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Interferencja językowa w nauce języka angielskiego przez polskich studentów. Analiza błędów leksykalnych i morfosyntaktycznych

(Language interference in learning English among Polish students. An analysis of lexical and morphosyntactic errors)

Summary of doctoral dissertation summary written under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Mariola Wierzbicka

The main aim of the dissertation is to analyse interference errors made by Polish students learning English, with particular emphasis on lexical and morphosyntactic errors. The inspiration for undertaking this research arose from the author's many years of experience as an academic teacher, during which recurring and predictable language errors made by students learning English were observed. The dissertation also aims to address the shortage of empirical studies concerning the interference of the Polish language in the process of learning English.

The dissertation consists of both theoretical and empirical parts and is divided into six chapters. Chapters One and Two are theoretical in nature. Chapter One presents the phenomenon of interlingual interference in the context of linguistic and SLA theories, taking the linguistic, psychological and sociolinguistic aspects into account. The chapter also discusses the most important concepts related to interlingual interference, such as contrastive analysis, error analysis, transitional competence, idiosyncratic dialect and the concept of interlanguage. Contemporary approaches to language interference and cross-linguistic influence are also presented.

Chapter Two presents selected definitions and classifications of language errors. It also discusses the classification of interlingual interference errors proposed by Jerzy Zybert (1999), which constitutes the basis for the empirical research. Furthermore, a review of the literature concerning studies on interference errors among Poles learning English is provided.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology as well as the research procedures and tools applied in the study. It also characterises the research group consisting of 173 first-year full-time students at the University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz. The chapter outlines the main aim of the study, namely the identification and classification of errors resulting from the interference of the Polish language in the process of learning English. In addition, the research hypotheses are presented, and the research material, consisting of samples of students' written production and data obtained from an original questionnaire survey, is characterised. The study employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, which allows both for obtaining a general overview of the phenomenon of interlingual interference and for gaining a deeper understanding of specific types of errors.

Chapter Four is devoted to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of interference errors identified in the research material. The first part of the chapter presents a quantitative analysis, which indicates that lexical and morphosyntactic interference errors constitute 56% of all errors found in the research material. The second part contains a qualitative analysis in which lexical and morphosyntactic interference errors are classified according to the typology proposed by Jerzy Zybert (1999) and modified by the author of the dissertation. Within each category, selected examples of errors are analysed together with a discussion of their potential sources.

The aim of Chapter Five is to analyse the relationship between factors declared by the respondents, such as the level of language competence, self-awareness of making errors and teachers' methods of error correction, and the number of interference errors identified in the research material. The obtained results make it possible to identify general tendencies related to the frequency of interference errors depending on the aforementioned factors.

Chapter Six outlines SLA-related implications concerning the phenomenon of Polish language interference in learning English, based on the results presented in the previous chapters. The chapter also discusses selected contemporary approaches to the role of the mother tongue in SLA, including the concepts of translanguaging, language mediation and brain-based approaches to language learning. Furthermore, proposals for future research concerning pragmatic and cultural aspects of interlingual interference are presented.

The dissertation also discusses the limitations of the conducted study and indicates directions for further empirical research concerning the pragmatic and cultural aspects of interference phenomena as well as comparative analyses of diversified research groups.

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