

Chapter 17

Word Formation Study in Developing Naming Guidelines in the Translation of English Medical Terms Into Persian

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ABSTRACT

Lack of appropriate equivalences for terms or technical words is the result of ineffective translation guidelines adopted in the translation process. This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the characteristics of Persian medical terms, using the universal naming guidelines and local naming principles in Persian. The aim of the study is to determine the similarities and differences of the compatible and incompatible terms (Persian equivalents) with respect to the applied translation procedures and the employed word formation processes. The descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis were employed to analyze the collected data which consisted of a population of 339 English medical terms and their pairs in Persian. The research was based on two theoretical frameworks, namely Sager's naming criteria and word designation principles by the Persian Language and Literature Academy to investigate the effective translation procedures and word formation parameters for the translation of English medical terms into Persian through morphosemantic comparison of the terms.

INTRODUCTION

The medical translation is a critical tool for communication between patients and health care professionals. A correct translation finds itself significant when a medical translator, as a skilled mediator, acts accurately and precisely by transferring the messages between a medical professional and a patient. This study is of utmost importance as it aims to find guidelines specific to translation procedures of English medical terms into Persian through word formation processes for linguists and translators. Such guidelines can be employed by translators to find the required equivalents. Persian linguists from the

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Persian Language and Literature Academy (PLLA) and Medical Science Academy in Iran may also find it beneficial. It may be effective and applicable to information technology and machine translation systems linguistic databases. This study presents the findings obtained by a comparative analysis of the Persian translation equivalents found in “راهنمای کدگذاری بین المللی بیماریها” (Guide to ICD-9-CM in Persian) using the universal naming guidelines and local naming principles in Persian, with regard to their pairs in English selected from medical terms in “ICD-9-CM.” The study went through the research questions to investigate the naming characteristics of the English-Persian medical terms with respect to Sager’s criteria (1990, p. 88) who provides 12 criteria for the perfect idealized requirement in a serious controlled condition for naming, the PLLA principles, the effectiveness of the adopted TPs in naming, the contribution of the morphosemantic factors to the naming process and to propose the specific naming parameters for the translation of English-Persian medical terms. The objectives of the study were also in line with the research questions. The analysis focused on Sager’s naming criteria, the PLLA naming principles, and the applied translation procedures on the selected English medical terms into Persian equivalents during the translation process.

BACKGROUND

According to Ashuri (1995, p.29), one of the problems for Persian today is the fact that it is a combination of ancient writings and translation works. Scientific language of new works mostly deals with translation together with a lot of English and French words and syntactical structures. He suggests that the word formation is a solution for enriching a language with new concepts.

Beheshti (1999, pp.25-31) explains that one of the most significant contemporary linguistic issues is scientific-technical word formation, which is based on the language grammar and linguistic principles. She discovered that only 50 percent of the total terms studied had the equivalences in Persian; thus, indicating that the translators have not yet shown interest in employing Persian equivalents in their works. Further investigation is crucial to uncover the underlying reason. According to her, equivalent findings or naming of imported medical terms should be based on the features specific to medical terms. This means that medical terms, either in the source language or the target language, should be studied to find their systematic characteristics and some patterns in order to help the translators or linguists in the word formatting process or naming imported terms in the future. She suggests a study on the patterns based on the term characteristics of morphology, etymology, word formation and translation procedures.

Naseri et al. (2011, pp.41- 47) believe that the present problems of Persian in the areas of science and technology are due to the application of foreign language structures, lack of consistencies in scientific terms, and no consensus among authors and translators. Sadeqi (1993) believes that the solution to these problems is stabilizing the scientific and technical terminology at the basic levels and mass media. He states that the scientific terminologies are not consistent and in some cases, there are various Persian equivalents for a single foreign word in different dictionaries, or there are various foreign equivalents for a single Persian word. As a result, it is claimed that the scientific expressions are inconsistent (Kafi, 1992). According to Beheshti (1999, p.31), a language that borrows a large number of words suffers from negative consequences in the general language and can denigrate the capacity for people to speak their native language (i.e. such as German language in interaction with the English language). The Persian language in interaction with other languages will lose its capabilities and will be converted to a totally different language if it is not protected against the foreign words imported from many languages.

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