

The curious case of translating German modal particle *wohl* into English and Albanian

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Abstract

This paper shall examine the translation of the German modal particle (MP) *wohl* into English and Albanian, using a literary corpus, namely the first three chapters of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*; 80 occurrences of the MP *wohl* in German. This is of particular interest, as German is considered a language rich in particles, whereas English and Albanian are poor in this respect. MPs in German belong to the linguistic means that serve to express modality. Modality is a semantic category that expresses the speaker's attitude on the validity of the facts to which the statement relates. One could also conceive of modality as the expression of the speaker's attitude to a proposition. The object of this research paper, therefore, is to determine the equivalents in English and Albanian of German MP *wohl*. The paper establishes the palette of linguistic means available in English and Albanian, respectively, to transfer the meaning of the German MP *wohl*. The results of our corpus analysis, based on the English and Albanian translations of Mann's novel, prove that there are no direct equivalents of the German MP *wohl* in the two translating languages, but that there are varying degrees to which the speaker attitude is translated into English and Albanian.

Key words: modal particles (MPs), German, English, Albanian, translation, modality

Introduction

„In der Tat gilt die deutsche Sprache als besonders partikelreich im Verhältnis zu anderen Sprachen; dieser Umstand führt zu Schwierigkeiten bei der Übersetzung der deutschen Partikeln, weil diese zumeist keine direkten Äquivalente in anderen Sprachen haben.“ (Helbig, 1994: 11)¹

As Helbig's statement above indicates, German has a considerable number of words that are virtually untranslatable into languages that are poor in terms of particles compared to German. Particles cannot be readily equated to other uninflected words such as prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, and interjections. The literature on German particles – focussing on semantic, pragmatic, translational, didactic, and lexicographical aspects – is very extensive (Thurmair, 1989; Beerboom, 1992; Meibauer, 1994, Helbig, 1998; Diewald, 2006, etc.).

Erben (1980: 178) translates the Latin *particula* into German as *unveränderliche Rede-teilchen* (invariant speech components). By virtue of this translation, he exposes two important features of particles: on the one hand, they are invariant, and, on the other, they occur mainly in spoken language. Many contrastive research articles and translation comparisons of German texts translated into other languages suggest that

¹ Our translation: In fact, the German language is considered to be particularly particle-rich in relation to other languages; this circumstance leads to difficulties in translating German particles, because these usually have no direct equivalents in other languages.

modal particles (MPs) are found exclusively or predominantly in German (Weydt, 1969, Feyrer, 1998; Braber, 2006). This body of scholarship has shown that for a German MP often no equivalent is found, giving the first impression that MPs exist in German only. As Waltereit (2001: 1392) observes, “it seems difficult to conceive of the function of MPs as being restricted to particular languages.” Thus, English and Albanian languages, for instance, which lack such particles, must have “other means for expressing the same thing.” Fischer (2000: 27) maintains that English tag questions have been used as translation equivalents for German MPs.

MPs in German belong to the linguistic means that serve to express modality. According to Bußmann (2008: 442) modality is a semantic category that expresses the speaker's attitude on the validity of the facts to which the statement relates. The speaker's attitude is the opinion of the speaker on what is expressed. One could also conceive of modality as the expression of the speaker's attitude to a proposition. For Bublitz (1978: 9), speaker attitude is the modal attitude of the speaker “[...] which refers to his views, attitudes, expectations, assumptions, emotions and that of his listener as well as to the respective social role distribution”.² Epistemic modality in German is mainly expressed on the lexical level – such as through MPs. In other languages, however, syntactic, morphological, and phonetic levels are employed to convey this effect.

In our paper, we work on the basis of Calbert's idea that it is reasonable to assume the existence of a basic system of modality, which is realized in various ways in different languages:

“By a basic system of modality, we understand the types of semantic relationship realized in language by modal verbs, moods, and a variety of syntactico-semantic structures involving for example non-modal verbs (such as *verba dicendi*) and certain adverbs, which express various degrees of “possibility” or “necessity”, whether as the modality of the propositional content of the utterance itself, or as the modality, within the speech context, of the attitude of the speaker or somebody else toward the likelihood of the information reported in the utterance.” (Calbert, 1975: 1)

The purpose of our paper is to establish the palette of linguistic means available in English and Albanian, respectively, to transfer the meaning of the German MP *wohl*. It will be of interest to establish which language means are used since both languages have no direct equivalents of the German MP *wohl*. We shall examine how the speaker's attitude is translated into both languages.

Methodology and Corpus

Although MPs had in the past been considered indicative of lousy style and used mainly in spoken language, Weydt (1969) asserts that famous German-language writers such as Goethe, Schiller, Kafka, Thomas Mann, etc., used MPs in their works. Goethe used the MP *denn* very frequently (Weydt, 1969: 84). Thomas Mann used particles for characterization; the particle *effektiv* (actually) is used extensively by the

² For emotion and emotive language see Braber, 2006.

character Senator Hagenström in his novel *Buddenbrooks*. The narrator's reflections in Mann's *Joseph und seine Brüder* abound in the use of particles (Weydt, 1969: 86). Franck (1980: 30) labels this the *Image- Funktion* of style, which implies that the frequent or specific use of a particular MP points the hearer to certain characteristics of the speaker, and she speculates whether the use of MPs in such a manner could indicate insecurity, aggressiveness, dominance, etc. Hentschel (2010: 115), in her research work on the usage of MPs in eleven theatrical plays from three centuries, concludes that their usage is considerably high, adding that there is indeed something like the "particle profile" of a literary text.

The corpus selected for this paper consists of 80 occurrences of the MP *wohl* in German in the first three chapters of Thomas Mann's novel, *The Magic Mountain*. We have used a corpus analysis to examine English and Albanian translations of the MP *wohl* in Thomas Mann's novel *Der Zauberberg* (2012, first published in 1924) and its translation into English (*The Magic Mountain*, translated by John E. Woods, 2005) and Albanian (*Mali magjik*, translated by Afrim Koçi, 2009), the latter the only translation in the language. There are two famous translations of this novel into English, done decades apart, but this one, originally published in 1995, is considered more accurate.³

We have opted for English and Albanian translations (rather than French or other translations) because English belongs to the Germanic language family, whereas Albanian, while part of the Indo-European family, just like German and English, forms a subgroup of its own, being neither Latin, nor Slavic or Germanic in its roots.⁴

Overview of research on MPs

MPs in German are distinguished by their brevity (Weydt, 1969), which has made German linguists call them variously "kleinen Wörter" (little words), "Flickwörter" (flick words), "farblose Redefüllsel" (colourless speech fillets), "Würzwörter" (spice up words), "Läuse am Pelz unserer Sprache" (lice on the fur of our language).⁵ MPs had been ignored by linguists for a long time, as they were considered to be of particularly "low-importance" and were treated as if they had no function (Baerentzen 1989: 19). However, Helbig (1994) draws attention to their communicative importance. With the "communicative-pragmatic turn" (in the 1970s), particles and especially MPs gained in importance in German linguistics. Beerbom (1992) rightly calls this time the 'particle boom'. Harald Weydt's (1969) dissertation on the particles is seen by many linguists as a ground-breaking work and trend-setting in German particle research. German particles and especially MPs are considered to be particularly "meaningless" in linguistics. This makes the description of the semantic aspect of MPs not an easy task. They often express - sometimes even crucial - communicative nuances which (even if they often add little factual information to the statement) should by no means be considered insignificant because they: make the language juicy, express a certain 'anchoring', and indicate how the interlocutors relate to each other, as well as the conditions and expected reactions (see Helbig, 1994: 12-

³ See the first translation: Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter, Secker & Warburg, London, 1971 [1928].

⁴ More for the Albanian language see: Newmark et al., 1982; Buchholz-Fiedler, 1987; Breu, 2009, 2010.

⁵ For more, see Reiners, 1943; Thiel, 1962; Bublitz, 1978; Beerbom 1992.

13). Heringer (1988: 739) maintains that the semantic description of particles is difficult, underlining that explicit paraphrases appear to be especially problematic. Meanwhile, Helbig (1994) draws attention to the fact that this is not a reason for their communicative insignificance because they often express communicative nuances. According to him, particles control the conversation and anchor it in the context of interaction (Helbig, 1994: 12-13).

The fact that particles are very common, especially in the spoken language, and that they fulfil different functions, is emphasized by DUDEN-Grammatik (2016), which states as follows:

[...] Als Gradpartikeln geben sie Auskunft über die Intensität von Eigenschaften, als Fokuspartikeln heben sie bestimmte Teile eines Satzes hervor, als Negationspartikeln verneinen sie einen Satz oder Teilsatz, als Abtönungspartikeln geben sie Auskunft über die subjektive Einstellung ‚die Haltung des Sprechers‘ zum geäußerten Sachverhalt, als Gesprächspartikeln steuern sie den Ablauf von Dialogen, als Interjektionen dienen sie dem Ausdruck von Emotionen, und als Onomatopoeitika imitieren sie Geräusche. (DUDEN-Grammatik, 2016: 588)⁶

Our paper draws on the division of the particles that DUDEN-Grammatik (2016) makes, which has uninflected parts of speech as a generic term. Beerbom (1992) is also of the view that particles should have “Nichtflektierbarkeit” (uninflected) as a generic term. For Beerbom (1992: 24) particles are not a type of word as the others, but a so-called “recycle bin category” for very heterogeneous elements. Diewald observes that “[a]mong non-inflecting linguistic items, membership in a specific word class is primarily defined via functional criteria, with concomitant morphosyntactic features providing additional criteria” (Diewald, 2006: 406).

According to *Grammatik der deutschen Sprache* (Zifonun et al., 1997: 1209) the German word-class MPs covers a core area of 16 words: *aber, auch, bloß, denn, doch, eben, etwa, halt, ja, mal, man (regional), nicht, nur, schon, vielleicht* and *wohl* as well as a border area of 6 words: *eh, eigentlich, einfach, erst, ruhig* and *überhaupt*. As we can see, the word-class MP is clearly delineated.⁷ According to Weydt (2010: 12) German MPs are very language-specific. They occur only in a limited number of languages; for speakers of other language communities, they are particularly difficult to understand, to grasp, to learn, and to use actively. In the linguistic literature on German, the MPs are named differently. In addition to modal particle (Abtönungspartikeln), they are also referred to as *modale Partikel* (Krivonossov, 1977: 40), *Modalpartikeln* (Bublitz, 1987: 10), *Satzpartikeln* (Hartmann, 1979:121), *Einstellungspartikeln* (Doherty, 1985: 62).

⁶ Our translation: [...] As degree particles they give information about the intensity of properties, as focus articles they emphasize certain parts of a sentence, as negation particles they deny a sentence or subset, as MPs they give information about the subjective attitude, the ‘attitude of the speaker’, as an object of conversation, as conversation particles they control the course of dialogues, as interjections they serve the expression of emotions, and as onomatopoeitics they mimic noises.

⁷ For more, see Weydt, Hentschel, 1983 “Kleines Abtönungswörterbuch” and Helbig ,1994 “Lexikon deutscher Partikel”.

MPs are no longer referred to as filler words, as in the past. They express very different attitudes, assumptions, assessments, and expectations of the speaker with regard to expressed facts, and, in part, also the speaker's expectations of the listener. MPs do not refer to individual phrases, but to the predicate and thus to the entire sentence. They have different types of functions that are not primarily semantic but rather communicative (for more see Helbig, Buscha, 2001)

MPs have the following morphological and syntactic features⁸:

- MPs are uninflected and unstressed words. Lexemes functioning as MPs do not inflect even if their heterosemes do. This is a feature MPs share with all other particles of German;
- MPs refer to the entire sentence. Because of these functions, most MPs are fixed to specific types of sentences (statements, demands and questions). They do not have referential meaning. Very often, this feature sets them in sharp contrast to their heterosemes in the class of adjectives or adverbs;
- MPs are syntactically restricted to the midfield;
- MPs very often display an affinity with a particular sentence type, either with structural types, or with illocutionary types, or with complex constructions, in German called *Satzmodi* (sentential moods);
- MPs cannot answer questions;
- MPs have *sentential* scope or *utterance* scope (illocutionary scope); they have the widest scope of all sententially-integrated particles. Therefore, they cannot function as the reference point of a negation particle;
- MPs cannot build phrases;
- MPs are combinable.

The word-class of particles and especially MPs are different/specific in every language. They have various kinds of affixes or function words, and this is why this class of words must be defined separately for each language:

“The fact that the function of MPs is a grammatical function in German, of course, does not mean that it must be realized as a grammatical function in other languages, or that this function must be expressed by a separate set of items in a language at all.” (Diewald, 2013: 36)

To sum up: we can say 1) that particles are (single) words, which have no dissecting (lexical), deictic, or word class meaning, but they do have semantic content which they deploy in connection with other elements of the utterance, and 2) that MPs and related linguistic elements are used as specific instruments for the partners' cooperation, helping them make the actual intention of an utterance clear and assign its function in the developing interplay.

Albanian

Unlike German, Albanian does not have a word-class for MPs. However, the Albanian language system has a word group of particles classified as invariable parts

⁸ For more see Weydt, 1969; Thurmair, 1989; Abraham, 1991b; Helbig, 1994; König, 1997; Zifonun et al., 1997; Helbig, Buscha, 2001; Molnár, 2002; Möllering, 2004; Autenrieth, 2005; Hentschel, Weydt, 2013; Diewald, 2013.

of speech. They impart an additional meaningful or emotional coloring of a word or a sentence. In Albanian (Agalliu et al., 2002, Buchholz, Fiedler, 1987) some words that originally belonged to other parts of speech, but over time have lost their lexical and grammatical features, are seen as belonging to the word group of particles. They have long been used as a means of forming grammatical word forms, such as: *u, do, të, me, për, pa, duke* and *më*. Because of their unspecified meaning, particles resemble the morphologically bound particles that are firmly bound to the verb forms: *le, mund, dot, a, në, po, nuk, mos*. In Buchholz, Fiedler (1987: 392), they are regarded as “morphological or morphological tendencies”. In this grammar, they are treated as verb forms.⁹

The word class of particles does not signal syntactic relationships and has no independent lexical meaning. Particles have referential or complementary functions in a sentence. Their lexical meaning is conditioned by the context in the sentence. Like in German, particles are mainly used in the spoken language in Albanian.

English

In English, just like in Albanian, there is no word class of the sort of German MPs. This does not mean that the speaker would not be able to perform this function verbally in English. In English-language literature, this type of phrase is called variously: *pragmatic markers, discourse particles, discourse markers, interpersonal markers, argumentative markers*, etc.¹⁰

However, these phrases cannot be equated with the German MPs. This is explained by Cuenca (2013):

[...] discourse markers are a set of expressions that include different word classes. The same can be said of modal markers and, among them, of MPs. Waltreit (2001), for instance, convincingly argues that the functions of German MPs can be equivalent to the effects created by lexical and morphological devices in English or Romance languages, which lack for such particles. (Cuenca, 2013: 195)

Meanwhile, this is how Diewald (2006) explains the difference between discourse markers and MPs:

[...] MPs, which are an important grammatical device of contemporary spoken discourse, cover an intermediate domain between the functions of text-connecting elements such as conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs on the one hand, and discourse-structuring elements such as turn signals, hesitation markers, etc., on the other. That is to say, MPs are treated here as the link between strictly textual functions and strictly discourse-relational functions. Taking into account that languages like English, which have been the object of extensive research concerning their discourse marking devices, do not have a functional class comparable to MPs in German, the latter

⁹ For more see Buchholz, Fiedler 1997: 64-70.

¹⁰ On the differences and similarities between MPs and discourse particles see also Weydt, 2006; Abraham, 1991; Molnár, 2002, Haselow, 2011.

might even be called the ‘missing link’ to deepen our understanding of the interrelations between ‘text-connecting’ and ‘discourse-marking’ elements. (Diewald, 2006: 408)

In short, scholarship so far has validated the idea that there is a distinction between discourse markers and MPs, but there is no agreement on terminology. The object of our paper is to examine how translators into languages which are lacking in MPs, English and Albanian, have grappled with the difficulty of rendering the meaning of German MPs in the respective languages.

Problems with the translation of German MPs

The difficulty of translating MPs has long been recognized in translation theoretic studies.¹¹

These studies offer valuable insights, but a mere observation of what translators do does not resolve the crucial question of what are the specific linguistic properties of the chosen equivalents, that enable them to perform the same function as the translated particle. (Waltereit, 2001: 1393)

It is generally impossible to translate these particles into a different language with single, specific functional equivalents, as pointed out by Weydt (1969). In truth, while there are no word-to-word equivalents in these cases, the connotation and the subjective coloring of the propositions have to be translated (see also Krivosov, 1989: 32). MPs have no lexical meanings per se, but meanings that refer to whole sentences and color them subjectively. Therefore, German MPs cannot be explicitly translated, but propositions and speaker attitudes must be taken into account (For more see Krivosov, 1989: 32-33).

Die Abtönungspartikel können Träger pragmatischer „Bedeutungen“ werden. In diesen Fällen muss die pragmatische Funktion Ziel der fremdsprachlichen Wiedergabe sein. Sie muss in partikelarmen Sprachen mit den spezifischen Mitteln der Zielsprache erreicht werden, in den meisten Fällen gar nicht mit Hilfe von Partikeln. (Weydt, 1989: 247)¹²

As Weydt's quote suggests, the problem of the translatability of German MPs in other languages is due to two points. On the one hand, the pragmatic meaning has to be translated into the target language, and on the other hand, in poor-particle languages, other means of language should be used to reproduce the same meaning in the target language. This is why the German MPs are based on a pragmatically-oriented translation concept. The pragmatic aspect takes into account the primacy of the purpose and the efficient equivalence and considers the communicative-functional aspect of the text as the translation's starting point. In such cases, the meaning that has developed in the interaction between MPs and context can be well rendered.

¹¹ See the studies of Stolze, 1982; Weydt, 1989; Beerbom, 1992; Liefländer-Koistinen, 2004.

¹² Our translation: MPs can become carriers of pragmatic ‘meanings’. In these cases, the pragmatic function must be the goal of the foreign language reproduction. It must be achieved in particle-poor languages using the specific resources of the target language, in most cases not with the help of particles.

Translation of MPs is not about word equivalency, but rather about (con)text equivalence. As (Feyrer, 1998: 107) suggests, the context must be fully considered in the translation work.

Therefore, the greatest challenge remains for the translator because he/she has to convey a modal meaning in the target language. Stolze (1982: 356) makes it clear that it is not the text structure that is translated, but the underlying, over-summative sense of the whole, where the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Translation of MPs is not only about a language transfer but, above all, a cultural transfer.¹³ As a result, the translator assumes the role of a mediator between the cultures of the source and target languages. Stolze (1992: 35) calls this “double enculturation.”

In translation practice between a rich-particle language (German) and poor-particle languages (e.g., English or Albanian), null correspondences may also be considered as adequate correspondences for MPs, if the modality expressed by these elements is rendered through other means.

Contrastive analysis of *wohl*

Let us determine the meaning of the MP *wohl*¹⁴ in German before conducting the corpus analysis. Previous research indicates this modal particle is used to express presumption. Molnár (2002:72) describes MPs as “Hypothesenfunktor” (‘hypotheses functor’). Obviously, the speaker’s attitude should be conveyed in the other language. A lot of scholarship in the field suggests the MP *wohl* when rendered in English is used for toning down – expressing *I think/suppose/should imagine* – as well as expectation which is rendered by means of *I expect, no doubt, by any chance*. MPs have several meanings, i.e. they can express several statements. This can occur in determination questions, decision questions, dependent decision questions, and assertion sentences. Evidence has shown that the epistemic modality in German reinforces the epistemic speaker’s attitude.

The Concise Oxford - Duden German Dictionary (1998) features the following description of the MP *wohl*: the first meaning is *wohl* as an adverb, which is translated into English as *well*. Whereas as an article, two possibilities are given: (a) probably, and (b) reinforcing a sentence. Meanwhile, Ali Dhrimo/Hamlet Bezhani’s dictionary *Deutsch - Albanisches Wörterbuch/Fjalori Gjermanisht - Shqip* (1996) translates *wohl* as an adverb and provides variants of its usage in German where *wohl*’s function is not of an adverb, but instead of an MP.

Our corpus analysis for this paper reveals that the palettes of words that have been used in translation in the two languages – English and Albanian – are very different. Therefore, before conducting the analysis of the corpus, let’s bring the charts here.

¹³ More for “cultural transfer” see Bednarova-Gibova, 2017.

¹⁴ The article by Asbach-Schnittker, 1977 provides a comprehensive description of this MP.

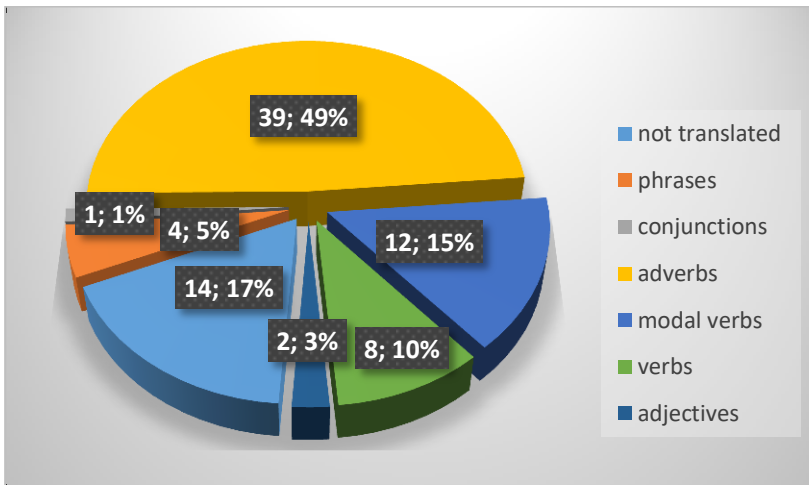


Chart 1. English translations of the German MP *wohl*

Meanwhile, in Albanian these linguistic means have been used to translate the MP *wohl*, as illustrated by Chart 2:

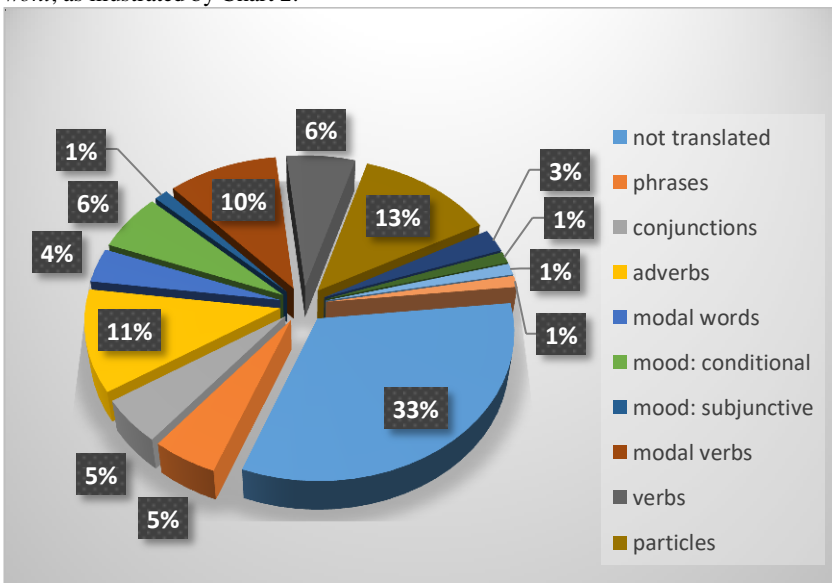


Chart 2. Albanian translations of the German MP *wohl*

The analysis shows that the MP *wohl* has not been translated at all into English in 14 cases, amounting to 14.17 % of the corpus. In Albanian, this number is higher, 26 cases, or 33 %. Such instances lead one to the conclusion that the epistemic modality has been lost in both English and Albanian languages during the translation process. The following examples illustrate this:

1. Hans Castorp hatte den Großvater zu Anfang von dessen letzter Krankheit *wohl* mehrmals, gegen das Ende hin aber nicht mehr gesehen. (p. 51)
 - 1.a. Hans Castorp had seen his grandfather several times in the early stages of his last illness, but then no more toward the end. (p. 30)
 - 1.b. Hans Kastorpi e kishte parë shpesh gjyshin para kësaj sëmundjeje të fundit, por asnjë herë përpara fundit të saj. (p. 44)
2. „Gute Nacht!” und „Erfriere nur nicht!” und „Zum Frühstück holst du mich ja *wohl* wieder” und schwankte über den Korridor in sein Zimmer hinüber. (p. 126)
 - 2.a. “Good night. Don't freeze out there, and call me again for breakfast” - and staggered out to the corridor and into his room. (p. 104)
 - 2.b. Së fundi u ngrit nga kolltuku, e hodhi përsëri mbi krevat batanijen e Joahimit, mërmëriti me një gojë të shpërvjelur “natën e mirë!” dhe “kujdes me sos ftohesh!” dhe “nesër eja të më marrësh përsëri” dhe u kalamend nëpër korridor drejt dhomës së vet. (p. 145)

It should be underscored that cases, when MP *wohl* has not been translated, are not the same in both languages. In (3.a) the speaker's attitude has been translated into English with the verb *assume*, whereas in Albanian (3.b) it has not been transferred at all.

3. „Wir essen *wohl* gleich? Mir scheint, ich habe Hunger. Isst man denn anständig bei euch hier oben?” (p. 32)
 - 3.a. I *assume* we'll be eating soon? I think I'm getting hungry. Do they feed you properly up here?” (p. 11)
 - 3.b. Do të hamë tani shpejt? Më duket se më ka marrë uria. Hahet mirë tek ju këtu lart? (p. 19)

Chart 1. indicates that adverbs have been used most, in 39 cases, or in 36.49 % of the total corpus when translating the MP *wohl* into English. Chart 2. indicates that adverbs have been used in Albanian translation only 9 times, or in 11% of the corpus:

4. Hauptsächlich aber war es doch *wohl* für den Alten bezeichnend, der ohne Frage die eigentliche Charakterfigur, die malerische Persönlichkeit in der Familie gewesen war. (p. 47)
 - 4.a. Probably the most significant factor, *however*, was that without question the old man had been the central figure in the family, its picturesque personality. (p. 26)
 - 4.b. *Duhet thënë* se këto ndjenja i zgjonte edhe vetë gjyshi, pa dyshim figura me karakterin më të mirëfilltë, personaliteti më piktoresk në familje. (p. 39)
5. Weder das eine noch das andere war Hans Castorps Fall, und so war er denn doch *wohl* mittelmäßig, wenn auch in einem recht ehrenwerten Sinn. (p. 58)
 - 5.a. Neither the former nor the latter was the case with Hans Castorp, and he *probably* was mediocre after all, though in a very honorable sense of that word. (p. 37)
 - 5.b. Hans Kastorpi nuk e kishte as njërën, as tjetrën dhe nuk *mund të ishte* pra veçse një i rëndomtë, ndonëse në një kuptim tepër pozitiv. (p. 54)

Modal verbs play an important role during translation into both languages. In English, they have been used 12 times, or in 12.15% of the corpus. In Albanian in 8 cases, or

in 8.10 % of the corpus. For example (6.a.) the modal word *may*, and the adverb *well* have been used to enforce the epistemic modality. This example in Albanian sees the usage of the modal word *ka të ngjarë*. In the examples (4.b) and (5.b.), modal verbs *mund* and *duhet* have been used.

6. [...]gefriedete Stille solcher hallender Orte glaubte er zu hören; geistliche Empfindungen mischten sich mit denen des Todes und der Geschichte beim Klang der dumpfen Silbe, und dies alles mutete den Knaben irgendwie wohl tuend an, ja, es mochte *wohl* sein, daß er um des Lautes willen, um ihn zu hören und nachzusprechen, gebeten hatte, die Taufschale wieder einmal betrachten zu dürfen. (p. 46)

6.a. At the sound of those somber syllables, religious feelings got mixed up with a sense of death and history, and all of it together somehow left the boy with a pleasant sensation - indeed, it *may well* have been that it was solely for the sake of that sound, just to hear it and join in reciting it, that he had once again asked to be allowed to see the baptismal bowl (p. 25)

6.b. Tek dëgjonte atë tingull të kësaj rrokjeje të mbytur ndjenjat e shpirtit të tij përziheshin me ndijimin e vdekjes dhe të historisë dhe të gjitha këto sikur i bënin mirë djalit dhe *ka të ngjarë* që ai ndaj edhe të ishte lutur që t'ia tregonin edhe një herë kupën, për hir të atij tingulli, për ta dëgjuar dhe shkërbyer atë. (p. 37)

In both languages, phrases have also been used in translating the modality of the German MP *wohl*. In each of the two languages, phrases have been used four times, or in 4.5% of the overall corpus. In the example 7.a the phrase in English is *at least*. In Albanian, this example has been translated with the particle *thujajse*.

7. Es schimmerte weiß im Saale vor lauter Milch: an jedem Platz stand ein großes Glas, *wohl* ein halber Liter voll. »Nein«, sagte Hans Castorp, als er wieder an seinem [...] (p. 100)

7.a. The room glistened with white from all the milk - a large glass at every place, *a good pint of it at least*. "No," Hans Castorp said, taking his seat again at the end of the table between the seamstress. (p. 78)

7.b. Salla dukej si e zbardhur nga qumështi i shumtë nëpër tryeza: pothuaj para çdo karrigeje ishte vënë një gotë e madhe, *thujajse* gjysmë litroshe me qumësht. (p. 110)

Meanwhile, in example 8, phrases have been used in both languages for transferring epistemic modality:

8. Da der Aufenthalt Ihnen nicht zuträglich zu sein scheint, da Sie sich körperlich und, wenn mich nicht alles täuscht, auch seelisch nicht *wohl* bei uns befinden, - wie wäre es denn da, wenn Sie darauf verzichteten, hier älter zu werden, kurz, wenn Sie noch heute nacht wieder aufpackten und sich morgen mit den fahrplanmäßigen Schnellzügen auf- und davonmachen?« (p. 123)

8.a. Since your stay here appears not to be good for you - neither physically *nor*, if I am not mistaken, *mentally* - how would it be, if you were to forgo the pleasure of growing older here, in short, if you were to pack your things tonight and be on your way with one of the scheduled express trains tomorrow morning?" (p. 101)

8.b. Në qoftë se qëndrimi këtu nuk po u shkon për shtat, meqenëse si trupërisht, *por siç më duket mua*, edhe shpirtërisht nuk ndjeheni mirë tek ne, si thoni sikur të hiqni dorë nga moçnimi këtu, shkurt, sikur që sonte në mbrëmje

të mblihdni plaçkat dhe nesër në mëngjes t'ia mbathni me trenin e parë? (p. 123)

Verbs have been used in both languages for the translation of MP *wohl*. In English, they have been used 8 times, or in 8.10% of the corpus, whereas in Albanian 5 times or in 6% of the corpus.

9. „Wir sind *wohl* wirklich etwas versimpelt. Aber man kann sich schließlich wieder zusammenreißen.” (p. 88)

9.a. “We do become rather tedious, *I suppose*. But one can always pull oneself together again.” (p. 66)

9.b. *Është e vërtetë* që jemi fundosur ca, por me disa përpjekje edhe mund të ngrihem i përsëri. (p. 94)

Adjectives have been used twice, or in 2.3 % of the corpus, to translate the MP *wohl*:

10. Das war schade, denn dem kleinen Hans Castorp gefiel es besonders *wohl*, wie der Großvater das Kinn in die hohe, schneeweiße Binde lehnte; noch in der Erinnerung, als er erwachsen war, gefiel es ihm ausgezeichnet: es lag etwas darin, was er aus dem Grund seines Wesens billigte. (p. 44)

10.a. What a shame that was, because little Hans Castorp was *delighted* by the way his grandfather could rest his chin in the high, snow-white necktie; and even as an adult, the memory of it pleased him no end - there was something about it that found approval in the very depth of his soul. (p. 23)

10.b. Por sa keq; se Hans Kastorpi të vogël i pëlqente *aq shumë* se si gjyshi mbështeste mjekrën në jakën e lartë dhe dëborë të bardhë. Edhe kur u rrit kënaqej pa masë kur i kujtohej kjo gjë. Kishte aty diçka që e pëlqente vetë thelbi i genies së tij. (p. 34)

In Albanian conjunctions have been used 4 times, or in 5% of the corpus, whereas in English only once, or in 1.1% of the corpus:

11. Hans Castorp hatte den Großvater zu Anfang von dessen letzter Krankheit *wohl* mehrmals, gegen das Ende hin aber nicht mehr gesehen. (p. 51)

11.a. Hans Castorp had seen his grandfather several times in the early stages of his last illness, *but* then no more toward the end. (p. 30)

11.b. Hans Kastorpi e kishte parë shpesh gjyshin para kësaj sëmundjeje të fundit, *por* asnjë herë përpara fundit të saj. (p. 44)

As shown by Chart 2., the Albanian has a wider palette of linguistic means to translate the MP *wohl*. Grammatical moods occupy a special place in Albanian. The results of the analysis demonstrate this: the conditional mood has been used 5 times or in 6% (12.b.), whereas the optative (13.b.) and the subjunctive (14.b.) only 1 time each, or in 1 % of the corpus.

12. Na, und auf der gereizten Haut tut das Salzwasser natürlich weh, da war er *wohl* vom Dienst her gewöhnt, Coldcream anzuwenden, es fällt mir nichts auf daran. [...] (p. 33)

12.a. And, of course, salt water does smart on chafed skin, so he *probably* got in the habit of using cold cream while he was in the service, that doesn't seem at all peculiar to me. (p. 13)

12.b. [...] është e vërtetë që në një lëkurë të acaruar lëngu i kripur të djeg, këtë ai *do ta kishte ditur* nga shërbimi i tij, por përdorimi i goldkremi nuk do të më kishte shkuar ndërmend, të them të drejtën [...] (p. 21)

13. „Nun, so schlafen Sie denn *wohl*, Herr Castorp, - im Volle- fühl Ihrer untadeligen Gesundheit! Schlafen Sie *wohl* und auf Wiedersehn!” - Damit entließ er die jungen Leute und setzte sich wieder zu seiner Zeitung nieder. (p. 40)

13.a. “In that case, sleep *well*, Herr Castorp - in full enjoyment of your impeccable health. Sleep *well*, and I'm sure we'll see more of one another.” And then he dismissed the young men and sat back down to his newspaper. (p. 19)

13.b. Atëherë *bëfshi* gjumë të embël, zoti Kastorp, me vetëdijen e shëndetit tuaj të përkryer! Gjumë të ëmbël dhe mirupafshim!,- me këto fjalë ai i la djemtë dhe shkoi e u ul sërish për të lexuar gazetën. (p. 30)

14. Das humanistische Gymnasium, - nennen Sie mich rückschrittlich, Ingenieur, aber grundsätzlich, in abstracto, ich bitte, mich *wohl* zu verstehen, bleibe ich sein Anhänger [...] (p. 96)

14.a. Schools based on humanistic education -you may call me backward if you like, sir, but on principle and in abstracto, do understand me *correctly*, I beg you - I remain their firm supporter [...] (p. 74)

14.b. Gjumnazi klasik, - mund të më quani të prapambetur, inxhinier i dashur, por në parim, in abstracto, ju lutem të *më kuptoni*, unë mbetem ithtar i tij [...] (p. 105)

Particles have been used in Albanian 10 times, or in 13% of the corpus (15.b.) for transferring the epistemic modality in this language. Meanwhile, modal words have been used 3 times, or in 4% of the corpus (16.b.).

15. „Gar nicht zynisch”, antwortete Joachim achselzuckend. „Wieso denn? Das ist den Leichen doch einerlei . . . Übrigens kann es *wohl* sein, daß man zynisch wird hier bei uns. (p. 30)

15.a. “That's not cynical at all,” Joachim replied with a shrug. “Why do you say that? It doesn't matter to the bodies. All the same, *it may well be* that we do get cynical up here. (p. 10)

15. b. Pse cinik? - u përgjigj Joahimi duke mbledhur supet, - ku e sheh cinizmin? Sidoqoftë, në një farë mënyre kufomat do të duhej ... por, *mbase* edhe mund ta pranojmë që këtu lart njeriu bëhet cinik. (p. 17)

16. [...]gefriedete Stille solcher hallender Orte glaubte er zu hören; geistliche Empfindungen mischten sich mit denen des Todes und der Geschichte beim Klang der dumpfen Silbe, und dies alles mutete den Knaben irgendwie *wohl* tuend an, ja, es mochte *wohl* sein, daß er um des Lautes willen, um ihn zu hören und nachzusprechen, gebeten hatte, die Taufschale wieder einmal betrachten zu dürfen. (p. 46)

16.a. At the sound of those somber syllables, religious feelings got mixed up with a sense of death and history, and all of it together somehow left the boy with a pleasant sensation - indeed, *it may well* have been that it was solely for the sake of that sound, just to hear it and join in reciting it, that he had once again asked to be allowed to see the baptismal bowl (p. 25)

16.b. Tek dëgjonte atë tingull të kësaj rrokjeje të mbytur ndjenjat e shpirtit të tij përziheshin me ndijimin e vdekjes dhe të historisë dhe të gjitha këto sikur i bënin mirë djalit dhe *ka të ngjarë* që ai ndaj edhe të ishte lutur që t' ia

trigonin edhe një herë kupën, për hir të atij tingulli, për ta dëgjuar dhe shkërbyer atë. (p. 37)

In one case (17.b.) a preposition has been used, whereas in another the noun *gjasë* which expresses probability (18.b.) for the transfer of epistemic modality which in the original German has been expressed with MP *wohl*:

17. [...] Leichtsinziges, was sich ihren Mienen, ihrer ganzen Erscheinung mitteilte, so daß man *wohl* wünschen konnte, zu ihnen zu gehören. (p. 78)

17.a. [...] there was a kind of nimble frivolity to their gait, which spread even to their faces, until the whole effect *might* very well have made you want to join their party. (p. 57)

17.b. [...] ecja e tyre kishte diçka frymëzuese dhe të shkujdesur, gjë që e shprehnin më së miri fytyrat dhe *që* të zgjonte dëshirën për të qenë pjesë e tyre. (p. 81)

18. Auch mochte *wohl* sein, daß Stabsarzt Dr. Eberding, der am Harvestehuder Weg verkehrte, von Consul Tienappel gesprächsweise gehört hatte, daß der junge Castorp in der Nötigung sich zu bewaffnen eine empfindliche Störung seiner soeben auswärts begonnenen Studien erblicken würde. (p. 61)

18.a. It may *also* be that Dr. Eberding, the staff surgeon, who was a regular on Harvestehuder Weg, had heard in casual conversation with Consul Tienappel that young Castorp, having just left for the university, would regard being forced to bear arms as a serious disruption in his studies. (p. 40)

18.b. Por mund të ketë shumë *gjasë* edhe që mjeku ushtarak, doktor Eberdingu, që banonte në rrugën Havershtuder, ta kishte dëgjuar konsullin Tinapel të thoshte se detyrimin për tu thirrur nën armë djaloshi Kastorp do ta kishte përjetuar si një goditje të ndjeshme ndaj studimeve të tij që sapo kishin filluar të merrnin për mbarë. (p. 57)

Conclusions

German MPs are translatable, not as word equivalency but as textual equivalence, as scholarship has established, and our analysis of the corpus of MP *wohl* translated into English and Albanian has corroborated. Palettes of different linguistic means are available to these two languages poor in MPs compared to German.

Both English and Albanian translators have used adjectives, adverbs, verbs, modal verbs, phrases, and conjunctions to transfer the epistemic modality of German *wohl* in the translations of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.

The Albanian language has a broader palette of linguistic means to transfer German MP *wohl*'s nuances of meanings; the selected corpus has shown. Albanian uses the grammatical moods: conditional, subjunctive, and optative. Besides, the Albanian translator uses particles, modal words, prepositions, and nouns to transfer the epistemic modality of *wohl*.

The corpus analysis shows that in 14.17 % of the cases in English, and in 33 % of the cases in Albanian, the epistemic modality of the German *wohl* has not been transferred at all.

In view of the present research work and its outcome, we can conclude that the Albanian translator has not made adequate use of the otherwise wide palette of linguistic means available in his language to transfer the subjective coloring of the MP *wohl*.

It is up to the translator to make use of the most appropriate linguistic means as he/she is the ultimate decision-maker in the translation process. The translator's knowledge of the source and target languages and cultures are key assets in this decision-making and the quality of the translation work.

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