

The aim of this thesis is to discuss the notions of generalization and specification as universal trends in translation and potential candidates for the status of universals of translation. Methods used in empirical research are also discussed in some detail. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on generalization and specification in the context of Descriptive Translation Studies, Corpus-Based Translation Studies and the work of the translation scholar Jiří Levý. Chapter 2 further attempts to present a comprehensive picture of both potential universals by examining the notion of lexical meaning and the issue of synonymy in the context of lexicology and stylistics. Finally, it draws attention to typological (systemic) differences between Czech and English and the impact these differences have on shifts of lexical meaning in terms of generalization/specification and on the use of electronic corpora.

Chapter 3 outlines the three following stages of empirical research in terms of materials and methods. It presents a description of the three sets of corpora (a large monolingual comparable corpus, a parallel unidirectional English-Czech corpus, and a parallel corpus of one original and two translations), the choice of texts, reference corpora and corpus-processing software tools. Texts analysed in the three types of corpora are for the major part works of mainstream prose fiction.

Chapter 4 presents, one by one, the three stages of research. The first stage analyses three large comparable subcorpora as parts of a monolingual comparable corpus of some 21 million tokens in total. Drawing upon the Czech National Corpus, these subcorpora are designed according to the criteria of the Three-Phase Comparative Analysis by Jantunen, so as to highlight potential influence of source languages.