

Abstract

The BA thesis focuses on the variation between the two conjunctions *if* and *whether* in subordinate closed interrogatives. Since the two subordinators are from the semantical point of view regarded as interchangeable, they represent competing variants between which the speaker can freely choose. It is believed that speakers' preference for either one or the other variant is determined by internal or external variables. The purpose of this study is to examine this phenomenon in order to provide further knowledge about the influence of variables determining speakers' choice between the two options.

The study is corpus-based; the research part is devoted to examination of 200 examples of closed dependent interrogatives introduced by the conjunction *if* or *whether*, excerpted from the spoken version of British National Corpus 2014. The collected data are examined from the point of view of a single variable, starting with the internal factors proceeding to the external. The analysis initially focuses on the examination of governing verbs and sentence type. Then, it is investigated whether the character of the subordinate clause plays an influential role; the examination is devoted to the syntactic function realised by the clause, to finite or non-finite, as well as alternative or non-alternative character. The external factors include gender, age and region. The statistical significance of the influence of the individual variables is verified either by means of logistic regression or Chi2 tests.

Keywords: closed dependent interrogatives, conjunctions *whether* and *if*, competing variants, internal linguistic variables, external linguistic variables