

Teachers' Perceptions toward Student's Problems in Adapting Medical Texts from English into Arabic Language

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore MA translation student's problems at Bahri University in rendering medical texts from teachers of translation prospective. It seeks to inquire the perceptions of translation teachers toward MA translation students output for medical texts. It follows quantitative descriptive method where a questionnaire is used to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to fifty teachers of translation from different universities. The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data. The study has shown that, understanding the structure of the medical terms can help to solve the problem of medical terms translation and unexperienced or untrained translators may find it difficult to translate medical terms or texts. Beside, curricula and techniques should be improved.

Keywords: Medical text, language of medicine, Equivalences, Affixations, Terminologies

INTRODUCTION:

Translation has played a vital role in communication between languages and cultures. Translation can be applied to all fields of language including medical translation. Translating medical text into different languages proved to be a difficult task. The language of

medical sciences is used in contexts wherever failures in communication or mistakes in expressing oneself could cause disastrous results. It is said that medicine is the king of all professions. Today, the lingua franca of medicine is English, as the most generally cited medical journals are in English. Practitioners have to be able to master this new lingua franca of medicine, not only to communicate with their patients or the other members of the medical staff, but also to improve professionally, to have access to the most recent discoveries. Medical terminologies are special language used by health care practitioners. Lee-Jahnke (2005:82) explains that terminology is one of the difficulties faced in medical translation. He emphasizes that steps need to be taken to familiarize translators with Greek and Latin terms, as these terminologies will help them to translate better, since some of the translators do not learn these two old languages. Now days, people who do not share the same native language are looking for medical translation as a medium of communication between patients and doctors. Today English has become lingua franca throughout the world. For that reason, many Arabic countries teach medicine in English language. The fact of studying medical terms in English language neglects the Arabic medical terminology. Because of that situation, there are many efforts done by the Arabic Academy to Arabize medical terms and to make Arabic the language of science and medicine.

Statement of the problem:

The area of medical translation is complex. It poses constant challenges of disseminating new knowledge and discoveries throughout cultural boundaries worldwide. Likewise, it is a field of knowledge in accelerated scientific development that each year includes a great number of new terms in medical texts. For instance, some of these obstacles include medical terminology, issues on equality, readability, equivalence of medical texts, and unique characteristics of the medical language. Due to, the need to quickly update knowledge increases This study attempts to explore the challenges problems of MA students at Bahri University (faculty of languages and translation) in rendering medical texts into Arabic from teacher's prospective.

Objectives of the study:

The purpose of this study is to achieve the followings:

- 1- To find out the possible ways that may help MA translation students to improve their translation of medical texts.
- 2- Making use of affixes as bridge to make medical texts translation simpler.

Questions of the study:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent are MA translation students familiar with affixation in medical terms?
- 2- How can MA translation be students approach and deal with medical translation problems?

Hypothesis:

- 1- MA translation students need to have more knowledge about affixation
- 2- MA translation students need to be more familiar with medical terms.

Methodology:

The study follows quantitative descriptive method; a questionnaire is used to collect data. Translation teachers were inquired about their students' problems when they translate medical texts. SPSS is used to analyze data collected. The aim of the questionnaire used in this paper was to find out about the teachers' views regarding teaching and learning of medical translation. It has been administrated to a total sample of 50 English language translation teachers at some Sudanese universities. It consisted of one part. The part contained 5 statements related to teachers' views about medical translation from English into Arabic

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Translation in medicine should be seamless. Without translation, patients would not be able to know their diagnosis, their prescriptions, fill up the prescriptions and take their prescribed medicine. They would not be able to come back for their succeeding medical appointments and

follow doctor's instructions to recover from whatever ails them. (cf. O'Neil 1998: 73) states that medical translation must be highly accurate because it involves lives and careers. It needs specialists who are knowledgeable in the special language of medicine and healthcare services. The terminology is incredibly specific, whether it concerns medicines, the health condition of the patient or the disease that distress them. The words used in this sector are specific and it takes an expert to understand these words that are not often used outside the sector.

Customers should ensure that they are working with translators who are subject matter experts. The medical translator should be highly proficient in different languages and should have the right medical experience with in the specific field as well as possess a deep knowledge of the sector's technical terminology. They have been able to offer documents that might be very useful to doctors and nurses in caring for their patients.

Problem of equivalence:

Translation has usually been viewed as the process of establishing equivalence between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Finding equivalents is the most problematic stage of translation, as equivalence (which means sameness or similarity) has been a key concept in translation studies. Achieving perfect equivalence in rendering ST properties into TT ones is not possible as each language has its own grammatical, lexical and textual systems that distinguish one from the other. A translator's failure to attain an appropriate equivalent translation will result in an incorrect translation which may be misleading in most fields but can have very serious consequences within the field of medicine. The common use of English language in science in general, and in medicine in particular, makes the use of other languages very limited. Translators sometimes find it difficult to cope with these structures in English, which might result in mistranslations. Furthermore, there are problems of ambiguity as many English terms are either new or so technical that untrained translators cannot understand the meanings in the SL.

Having different types of equivalence and different medical Arabic terms for the same foreign English medical term might seem inevitable due to different factors. Different bodies of translation that

work individually in the Arab world, and multiple codified lexical resources are considered among the major causes of the multiplicity of terms that is reflected in terminological inconsistency as a result of lack of standardization.

Krulj et al. (2011:170) emphasis that "It is well known that English is the leading language of medical sciences. Communication in English has been indispensable throughout the history of medicine". For example, the use of English in higher education in most Arab countries (except Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria) as the medium of instruction and communication is well documented. Yowel and Lataiwish (2000:152) affirm that "one of the misconceptions related to scientific translation, in general, and Arabic translation, in particular, is closely related to terminology".

Khashīm (2006), as an example, notes that although Arabic is the official language in all Arab countries, English is still used because it is the language of teaching in most Arab medical universities except Syria and some Arab countries in North Africa. Thus, English terminology is used academically and its use is crucial. Hence, there is an excellent demand for the study of scientific and technical translation from English into Arabic and vice versa. Such a demand is included in the national strategies of Arab academies so as to solve the problems of accessing scientific and technological information by the production of pamphlets and dictionaries.

Marchuk (1984) remarks that the increasing demand for technical and scientific translation arises from scientific and technical progress, the expansion of scientific, technical, commercial, cultural and different relations, and the desire of nations and governments to develop cooperation and to coordinate their efforts in promoting civilization. Medical translation is a branch of scientific and technical translation and it is a very important type of translation. Montalt (2011) emphasizes that medical translation is one of the most active types of professional translation.

The Problem of Non-equivalence:

As is self-evident, all languages are different, and this makes it hard to find appropriate equivalents for some words or concepts in the target languages. An Arabic translator sometimes faces the problem of finding lexical equivalents for English words, objects and events in Arabic.

Baker (2011: 23) states “non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalents for a word which occurs in the source text.”

Many English words and concepts have no equivalents in Arabic and vice versa. Medical translations ought to be localized. Localization addresses cultural components like healthful dosages (ounces versus grams or milliliters), acronyms like TBD (twice per day), as an example, most countries address their doctors and medical professionals in numerous ways that some cultures still have ancient drugs combined with trendy drugs. Faiq (2000: 1) states that “Culture refers to beliefs and value systems tacitly assumed to be collectively shared by particular social groups and to the positions taken by producers and receivers of texts, including translations, during the mediation process.” Within this framework, a language is intrinsically linked to its culture and translation can thus be used to describe and explain the world views of one people to another in addition to that (Alma'ni, 2000) claims that there are variations in time, personal area, and also the means within which procedures are scheduled and administered.

In several cultures, the means professionals are self-addressed is extremely necessary. To use the incorrect formality within the language would be terribly offensive, whether or not the content itself were correct.

Doublets, affixation and word compounding

Contrast medium, patient safety and heart failure are examples of compound nominal phrases that are commonly used in basics of medical English. When translating into other languages, these common phrases may have phrase changes or syntactic shifts. (Salager –Mayer 1983:61) confirms that it is also observed in specialized terminology, what is especially characteristic of specialized terminology is the use of Latin and Greek affixes. Prefixes and suffixes are also common, most of them derived from Greek or Latin, such as:

hypo - *insufficient*

hyper - *excessive*

The differences in these affixes in different languages cause variations in semantic distribution. Doublets can also be difficulty, as the translator has to carefully choose which term to use for specific

audiences. Most of them are derived from Latin and Greek. Some examples include:

spinal canal - *backbone*
frontal bone - *forehead*
oral cavity - *mouth*

Medical terms that may at first seem very complex can be divided into their component parts to give you a basic idea of their meaning for instance:

neuro- means *nerve*
-oma means *tumour*.

Collocations are quite common in English particularly in technical texts and specifically within the medical field. Collocations are two words or more that are grammatically coupled along as a results of their which meaning. According to Ghazalla (1995:108), “collocation is defined as a combination of two or more words that usually occur together consistently in different contexts in language.” The problem of translating collocations is that dictionaries don't usually facilitate find the meaning for them. But, in medical translation, it's not perpetually troublesome to search out a collocation in the target language that has the identical meaning because it supplies collocation. For instance, the English collocations:

- *Bird flu*
- *Acute leukemia*
- *Nerve cell*

They can be rendered into Arabic as:

انفلونزا الطيور • *inflwanza al-tuyur*
الابيضاضات الحادة • *al-abyadadat al-hadda*
خلية اعصاب • *khaliat aasaa*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

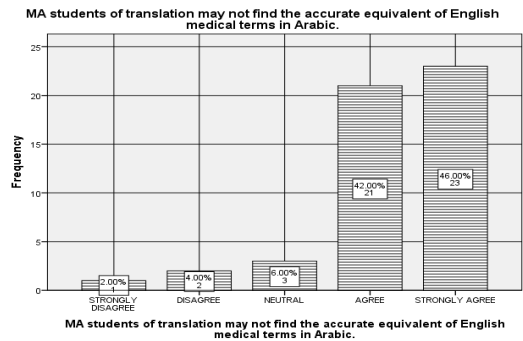
Statement		S.A.	A.	N.	D.	S.D.	M.	St.D.	R.
MA students of translation may not find the accurate equivalent of English medical terms in Arabic.	N %	23 41.1%	21 37.5	3 5.4	2 3.6	1 1.8	4.26	0.90	S.A.
Understanding the meaning and the structure of the elements of medical terms may	N	30	20				4.60	0.49	S.A.

help MA students of translation to solve the problems of translating medical terms which contain different parts of a word (e.g. hypertension.)	%	53.6	35.7						
Abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, polysemy pose serious translation problems	N %	20 35.7	22 39.3	5 8.9	3 5.4		4.18	0.85	A
Most of the medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek languages; therefore, it is difficult to use literal translation	N %	24 42.9	20 35.7	5 8.9	1 1.8		4.34	0.75	S.A
Understanding the meaning of affixes used with medical terms will help MA students of translation to tackle the problems of translating medical terms.	N %	25 44.6	22 39.3	2 3.6	1 1.8		4.42	0.67	S.A

Scale:
S.A. =Strongly Agree
A= Agree
N= Neutral
D. = Disagree
S.D. = Strongly Disagree
M. =Mean
St. D. = Standard Deviation
R= rank

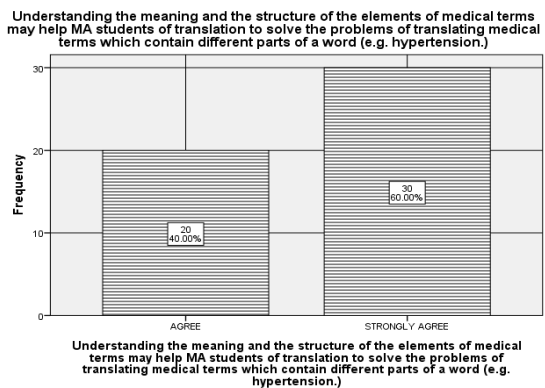
The table above **Exploring MA translation student's difficulties in rendering medical texts from translation teacher's prospective** It is clear that 30 of the teachers with a mean index of 53.6 attributed these difficulties to the lack of *understanding the meaning and the structure of the elements of medical terms*. Furthermore, 25 teachers with a mean index of 4.42 strongly agreed that affixation is the main cause behind the difficulties facing students in translating medical terms. While 24 respondents with a mean index of 4.34 attributed these difficulties to the fact that *medical terms stem from Greek or Latin words*, others with a mean index of 4.18 agreed that this difficulty is due to the *lack of awareness of abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, and polysemy*.

Figure 1: MA students of translation may not find the accurate equivalent of English medical terms in Arabic.



The figure above demonstrates the teachers’ views on the reasons behind the difficulties encountering the MA students in translating medical terms. Obviously, 23 teachers with a percentage index of 46 strongly agreed that MA students may not find the accurate equivalent of English medical terms in Arabic. This strong agreement was further supported by the agreement of 21 of the teachers. However, despite the agreement on this statement, it is clear to find that one teacher with a percentage of 2, and two teachers with a percentage of 4, rejected this notion. What is remarkable was that three teachers remained neutral.

Figure 2: Understanding the meaning and the structure of the elements of medical terms may help MA students of translation to solve the problems of translating medical terms which contain different parts of a word (e.g. hypertension.)



As indicated in the figure above that understanding the meaning and the structure of medical terms matters a lot in translating medical terms. It was unanimously agreed upon by all of the respondents. That is, 30 respondents with a percentage of 60 strongly agreed on it, and another more 20 with a percentage of 40 supported this agreement.

Figure 3: Abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, and polysemy pose serious translation problems

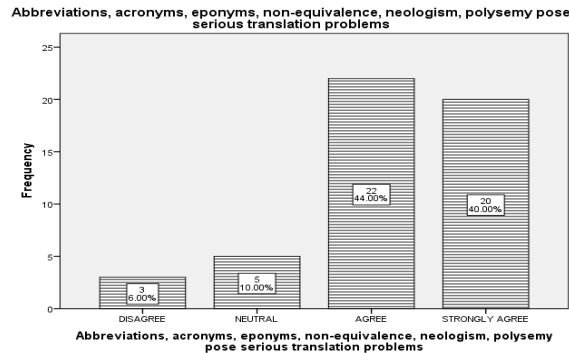
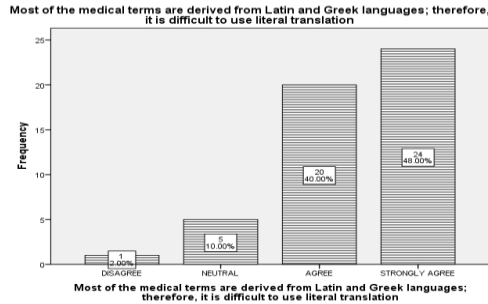


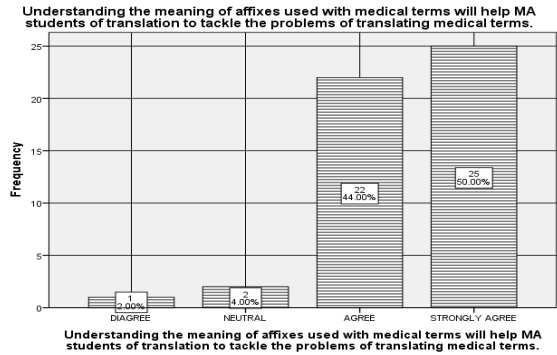
Figure 3 demonstrates the respondents' opinions on the negative role played by abbreviation, acronyms, no-equivalence, neologism and polysemy in hindering medial translation. The agreement on this statement scores the highest percentage (44) with a frequency of 22. Such an agreement was strongly backed up with 20 respondents gaining a percentage index of 40. Despite this agreement, it is clear to find that 5 respondents with a percentage of 10 neither agreed nor disagreed, and 3 respondents with percentage of 6 disagreed on this statement.

Figure 4: Most of the medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek languages; therefore, it is difficult to use literal translation



The figure above demonstrates the respondents' views on the difficulties facing MA students when translating medical terms that are Greek and Latin- originated. 24 respondents with a percentage of 48 strongly agreed on this statement. This strong agreement was supported by the agreement of 20 respondents with a percentage of 40. In contrast, one respondent with a percentage of 2 disagreed on this statement. Between the agreement and disagreement of the respondents, it is clear that 5 of them with a percentage of 10 preferred the choice of neutrality.

Figure 5: Understanding the meaning of affixes used with medical terms will help MA students of translation to tackle the problems of translating medical terms.



The statement (understanding the meaning of suffixes and prefixes used with medical terms will help MA students of translation to tackle the problems of translating medical terms) was strongly agreed on by 25 respondents with a percentage of 50. This agreement was supported by the agreement of 22. In spite of this agreement, it is clear that one respondent with a percentage of 2 disagreed on it, and 2 respondents with a percentage of 4 remained neutrals.

With regard to the two hypothesis claiming that:

- 1- MA translation students need to have more knowledge about affixation
- 2- MA translation students need to be more familiar with medical terms.

The results obtained from the questionnaire analysis indicated that MA students of translation encounter difficulties when rendering medical terms because of:

- Complex structures that medical terms have a matter can give rise to various semantic, lexical and grammatical interpretations.
- MA students of translation may not find the accurate equivalent of English medical terms in Arabic.
- Abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, polysemy pose serious translation problems

The findings of the study:

- Understanding the meaning and the structure of the elements of medical terms may help MA students of translation to solve the problems of translating medical terms which contain different parts of a word.
- The translation of medical terms proved to be problematic for unexperienced translators and postgraduate translation students.
- Unsuitable techniques are adopted in translating medical terms
- The absence of curricula, teaching programs pose difficulties in teaching medical translation.

CONCLUSION:

This paper attempts to explore MA translation student's difficulties in rendering medical texts from translation teachers' prospective. It aims to find out to what extent MA translation students at Bahri university face difficulties in translating medical terms. The study uses a questionnaire to collect the data. The results reveal that students are unable to use appropriate equivalence in translating medical terms. Moreover, students are not aware of affixation in medical terms due to most of the medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek languages; therefore, it is difficult to use literal translation.

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