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Code-switching of standard and colloquial Czech as a didactics problem

Summary

This dissertation examines the process of code-switching between so called standard and colloquial Czech in the process of education, especially in the language used by teachers in the classroom. Discussion about increasing use of colloquial Czech in broader situations and functions (based on previous research) among linguists is still present in various linguistic journals as it appears to be one of the central sociolinguistic problems of the Czech language. The main problems discussed in this dissertation are to what extent is the code-switching present in the teachers' speech in the classroom, what functions does it have in this specific area of communication and what (if any) are the features of code-switching to be considered for further teaching of Czech.

In the theoretical part, different functional aspects of, and linguistic points of view on this phenomenon in Czech language are analysed with regard to its impact on the education of contemporary Czech in secondary schools. The author also analyses the requirements on teachers' use of language set by curricular documents and relevant linguistic papers, according to which there appears to be less emphasis at present on the use of standard Czech in classrooms, with the quality of speech (both teacher's and student's) considered mainly in terms of its coherence, logic and the clarity of ideas presented. Further analysis of Czech textbooks used currently in secondary schools is also provided and the main focus is set on how these textbooks present this diglotic problem to students and whether the problem is presented in conformity with the current linguistic recognition of the code-switching process.

The quantitative and qualitative research is based on recordings of various lessons from Prague and the region of central Bohemia, where colloquial Czech functions as a major code of communication. The results present the statistics on the use of the main phonological and morphological alternatives between standard and colloquial Czech as well as the main functions (speech acts) in which the alterations of colloquial Czech are used by teachers rather than the ones of standard Czech.

The Czech used by teachers (teachers of Czech and other subjects too) in classrooms is diverse and both main varieties of Czech are used with specific functional purposes assigned to them. It is clear that the process of education in the specified geographical area is no longer a domain of standard Czech only – colloquial Czech in the classroom plays an important role that can be ignored neither by linguists nor by authors of textbooks and other didactic materials.