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## TRANSLATION OF MEDICAL TEXTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the article is specifics of translating medical texts; there are considered characteristic features of informative translation, «false friends of the translator» in medical texts, as well as the problem of translating such a lexical group as the group of abbreviations in the field of medical translation.*

Translation of medical texts (medical translation) is translating from one language into another of specialized medical publications and texts of private character which content is directly connected with the person's health. A special position of this category of specialized translations is defined by the importance of any translated information, increased requirements to the accuracy of the translation and observing confidentiality of private data, as well as pronounced heterogeneity of the used terminology. A feature of medical texts is the existence of special terms and abbreviations. Medical texts do not contain enough metaphors and other stylistic means therefore translating specific terminology and abbreviations is the most difficult thing in the translation process. An important factor is also studying the

structure of terms and abbreviations and their use in various contexts.

Medical translation includes translating the texts of the all-medical and pharmaceutical direction, it is by right possible to call medical translation one of the most difficult specialized translations and it is even possible to allocate it as a special type of translation activity. In the process of conversion of medical and pharmaceutical texts a translator constantly compares a source text of the original with the translated text, every time switching from one language to another. In this process the set of the translator's actions is divided into the actions relating to the source medical text and respectively to the text of medical translation, that is in this process a translator at first perceives and understands the text of the original and on its basis he forms the translated text. Thus,



medical translation is made by a translator on the basis of two interconnected stages of the translation process which are undertaken by the translator, namely: the first stage includes extraction of information from the original medical text, and the second stage is selecting the needed translation means and methods for implementation of medical translation. The extraction of information from the original medical text is the first stage of translation process, which is related to informative translation. Informative translation represents translating the texts which main function consists in informing of some data, the information transfer; it makes no art and esthetic impact on the reader. All materials of scientific, business, social and political, everyday life character belong to such texts. There should be referred to this group translating lot of detective stories, descriptions of travels, sketches, official materials and those materials where there prevails purely information narration.

The aspiration to the clearness and strictness of a statement, refusal of indirect, descriptive designations of objects, wide use of stamps and stereotypes of special vocabulary is characteristic of informative translation, both in the English and in the Russian languages. However more detailed analysis shows that strictness of using terms and habitual formulations is in general more peculiar to the Russian special texts. Therefore a translator quite often feels obliged to make «stylistic editing» of the original, to enter an exact term instead of a paraphrase, to explain what is specifically meant, to replace an author's construction with a more habitual stamp. A translator is to report fully and precisely the thought of the author, giving it the shape inherent in the Russian special text and

without transferring peculiar features of the English original to the Russian text. In the English text there prevail personal forms of a verb whereas in the Russian text there are more impersonal or indefinite-personal constructions.

Prevalence of simple sentences which average over 50 % of the total number of sentences in the text is characteristic of informative texts of English. At the same time the number of compound sentences is rather small. This phenomenon is unusual for the corresponding style in Russian where compound sentences are used very widely. One of the criteria of selecting the variant of translation of the text is the genre and stylistic accessory of the text being translated. According to this criterion informative translation allocates:

- translation of social and political texts, journalism and oratorical speech; the commonness of lines of this category is caused by the propaganda or a propaganda aim of the translated material directed to forming or changing public opinion and its abundance with language elements of polemic: language cliches, rhetorical structures, literalisms, newspaper cliches, social and political terms, estimated words, slang and popular speech;

- translation of scientific texts depends on their types and content. The more is formalized a scientific text, and it occurs first of all in natural sciences especially, the more is translation equivalent to the original. Translations of works in mathematics, chemistry, biology and other exact sciences consisting of stereotypic phrases and highly specialized terms are identical to the original, i. e. they possess full equivalence.



The fullest equivalence is observed in translations of the texts of highly specialized character owing to unambiguity of terminology. Translation of the texts of general scientific or medical subject requires selecting a correct variant of translation of one of the meanings of a polysemantic term:

– translation of official texts is completely focused on transferring the content, i.e. it has an informative character. The form of texts is in most cases stereotypic. Medical translation, as well as any other type of translation, has its features and can cause difficulties for a translator. Difficulties of medical translation consist in the presence in texts of difficult medical terminology, as well as special words and abbreviations. In addition to it, depending on the country and even its region the same term can have several meanings and it is necessary to translate it taking into account the geographical aspect. A very important condition facilitating the work at medical translation is the thorough knowledge by the translator of Latin, the language universal for physicians around the world.

When translating medical texts there should be paid attention at the following moments:

Using transcription when translating the names of diseases and preparations. English variant: Klaritin is allergy relief medicine.

- Lymphangioma
- Lymphedema
- Metronidazole
- Sulfasalazine
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
- Methylmethacrylate
- Pharmacomania.

Russianvariant: Кларитин  
является противоаллергическим  
лекарством. – Лимфангиома  
– Лимфедема  
– Метронидазол  
– Сульфазалазин  
– Гипертрофическая  
кардиомиопатия  
– Метилметакрилат  
– Фармакомания.

Using transcription when translating medical terms.

English variant:

- Antibiotic
- Narcotic
- Penicillin
- Chlamidia
- Stimulator
- Hematocrit
- Hemoglobin
- Vitamin.

Russianvariant:

- Антибиотик
- Наркотик (наркотическое средство)
- Пенициллин
- Хламидия
- Стимулятор
- Гематокрит
- Гемоглобин
- Витамин.

«False friends of the translator» in medical texts.

False friends of the translator are foreign words, conformable with Russian but meaning something quite different. Of course, new diseases develop from time to time, but it happens not so often.

Examples - cell - "phlegmon" not "cellulite"; potent pathogen (about bacterium) - not "potential" but "strong", simple pathogen (against a conditional



one); by the way for power: the third power is the "cube" (third degree), not the "third".

Symptomatic is not only symptomatic, but also with clinical manifestations, for example - symptomatic hypertension-arterial hypertension with a clinical manifestation of "symptomatic arterial hypertension", but symptomatic therapy.

The translation of medical texts is a very demanded type of translation but at the same time one of the most difficult and responsible.

This genre assumes an absolute understanding by the text translator of the original and laborious work with dictionaries and reference books. Here it is forbidden to dream and guess, the medical diagnosis, the appointed treatment and, as a result, the patient's life quite often depends on the translation accuracy. A translator of medical texts should be guided very accurately in the subject to reveal surely ambiguous terms and expressions and to define correctly their treatment.

Medical texts are characterized by a peculiar building of sentences. Quite often the structure of an English sentence abounds with difficult grammatical constructions (infinitive and participial phrases) that complicates the definition of a logical accent in the sentence. All this leads to the emergence of ambiguity of the text being translated. From the point of view of grammar sentences can be divided into

translated practically without changes, translated by means of the changed word order; requiring when translating partial syntactic and lexical changes; requiring descriptive translation sentences that are difficult in every respect. Thus, the complexity of medical translation consists in the huge and promptly growing vocabulary of medicine, abundance of synonyms and an idiomaticity of the professional medical language, prevalence of abbreviations in medical communication, grammatical difficulties of the English sentence. Successful performance of this kind of activity requires a close acquaintance with medicine — for this reason the best translators of similar literature are graduates of medical schools. From the above-mentioned it follows that medical texts represent complexity when translating not only at the lexical level but also at the syntactic and grammatical ones. The described problems are not the only that can be faced when translating. But having correctly presented the matter at the syntactic, lexical and stylistic levels, it is possible to achieve the correct and high-quality translation.

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