Abstract

The dissertation surveys the use of expressions of futurality in professional economic texts (the linguistic part). In addition, it investigates didactic aspects of futurality in the process of English as a second language acquisition, focusing on undergraduates in the study programme B 6208 – Economy and Management (the didactic part). The topic was chosen on the basis of the author’s empirical experience and the results of pre-tests in the target group. The research is based on a corpus-based linguistic study. Seven representative monographs written by native speakers were selected as a source of relevant information about the use of futural constructions in a written economic text. All the sources were explored by means of corpus query software and instances of selected futural constructions (will, shall, be going to, be about to, be on the point of, be (due) to and the present tense) were excerpted. Functions of the futural constructions were elaborated on the basis of the numerous excerpts and confronted with English for specific (economic) purpose textbooks that are used widely at Czech economic universities. To prove or disprove their mutual interdependence, the correlation of general language and specific language proficiencies of undergraduates from two universities was measured. Subsequently, the efficiency of implicit and explicit instruction was measured as an added value by means of a paired t-test. The corpus data indicate that certain futural expressions dominate written native economic texts considerably (will, shall and the present simple tense) while other expressions (be going to, be (due) to, be about to) are underused. Some futural constructions cannot be detected at all (the present progressive tense, be on the point of). Authors of textbooks tend to ignore the various functions of futural expressions in a written economic text. They exemplify the use by means of instances neutral with respect to the frequency, formality level and mode (written or spoken). The research reveals no correlation between the undergraduates’ general language and specific language proficiencies. Explicit instruction results in a higher added value in specific language proficiency, in terms of futurality, than implicit instruction. The stylistic and pragmatic specificity of the economic discourse and a large number of intralanguage and interlanguage interferences prove that futurality is a demanding phenomenon from the didactic point of view. Undergraduates appear to need explicit information about the use of futural structures in a specific context. It can thus be concluded that grammar instruction is an indispensable component of the pre-graduate language education.