

CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF LEXICAL MODALITY IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

Nina ROSCOVAN

Catedra Limba Engleză

Prezentul articol este un studiu contrastiv al modalității lexicale în limbile engleză și română pe baza operei "An American Tragedy" de Theodore Dreiser și opera "O tragedie americană" traducere de Leon Levițchi.

What usually happens when a work of fiction, literary prose that is translated into another language, is that it usually amounts to retelling the story by the natural user of the target language in his own words. In case of a good translation the teller of the story is himself a good enough writer to be able to write well in his own language and has enough talent to catch the spirit of the original, to retell the story plausibly and somehow approximate it to the original. What the translator is thinking of, is transposing the source text into the target one, as exactly or as closely to the original as possible. We should keep in mind that while translating from one language into another we have to remember the connotation and denotation of the given words or expressions, their grammar meanings, the importance of prosody in the realization of their meanings, including lexical, lexical-grammatical and grammatical categorial meanings [1, p.33]. Extremely important is the rendering of modality (phonological, lexical, grammatical, stylistic and prosodic).

Translation is "far more than a science. It is also a skill, and the ultimate analysis fully satisfactory translation is always an art" [2, p.123]. There are many aspects of translation, which admit of purely linguistic approach, and involving two or more languages, it becomes part of comparative linguistics. The deeper we go into it, the more assured we become that some languages, either because of genetic identity or because of certain sociolinguistic, historical and other circumstances are readily confronted, while others are not. It is easier to translate a text from English into French or Romanian, than from English into Arabic, or Chinese, the obvious reason being the much greater affinity between English, French and Romanian, than between English, Chinese and Arabic.

There is no real confrontation in any field of linguistics without taking into consideration the types and classes of meanings, the semantic classes of different verbs, which so obviously affect the function of their grammatical forms. It is usually assumed that lexical confrontation should be based on an analysis of different meanings of the word in the source language and of its equivalents in the target language.

In this article we shall study the translation of modality and mainly modal verbs and expressions from English into Romanian. Our main target is to see the way they are translated and how they rend modality in Romanian. The main modal verbs are: **must, may, might, need, can, could, have, should**, which mainly express necessity, possibility and obligation. In Romanian this would be: *necesitate, dezirabilitate, or posibilitate/probabilitate, obligațiune*.

The basic translation of modal verbs into Romanian is: **Must** = a trebui > necesitate, obligația îndeplinirii acțiunii. **Can** = a putea, a fi în stare, a se pricepe > posibilitatea fizica, intelectuală sau morală. **May** = a putea > permisiunea sau posibilitatea. **Need** = a avea nevoie. We shall study the translation and use of modal verbs in Romanian and English by means of comparing the English variant of the novel "An American Tragedy" by Theodore Dreiser [3, p.12-340] and "O Tragedie Americana" translation by Leon Levițchi [4, p.20-210]. It should be mentioned that there are no modal verbs or expressions in Romanian. There are some basic verbs used, as "a trebui" "a putea", which can be considered to rend the modality. So let's follow their translation starting with **COULD**: its main equivalent is "**ar putea**" = the verb "a putea" in Present Conditional showing a possibility, desirability: usually these are "if" clauses. (1) *All that could be truly said of him now was that there was no definite appeal in all this for him.* => *Oricum, ceea ce s-ar putea spune în mod neîndoielnic despre el, chiar acum, este ce nu simțea nici un fel de chemare pentru meseria aceasta.* (2) *I'd like to get something better if I could.* => *Mi-ar plăcea să găsesc ceva mai bun, dacă s-ar putea.* (3) *Gee if he could only have such a girl for himself.* => *Ah dacă această fată ar putea fi numai a lui.* Could is more unsure than "can" and it is used also to talk about possible actions especially when there are suggestions made. "a fi în stare" = "was/is able to" = a reuși.

There are cases when “could” showing ability (physical) is translated with the help of the verb “a putea”: (4) **Being rather flattered by the knowledge that she could speak and sing, her ability to sway and persuade and control people with the “Word of God”.** => *Magulită oarecum de gândul că poate și ea predica și cânta, și că este în măsură să-i domine pe oameni...* It also can be translated with the help of two different verbs in the same sentence: “a putea” and “a voi” (a dori). (5) **... and he might be making more money pretty soon- he couldn't tell –but as for more than that he either wouldn't or couldn't say.** => *“se putea ca în curînd să câștige mai mulți bani – nu putea spune – dar despre asta nu se cădea sau nu voia să vorbească pe larg”.* [In both uses they mean the unwillingness to do something]. Furthermore it can express future actions in Romanian: (6) **He could just stay downtown and say he had to work.** => *Va putea să ramîna în oraș spunînd că a avut de lucru.*

Another way of translating could is by means of using expressions showing possibility or ability to do something: (7) **...but worried for fear it might be something that he would not understand he could not do it quickly.** => *Dar îngrijorat că s-ar putea fi vreo sarcina pe care n-ar înțelege-o sau n-ar fi în stare s-o execute repede.* (8) **Could what Ratterer had been telling him really be true?** => *Puteau fi oare adevărate lucrurile pe care i le spuse Ratterer?* (9) **Could it be possible that he would be admitted to such a grand world like this.** => *Ar fi oare posibil să fie primit într-o lume atît de distantă?* (10) **Could that be the way things went here?** => *Oare, într-adevăr așa merg lucrurile pe aici? Or with the help of the verb “to be” “a fi” in Present Conditional: (11) And it was all so brisk and enlivening that he wished that he could be so fortunate as to secure a position here. => *Și munca se desfășura într-o atmosferă atît de plină de viață și de freamăt, încît Clyde își spunea că ar fi o adevărată fericire să i se dea un lucru aici.* (12) **And couldn't he begin to do as he pleased?** => *Și nu are dreptul să înceapă, în fine, să facă și el ce-i plăcea?**

It can also be translated as a past action: “nu putea” or “nu se putu”: (13) **There was a difficulty about marriage here, which he could not explain, but in St. Louis he had a preach who would wed them.** => *Aici existau unele dificultăți în privința căsătoriei, pe care el nu putea să i le explice, dar la St. Louis avea un prieten care îi va cununa.* (14) **As green as Clyde was, he could not help smiling secretly.** => *Oricît de novice ar fi fost Clyde, nu se putu totuși să nu rîda în sinea lui.* [In these sentences “could” expresses just the past form of “can” showing the ability to do something].

There are cases when the positive form of “could” in English is translated as negative in Romanian “nu putea fi”: (15) **It could only mean that he must help.** => *Rezultatul nu putea fi decît acela, că trebuia să-și ajute sora.* Or not translated at all: (16) **He could scarcely believe it.** => *Nu-i venea să creadă.* (17) **Now what do you suppose could have caused her to leave?** => *Ce crezi că a îndemnat-o să facă una ca asta? (possibility).*

As a conclusion it may be said that in most cases “could” is translated with the help of the verb “a putea”, but there are other expressions used like “a fi în stare”, “a fi posibil” and “oare”. While translating with the help of the verb “a putea” this would be a direct translation, could being used as the past tense of can. But in most cases could is translated differently, using synonymous verbs and expressions.

MUST: is usually used to express necessity, obligation or probability, it has no past form, and it is usually translated as “a trebui”, a verb usually showing obligation or possibility. Study the following examples: (17) **Our hearts must be kept open, soft and tender.** => *Inimile noastre trebuie să-i ramîna deschise, binevoitoare și iubitoare.* (18) **That must be understood now, once and for all.** => *Iată ce trebuia să se înțeleagă de la început odată pentru totdeauna.* [Strong obligation] (19) **I must speak to Asa about it!** => *Trebuie să-i vorbesc lui Asa!* [Necessity/obligation] (20) **It must be someone she liked.** => *Trebuie să fie cineva pe care-l place.* [Supposition] (21) **But now that he was here, he must go through it with it.** => *Dar acum, odată ce intrase în horă, trebuia să joace mai departe.* [Obligation] (22) **He must find a free pagan girl.** => *Trebuia să caute cu orice preț o bacantă pentru sine.* [Obligation/necessity]. With the second person “you” “must” “expresses an obligation which has an effect of a command. “**You must do as you are told** => *Fă cum ți se spune!*” As we can see, the same as in English, the verb “a trebui” in Romanian can be used in more meanings: to show necessity, possibility, supposition or obligation.

MUSTN'T, showing prohibition, is translated as “nu trebuie”: (23) **But we mustn't harbor hard thoughts.** => *Dar noi nu trebuie să ne facem gînduri rele.,* or with a synonymous expression “**a se cădea**”. (24) **We mustn't judge!** => *Nu ni se cade nouă să judecăm.*

There are other ways of translating “must”: a. as “**am nevoie**”: (25) *I must have 100\$, but I can't tell you for what now, and you mustn't ask me.* => *Am nevoie de 100\$, însă nu-ți pot spune acum pentru ce, și nici nu mă întreba.* B. As “**s-ar putea**” to show supposition (27) *She must be back in K.C. again.* => *S-ar putea ca ea să fie din nou în R.C.* C. As “**ar fi**” = with the help of the verb to be “a fi”: (28) *It must be silly for him to think that there was so much danger in drinking a little.* => *Ar fi un nătărau dacă ar crede că e periculos să bei nițel.* D. Not translated at all: (29) *That he had a son who must be about Clyde's age and several daughters two at least, of whom must be as Clyde imagined, living in luxury in Lycurgus.* => *Că are un băiat cam de vîrsta lui și mai multe fete, două în tot cazul, și Cluyde își închipuia viața îndestulată pe care trebuia să o ducă oamenii aceea în Lycurgus.* Or again as **trebuie** showing supposition: (30) *What a boob he must seem not to be able to dance.* => *Ce găgăuță trebuie să li se pară, de vreme ce nu știe să danseze.* E. As “**e bine să**” => it's good to...: (31) *She must see something of the world for herself, I suppose.* => *După părerea mea, e bine să cunoască singură lumea.* Suppositional “must” can be translated with the help of the verb “a se părea” “*She must be so lonely*” > “*Ea pare a fi atît de singură*”. F. **MUST HAVE** is translated as “**cred că**” showing possibility: (32) *I must have missed those two.* => *Cred că mi-au scăpat.* (33) *He must have gone already.* => *Cred că a plecat deja.* It comes as a conclusion that must is mainly translated with the help of the verb “a trebui” and for mustn't there is the negative form “a nu trebui”. But there exist other equivalents depending on the context: “a avea nevoie” to show necessity. “a putea” – supposition = “a fi bine să”. There are times when must is not translated at all.

MIGHT: is used to express reproach /about the past and the present/ is more often translated with the help of “a putea”, but also with some other words or expressions. (34) *And he might be making more money pretty soon he couldn't tell, but as for more than that he either wouldn't or couldn't say.* => *S-ar putea ca în curînd să câștige mai mulți bani – nu putea să spună acum cît anume...* (35) *But worried for fear it might be something that he would not understand he could not do it quickly.* => *Dar îngrijorat că s-ar putea fi vreo sarcină pe care n-ar înțelege-o sau n-ar fi în stare s-o execute repede.* (36) *He might need in the future, other children needed things too.* => *S-ar putea să-și dea seama, ceilalți copii aveau și ei nevoie de o serie de lucruri.* (37) *He might contact some dreadful disease.* => *S-ar putea să contacteze o boală îngrozitoare.* [All these cases of “may” or “a putea” show possibility in both languages].

B. It can be translated as “**ar fi**” Present Conditional (optativ): (38) *I could think it might be nice to sing twenty-seven tonight.* => *Cred că astă seară ar fi mai potrivit să cîntăm imnul 27.* C. As “**ar fi posibil**” or “**era posibil**” (using the past): (39) *She might never come back!* => *Ar fi posibil să nu se mai întoarcă niciodată!* (40) *She might charge him more than he could afford.* => *Mai era posibil ca ea să-i ceara mai multi bani decît ea i-ar putea da.* D. Showing future “**va putea**”: (41) *Assuming that he was sufficiently willing and facile, he might take as much as fifteen dollars a week.* => *In cazul cînd s-ar fi dovedit sîrguincios și îndeminatic va putea să cîștige pînă la cincisprezece dolari pe săptămîna.*

E. With the help of “**erau poate**”: (42) *His younger sister and brother might be too young to care.* => *Sora și fratele lui mai mic erau poate prea navirtnici ca să-și dea seama.* F. Not translated: (43) *Crossing at right angles the great thoroughfare on which they walked, ..., and various lines of cars which changed their bells and made such progress as they might amid swiftly moving streams of traffic.* => *Strada pe care margeau ei ..., și automobilele, ce claxonau într-una, făcîndu-și loc cu greu prin mijlocul furnicarului care se scurgea repede într-o parte și în alta ca niște valuri.* (44) *What might have been done to her?* => *Cum a fost tratată?* As we have already noticed all the examples of “may” here express possibility in both languages. In the examples (44) and (43) where it is not translated directly, the modality is rendered on the phonetical level of the sentence. The speaker is worried that something bad or good might have happened to her, we can hear it from his voice. So this sentence shows the possibility (that something bad or good has happened to her).

MIGHT HAVE (DONE): “**s-ar putea presupune**”: (45) *That such a family, thus curiously presented, might have a different and somewhat a peculiar history could well be anticipated, and it would be true.* => *S-ar putea presupune, și pe bună dreptate, că o familie ca aceea pe care am prezentat-o atît de fugitiv trebuie să aibă o istorie sa aibă o istorie aparte și intrucîtva stranie.* “**Ar fi putut**”: (46) *Of all influences which might have come to Clyde at this time...* => *Și astfel din toate influențele pe care le-ar fi putut suferi Clyde în aceasta vreme...* (47) *You might have written me a letter something anyhow.* => *Mie ai fi putut să-mi scrii două rînduri.* Not translated: (48) *At first they assumed that she might have taken an unexplained walk*

somewhere. => *La început își închipuiră că s-a dus să facă o plimbare neprevăzută.* “Might have” is not translated but the modality is expressed by the expression “plimbare neprevăzută” and from the previous sentence “își închipuiră” showing possibility or sometimes supposition, the possibility that she could take a walk.

SHOULD: is used to express two meanings: one of them is obligation – translated into Romanian as “a trebui”: (66) *For why should she go and do anything which would distress her parents in this dreadful fashion?* => *De ce trebuie să plece pricinuind părinților ei o mîhnire atît de mare?* (67) *I should think she'd be ashamed of herself if she has.* => *Cred că ar trebui să-i fie rușine dacă a făcut așa ceva.* [In this case the author has translated only the second “should be ashamed”- “as ar trebui să-i fie rușine”, but not the first “I should think” only the main verb “cred”] (68) *He shouldn't go along like this forever.* => *N-ar trebui s-o continue așa.* [It denotes a negative advice by being in negative form].

There are more cases of should not being translated: (69) *I should think it might be nice to sing 27 tonight.* => *Cred că astă seară ar fi mai potrivit să cîntăm imnul 27.* Here should expresses a supposition, and the use of “cred că” showing supposition has already been mentioned at the use of “must have” translated into Romanian as “cred că”. Compare: (70) *I must have missed those two.* => *Cred că mi-au scăpat.* (71) *How should I know?* => *De unde să știu eu? As “este necesar” = a fi necesar = to be necessary = a request.* (72) *Should I really go to K.C?* => *Este oare necesar să merg la K.C?* [Showing a doubt about doing something] As *era să*” – showing a strong ambition or even obligation: (73) *He should have a brown cap.* => *Ambiția sa era să aibă o șapcă maro.* As “**ar trebui**” showing probability or even suspicion. (74) *His life should not be like this.* => *Ar trebui să aibă și el altă viață.* The English negative form “should not” has become a positive one in Romanian. In the following example (75) “should” is not translated but the modality is shown by the alternative question: (75) *Should he or should he not drink?* => *Să bea ori să nu bea? Should have been* => “ar fi putut fi” showing a possibility or a supposition about an action. (76) *For behind her were all those years of religious work and faith, which somehow, seemed dimly to indicate that she should justly have been spared this.* => *Fiindcă în urma ei se înșirau toți acei ani de strădanii și convingeri religioase ce păreau să indice că dînsa ar fi putut fi scutită de o asemenea năpastă.* To sum up, it should be mentioned that “should” showing obligation or probability is translated into Romanian with the help of the verbs “a putea” and “a trebui”, the synonymous expression used for should is “a fi posibil, a fi necesar”, but there are also cases when it is not translated at all.

WOULD: “will” and “would” are looked upon as forms of the same verb although in a few cases their meaning differ, and are used to express willingness, intention, determination. As most of the modals, “would” is also translated with the help of “ar înțelege”. (77) *But worried for fear it might be something that he would not understand he could not do it quickly.* => *Dar îngrijorat că s-ar putea fi vreo sarcină pe care n-ar înțelege-o sau n-ar fi în stare s-o execute repede.* (78) *I'd like to get something better if I could.* => *Mi-ar plăcea să găsesc ceva mai bun dacă s-ar putea.* [Wish, desirability]. (79) *I wouldn't mind pulling some of it myself.* => *Și mie mi-ar plăcea așa ceva, mai știi?* (80) *What would they think of him if he didn't drink?* => *Ce-ar fi crezut despre el dacă n-ar fi băut nimic?* [Supposition or request for advice] (81) *He would have liked to kiss her.* => *I-ar fi plăcut să o sărute.* [Unfulfilled wish, desire in the past]. (82) *She would have to be much sweeter.* => *Ar trebui să fie mai dulce.* As “**aș vrea**” or “**aș fi**”: (85) *Without mama, I don't know what I would have done.* => *Nu știu ce aș fi făcut fără mama.* (84) *I wouldn't want to try here.* => *N-aș vrea să încerc aici.*

With the future tense: (85) *She would travel with him and see a great world* => *Va călători cu el și va vedea lumea întreagă.* (86) *There was a difficulty about marriage here, which he could not explain, but in St. Lois he had a preach who would wed them.* => *Aici existau unele dificultăți în privința căsătoriei, pe care el nu putea să i le explice, dar la St. Louis avea un prieten care îi va cununa.* And as “voia” for future in the past: (87) *He would work and save some money and be somebody.* => *Voia să muncească, să pună bani deoparte și să ajungă și el cineva.* Through the past tense “strigau” or not translated at all: (88) *O, they would call after him: “Hey, you're the fellow whose sister plays the organ.”* => *Alteori băieții strigau în urma lui „tu ești ăla măi, de cînta sora la orga”* (89) *He wouldn't tolerate any nonsense.* => *El nu tolera nici o abatere.* (90) *You wouldn't know Clyde, would you, how I could raise 100\$ right away?* => *Clyde nu știi tu cum ași putea să fac rost de 100\$?* [Request] (91) *What would he do now?* => *Ce să facă acum?* (92) *No good-looking girl, as it then appeared to him, would have anything to do with him, if he did not possess this standard of equipment.* => *Era convins că, nici o fată frumoasă n-o sa-l ia în seamă dacă nu va fi îmbrăcat*

și el în felul acesta. (93) **He would not do that.** => *El pur și simplu nu va face acest lucru.* [unwillingness to do something] (94) **Would you like something to drink?** => *Nu vrei să bei ceva?* As we can see from the mentioned examples “would” is not usually translated into Romanian, there is no equivalent found. It just shows the future in the past.

WILL: “will” in modal sense is not very often used in the novel “An American Tragedy”. In the few examples it expresses obligation or command, examples (95), (96) and (97) and intuition or determination, (98) and (99): (95) **Clyde you will do exactly as I say!** => *Vei face exact cum spun eu!* (96) **We will first sing a hymn of praise so that any who may wish to acknowledge the Lord may join us. Will you oblige Hester?** => *Vom cânta mai întâi un imn de slavă, așa că oricine dorește să-l slăvească pe Domnul poate să cânte împreună cu noi. Ești bună să începi Hester?* (97) **Children, will you just be quiet!** => *Copii, fiți cuminiți!* (98) **Of course you won't be in any danger.** => *Desigur nu vei fi în nici un pericol.* (99) **She won't like this.** => *Nu cred că-i va plăcea.*

CAN: the Romanian equivalent for “can” is “a putea”. (100) **But we can forgive her.** => *Noi însă putem s-o iertăm.* (101) **There must be a little place in some of the departments where he can be fitted in as the head of something.** => *Trebuie să existe vreun locușor unde el poate fi angajat în calitate de conducător.* **Cannot = nu pot, nu se poate să:** (102) **I must have a 100\$, but I can't tell you for what now.** => *Am nevoie urgent de 100\$ însă nu pot să-ți spun acum pentru ce.* (103) **I can't stay a minute.** => *Nu mai pot sta un minut.* (104) **She cannot prosper on the course she's going now.** => *Nu se poate să-i meargă bine pe drumul pe care l-a ales.* It is also translated with the help of some expressions “nu-mi vine să cred” and “nu-mi reușește”: (105) **I can hardly believe it.** => *Nu-mi vine să cred.* (106) **I can't make it.** => *Nu-mi reușește.* **TO BE ABLE TO:** “a fi în stare”: (107) **I keep telling her she won't be able to keep her place if she doesn't get more sleep.** => *Îi spun mereu că nu va fi în stare să-și păstreze serviciul dacă nu doarme mai mult.*

MAY: it is only used for a few times to show permission, as in example (108), (109) and supposition about something as in (110, 111): (108) **We will first sing a hymn of praise, so that any who may wish to acknowledge the Lord, may join us.** => *Vom cânta mai întâi un imn de slavă, așa că oricine dorește să-l preamarească pe domnul poate să cânte împreună cu noi.* (109) **May I come in?** => *Pot să intru?* (110) **Asa may be in St. Lois.** => *Se prea poate că așa să fie în St. Lois.* (111) **Clyde may be late today.** => *Clyde poate să întârzie.* So we can consider as equivalent for “may” the Romanian verb “a putea”; the same as for “can” but in this case showing permission or supposition but not ability.

HAVE TO: the direct translation would be “a avea”: (112) **What a wretched thing it was to be born poor and not to have anyone to do anything for you and not to be able to do very much for yourself!** => *Ce nenorocire e să te naști sărac, să nu ai pe nimeni care să te ajute și să-ți dai seama că tu însuși nu poți să-ți îmbunătățești cu nimic soarta.* As a second equivalent the verb “a trebui” is used to express obligation or necessity arising out of some circumstances. (113) **You'll have to get that hair of yours cut.** => *Trebuie să-ți tai chica.* (114) **He arose saying that he must go, that he had to get up early in the morning.** => *Se sculase brusc în picioare spunând că trebuie să plece și că trebuie să se trezească devreme dimineața următoare.* (115) **And I had to go up to the office.** => *A trebuit să merg pîna la oficiu.*

Sometimes there are expressions “nu erau siliti să” “a avut de” used as equivalents for “have to” expressing obligation or necessity: (116) **He could just stay downtown and say he had to work.** => *Va putea să rămînă în oraș spunînd că a avut de lucru.* (117) **Other boys did not have to do as he did.** => *Ceilalți băieți nu erau siliți să facă ce făcea el.* (118) **I had to laugh.** => *Cum naiba să nu rîd?* This last example is really interesting. An affirmative sentence expressing a kind of obligation is transformed into a question, but having the same meaning. “Had to” is not translated, but the modality is still preserved by the slang “naiba”.

OUGHT TO: it is used to show moral duty and moral obligation, which is not always fulfilled. It is translated with the help of the verb “trebuie” and the expression “a fi necesar”. (119) **It occurred to him that if he wanted to get on he ought to insinuate himself into the good graces of people.** => *Îi străfulgera prin minte gîndul că, dacă vrea să răzbească în lume, trebuie să intre în grațiile oamenilor.* (120) **But now he was 16 and old enough to make his own way, he ought to getting out of this** => *Acum însă cînd avea 16 ani, deci o vîrstă la care putea să se descurce singur, era necesar să scape de asemenea constrîngerii.* Or to express supposition the same verb “a trebui” (121) **I think the one Silsbee wore ought to be right for him.** => *Cred că cea pe care a purtat-o Silsbee trebuie să-i vină destul de bine.*

To sum up, it should be mentioned that the most common Romanian equivalents for English modal verbs are “a putea and a trebui.” The modal verbs can be classified according to the Romanian translation, into two groups: translated with “a putea (can, could, may, might) and a trebui (must, shall, should, have to, ought to and need). At first sight one may conclude that in Romanian all of them would express the same thing. But this would be incorrect and it can be proved by means of the synonymous verbs and expressions used “a putea” – **can, could**-ability to do sth, possibility=to be (11,12) =syn=a voi/a dori” willingness. **May might** - possibility= a fi posibil. “a trebui” => **must** obligation, necessity= “am nevoie, s-ar putea, a fi bine să, a fi obligat”. **Shall, should**–obligation - “a fi necesar, a putea fi, a fi nevoie”. **Have to** - a fi silit să, a fi nevoit să, a fi necesar.

The same sentence can be translated in many ways: Trebuie sa plec.

=>I must leave. => I ought to leave. => I need to go. =>I should go. => I have to go.

All of them seem to be correct at first sight, but in English they express different meanings and different degrees of necessity or obligation as => I need/ought to go – is a necessity while I must/ have to/should go – comes as an obligation, so the translator or even the speaker should be really carefull and find the most relevant variant. The difficulty is that even in Romanian it is not easy to understand if “trebuie sa plec” is a necessity or obligation. The only way to understand is to transform the sentence using synonymous expressions “este necesar sa plec” = necessity; “sunt nevoit/obligat sa plec” expresses obligation.

The conclusion is that even if in most cases the English modal verbs are translated into Romanian only with the help of two verbs “a putea, a trebui” they still express different meanings in both languages.

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