

# Contents

1. Introduction.....	19
1.1 Aim and scope.....	19
1.2 Expressions of future dealt with in the present study.....	20
1.3 Identifying the expressions of future.....	22
1.4 Corpora examined.....	24
1.5 Tools and methods.....	25
1.6 Plan of the thesis.....	26
2. Previous research on expressions of future in English.....	28
2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2 Is there a future tense in English?.....	29
2.3 By what linguistic means is futurity expressed in English?.....	30
2.4 How have the expressions of future and their use developed over time?.....	32
2.5 What is the meaning of the expressions of future used in English?.....	33
2.5.1 Tense symbolisation: Reichenbach and Close.....	33
2.5.2 Speaker's perspective.....	35
2.5.3 Distance in time/relation to present time.....	35
2.5.4 <i>Will</i> vs. <i>going to</i> : "elliptical" uses.....	37
2.6 Concluding remarks.....	38
3. Corpus linguistics as an analytical framework.....	40
3.1 Introduction.....	40
3.2 Corpus.....	41
3.2.1 'Corpus' definitions.....	41
3.2.2 Annotation, markup, encoding.....	42
3.2.3 Specific issues related to the use of spoken data.....	49
3.2.4 Summary: corpus.....	54
3.3 Language use.....	54
3.4 Choice of texts.....	55
3.4.1 Corpora used.....	56
3.4.2 Corpus comparability.....	63
3.5 Methods of data retrieval and analysis.....	64
3.5.1 Data retrieval.....	65
3.5.2 Tools used.....	66
3.5.3 Analysis.....	68
3.5.4 Identifying systematic variation.....	70

3.6 Summary .....	72
4. Medium .....	73
4.1 Introduction .....	73
4.2 Overall frequencies and proportions .....	74
4.3 Quoted context in writing .....	76
4.3.1 Subset 1: Text categories A and K in LOB and FLOB .....	77
4.3.2 Subset 2: <i>Going to</i> in four written corpora .....	79
4.3.3 Subset 3: <i>Gonna</i> and <i>going to</i> in the BNC .....	80
4.3.4 Conclusions regarding quoted/non-quoted contexts .....	83
4.4 Summary .....	84
5. Text category .....	85
5.1 Introduction .....	85
5.2 Written corpora .....	86
5.2.1 Overall frequency of expressions of future .....	86
5.2.2 Overall proportions of expressions of future .....	88
5.2.3 Comparison of hyper-categories .....	93
5.2.4 <i>Gonna</i> and <i>going to</i> across text categories in the BNC .....	98
5.2.5 Summary: variation in written corpora .....	100
5.3 Spoken corpora .....	101
5.3.1 Expressions of future in the CG and DS components .....	101
5.3.2 Summary: variation in spoken corpora .....	105
5.4 Summary .....	106
6. Speaker properties .....	108
6.1 Introduction .....	108
6.2 Speakers' sex .....	108
6.3 Speakers' age .....	110
6.4 Speakers' social class .....	113
6.5 Speakers' education .....	114
6.6 Multiple variables .....	117
6.7 Summary .....	118
7. Region .....	119
7.1 Introduction .....	119
7.2 Variation between British, American, and Indian English .....	120
7.2.1 <i>Will</i> .....	122
7.2.2 <i>'ll</i> .....	122
7.2.3 <i>Shall</i> .....	123
7.2.4 <i>Going to</i> .....	125
7.2.5 <i>Gonna</i> .....	126
7.3 Variation within national varieties of English .....	126
7.4 Summary .....	127

8. Time .....	129
8.1 Introduction .....	129
8.1.1 Press texts .....	130
8.1.2 LOB vs. FLOB.....	131
8.2 Concluding remarks .....	138
9. Linguistic association patterns .....	139
9.1 Introduction .....	139
9.2 Collocation with word-classes.....	140
9.2.1 Collocations with infinitives.....	141
9.2.2 Collocations with personal pronouns.....	150
9.2.3 Personal pronouns as subjects .....	151
9.2.4 Collocations with nouns .....	156
9.3 <i>Going to</i> and <i>gonna</i> .....	158
9.4 Summary .....	160
10. Summary and conclusions .....	163
10.1 Introduction .....	163
10.2 Association patterns .....	163
10.2.1 <i>Will</i> .....	163
10.2.2 <i>'ll</i> .....	164
10.2.3 <i>Shall</i> .....	165
10.2.4 <i>Going to</i> .....	165
10.2.5 <i>Gonna</i> .....	166
10.3 Analytical framework.....	167
10.3.1 Language use .....	167
10.3.2 Choice of text.....	167
10.3.3 Methods of data retrieval and analysis .....	168
10.4 Concluding remarks .....	170
11. References.....	172
12. Appendix A: Abstracts of Studies I–V .....	179
12.1 Study I.....	179
12.2 Study II.....	180
12.3 Study III.....	181
12.4 Study IV .....	182
12.5 Study V.....	184
13. Appendix B. Tables with raw frequencies .....	186

# List of tables and figures

## Tables

Table 1.1. Examples of expressions included or excluded in Studies I–V ...	24
Table 1.2. Corpora used .....	25
Table 1.3. Tools used .....	26
Table 2.1. Expressions of future treated by different authors .....	32
Table 3.1. Tagging accuracy evaluation. Samples of <i>going to</i> in the spoken part of the BNC .....	46
Table 3.2. Schematic over-view of corpus features .....	57
Table 3.3. Composition of the Brown corpus and its clones .....	59
Table 3.4. Composition of the LLC .....	60
Table 3.5. Composition of the BNC .....	61
Table 3.6. Composition of the BNC Sampler .....	62
Table 4.1. Quoted instances .....	77
Table 4.2. Quoted contexts of <i>going to</i> in the LOB, FLOB, Brown, and Kolhapur corpora.....	80
Table 4.3. <i>Gonna</i> and <i>going to</i> in the BNC (written part) .....	82
Table 5.1. Text categories in the Brown, LOB, FLOB and Kolhapur corpora .....	85
Table 5.2. Text categories in the BNC and Sampler corpora .....	86
Table 5.3. Expressions of future in the Brown corpus .....	89
Table 5.4. Expressions of future in the LOB corpus .....	89
Table 5.5. Expressions of future in the FLOB corpus .....	90
Table 5.6. Expressions of future in the Kolhapur corpus .....	90
Table 5.7. <i>Gonna</i> and <i>going to</i> in the written part of the BNC .....	98
Table 5.8. Expressions of future in CG domains .....	104
Table 6.1. Expressions of future. Distribution across speakers' sex .....	110
Table 6.2. Expressions of future. Distribution across speakers' age .....	111
Table 6.3. Expressions of future. Distribution across speakers' social class .....	113
Table 6.4. Data produced by informants still in education across age groups and social class categories in the spoken part of the BNC .....	115
Table 6.5. Data produced by informants who left school at 14 or younger across age groups and social class in the spoken BNC .....	116
Table 7.1. Proportions of the expressions of future and statistically signifi- cant differences between the corpora .....	121

Table 8.1. Proportions and total raw frequencies of expressions of future in the Press texts (genres A-C) of four corpora .....	131
Table 8.2. Proportions of expressions of future in LOB and FLOB .....	132
Table 9.1. Examples of collocation patterns .....	140
Table 9.2. Infinitives: ranking of verbs found among the 13 most frequent infinitival collocates with at least one expression of future in the spoken part of the BNC .....	143
Table 9.3. Proportions of <i>will</i> collocating with infinitival <i>be</i> in five corpora of British English .....	145

### **The following tables are given in Appendix B**

Table A.1. Expressions of future in the LOB corpus (genres, hyper-categories and total) .....	186
Table A.2. Expressions of future in the FLOB corpus (genres, hyper-categories and total) .....	187
Table A.3. Expressions of future in the Brown corpus (genres, hyper-categories and total) .....	188
Table A.4. Expressions of future in the Kolhapur corpus (genres, hyper-categories and total) .....	189
Table A.5. Expressions of future in the LLC .....	189
Table A.6. Expressions of future in the BNC .....	189
Table A.7. Expressions of future in the BNC Sampler .....	190
Table A.8. Expressions of future in monologue and dialogue texts in the spoken CG and DS components of the BNC .....	190
Table A.9. Expressions of future used by male and female speakers in the CG and DS components of the BNC .....	190
Table A.10. Expressions of future used speakers of different age groups in the CG component of the BNC .....	191
Table A.11. Expressions of future used by speakers of different social classes in the DS component of the BNC .....	191
Table A.12. Personal pronoun subjects used with FUT in LOB .....	191
Table A.13. Personal pronoun subjects used with FUT in FLOB .....	192
Table A.14. Personal pronoun subjects used with FUT in LLC .....	192
Table A.15. Personal pronoun subjects used with FUT in Sampler CG ....	192
Table A.16. Personal pronoun subjects used with FUT in Sampler DS ....	193
Table A.17. Infinitival collocates in the BNC, spoken part. ....	193
Table A.18. Infinitival collocates in Sampler CG .....	193
Table A.19. Most frequent infinitival verbs used with expressions of future .....	194

## **Figures**

Figure 3.1. Formula for calculating proportions .....	68
Figure 3.2. Association patterns .....	69

Figure 3.3. Formula used for identifying statistically significant differences between proportions .....	71
Figure 4.1. Expressions of future in the written LOB and FLOB corpora and the spoken LLC and BNC Sampler .....	74
Figure 5.1. Expressions of future: frequency per 2,000 words in genres and hyper-categories in four comparable corpora .....	87
Figure 5.2. Patterns of variation across corpora and hyper-categories. Proportions of the expressions of future in 15 genres .....	91
Figure 5.3. Distribution of expressions of future in the LOB corpus .....	93
Figure 5.4. Distribution of expressions of future in the FLOB corpus .....	94
Figure 5.5. Domain size (text) compared to proportions of <i>gonna</i> and <i>going to</i> in the written part of the BNC .....	99
Figure 5.6. Expressions of future in the Demographically Sampled and Context-governed components of the BNC Sampler .....	102
Figure 5.7. Proportions of expressions of future in dialogue and monologue texts in the two spoken components of the BNC Sampler .....	103
Figure 5.8. Expressions of future in CG domains (frequency per 2,000 words) .....	105
Figure 6.1. Expressions of future. Distribution (proportion) across male and female speakers in the Context-governed (CG) and Demographically Sampled (DS) components .....	109
Figure 6.2. Expressions of future in the CG component of the BNC. Proportions in different age groups .....	111
Figure 6.3. Expressions of future in the DS component of the BNC. Proportions in different age groups .....	112
Figure 6.4. Expressions of future in the DS component of the BNC. Proportions for different social classes .....	114
Figure 6.5. Speaker still in education. Proportions of words marked for speakers' age and social class .....	116
Figure 6.6. Speaker left school <14. Proportions of words marked for speakers' age and social class .....	117
Figure 7.1. Proportions of <i>will</i> in the LOB, Brown and Kolhapur corpora .....	122
Figure 7.2. Proportions of <i>'ll</i> in the LOB, Brown and Kolhapur corpora ..	123
Figure 7.3. Proportions of <i>shall</i> in the LOB, Brown and Kolhapur corpora .....	124
Figure 7.4. Proportions of <i>going to</i> in the LOB, Brown and Kolhapur corpora .....	125
Figure 8.1. Proportions of <i>will</i> in the 15 genres in the LOB and FLOB corpora .....	133
Figure 8.2. Proportions of <i>'ll</i> in the 15 genres in the LOB and FLOB corpora .....	134
Figure 8.3. Proportions of <i>shall</i> in the 15 genres in the LOB and FLOB corpora .....	136

Figure 8.4. Proportions of <i>going to</i> in the 15 genres in the LOB and FLOB corpora .....	137
Figure 9.1. Proportions of FUT followed by verbs in the infinitive in positions +1 and +2 (BNC Spoken part) .....	141
Figure 9.2. Most frequent infinitives collocating with FUT in the spoken part of the BNC .....	144
Figure 9.3. Expressions of future collocating with <i>be</i> , <i>have</i> and <i>do</i> in the CG component of the BNC Sampler .....	146
Figure 9.4. Word-class tags most frequently found following instances of FUT+ <i>be</i> in the spoken part of the BNC .....	147
Figure 9.5. Proportions of the expressions of future collocating with pronouns in positions -3 – +2 (spoken part of the BNC) .....	150
Figure 9.6. Proportions (%) of personal pronoun subjects in LOB, FLOB, LLC, Sampler CG and Sampler DS .....	152
Figure 9.7. Proportions of different personal pronouns used with the FUT in the FLOB corpus .....	154
Figure 9.8. Proportions of different personal pronouns used with the FUT in the Sampler DS corpus .....	155
Figure 9.9. Collocations noun+FUT in the spoken part of the BNC .....	157