

## Non-native use of a verb *JÍT/GO* in Czech: a corpus study

The work deals with the use of a verb *JÍT/go* by non-native speakers of Czech.

### Background.

The verb *JÍT/go* belongs to the central vocabulary of Czech. It is one of the most frequent verbs and, at the same time, it is one of the verbs with a high polysemy. According to *Frekvenční slovník češtiny*<sup>1</sup>, the verb *JÍT/go* is on the 65th place among the most frequent Czech appellatives. *Statistiky češtiny*<sup>2</sup> states that the verb *JÍT/go* occurs among the fifth most frequent verbs in Czech (according to the absolute frequency of occurrence). The verb *JÍT/go* belongs to the semantically richest words, *Slovník spisovné češtiny*<sup>3</sup> distinguishes 16 meanings of this verb which exceeds the most frequently used verb *MÍT/have* which has 14 semantically separate meanings<sup>4</sup>.

**Methodology.** The study is based on a learner corpus of Czech as a foreign language MERLIN (Multilingual Platform for the European Reference Levels: Interlanguage Exploration in Context)<sup>5</sup> and the corpus CzeSL-SGT (Czech as a Second Language)<sup>6</sup>. The corpus Merlin contains 442 texts (64,490 words) in Czech written by non-native speakers. The texts were elicited during certified exams. The corpus CzeSL contains 12 388 texts (960,000 words). Both corpora are tagged with the linguistic and error annotation; the error annotation works with two target hypothesis. From these texts, 5,785 occurrences of use of the verb *JÍT/go* were selected and analysed for (i) valency patters; (ii) tense; (iii) mood; (iv) negation; (v) presence of a prefix; (vi) presence of a perfectivizing prefix; (vii) collocation; (viii) lexical use. The analyses include the error analyses including the aspects of non-nativeness in grammatically correct sentences.

### Aim of the study.

In the range of vocabulary and grammatical system of Czech, which are learned by non-native speakers of Czech, this verb belongs to those which must be closely observed<sup>7</sup>. First, because of its valency<sup>8</sup> with the genitive (*jít do školy/go to school*) and accusative cases (*jít na školu/start studying*) that interferes with the inappropriate connection with the locative case (*\*jít v školu*); second, because of its connectivity with some types of subjects (i.e. *hodiny jdou/watch goes; měsíce jdou/months go*) which is one of the significant areas of negative mother tongue transfer and, last but not least, due to the large amount of collocations and phrases that this verb creates (i.e. *jde to/that's it*). The aim of the paper is to introduce an analysis of the use of the verb *GO/jít* by non-native speakers of Czech. On the basis of quantitative and qualitative analysis based on data drawn from the Merlin and CzeSL corpus, we will point out the specifics of using this important verb in written communications, not only with regard to the error analysis, but also with the regard to the overall image of grammatical and semantic use of this verb by non-native speakers in Czech. The resulting analysis should contribute to a methodical description of the teaching of the verb to go within the grammar and lexical system of Czech for foreigners.

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<sup>1</sup> Čermák, Křen a kol., 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Bartoň a kol., 2009, s. 182.

<sup>3</sup> SSČ, 2000, s. 123.

<sup>4</sup> SSČ, 2000, s. 40.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.merlin-platform.eu>

<sup>6</sup> <http://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/cnk:czesl-plain>

<sup>7</sup> Fryščák, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Svozilová, 1997.

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