

## **ABSTRACT**

This diploma thesis deals with the crucial impact of the neutral vowel schwa on creating prominence contrasts in English pronunciation teaching, i.e. a schwa-centred approach. The theoretical part focuses on the complex description of the target sound with regard to the suprasegmental level, including Czech speakers' difficulties to recognise and pronounce this vowel and prominence patterns it participates in. Furthermore, it defines the essence of the schwa-centred approach. The practical part presents the implementation of the schwa-centred approach in teaching practice in the form of a set of activities aimed at perception, production and raising students' awareness of this phenomenon. The effectiveness of the activities is evaluated by means of the analysis of audio recordings made before and after the teaching and assessment of students' questionnaires. The thesis also contains all worksheets with task descriptions applying the schwa-centred approach.

## **KEY WORDS**

schwa, full vowel, prominence contrasts, perception, production, raising awareness