

This diploma thesis analyses ways of expressing Epistemic Possibility in modern English: modal verbs may, might, can and could. The expression of Epistemic Possibility is examined separately in four registers: British and American fiction and non-fiction. In Part One, an extensive theoretical background is provided. Part Two is based on a corpus of examples representing contemporary British and American fiction and non-fiction. Devices of expressing Epistemic Possibility are analysed according to their occurrence in positive statements, questions and negative statements. Special attention has been paid to Syntactic Co-occurrence Patterns associated with Epistemic Possibility. Results are summarized in conclusion and statistical data and tables are provided in Part Four. Nevertheless, this thesis is focused only on written English.