AURELIJA USONIENĖ
Vilniaus universitetas

DEGREES OF CONFIDENCE AND MODAL WORDS IN LITHUANIAN

Epistemic or propositional modality is concerned with the speaker's "judgments about the factual status of the proposition" (Palmer 2001: 24). The given type of subjective evaluation can be expressed by modal verbs and adverbs in English. The latter are claimed to be used to denote 'degrees of confidence' as in the following examples:

(1) *Perhaps she's thereShe's probably thereShe's certainly there* (Palmer 2001: 34)
 On the contrary, modal verbs express the speaker's strength of the conclusion which is based on inference. Further on, the scholar makes a distinction between 'speculative' MAY and 'deductive' MUST, which can be illustrated by the examples in (2):
(2) *All three factors **may** be at work.* CMT 1286 (BNC)
 *Something beyond biology **must** be at work, although we do not yet know what ... (*BoE)

Despite the distinction drawn between inference and confidence, Palmer admits that "there seems to be little difference between *Mary may be at school* and *Perhaps Mary is at school*" (Palmer 2001: 35) and explains their closeness of meaning as that of between "coffee without milk and coffee without cream." 'Speculative' MAY can be seen as parallel to epistemic possibility or uncertainty while 'deductive' MUST is parallel to epistemic necessity or uncertainty in van der Auwera (2001). The above given modal expressions contain the speaker's subjective evaluation of the truth-value of the state of affairs. Nuyts (2001) observes that there is much linguistic evidence to support the 'scalar' interpretation of epistemic modality because human beings seem 'to think in terms of a scale', thus he regards this 'estimation of likelihood of states of affairs' as situated on a scale. The so-called 'epistemic scale' (Nuyts 2001: 22) can be explained in terms of doubt, likelihood, uncertainty, probability. In general, there seems to be no polemic regarding a class of epistemic adverbs in English that express the speaker's assessment in terms of 'degree of truth' (Quirk et al. 1985: 620-21), 'indication of belief in various degrees of probability' (LGSWE 1999: 854), 'degree of certitude of the truth-value' (Ernst 2002: 73). The authors of *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (CGEL 2002: 768) distinguish "three levels of strength, according to the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition" for modal auxiliaries and four levels of strength for modal adverbs:
 (3) a) strong (*obviously, necessarily*, etc.)
 b) quasi-strong (*apparently, evidently, presumably, seemingly*, etc.)
 c) medium (*likely, probably*, etc.)d) weak (*maybe, perhaps, possibly*, etc.)

As the latest contrastive studies show, despite the existing similarity in terms of the 'auxiliary and adverb strategies' (van der Auwera, Schalley, Nuyts 2005) available for the realization of epistemic meanings of necessity and possibility, speakers of English and Slavonic languages do not use these strategies with equal frequency. The results of the investigation of the Slavonic translational equivalents for the English auxiliaries and adverbs of epistemic possibility show that the degree of polyfunctionality seem to explain some of the reasons why Slavonic modal adverbs are more common as equivalents for the English auxiliary *might* than for *could*. It should be noted that this feature appears to be more typical to the South and West Slavonic languages. Basic types of realizations of epistemic modality in English and Lithuanian are illustrated in the examples listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Realizations of epistemic modality in English and Lithuanian

English	Lithuanian
MODAL VERBS (auxiliaries): *Everybody says that so it* **must be** *true.* ([K6P](#) 46) *In theory that* **might be** *true.* ([J10](#) 4611) **ADVERBS**: ***Maybe/perhaps*** *John has done it.* (van der Auwera, Schalley, Nuyts 2005: 201)	**MODAL VERBS (full)**: *Jis* **turi būti** *namie.* ('He may be at home') *Jis* **gali būti** *namie.* ('He must be at home') **MODAL WORDS and particles**: ***Gal(būt)/turbūt*** *jis namie.* ('Maybe/probably he (is) at home')

There seems to be no polemic regarding the inventory of realizations of the weak level of strength or low probability/doubt (*maybe, perhaps,* etc.) and those of certainty (*certainly, clearly, surely, undoubtedly, definitely, presumably*, etc.). However other probability values and a quasi-/medium degree of strength are rather difficult to measure and grade. In Lithuanian grammar, particles are defined as 'a class of words which serve to give modal or emotional emphasis to other words, or word groups, or clauses' (Lithuanian Grammar 1997: 395) and the modal meaning is explained in terms of speaker's certainty and doubt/uncertainty (Laigonaitė 1967: 11–13). My native speaker's intuition would suggest drawing a distinction between:

(a) **certainty** adverbs like *tikrai* ('surely/certainly'), *aiškiai* ('clearly') as used in *Šis kelias áiškiai (tikrai) į Kauną* Rt. (LKŽe) (Lit. 'This road is clearly (surely) to Kaunas') and modal words denoting certainty like *žinoma* ('of course/definitely');

(b) **high** probability or **quasi-strong** confidence adverbs like *tikriausiai, greičiausiai, veikiausiai*1[1] ('most likely/probably'); and

(c) **weak** or **low** epistemic possibility words and particles like *gal(būt)* ('maybe')*, galimas daiktas* ('conceivably')*, rasi* ('perhaps')*, bene* ('possibly')*,* etc. It should be noted that in Lithuanian, as contrasted to English, there are very few modal adverbs and a great number of modal words and particles. The majority of modal adverbs in Lithuanian are derived from adjectives by means of the suffix – *(i)ai*, e.g.:

(4) Adj. **tikras** ('sure') → Adv. *tikrai* ('surely') and *tikriausiai* ('most likely/probably');

    Adj. **būtinas** ('necessary') → Adv. *būtinai* ('necessarily')

    Adj. **aiškus** ('clear') → Adv. *aiškiai* ('clearly')

There is also a group of modal words/particles that have been derived from verbs, e.g.:

(5) *gal* ('perhaps/maybe') ← *gali* (**gal**-**ėti** 2PresSg/3Pres.) ~ 'you/they can/may'

    galbūt ('maybe/possibly') ← *gali būti* (**gal**-**ėti** 2PresSg/3Pres. **bū**-**ti** Inf) ~ 'can/may be'

    turbūt ('probably') ← *turi būti* (**tur**-**ėti** 2PresSg/3Pres. **bū**-**ti** Inf) ~ 'have/has to be'

    matyt ('evidently') ← *matyti* (**mat**-**yti** Inf) ~ 'see'

The purpose of the given paper is to analyze the realizations of the speaker's degrees of confidence in Lithuanian as contrasted to English by looking at translation correspondences. The pilot study is based on a contrastive analysis of the data compiled from the parallel English-Lithuanian corpus. The focus of the study is on the most frequent modal words and particles used in contemporary Lithuanian. According to the frequency lists produced by the team of the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language at the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University (Marcinkevičienė 2006: 91-98), the particles under analysis are among the top twenty most common particles, e.g.:

(6) 5. GAL1[2] ('perhaps/maybe')

    12. GALBŪT ('maybe/possibly')

16. MATYT ('evidently')
18. TURBŪT ('probably')

According to the dictionary definitions, all these modals should be regarded as very close synonyms because their meanings are explained in terms of each other, e.g.:

(7) **gál** modal. *ar, rasi, galimas daiktas* (LKŽe)

 gal dll. *rasi, galimas daiktas* (MLD)

 galbūt modal. *galimas daiktas, turbūt, rasi, gal* (LKŽe)

 galbūt dll. *galimas daiktas, gal* (MLD)

 turbūt modal. *<...> galbūt, rasi, tikriausiai* (LKŽe)

 matyt įterpt.1[3] *turbūt, galbūt, greičiausiai* (MLD)

As can be seen from the above examples, there seems to be no distinction made between high and low degree probability meanings: *turbūt* ('probably') is explained by using *galbūt* ('maybe') and *tikriausiai* ('most probably'), which might suggest that either these modals are polyfunctional or the given distinction is not relevant in Lithuanian because the notion of probability is not a gradable category. These issues need special attention and further research. However, there is preliminary evidence that the Lithuanian high probability modals seem to behave similarly as their English equivalents and they can be contrasted to the weak/low probability modals. In Hoye's book (1997) on adverbs and modality in English, *probably* and *presumably* are regarded as adverbs that 'imply the speaker's reasonable certainty' and they are not acceptable in the structures allowing a low likelihood reading where only much weaker adverbs like *conceivably* and *possibly* are preferable. The use of the Lithuanian *tikriausiai* ('most probably') is also blocked when the speaker is hypothetically assessing the chances of the event to take place. Compare the following English and Lithuanian examples in contrast:

(8)

English	Lithuanian
*Probably/Presumably they'll be at the reception this evening, on the other hand, probably/presumably they won't. (Hoye 1997: 194)	*****Tikriausiai** užbėgsiu paplepėti šįvakar, o **tikriausiai** ne.* ('Most probably I'll drop in for a chat tonight, and most probably not')
Possibly/Conceivably they'll be at the reception this evening, on the other hand, possibly/conceivably they won't. (Hoye 1997: 194)	***Gal** užbėgsiu paplepėti šįvakar, o **gal** ir ne.* ('Maybe I'll drop in for a chat tonight, and maybe no')

Results of the contrastive analyses carried out using data from translation corpora (Aijmer 1997, 1999, Løken 1997, Johansson 2001) demonstrate that in a cross-linguistic perspective the percentage of 'congruent' (lexical) correspondence in expressions of epistemic modality is not very high. An assumption can be made that the proportion of lexical correspondence can be very low when dealing with realizations of grammatical categories cross-linguistically.

Method and the Data

Corpus-driven contrastive methodology used in the given investigation of degrees of confidence expressed by modal words and particles in Lithuanian as opposed to modal expressions seems to be a most efficient and reliable tool capable of diagnosing language-specific variation in conceptualization of the notion of probability and allowing to reveal its varied linguistic realisations.

The present pilot study is based on a bidirectional corpus which has been compiled from three sources; all of the texts are fiction. Two translations are from English into Lithuanian and one translation is from Lithuanian into English. As there are only three translators and a very small variety of texts, use has been also made of monolingual corpora (BNC, BoE and CCLL). In the light of the above limitations, no general conclusions can be drawn, however a few tendencies can be observed and several hypotheses can be made.

The total size of the corpus is about 430, 690 words. The size of the English-Lithuanian Parallel sub-corpus compiled from the online Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian Language (referred to as E-LT$_{CCLL}$) is about 95, 500 words and contains about 1, 440 occurrences of various modal expressions. The other two texts and their translations into Lithuanian and English were aligned by me. The E-LT$_{Potter}$ parallel corpus contains about 132, 400 words and the size of LT-E$_{FoG}$ parallel corpus is approximately 209, 790 words. The search in the online corpus was automatic however all the analysis was carried out manually because the corpus is not annotated (including the E-LT$_{CCLL}$ sub-corpus compiled from the online parallel corpus).

Findings and Discussion

The first observation to be made is very general and it concerns the overall raw frequency of modal auxiliaries and adverbs in the English original texts and translations into English as compared to the number of occurrences of modal verbs, words and particles in Lithuanian original and translations. The numbers speak for themselves. The total number of modal verbs in the English texts is nearly twice as that in the Lithuanian texts while the number of English modal adverbs is nearly three times lower than that of Lithuanian modal words and particles as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overall raw frequency of occurrences of modal expressions in the parallel corpora compared

	E-LT$_{Potter}$ Original E	E-LT$_{CCLL}$ Original E	LT-E$_{FoG}$ Transl. E	E-LT$_{Potter}$ Transl. LT	E-LT$_{CCLL}$ Transl. LT	LT-E$_{FoG}$ Original LT	TotalE	TotalLT
Modal verbs	890	825	1461	462	584	674	3176 *(1.85*	1720 *1)*
Modal adv.,words prt.	80	135	131	332	274	330	**346** *(1*	**936** *2.71)*

The ratio between the English and Lithuanian modal verbs is 1.85 : 1 and the ratio between the English modal adverbs and Lithuanian modal words and particles is 1 : 2.71, which indicates that eventually the quantitative difference is resolved and linguistically the situation becomes balanced.

Thus the adverb-auxiliary strategy that speakers of both languages have at their disposal is not used with the same frequency. One of the basic reasons that can explain this 'adverb vs. auxiliary' phenomenon is a much higher degree of grammaticalization of the English modal auxiliaries. This fact is stressed by all the scholars when analysing the findings of the contrastive analyses carried out using data from parallel corpora (Aijmer 1997, 1999, Løken 1997, Johansson 2001, van der Auwera, Schalley, Nuyts 2005).

The most frequent English adverb in the three corpora is *perhaps* and the most frequent Lithuanian particle is *gal* ('perhaps/maybe'). The mean raw frequency of the four most common English and Lithuanian adverbs/words and particles is as follows:

(9) E: *perhaps* 40   LT: *gal* ('perhaps/maybe') 92
          maybe 19   *matyt* ('evidently') 33
          probably 15   *tikriausiai* ('most probably') 29
          apparently 8   *turbūt* ('probably') 12

Consequently, one can assume that English epistemic modal auxiliaries *may* and *must* that represent two extreme points on the axis of probability might have Lithuanian modal particles as their equivalents. The analysis of the concordance of the English auxiliary *might* and its Lithuanian correspondences in E-LT$_{CCLL}$ shows that the percentage of modal words/particles in the Lithuanian translation is 43%, that of the modal verb *galėti* ('can/may') is (40%) and zero correspondence is 17%. The frequency of the main correspondence types and their realizations is given in Table 2. It should be noted that alongside the expressions denoting low-degree probability, there are quite a few cases of high-degree probability expressions, which seems to be rather unexpected for the meaning of the English auxiliary *might*. As there does not seem to be any studies indicating that the meaning of *might* shifts towards epistemic necessity, an assumption can be made that it is the meaning of the Lithuanian adverb *tikriausiai* ('most probably') and the modal word *matyt* ('evidently') that might vary from high or medium to low probability.

Table 2. Main correspondence types for the English auxiliary MIGHT (E-LT$_{CCLL}$)

Type	%	Realizations
Verb	40%	Lexical verb *galėti* ('can/may'), modal verb *turėti* ('have to'), verb *atrodyti* ('seem');
Particles, adverbs, words	43%	**LOW**: *gal* ('perhaps/maybe'), *galbūt* ('maybe'); *galima* ('possible'), *panašu* ('likely'); *lyg* ('as if'), *kokias* ('some'), *maždaug* ('approximately'); **HIGH/MEDIUM**: *tikriausiai* ('most probably'); *matyt* ('evidently');
ØLT	17%	

A few examples to illustrate the above mentioned observations are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of translation correspondences of the epistemic MIGHT in E-LT$_{CCLL}$

Original (E)		Translation (LT)
\<s>O'Brien was looking down at him with an expression which suggested that the same thought **might be** in his own mind.\</s>	ATRODYTI, kad ('seem that S')	\<s>O'Brajenas žiūrėjo į jį iš viršaus su tokia išraiška, jog atrodė, kad ir jam atėjo ta pati mintis.\</s>
\<s>In some cases they **might not even be** dead.\</s>	ØLT	\<s>Kartais jie net būdavo paliekami gyvi.\</s>
\<s>It **might** take years.\</s>	GAL ('perhaps')	\<s>**Gal** tam reikės nemažai metų.\</s>
\<p>\<s>"It **might be** a long time," said O'Brien.\</s>	TIKRIAUSIAI ('most probably')	\<p>\<s>-- **Tikriausiai** dar negreit, -- tarė O'Brajenas.\</s>
\ \<s>In Oldspeak (or standard English) this **might be** rendered:\</s>\	MAŽDAUG ('approximately')	\ \<s>Senkalbe (normalia anglų kalba) tai skambėtų **maždaug** taip:\</s>\

Another quantitative feature that is worthwhile special attention is zero correspondence. The absence of any means of expression on the level of the aligned sentences might have three explanations. The element of likelihood might be utterly lost, it might be sometimes partially/fully conveyed by some other linguistic means (lexical of syntactic) in the context or the situation described is differently conceptualized in Lithuanian. In this respect, a bi-directional search of correspondences in a parallel corpus gives plenty of evidence in a form of zero correspondence. A distinction can be made between zero correspondence in a target language and zero correspondence in a source language. The latter one can be called insertion. Consider the following examples from the E-LT$_{CCLL}$:

(10)   *I thought*   **ØE**   *I had taken a wrong direction and lost my way.*
Aš pagalvojau, *jog* **turbūt** *pasukau   ne ta   linkme   ir   paklydau*.
(Lit. 'I thought that **probably** (I) turned not that direction and lost my way')

ØE   *'Ave to teach you the A, B, C next.*
Gal   *dar ir abėcėlės turėsiu tave mokyti?*

Thus insertion (or cases of zero correspondence in a source language) of modal particles and words in Lithuanian seem to compensate cases of zero correspondence of English modal auxiliaries in Lithuanian (E *might* → ØLT: 17%; E *must* → ØLT: 12%). The given phenomenon of insertion is directly related to 'overuse' which is used to refer to a mismatch of an element's frequency in the target texts as compared to the source texts (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2002-2003: 16).The analysis of the most frequent Lithuanian modal particle *gal* ('perhaps/maybe') demonstrates that its most congruent correspondence is the English modal adverb *perhaps* (45%) in the concordance of *gal* in E-LT$_{CCLL}$. The most common correspondence of the English low probability adverb *perhaps* is *gal* (72%). The most surprising finding relevant to the issue of gradability is the occurrence of the high probability adverb *tikriausiai* ('most probably') and the modal word *matyt* ('evidently') as correspondences for *perhaps*. The two of them take about 10% of all the correspondences of *perhaps*, which suggests that the distinction between low and high degree of confidence might be blurred in Lithuanian.

The analysis of the Lithuanian adverb *tikriausiai* ('most probably') seems to offer more proof to support the given hypothesis. Table 4 gives the data of the overall raw frequency of all its English correspondences as classified in terms of gradability of probability.

Table 4. TIKRIAUSIAI ('most probably') in E-LT$_{CCLL}$: classification of types of correspondences, their raw frequency and percentage in relation to the total number of occurrences

OPINION verbs (parenthetical use) 17 (16%) OTHER 3 (~3%)	LOW degree probability 13 (12%)	MEDIUM to HIGH degree probability(adverbs)32 (31%)	HIGH degree probability (verbs) 28 (27%)	CERTAINTY 11 (10%)
I dare say 5 *I should say* 1 *I suppose* 4 *I believe* 3 *I expect* 2 *I think* 2 OTHER: *a sort of* 1 *besides* 1 *seem* 1	*perhaps* 7 *may/might* 4 *can* 1 *possibly* 1	*probably* 24 *in all probability/likelihood* 2 *presumably* 2 *very likely* 2 *evidently* 1 *obviously* 1	*must have/be* 19 *shall* 4 *will* 5	*sure/surely* 6 *no doubt* 1 *certainly* 1 *in all certainty* 1 *actually* 1 *absolutely* 1

As can be seen from the table, there two basic types of correspondences of *tikriausiai* ('most probably') in English. The most common type in the source text s adverbs the total number of which makes up 46% of all the correspondences and that of the auxiliary verbs makes up 32% of all the correspondences. The most common adverb found in the translation of the Lithuanian *tikriausiai* ('most probably') is *probably* (23%) and the most common auxiliary is *must* (18%). Opinion verbs used parenthetically (16%) are more common than certainty expressions (10%). Thus, the Lithuanian adverb *tikriausiai* ('most probably') can cover the whole spectrum of epistemic qualification: from certainty to low degree probability and propositional attitude. Hypothetically, the given range of change of meaning might be seen as parallel to Aijmer's (1998) observations on the semantics of the epistemic phrase *I think* which can be used to express an epistemic qualification of speaker's belief, uncertainty, and subjective or reported evaluation.

The analysis of the correspondences of *matyt* ('evidently') shows that the semantic structure of this modal word preserves the element of inference which is a crucial factor in the extension of meaning of this verb from direct visual perception to mental perception and then further to an evidential (Usoniene 2003). In his paper on lexical markers of evidentiality in Lithuanian, Wiemer (forth. 2007) regards *matyt* ('evidently') as an inferential marker. The corpora data collected offer evidence that support the inferential nature of *matyt* ('evidently'), however self-inference, as an unreliable source of information, triggers the meaning of uncertainty. Consider the following examples which illustrate that in E-LT$_{CCLL}$, 25% of the Lithuanian correspondences for the epistemic *must have* is *matyt* ('evidently') and in LT-E$_{FoG}$ and E-LT$_{CCLL}$, the English adverbs *obviously, evidently, apparently* make up 48% of correspondences of *matyt*:

(11)

LT-E$_{FoG}$		
Tačiau jis į mane nekreipė jokio dėmesio, **matyt**, buvo įsitikinęs, kad aš vis tiek nusprogsiu.	***matyt → apparently***(Adv. 41%)	But he paid no attention to me, **apparently** convinced I would croak anyway.
E-LT$_{CCLL}$		
\<s\>Saulė, **matyt**, jau buvo nusileidusi už namų -- į kiemą ji nebešvietė.\</s\>	***must have → matyt***(25%)	\<s\>The sun **must have** gone down behind the houses; it was not shining into the yard any longer.\</s\>

Concluding remarks

The pilot study was devoted to the corpus-driven contrastive analysis of a few most common Lithuanian modal words and particles expressing a degree of confidence as compared to their English correspondences. The analysis carried out should be regarded as diagnostic for it is rather restricted both quantitatively and qualitatively. Though rather 'mechanical' and not very consistent, the given contrast has revealed a few features that seem to be crucial in the binary opposition of Lithuanian and English.

First, it is a very obvious that the translational paradigm indicates language-specific differences in the process of grammaticalization and the study results on the frequency of the use of the auxiliary-adverb strategy in English and Lithuanian are in line with a suggestion made by van der Auwera, Schalley, Nuyts (2005: 202) that English auxiliaries are much more strongly grammaticalized than those of Slavonic, which might be an areal feature. The ratio between the overall bidirectional raw frequency of English and Lithuanian adverbs/words and modal verbs is approximately 1:2. The so-called 'overuse' of modal words in Lithuanian predicts and explains their higher frequency in learner English and, naturally, 'underuse' of epistemic auxiliary verbs.

Second, the preliminary results obtained by contrasting Lithuanian – English epistemic modal correspondences in parallel support the viewpoint that the meaning of modal adverbs and words is

very much context-dependent and they have to be analysed both in terms of modality and of discourse, as is claimed by Aijmer (2001). The Lithuanian adverb *tikriausiai* ('most probably') might have a similar path of its change of meaning as the English adverb *surely*, namely 'the unidirectional development from the literal meaning of certainty to emphasis or to a degree of uncertainty' (Aijmer (2001). The study has shown that there might be a less clear distinction between different degrees of confidence as expressed by the speaker using modal words and particles in Lithuanian. There are actually no studies on the grammmaticalization and pragmaticalization of the Lithuanian words and particles under analysis and these issues need further research.

Third, a relatively significant proportion of zero correspondence has been observed by many linguists, for instance the percentage of zero correspondences of *seem* in the Norwegian text is about 16% (Johansson 2001: 238), that of Swedish *visst* ('seems'/'of course') in English is about 16.9% (Aijmer 1996: 411) and that of Swedish *väl* ('probably'/'perhaps') is 38% (Aijmer 1996: 415). Alongside the processes of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization, weakening of meaning, this might be also indicative of culture specific conceptualization of probability, which is hypothetical and needs further research.

Data sources

BNC – *The British National Corpus* (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/)
BoE – *The Bank of English corpus* (the Collins Wordbanks*Online* English corpus: http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/)
CCLL – Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (http://donelaitis.vdu.lt) (Last access: 28.08.2006)
MLD – Modern Lithuanian Dictionary (Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos žodynas: http://www.autoinfa.lt/webdic/)
E-LT$_{CCLL}$ – the Parallel Corpus of CCLL, 2005-2006. (http://donelaitis.vdu.lt)
E-LT$_{Potter}$ – Rowling, J. K. 2000. *Haris Poteris ir išminties akmuo* (tr. by Zita Marienė). Vilnius, Alma Litera. (Orig. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*).
LKŽe – Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language (Lietuvių kalbos žodynas: http://www.lkz.lt/startas.htm)
LT-E$_{FoG}$ – Sruoga, B. 2005. *Dievų miškas* (*Forest of the Gods*/ tr. by Aušrinė Byla). Vilnius, Versus aureus Publishers.

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[1] Morphologically these adverbs are the superlative degree forms of the corresponding base forms *tikrai* ('sure'), *greitai* ('quickly/soon')*, veikiai* ('quickly/soon').
[2] The Lithuanian word GAL can function both as an interrogative particle and as an epistemic possibility word. It is not infrequent that in certain contexts it can be ambiguous and it can pose a problem to make a distinction between a question proper and a modalized utterance to convey speaker's attitude towards what is being said. The information conveyed can range from probability to an imperative command, e.g.:
Gal jau eisiu. ('Perhaps I'll go')

Gal ateisi? ('Will you come')
Gal užsičiauptum! ('Shut up')
[3] I will not deal with the part-of-speech status of these words and the question why some of them are regarded as particles (*dll.*), modal words or parentheticals (*įterpt.*).

Aurelija Usonienė

Vilniaus universitetas

Anglų filologijos katedra
Universiteto g. 5,
LT–01513 Vilnius
[*aurelia@usonis.lt*]