

Abstract

This diploma thesis aims to contribute to the proposed project concerning the update of the multi-media application *EMSA* (*Elektronická mluvnice současné angličtiny*, The electronic grammar of contemporary English). This project is based on the text of *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* [Grammar of contemporary English against the background of Czech] by Professor PhDr. Libuše Dušková, DrSc. et al., which was digitalized and can be accessed at the website www.mluvniceanglictiny.cz. In the future, this application aims to contain supplementary texts, relevant bibliographic information, exercises, authentic examples acquired from electronic corpora, etc.

The particular task of this diploma thesis is the critical revision of chapter 8.4 *Modal verbs*. The first step was the survey of relevant literature and identification of parts which are not explicitly covered by Dušková's original text. These findings are presented in the theoretical part of the thesis (chapter 1.); they are concerned mainly with theoretical definitions (e.g. the delimitation of central and marginal modals or kinds of modality) and information concerning the distribution and recent developments of modal verbs. The second main step was to compile these findings into texts which would be suitable for the use in the project *EMSA*. This aim is fulfilled in the practical part of the thesis (chapter 3.), which contains short texts designed for a direct supplementation of concrete sections of chapter 8.4 in *EMSA* (3.1) and, further, four separate studies which cover the following topics: strength of modality (3.2), frequency and register distribution of modal verbs (3.3), new tendencies in the development of modal verbs (3.4) and epistemic *have to* (3.5). With respect to the purpose of this work, these texts are written in Czech; the content of the texts was designed to suit the needs of the users of *EMSA*. Another contribution to the project is an exercise on modal verbs with epistemic function (included section 3.2).