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Scrutinizing MA Translation Student's Achievement in Rendering Medical Texts into Arabic Language

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Abstract

This study investigates MA Translation student's output in adapting medical text from English into Arabic Language. It aims to shed a light on whether MA translation students at Bahri University (faculty of languages and translation) smoothly translate medical terms from English into Arabic or not. The study follows quantitative descriptive method; test is used to collect data. Ninety MA translation students from Bahri University (faculty of languages and translation) were examined. SPSS is used to analyze data collected. Test is significantly used to uncover and assess the results of medical terminologies translation for MA students. The paper has concluded that most of the medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek Languages; therefore, it is difficult to use literal translation in addition to that abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, polysemy pose serious translation problems. Besides, MA translation students do not have enough knowledge about medical terms so as to help them to translate accurately.

Keywords: Medical translation, Terminology, Medical Text, Abbreviations, Acronyms.

INTRODUCTION:

The previous few decades have witnessed a superfluity of newly coined terms in nearly every language and each branch of knowledge. Latest

developments in information and technology have accelerated the unfold adoption and translation of recent technical terms and ideas, in general, and new medical terms in particular, especially across countries and languages. Like other languages, Arabic language tries to keep up the latest developments in word updates through the Arabization of recent terminology coined in English, French and other languages. This development has brought to the students of translation serious language challenges to express this newly founded terminologies for which the Arabic equivalent is difficult to be found. Culler (1976:21-22) states that: "one of the troublesome problems of translation is the disparity among languages". There is a great gap between SL and TL and it is more difficult to transfer the source text to the target text. Whereas, Farghal and Shunnaq (1999:210) point out that: "the major problem facing translators at present is terminology standardization and dissemination in the sphere of science and technology". It is a noteworthy issue in medical translation; how to achieve the highest degree of possible precision in the use of words and to transfer information contained in the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) without any loss of the original meaning. Both scholars have emphasized the existence of language differences especially for the new coined expressions and words in different fields, thus it is a very rich and vital area for studies.

Statement of the problem:

Medical translation as a sensitive subject demands a high degree of consistency and accuracy in transferring the source text (ST) to the target text (TT), though translation of medical terms generally throws up many challenges. Although some medical terms can be translated without any difficulty, others are more difficult to be translated. This study attempts to inquire the levels of challenges that MA translation students at Bahri University (faculty of languages and translation) encounters while translating medical texts form English into Arabic language.

Objective of the study:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1- To bring into surface the problems that MA students face due to the rapid development and the contemporary epidemics that human face.

2- To contribute simplifying communication of medical field across languages and help finding solutions for problems that human have faced or might face in the future.

Questions of the study:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1- What are the problems that MA translation students encounter while translating medical texts from English into Arabic Language?
2- To what extent MA translation students are familiar with the right equivalence of medical terms?

Hypothesis of the study:

The study hypothesizes the followings:

1- MA translation students encounter numerous obstacles when they translate medical texts from English into Arabic.
2- MA translation students are not familiar with the right equivalence of medical terms from English into Arabic.

Methodology of study:

The study follows quantitative descriptive method. Test is used instrument to collect data.

Subject:

The population were 90 MA translation students from faculty of languages and translation at Bahri University.

Test:

A test include variety of medical vocabulary is designed in order to assess the student's knowledge in medical terminologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Medical language is widely used by health care practitioners. It is a specialized language that has its distinctive features. Translators have continuously paid attention to the current topic, as a result, they face problems in translating English medical terms from English into Arabic language. Hager (2000) states that: "translation is at the heart of international scientific and technical communication" in addition to

that, Yowell and Lataiwish (2000) claim that terminology could be one of the most serious obstacles that may face translators of scientific texts, especially, if the target language is Arabic. Similarly, Kingscott (2002:247) confirms that the estimation of technical and scientific translation is 90% "It has been estimated that scientific and technical translation now accounts of worldwide translation production. For Nida's (1964) view:" it is not easy at all to translate scientific terms that emerged in western developed countries languages into a language of a third world countries where financial and social problems profoundly existed. Medical translation is one of the most active types of professional translation (Montalt, 2011).

Terminologies:

Medical Terminology is defined as specialized language used by health care practitioners. Medical terms have their own vocabulary and they are used to describe diseases, symptoms, anatomy, treatments, and physiology. Approximately 75% of medical terms are driven from Greek and/or Latin. As a type of scientific terminology, medical terminology consists of all or some following word parts: word root, suffix, prefix, combining form Lungu (2015).

Medical terms have four parts: The word root is defined as: the foundation of the scientific term and contain its primary meaning. All terms have at least one root e.g: *Cardio* refers to the heart (قلب). In addition to the root, the suffix is a word element placed at the end of a word. It changes the meaning of the word **Trask (1993)**. A prefix is an element attached at the beginning of the word root. A prefix usually indicates a number, time position, direction or negation eg: *uni-unilateral*. Barbara (2008) states that Suffix: is added to the end of a word root or combining forms to modify its meaning, by adding a suffix to the end of word root, we create a noun or adjective with a different meaning eg*: algia* in the word *Myalgia* which mean *pain*. Moreover, a combining vowel is a vowel part, usually an "O", used to ease the pronunciation. The combining vowel is placed to connect word roots, placed to connect a word root and suffix. Not placed to connect a prefix and a word root.

What makes the translation of some medical terms into Arabic more complicated is their complex structure, e.g. as shown in such terms as*gasto-oesophageal*. Additionally, Kingscott (2010) states that there are medical compound terms and abbreviations that can be

ambiguous which make it harder for the untrained translator to know the intended translation, e.g. CNS: *central nervous system*.

Translation of Medical Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Eponymous:

Eponymous are terms derived from the name of a person, often a physician or scientist, who was the first to identify a medical condition or technique, Nida in his book "Towards a Science of Translating" states that « an 'eponym' as any word that is identical with or derived from a proper name. He suggested dividing eponyms into three categories, those derived from persons, objects and places".

Eg : "*Parkinson disease translated into Arabic as* " داءُ بَاركِنسون)الشَّلَل الرَّعَّاش)

Richard &Hohulin (1982) define an acronym as "combining the initial letter or letters of each of the elements making up the complex lexical units." (p.27). It defines as terms formed from the first letters of the words in a phrase such as *laser* (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation).eg: MRI is an acronym for 'magnetic resonance image' which is translated into Arabic as: **المغنطيسي التصويربالرنين**

Richard &Hohulin (1982: 27) define an Abbreviation as: "a shortened form of a word or a phrase, but not necessarily only the initial letter or letters.

Data analysis

To get the results as accurate as possible, SPSS has been used SPSS in data analysis; statistical software which indicates a shortcut to Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Respondents' performance in question one (Matching medical terms)

Table 1: Matching the medical term *Endocrinology* with its Arabic equivalent.

Endocrinology

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	INCORRECT ANSWERS	84	92.3	93.3	93.3
	CORRECT ANSWERS	6	6.6	6.7	100.0
	Total	90	98.9	100.0	

The table above illustrates the students' performance in question one. It is clear that 84 students from the total of 90 failed to match the medical term *Endocrinology* with its Arabic equivalent. Only 6 students with a percentage index of 6.7 succeeded in answering this question. A clear image of the weak performance of the students in this question has been projected in the following figure:

Figure 1: Matching the medical term *Endocrinology* with its Arabic equivalent.

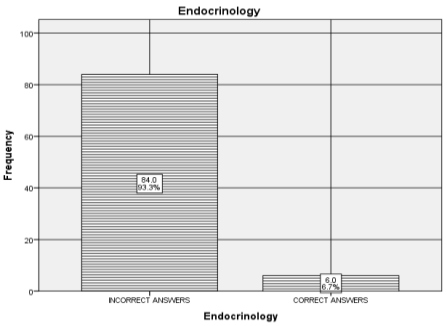


Table 2: Matching the medical term *Bronchioles* with its Arabic equivalent.

Bronchioles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	INCORRECT ANSWERS	82	90.1	91.1	91.1
	CORRECT ANSWERS	8	8.8	8.9	100.0
	Total	90	98.9	100.0	

Matching the medical term (Bronchioles) with its Arabic equivalent was another challenge to MA students of translation. That is, 82 students with a percentage index of 91.1 were unable to respond to this

question whereas 8 with a percentage index of 8.9 succeeded in doing so. Such a poor performance has been shown in figure 4.4

Figure 2: Matching the medical term *Bronchioles* with its Arabic equivalent.

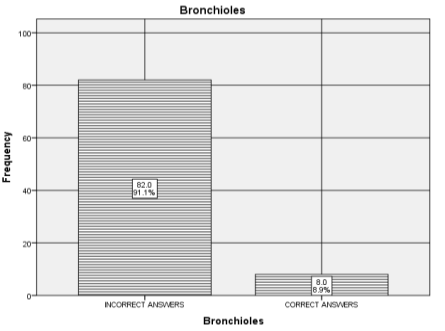


Table 3: Matching the medical term *Gastroenterology* with its Arabic equivalent.

Gastroenterology

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
INCORRECT ANSWERS	**80**	**87.9**	**88.9**	**88.9**
CORRECT ANSWERS	**10**	**11.0**	**11.1**	**100.0**
Total	**90**	**98.9**	**100.0**	

Table 4.3 demonstrates the respondents' performance in answering question three. It is clear that the vast majority of the students failed to match the medical term (Gastroenterology) with its Arabic equivalent. That is, 80 of them with a percentage index of 88.9 were unable to answer this question. Only 10 students with a percentage index of 11.1 were able to answer it. A clearer view of the students' performance in this question has been presented in figure 4.5.

Figure 3: Matching the medical term *Gastroenterology* with its Arabic equivalent

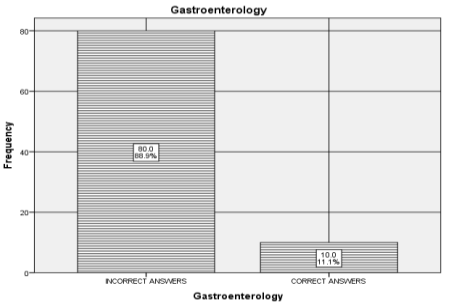


Table 4: Matching the medical term *Gynecology* with its Arabic equivalent

Gynecology

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent/ Cumulative Percent	
	INCORRECT ANSWERS	**77**	**84.6**	**85.6**	**85.6**
	CORRECT ANSWERS	**13**	**14.3**	**14.4**	**100.0**
	Total	**90**	**98.9**	**100.0**	

Similarly, most of the respondents were unable to match the medical term (*Gynecology*) with its Arabic equivalents. Thus, 77 students with a percentage index of 85.6 failed to give the correct answer whereas 13 of them with a percentage of 14.4 were able to do so. This result has been handled in the in figure 4.6.

Figure 4: Matching the medical term *Gynecology* with its Arabic equivalent

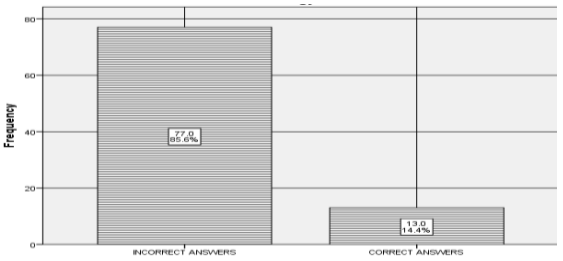


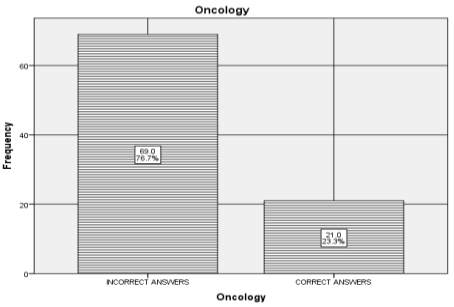
Table 5: Matching the medical term *Oncology* with its Arabic equivalent

Oncology

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
INCORRECT ANSWERS	69	75.8	76.7	76.7
CORRECT ANSWERS	21	23.1	23.3	100.0
Total	90	98.9	100.0	

Translating the medical term (Oncology) was also a problem facing MA students of translation. This is supported by the fact that 69 students with a percentage of 76.7 were unable to give the correct translation for this term. In contrast, 21 students with a percentage of 23.3 were able to do so. To have an extra, a clear image of the respondents' attainment in this question, figure 4.7 has been provided.

Figure 5: Matching the medical term *Oncology* with its Arabic equivalent



With regard to the two hypothesis claimed earlier as follows:

1- MA translation students encounter numerous obstacles when they translate medical texts from English into Arabic.
2- MA translation students are not familiar with the right equivalence of medical terms from English into Arabic.

The results obtained from the test analysis indicted that most of the students (79.56%) failed to match the medical terms with their Arabic equivalents. They similarly failed to choose the correct answer and failed to provide acceptable translation for the medical terms included in the test. A possible justification for this failure might be referred to their unawareness of medical terms. That is, they have insufficient vocabulary inventory related to the medical field. Another possible

justification could be that the postgraduate students find difficulties in working out the semantic relationship between the components of some compound medical terms. And this is, of course, due to the complex structure of medical terms that stem from both Greek and Latin languages.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- Prepare a standard Medical Arabic language for the entire Arab world and its speakers for the world due to varied Arabic dialects.
- Most of the medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek languages; therefore, it is difficult to use literal translation
- English medical terms may have multiple Arabic equivalents
- Abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, non-equivalence, neologism, polysemy pose serious translation problems

CONCLUSION:

This paper attempts to Investigate MA Translation student's achievements in translating medical text. It aims to find out to what extent students in Bahri university face difficulties in Translating English medical terms. The study uses a test to collect the required data. The results reveal that MA translation students are unable to use appropriate equivalence in translating medical terms and this is might be referred to their unawareness of medical terms. And the lack of Understanding the meaning and the structure of the elements of medical terms which contain different parts of a word.

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