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Medical Translation of *ABC of Nutrition*: Lexical and Syntactic Problems

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Dedication

To my father who has supported me and has given me strength to reach up the stars and chase my dreams. To my mother who is the candle that has lightened my whole life. You have always been my laugh when I am happy, my tear when I am sad, and my guidance when I am lost. To my loving husband who has been a great source of inspiration and motivation and without his love, patience, and cooperation, this work might not have been written. To my dear sisters: Sally, Nayrooz, Wae’d and Batool for their love and support. Finally, to all those people who have believed in me and have created confidence and challenge in me.
Acknowledgment

All Thanks are due to my God Who has always been my guidance in all conditions, thanks to Allah for giving me patience and ability to complete this work which is the first step to fulfill my dreams.

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Warm thanks are due to my loving husband who helped me in understanding the complicated medical terminologies as they are used in the medical field.

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to my father, mother, and sisters for their prayers and support during this work and at all times.
Medical Translation of “ABC of Nutrition”: Lexical and Syntactic Problems

Raneem Hesham Al-Bataineh
Supervised By: Prof. Abdullah Shunnaq

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the main lexical and syntactic problems encountered by Arab translators of medical texts. In order to achieve this goal, the researcher has translated into Arabic about thirty pages of the English medical book ABC of Nutrition written by A Stewart Truswell. The researcher found out that medical terms including synonymous ones, and medical abbreviations in addition to syntactic problems, namely word-order, long sentences, active/passive voice and adjective clauses, pose problems to medical translators. However, the researcher has used various strategies to solve these lexical and syntactic problems and also to find the most appropriate Arabic renditions for lexical items or whole sentences.

The present study reveals that borrowing with its different techniques is a solution for translating English medical terms and abbreviations that do not have ready equivalents in Arabic. The researcher found out that transliteration and loanwords are easy and short methods of translation, but this would be at the expense of naturalness. The study shows that diversity and multiplicity of Arabic renditions is a problem in the medical field and results in many medical synonyms. Moreover, it reveals that
syonymy in Arabic medical terminologies is a problematic issue in that the translator is confused about choosing the better equivalent. The researcher concludes that translator’s intuition and experience play an important role in choosing the better equivalent as many medical dictionaries includes odd and unaccepted terms.

The researcher found out that permutation and addition are two of different methods used to solve the problem of different constituents between English and Arabic sentences. This study shows that to solve the problem of long sentences in translating medical texts, the translator may opt for splitting a long sentence into two, when it is possible.

It also concludes that to end up with an adequate medical text, the translator must be a specialist in medicine or at least knowledgeable about medicine. It also shows that transferring information and facts in scientific texts, particularly Medicine, is more important than transferring style.
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Glossary of Medical Terms

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Chapter One
Introductory Materials

1.1 Introduction

Language is a universal tool used in communication. It plays an important role in developing civilization and in the progress of science and technology. However, difficulties arise when transferring information from one language to another. This research focuses on the difficulties and challenges faced by Arab translators in rendering medical texts and the strategies used to solve linguistic problems, namely lexical and syntactic problems.

1.1.1 Translation

Translation is important as it plays a role in transferring knowledge from one language to another. It is an essential element in the development of many sciences that contribute to the development of civilizations, such as many technological and scientific inventions. Catford (1965:vii) points out that “translation is an activity of enormous importance in the modern world and it is a subject of interest not only to linguists, professionals, amateur translators and language–teachers, but also to electric engineers and mathematicians”. Translation is the process of finding an equivalent of the source language (SL) item from the target language (TL) on the basis of grammar and lexis.

Catford (1965:1) defines translation as an “operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another”. He (ibid: 20) defines translation as: “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)”. 
Newmark (1981:15) defines translation as “a craft attempting to replace a written message or statement in one language by the same message or statement in another language.”

Wilss (1982:12) points out that translation is “a procedure, which leads from a written SLT to an optimally equivalent TLT and requires syntactic, semantic, stylistic and text pragmatic comprehension by the translator of the original text”.

Nida (1984:58) states that “translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.” In this respect, Newmark (1988:5) says that translation can be, but not always, defined as “rendering the meaning of a text into other language in the way that the author intended the text.”

From the above definitions of translation, one can note that ‘equivalence’ is a keyword in translation and it is the most important notion that all translators attempt to reach.

1.1.2 Technical and Scientific Translation

The present study is interested in medical translation as a branch of scientific technical translation. Newmark (1988:151) considers technical and scientific translation as “one part of specialist translation: institutional translation, the areas of politics, commerce, finance, government etc.” Technical language is somehow different from ordinary language in that technical is concise, clear, and specialized. Newmark (ibid) points out that technical language is different from non-technical one. He says that “Unless its non-technical language is jazzed up and popularized, it is usually free from
emotive language, connotations, sound-effects and original metaphor, if it is well written”.

It is known that every discipline has its own jargon or technical vocabulary and so is medical language.

Lannon (1979:9) mentions the importance of technical translation saying:

Because modern society is becoming increasingly technical, scientists, doctors, engineers, and a wide variety of other technical persons must keep informed of new advances being made by others working in their field...new developments in technical fields are constantly affecting modern living and must be reported and explained to the businessmen affected by them and to the general public.

Thus, technical translation is important in disseminating information all over the world to develop civilization.

1.1.3 Features of Technical Writing

Budinski (2001:1) defines technical writing as a general term that includes a wide variety of documents in science and skilled trades. He (ibid: 4) states that technical writing must follow these general attributes:

- It must pertain to a technical subject
- It has a purpose and an objective
- It is impersonal, concise, directed and archival
- It is performed in a particular style and in a particular format
- It cites contribution of others.