

Lexical Linguistic Interference in Translations of Science-Fiction Literature from English into Czech

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Abstract

The article describes interference phenomena in the Czech translations of science-fiction literature written in English. The corpus of errors in translation was assembled from thirteen sci-fi novels. The uncovered discrepancies that signalled signs of interference were divided into five categories. These five categories of interference dealt with are all subcategories of lexical interference. First, surface lexical interference occurs in those cases where the lexical unit of the source language visually, i.e. orthographically, resembles a certain lexical unit of the target language, which is not its equivalent (at least not in the given case). Second, semantic interference is caused by an overlap of meanings between the source lexical unit and the target lexical units, which are only partial equivalents. Third, idiomatic interference revealed itself in the translations of idiomatic expressions, including idioms proper, which the translator either did not recognize or misinterpreted as a collocation. Fourth, interference in collocation partially resembles semantic interference, but it affects collocations rather than individual words. Sometimes the typological difference between the languages plays a key role here. The English language uses many more multi-word expressions than Czech, which is a synthetic language and tends to incorporate the individual meanings into one lexical unit. Finally, cultural interference occurs in those cases where the translator is unable to deal with the cultural difference between the source language culture and the target language culture. In most cases there is no direct equivalent in the target language.

Keywords: interference, lexical unit