

Abstract

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to describe the Czech construction “*nepotřebovat* + infinitive” (‘not need to / needn’t + infinitive’), its use and its relation to the Czech system of modality. One of the questions this thesis will answer is whether the construction contains a new modal verb or a form of an already existing verb *potřebovat* ‘to need’. The theoretical part of the paper focuses on modality, modal verbs in Czech, German and Polish, grammaticalization, language contact and language purism. The researched construction together with the construction “*potřebovat* + infinitive” is then characterized from all the above-mentioned standpoints. In the practical part, an empirical research based on the data extracted from Czech dictionaries, lexical database of modern Czech and diachronic and synchronic corpora is presented. The results of the research show that in the 19th century, the construction containing *nepotřebovat* was used more frequently than the one with *potřebovat*, which indicates an ongoing process of grammaticalization. On the contrary, in the 20th and 21st century, the construction with *nepotřebovat* is the less frequented one. However, the frequency of both constructions is growing in the synchronic corpora. Both constructions have very similar morphosyntactic properties which partially correspond with properties typical for modal verbs. Theoretical as well as empirical findings support the claim that both constructions contain forms of one verb, and therefore a new Czech modal verb has not evolved.

Keywords

modality, deontic modality, necessity, construction, grammaticalization, German-Czech language contact, language purism, language corpus, language development