utter” among the introductory verbs.

**Fig. 12: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the short story micro-corpus**



**Table 12: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the short story micro-corpus**

Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
ŘÍCI	1,498	0.498	VYKŘIKNOUT	72	0.024	PŘIKÝVNOUT	45	0.014
ZEPTAT SE	324	0.108	ZAMUMLAT	63	0.021	POVZDECHNOUT	45	0.014
PROHLÁSIT	262	0.087	PRONĚST	58	0.019	ZASMÁT SE	31	0.01

POKRAČOVAT	162	0.054	PRAVIT	57	0.019	VYSVĚTLOVAT	24	0.008
KÝVNOUT	130	0.043	ZVOLAT	52	0.017	OPAKOVAT	20	0.007
PODOTKNOUT	78	0.026	SOUHLASIT	47	0.015	PŘISVĚDČIT	18	0.006
POZNAMENAT	78	0.026	DODAT	46	0.015	VYSVĚTLIT	15	0.005

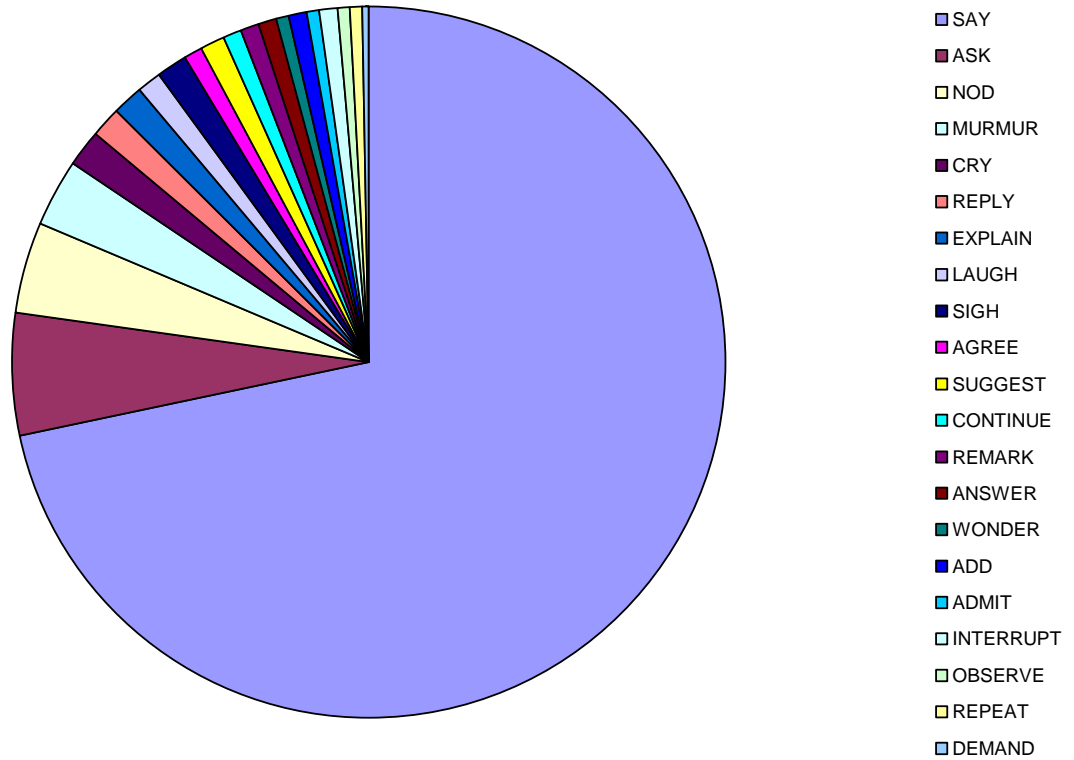
The translators translating short stories used twenty-one introductory verbs numbering more than 0.005% of the SL part of the micro-corpus. All these introductory verbs put together number 3,125 tokens and 1.504% of the micro-corpus.

The most common introductory verb is “říci”, forming 0.498% of the corpus with 1,498 tokens. “Říci” forms 48% of all the introductory verbs used in the TL part of the short story micro-corpus. When compared to “say” from the TL part, “říci” numbers only 36% of the tokens of the original “say”.

However, the second most used introductory verb “zeptat se” numbers 324 tokens (0.108% of the corpus). When compared to its SL counterpart “ask” (305 tokens, 0.087%), it is clear that at least some tokens of “said” were translated as “zeptat se”.

Nevertheless, the SL part of the short story micro-corpus follows the tendencies that can be seen in the SL part of the general corpus.

**Fig. 13: Introductory verbs in the SL part of the novel micro-corpus**



**Table 13: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the TL part of the novel micro-corpus**

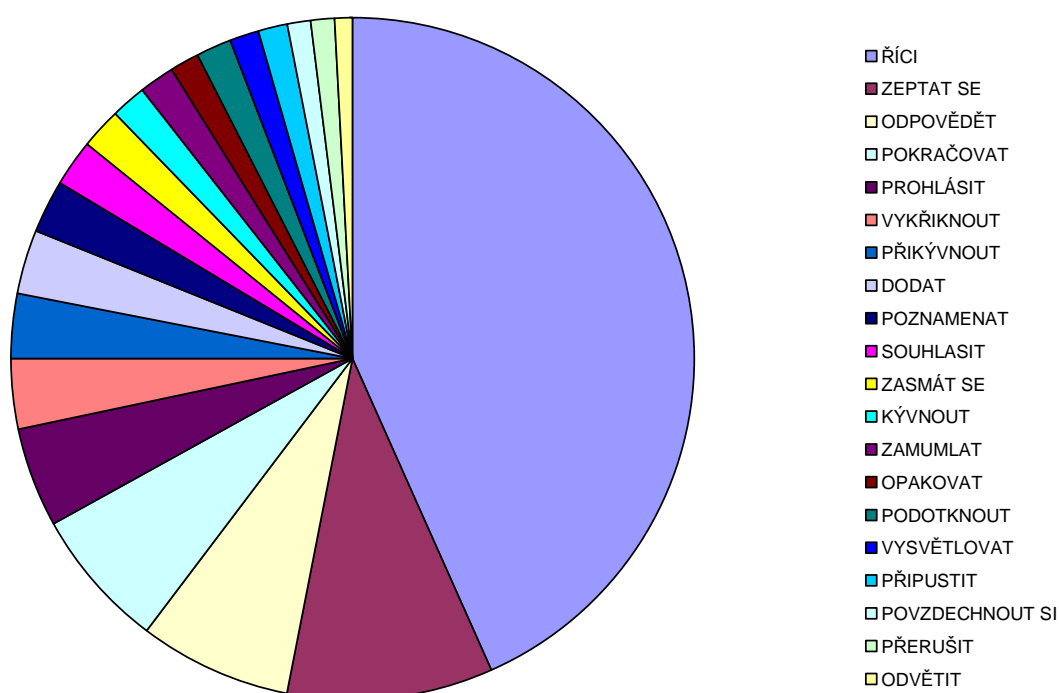
Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
SAY	3,977	1.171	LAUGH	69	0.019	WONDER	41	0.01
ASK	304	0.088	SIGH	64	0.017	ADD	40	0.01
NOD	238	0.069	AGREE	56	0.015	ADMIT	38	0.01
MURMUR	174	0.05	SUGGEST	56	0.015	INTERRUPT	37	0.009
CRY	85	0.023	CONTINUE	51	0.013	OBSERVE	30	0.008
REPLY	83	0.023	REMARK	44	0.011	REPEAT	28	0.008
EXPLAIN	73	0.02	ANSWER	43	0.011	DEMAND	21	0.006

The total number of introductory verbs in the TL part of the novel micro-corpus is 5,552 tokens (1.606% of the corpus). This fact shows that although the short story micro-corpus is slightly bigger, the number of introductory verbs is higher (nearly eight hundred uses) in the novel micro-corpus. This might be caused by the form – the short story is shorter and simpler, it has to be quite straightforward and the room for long

dialogues is very limited. The number of introductory verbs is also higher in the novel micro-corpus – twenty-one compared to nineteen.

The most common introductory verb in the TL part is “say” with 3,977 tokens and 1.171% of the corpus. “Say” forms 72% of the introductory verbs used.

**Fig. 14: Introductory verbs in the TL part of the novel micro-corpus**



**Table 14: Frequency and absolute count of introductory verbs in the SL part of the novel micro-corpus**

Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%	Word	Total	%
ŘÍCI	1,538	0.535	DODAT	103	0.032	PODOTKNOUT	53	0.016
ZEPTAT SE	348	0.121	POZNAMENAT	93	0.03	VYSVĚTLOVAT	51	0.015
ODPOVĚDĚT	260	0.087	SOUHLASIT	80	0.025	PŘIPUSTIT	47	0.014
POKRAČOVAT	233	0.075	ZASMÁT SE	65	0.021	POVZDECHNOUT	44	0.014
PROHLÁSIT	173	0.055	KÝVNOUT	61	0.02	PŘERUŠIT	42	0.013
VYKŘIKNOUT	113	0.037	ZAMUMLAT	57	0.018	ODVĚTIT	25	0.008
PŘIKÝVNOUT	112	0.037	OPAKOVAT	57	0.018			

The translators translating the novel micro-corpus used twenty introductory verbs that number higher than 0.005% of the corpus. These introductory verbs put together form 3,555 tokens and 1.191% of the TL part of the corpus.

The most common introductory verb in the TL part of the novel micro-corpus is “řici” with 1,538 tokens and 0.535% of the corpus. The introductory verb “řici” forms 43% of all the introductory verbs.

When the two micro-corpora compared together, some interesting things can be spotted. Firstly, Agatha Christie used more introductory verbs in her novels than in her short stories. Christie also used the introductory verb “say” less often in her short stories – “say” (3,392 tokens) forms 71% of all the introductory verbs used in the short story micro-corpus, whereas it forms (with 3,977 tokens) 72% of the novel micro-corpus. Although these numbers are small – some six hundred tokens and only one per cent of the total number of introductory verbs – the novel micro-corpus is smaller than the short story micro-corpus, the difference being approximately 13,000 tokens. This fact suggests that Agatha Christie used smaller number of introductory verbs in her short stories. The reasons for this are obvious; there is only one plot in a short story and the room for dialogues is limited. Novel, on the other hand, offers room enough for long dialogues of well developed characters.

However, the translators did not follow the general pattern apparent in the SL. The short story micro-corpus contains twenty-one introductory verbs with 3,125 (1.504%) altogether. The novel micro-corpus contains only twenty introductory verbs which with 3,555 tokens form 1.191% of the micro-corpus. When compared to the SL numbers – the introductory verbs form (with 4,762 tokens) 1.363% of the SL part of the short story micro-corpus and 1.606% (5,552 tokens) of the novel micro-corpus. The translators translated 66% of the introductory verbs used in the short-story micro-corpus, but only

64% of introductory verbs from the SL part of the novel micro-corpus were used in its TL part.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research has shown several facts worth mentioning. In past twenty years, more than sixty books by Agatha Christie were published. However, only thirty-nine of these books were new translations of Agatha Christie's detective fiction. The rest were reprints of older translations, bilingual editions and romances, which Agatha Christie published under her pen-name Mary Westmacott.

In the introduction I stated the aim and hypothesis. I assumed that the translators used roughly the same number of introductory verbs as Agatha Christie.

In chapter two I introduced Agatha Christie as an author. I also introduced her work, her famous detectives (namely Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple) and also her style; Christie, using a lot of dialogues, used a lot of introductory verbs.

Chapter three contains the theoretical background to this thesis. A short sub-chapter dealt with the history of computer-aided research in translation studies, problems the translators face when translating detective fiction and in the sub-chapter 3.3 I also discussed the direct speech and its rules in English as well as in Czech. A special sub-chapter dealt with the universals of translation – their definitions and their relevance to my thesis.

Chapter four contains the results of the research. Eleven sub-chapters contain a description of the creation of the corpus and problems I faced while creating and processing it, as well as the results of the research itself. The research was carried out on the whole corpus as the first step. Then the general corpus was divided into three sub-corpora (female-translators sub-corpus, male-translators sub-corpus and teams-of-

translators sub-corpus) and these sub-corpora were then processed individually and the results of this research were compared. The last sub-chapter contains the results of the research carried out on two micro-corpora – the short story micro-corpus and the novel micro-corpus.

The corpus made of forty translations and thirty-nine original books has shed light on the process of translating of verbs introducing the direct speech from English into Czech.

At the beginning of my thesis my hypothesis was that the translators translated approximately half of the tokens of the introductory verb “say” as “řici”. My hypothesis proved to be a valid one concerning the general corpus. However, the individual sub-corpora showed different tendencies among different groups of translators. These tendencies will be discussed later.

The research carried out on the general corpus proved the general tendency of translators to leave approximately one fifth of the introductory verbs not translated. It also proved a general tendency of translators towards weakening the dominant position of the introductory “say” in their translations.

However, when divided into three sub-corpora (female, male and translator teams) surprising differences appear. Whereas female translators use the verb “řici” the least frequently and use a wider variety of introductory verbs, male translators remained more faithful to the original in terms of translating “say” as “řici”, but they used a less diverse variety of introductory verbs than Agatha Christie in the ST. Teams of translators seemed to be somewhere in the middle – they are the most faithful concerning the translation of “say” as “řici”, yet, on the other hand, they used a wider variety of introductory verbs than the ST.

The research also proved that translation universals (namely normalization and simplification) are present in translations of Agatha Christie's detective stories into Czech. Moreover, both simplification and normalization influenced the introductory verb translation process.

Identifying translation universals in the corpus based on the research is a simple task. Nevertheless, the real problem is to identify the level on which these universals are present in the TT. Translation in general involves a lot of both conscious and subconscious operations on the part of the translator, which are often summed up in one term as "the process of translation," without any distinction between the individual parts of the process. In case of introductory verbs, there are two possible levels on which the translation universals may be present, the lexical level and the syntactical level.

However, as stated above, during the translation process these levels are not separated, but united in a complex operation. Therefore it is virtually impossible to identify the level on which the decision was made by the translator. Also the number of tokens of the introductory verbs in the TL part of the corpus (23,323 tokens) makes a detailed analysis of the individual cases impossible.

An analysis of a limited number of cases (an apparent solution to the above mentioned problem) was not carried out. While carrying out such an analysis on a very small sample of uses (ten or so) simply would have not been enough, analysing a larger sample which would have been representative (some two hundred cases), would have taken too much time and space and would have by far exceeded the limitations of an MA thesis.

It can be only stated that the translation universals in the case of translating introductory verbs from English into Czech can be traced on both stylistic and lexical level.

Normalization can be found in the stylistic/lexical level – the use of the closest functional equivalent to the introductory verb “say” – “říci” – is nearly half in terms of relative numbers. Another example of normalization is the wider variety of introductory verbs used by the translators.

Simplification can be found in the mean book length – translations are shorter than original books – and through the mean book length also in the use of introductory verbs. The relative number of introductory verbs in the SL corpora is greater than in the TL part of the corpora.

In my thesis, I did not attempt to find the individual tokens of SL introductory verbs in the TL part of the corpus, because I did not use a parallel corpus manager (e.g. the SketchEngine, Paraconc or similar software). When comparing the SL and TL tables, the only simple task was to tell how many tokens of an introductory verb were translated by its functional equivalent. Stating that a certain part of tokens of the TL verb was formed by the SL verbs A, B and C is pure guessing, however educated and as close such a guess might be. Moreover, Christie herself used twenty-one individual introductory verbs, but some of these verbs are in fact synonyms of each other.

To conclude I suggest that further research should be done using this corpus. Due to the limited space given by the requirements for an MA thesis, the present research could not be completed.

The TL part of my corpus could also be used to create a comparable corpus of detective novels by Czech authors and novels translated into Czech. Such a corpus could serve further research in the field of introductory verbs and for identifying the presence of translation universals in Czech translations.

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## **List of abbreviations**

MBL – Mean book length

MBL-SL – Mean book length in the source language

MBL-TL – Mean book length in the target language

SL – Source language

ST – Source text

TL – Target language

TT – Target text