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Pecularities of medical slang translation as an element of professional language

Особливості перекладу медичного сленгу як елемента професійної мови

Summary. *Medical slang is a specialized type of language used by healthcare professionals to communicate more effectively with each other. The article aims to explore the different aspects of medical slang, including categories of medical terms, usage, and impact on communication within the medical profession. Through the study of medical slang, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the unique language used by healthcare professionals and peculiarities of the translation of medical slang as an element of professional language. To solve the tasks and achieve the goal of the research, a set of general scientific methods is used: theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis to identify the main directions of research into the translation of medical slang as an element of professional language; the method of statistical analysis;* ***correlation analysis method;*** *empirical methods including the study of scientific works and medical terminological dictionaries. The process of translation of a text from one language to another is investigated in the works of such linguists, as T. Andriyenko, O. Kalnychenko, I. Korunets, V. Loboda, O. Pryimachok,*

M. Gyuró, G. Austrin Miriam, J. J. Birmingham, L. Myrna etc. There is a large number of methods used by interpreters while the translation of English medical slang into Ukrainian. These methods generally defined as "translational transformations". It was found that there are the following functions of medical terms in the language of literary texts: description of medical phenomena; creation of conditions of narrative realism; creating a colorful narrative. The analysis has shown that the process of translation of medical slang from English into Ukrainian is a challenge for interpreters, as the interpreter has to use a great number of translational transformations, such as lexical, grammatical and lexical-grammatical transformations. It was concluded that the most common transformation of translating medical slang is the transformation of replacement of slang by the commonly used word or collocation which was used in 16% of examples. The less common transformations are: the transformation of slang analogue, which was used in 14% of examples, the transformation of differentiation, which was used in 13% of examples.

Key words: *medical slang, professional language, translation, translational transformations, terms, lexical, grammatical.*

Анотація. *Медичний сленг – це спеціалізований вид мови, який використовується медичними фахівцями для більш ефективного спілкування між собою. Мета статті – дослідити різні аспекти медичного сленгу, включаючи його походження, категорії медичних термінів і вплив на комунікацію в медичній професії. Це дослідження спрямоване на надання глибокого розуміння унікальної мови, що використовується медичними фахівцями, і особливостей перекладу медичного сленгу як елементу професійної мови. Для вирішення завдань та досягнення мети дослідження використовується набір загальнонаукових методів: теоретичні методи, такі як аналіз та синтез для визначення основних напрямків дослідження перекладу медичного сленгу як елементу професійної мови; метод статистичного аналізу; метод кореляційного аналізу; емпіричні методи, включаючи вивчення наукових праць і медичних термінологічних словників. Процес перекладу тексту з однієї мови на іншу досліджується в роботах таких лінгвістів, як Т. Андрієнко, О. Калниченко, І. Корунець, В. Лобода, О. Приймачок, М. Гюро, Дж. Бірмінгем, М. Острін Міріам, Л. Мірна та інші. Існує велика кількість методів, які використовують перекладачі при перекладі англійського медичного сленгу на українську мову. Загалом ці методи визначаються як «трансляційні трансформації». Було встановлено, що існують такі функції медичних термінів в мові художніх текстів: опис медичних явищ; створення умов наративного реалізму, тощо. Аналіз показав, що процес перекладу медичного сленгу з англійської на українську мову є викликом для перекладачів, оскільки перекладачу доводиться використовувати велику кількість трансляційних трансформацій, таких як лексичні, граматичні і лексично-граматичні. Було зроблено висновок, що найбільш поширеною трансформацією при перекладі медичного сленгу є трансформація заміни сленгу загальноприйнятим словом або сполученням слів, яке використовувалося в 16% випадків. Менш поширеними трансформаціями є: трансформація аналогу сленгу, яка використовувалася в 14% випадків, та трансформація диференціації, яка використовувалася в 13% випадків.*

Ключові слова: *медичний сленг, професійна мова, переклад, трансляційні трансформації, терміни, лексичний, граматичний.*

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Introduction. Medical slang is a specialized type of language used by healthcare professionals to communicate more effectively with each other. It is a unique and varied sub-language that has its roots in the medical profession and is used primarily by healthcare providers. Medical slang can be seen as a way of enhancing communication within a specific professional group, but it can also be a barrier to communication for those outside of the medical profession. The article aims to explore the different aspects of medical slang, including categories of medical terms, usage, and impact on communication within the medical profession. Through the study of medical slang, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the unique language used by healthcare professionals and peculiarities of the translation of medical slang as an element of professional language.

Methodology and methods of research. To solve the tasks and achieve the goal of the research, a set of general scientific methods is used: theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis to identify the main directions of research into the translation of medical slang as an element of professional language; the method of statistical analysis for evaluating the quality of translated medical texts which can include measures of fluency, accuracy, and naturalness in the translated text; correlation analysis method to explore correlations between the use of specific translation strategies and the readability or comprehension of translated medical texts in order to determine which translation strategies are more effective in conveying the intended meaning; empirical methods including the study of scientific works and medical dictionaries including medical terminology.

Results and Discussion. Medical language is an expansion of natural, everyday language by adding technical terms. It lacks specific syntax and semantics. Most of its terms are either undefined or not satisfactorily defined. This deficiency is disadvantageous both in medical research and practice and may be responsible for many misdiagnoses. In addition, medical terms are ambiguous and vague.

Formal languages are characterized by a precise syntax and semantics. By contrast, a natural language has a fairly vague syntax known as its grammar, and lacks any explicit semantics. Its semantics is implicitly determined by a dynamic group decision-making in the process of its use in communities. How people use a term, establishes what it means. Its use varies over time. To explain, note that every scientific branch has its own scientific language. Examples are the languages of physics, chemistry, theology, and medicine. Unlike the formal languages of mathematics, logic, and computer programming that are artificial systems of signs with precise syntactic and semantic rules, most scientific languages develop

as mere expansions of natural language with the admixture of technical terms [6, p. 54].

M. Austrin Miriam notes that medical language belongs to this intermediate category. It emerges from natural, workaday language by adding terms such as "angina pectoris", "appendicitis", "nerve membrane potential", "immunocytoma", etc. This is the reason why it has no specific syntax and semantics beyond that of natural language. To give an example, consider the term "disease" that denotes the fundamental concept of medicine, i.e., the concept of disease underlying nosology and clinical research and practice. Although one would expect it to be a well-defined technical term, it is as yet an undefined phrase. Nobody knows what it means exactly, and apart from a few philosophers of medicine, nobody is interested in its exact meaning. The term languishes without any semantics as if it were an irrelevant or gratuitous one. Its derivatives share with it the same semantic obscurity [6, p. 45].

According to J. J Birmingham, there are three categories of medical terms, each used within its specific group of people for communication, information and documentation [7, p. 39]:

− scientific medical terms used among professional medical staff;
− general medical terms used between medical staff and patients;
− medical terms used among medical staff (often jargon).

The translated text is aimed at nursing students at university level, i.e. future professional medical people.

Medical terms are used for describing diagnoses, body organs and diseases [8, p. 67]. However, apart from the terms mentioned above, there are also those used for symptoms such as *agnosia*, the difficulties in recognizing familiar things. The analysis showed a wide variety of the use of terms related to the medical field. They have been subcategorized according to their linguistic features, which will be dealt with below.

The meaning of a medical term in a particular language consists of its extension and intension relative to this language, i.e., its referent and sense. First, the extension of a proper name is the individual person or object the name refers to; its intension is the property of being that individual or object. Second, the extension of the predicate is the set of all objects the predicate applies to; its intension comprises all features an object must have to be a member of that extension. For instance, the unary predicate "has Alzheimer's disease" has all human beings as its extension who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Its intension is the state of having this disease, that is, a set of defining symptoms and signs such as memory impairment, apraxia, agnosia, etc. [11, p. 54].

Since meaning is language relative, it does not reside in a term itself. One will not be able to uncover it by inspecting or analyzing the printed

or spoken word. The meaning of a term manifests itself in the manner of how the users of a language use the term in their communications, including writings. That is, it manifests itself in their linguistic behavior. In addition to its language dependence, meaning is also context-dependent.

An instance to support this thesis is the ambiguity, or polysemy, of terms. A term is called ambiguous, or polysemous, if it has more than one meaning. Such a term is differently used and understood in different contexts. For example, the term "bank" has at least three different meanings: financial institution, the ground near a river, a supply such as a sperm bank. This type of ambiguity cannot be avoided and is harmless. But there is also another type of ambiguity that is not harmless. Although it could in principle be avoided, it is scarcely noticed in medical community. It dominates the language of medicine, especially the clinical sublanguage. Another ubiquitous phenomenon in medicine and its language is vagueness [7, p. 42]. It is something different than ambiguity. Since it is of paramount importance in medicine and medical ethics, and may be regarded a reason to revise the fundaments of medical sciences, practice, and reasoning, it merits particular attention and appropriate evaluation and treatment.

The process of translation of medical slang from English into Ukrainian is a challenge for interpreters, as the interpreter has to use a great number of translational transformations. The process of translation of a text from one language to another is investigated in the works of such linguists, as T. Andriyenko, O. Kalnychenko, I. Korunets, V. Loboda, O. Pryimachok, M. Gyuró, G. Austrin Miriam, J. J. Birmingham, L. Myrna, etc. There is a large number of methods used by interpreters while the translation of English medical slang into Ukrainian. These methods generally defined as "translational transformations". The researchers define the term "translational transformation" as:

1) "numerous and qualitatively diverse replacements that are carried out to achieve translation equivalence (adequacy) of translation despite the differences in the formal and semantic systems of two languages" [4, p. 115];

2) the term *"transformation"* is used in Translation Studies in a metaphorical sense. In fact, this is in the reference to the relationship between the original and final language variants, about the process of replacement of one form of expression by another in the translation process [9, p. 72];

3) the non-use of the system equivalents, which are characterized by the same denotative meaning and grammatical similarity; if there is an interlanguage system equivalent, a literal translation should be used [1, p. 13];

4) changing of formal (lexical and grammatical transformations) or semantic (semantic transformations) components of the source text while preserving information intended for translation [2, p. 22];

5) Replacements that can be used to change the original units to translation units in the specified sense. They are formal and semantic in nature, transforming both the form and meaning of the initial units [3, p. 36].

Thus, O. I. Pryimachok identifies three types of transformations:
− lexical;
− grammatical;
− semantic [5, p. 116–118].

According to the researcher, these types of transformations include:
− the first type – lexical transformations – the transformations of generalization and concretization;
− the second type – grammatical transformations – replacement of parts of speech and sentence parts, combining sentences or dividing them;
− the third type – semantic transformations – metaphorical, synonymous, metaphorical replacement, logical development of concepts, antonymic translation and compensation [5, p. 116–118].

T. P. Andrienko identified such types of transformations as:
− lexical transformations (transliteration, translation transcription, calquing, some lexical and semantic replacements);
− grammatical transformations (grammatical replacements and sentence division);
− complex transformations (explication or descriptive translation, antonymic translation, and compensation) [1, p. 16].

The first transformation, which is used for the translation of medical terms is the transcription – the phonemic reproduction of the lexical unit of the source text by means of the TL phonemes, thus obtaining a phonetic imitation of the original word.

Another method of translation is transliteration – literal reproduction of the ST lexical unit using the TL alphabet, literal imitation of the form of the source word. Techniques such as transcription and transliteration are repeatedly used as components of mixed translation, along with calquing, semantic translation, or commentary [3].

Calquing is used directly for those language units that do not have an equivalent in the TL, not reproduced in sound, semantic meaning of the word or phrase.

Descriptive translation is repeatedly used in the interpretation of the realities typical for living conditions of one person and have no analogues in the life of another. According to I. V. Korunets, the descriptive way of conveying the sense of language units implies their structural transformation which is necessary to explicate their meaning with the help of hierarchically different target language units [3, p. 30].

Among the lexical and grammatical transformations of medical terms are: omission, compensation, addition, antonymic translation, as well as

semantic development. Also, there are often used such methods as omission and compensation [10].

Omission is a transformation of removing the excessive information that does not carry an important semantic load. Omission is often used when synonyms are used in the original text, which would be stylistically unfounded in the text in the TL [3, p. 33].

Another technique that is often used in the translation of medical terms is the addition – the inclusion the explanations and inserts that help to understand the ST, so the interpreter can clarify the meaning of realities, terms, abbreviations, foreign language.

Antonymic translation is built by replacing any concept in a foreign language with the opposite concept in the translating language with the corresponding transformation of the entire statement [10].

It is employed for the sake of achieving faithfulness in conveying content or the necessary expressiveness of sense units. It represents a way of rendering when an affirmative in structure language unit (word, word-combination or sentence) is conveyed via a negative in sense or structure but identical in content language unit, or vice versa: a negative in sense or structure sense unit is translated via an affirmative sense unit [3, p. 31].

Modulation is a kind of lexical and grammatical transformation in which one concept is replaced by another on the basis of their adjacency or logical proximity. At the same time, the main idea should remain unchanged [3, p. 34]. Thus, there are many transformations, which can be used in the process of translation of medical terms.

Also, we will analyze the implementation of grammatical and lexical-grammatical transformations. The following grammatical transformations were identified:

1. Transposition:

… The six or seven or ten of us… and listened to Patrick recount for the thousandth time his depressingly miserable life story – how he had cancer in his balls and they thought he was going to die… [17].

… вшістьох, усімох чи вдесятьох… втисячне слухали депресивну розповідь Патрика про те як у нього був рак яєчок і всі гадали, що він помре... [16].

In the example, the slang collocation *had cancer in his balls* was translated by means of the transformation of transposition – *рак яєчок.*

"Memorial people," he explained [17].

Це – люди з меморіалу [16].

In this case, the medical slang collocation *Memorial people* was used. Memorial – the big research hospital. The collocation describes the people who stay in this research hospital. This collocation was replaced by means of the transformation of transposition.

Osteosarcoma sometimes takes a limb to check you out [17].

Остеосаркома, коли хоче тебе прощупати, може відхопити кінцівку [16].

As the sentence demonstrates, the medical slang collocation *takes a limb* was translated by means of the transformation of transposition – *відхопити кінцівку*.

"Yeah," I said, having been the experimental pincushion myself [17].

«Ага», відповів він. Я нагадую подушку для експериментальних пункцій [16].

In the example, the slang collocation *the experimental pincushion myself* was translated by means of the transformation of transposition – *подушка для експериментальних пункцій*.

The lexical-grammatical transformations are represented by the following:

1. Modulation:

... most amputees can drive with no problem... [17].

... більшість після ампутації водить без проблем... [16].

In the example, the transformation of modulation was applied – the medical slang lexical unit *amputees* was translated by explication the implicit information – *після ампутації*. Thus, the sense of the lexical unit was developed, which shows the use of the transformation of modulation.

2. Descriptive translation:

I'd learned this from my aforementioned third best friend, Peter Van Houten, the reclusive author of An Imperial Affliction, the book that was as close a thing as I had to a Bible [17].

Я дізналася про це від вищезгаданого третього найкращого друга, Петера Ван Гаутена, письменника-самітника, автора "Царської немочі"1, що стала для мене другою Біблією. Петер Ван Гаутен єдиний з усіх моїх знайомих, схоже, а) розумів, що означає вмирати, і б) не помер [16].

The example demonstrates the use of the medical slang collocation *An Imperial Affliction*, which was translated by means of the transformation of descriptive translation – *Царської немочі"1*

Царська неміч – назва книги про лейкемію, яку Гледіс читала, як Біблію, з огляду на те, що ця книга передавала її власні переживання [16].

Thus, the interpreter describes the meaning of this slang collocation.

The analysis has shown the use of the following lexical, grammatical and lexical-grammatical transformations:

1. lexical transformations:

– replacement of slang by the commonly used word or collocation;

– differentiation;
– calque;
– omission;
– creating new word;
– slang analogue.
2. grammatical transformations:
– transposition;
3. lexical-grammatical transformations:
– modulation;
– descriptive translation.
The results of the statistical analysis are represented in the fig. 1.
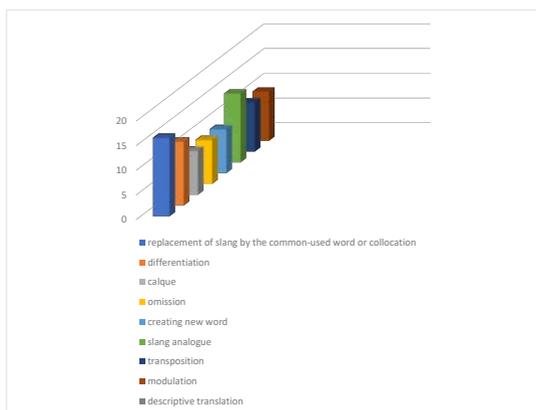
Fig. 1. The results of the analysis

Thus, the following results of statistical analysis were applied:
− replacement of slang by the commonly used word or collocation was used in 16% of examples;
– differentiation was used in 13% of examples;
– calque was used in 9% of examples;
– omission was used in 9% of examples;
– creating new word was used in 9% of examples;
– slang analogue was used in 14% of examples;
– transposition was used in 10% of examples;
– modulation was used in 10% of examples;
– descriptive translation was used in 10% of examples.
This way, it was concluded that the most common transformation of translating medical slang is the transformation of replacement of slang by the commonly used word or collocation was used in 16% of examples. The less common transformations are: the transformation of slang

analogue, which was used in 14% of examples, the transformation of differentiation, which was used in 13% of examples. The least common transformations are: the transformation of transposition, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of modulation, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of descriptive translation, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of transposition calque, which was used in 9% of examples; the transformation of transposition omission, which was used in 9% of examples; the transformation of transposition creating new word, which was used in 9% of examples.

Conclusions. This article deals with the analysis the options of the translation of medical slang from English into Ukrainian. In the frameworks of theoretical aspects, it was concluded that medical language is an expansion of natural, everyday language by adding technical terms. It lacks specific syntax and semantics. Most of its terms are either undefined or not satisfactorily defined. This deficiency is disadvantageous both in medical research and practice and may be responsible for many misdiagnoses. In addition, medical terms are ambiguous and vague. It was found that there are three categories of medical terms, each used within its specific group of people for communication, information and documentation: scientific medical terms used among professional medical staff; general medical terms used between medical staff and patients; medical terms used among medical staff (often jargon).

It was found that there are the following functions of medical terms in the language of literary texts: description of medical phenomena; creation of conditions of narrative realism; creating a colorful narrative. The analysis has shown that the process of translation of medical slang from English into Ukrainian is a challenge for interpreters, as the interpreter has to use a great number of translational transformations, such as lexical, grammatical and lexical-grammatical transformations.

It was found that the most common transformation of translating medical slang is the transformation of replacement of slang by the commonly used word or collocation was used in 16% of examples. The less common transformations are: the transformation of slang analogue, which was used in 14% of examples, the transformation of differentiation, which was used in 13% of examples. The least common transformations are: the transformation of transposition, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of modulation, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of descriptive translation, which was used in 10% of examples; the transformation of transposition calque, which was used in 9% of examples; the transformation of transposition omission, which was used in 9% of examples; the transformation of transposition creating new word, which was used in 9% of examples.

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