Abstract

The focus of dissertation belongs to the field of learning Czech as a foreign language and deals with the acquisition of pragmatic competence of non-native speakers. Whereas this is a broad area, the work concentrates on speech act request. The aim is to describe how two students of Czech acquired the speech act during a one-year intensive course.

The theoretical background is given in Chapter I. The term Interlanguage Pragmatics is introduced to Czech readers. The Chapter further maps what the pragmatic research of non-native speakers generally deals with and what questions it asks. Attention is paid to possible methods for collecting data for research of pragmatic competence, what kinds of errors non-native speakers usually make, what environment is suitable for the acquisition of pragmatic competence or how individual differences among students affects pragmatic competence.

In the second chapter attention is paid to speech act request. We present an overview of major longitudinal studies. On the bass of this longitudinal research it was found that students of English go through five stages of development when acquiring request. The stages are presented here in detail.

In the research part of the dissertation the investigation of how two non-native speakers (a student from Taiwan and a student from Japan) acquired speech act request is described. The material was collected over two semesters and the research concentrates on the grammatical and lexical means. Language material was obtained in various ways, mainly through role-plays and authentic linguistic expressions. Collection of data in different ways allowed us to obtain more linguistic material and has enhanced conclusiveness of the data.

At the beginning, students used the same strategies, however overtime differences between them began to emerge. The results are generalized, and based on the analysis of linguistic material five development phases are defined. The phases are described in detail. After that, these phases are compared with the development stages of students learning English. The comparison shows the similarities and differences in learning both languages. In case of differences, the explanation is given.

Description of similarities and differences helps us to better understand how the acquisition not only of Czech, but foreign languages in general works.