The extended meanings of medical terms. Difficulties in the practice of translation

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Abstract

Taking into account that the structure of a specialized field is never homogeneous, in order to interpret or translate a term, we should define and know its different possible "semantic manifestations" (Martin, 1972: 125). In order to facilitate understanding and to ensure translation accuracy, we analyze - from the perspective of an internal polysemy - the terms of the medical lexicon which constitute a specific and restrictive use of the common language lexicon. Through the study of a selection of terms extracted from a specialized dictionary (*Dicționar Medical,* Rusu V. 2010), this communication illustrates the restrictions and the extensions of meaning in a double translation: the terms taken from the common language with a restrictive meaning in the specialized field; the terms belonging to related disciplines and various fields adopting a specific meaning in the medical area. All these directions of change of meaning are thus envisaged to facilitate the practice of translation which raises both general and specific difficulties.

Keywords: medical lexicon, change of meaning, common language, specialized field.
JEL classification: A10, H69, Z10

1 Introduction

Theoretically, every scientific or technical field has its own terminology, but in practice, it sometimes proves to be difficult to establish real borders between the terminology of the various related disciplines, as between terminology and common lexicon (Cabré 1998: 148). The use of "specialized denominations" (Lerat 1995: 21) is one of the elements that differentiates common language and specialized language.

In the medical field, the development of specific terminological system is a process in continuous evolution and change, closely related to the dynamics of research, the constant scientific discovery, the progress and the changes of current society. Starting from the premise that many words exist simultaneously in the common language and in the terminology of one or more specialized languages, in this work we propose to highlight the "semantic manifestations" (Martin, 1972 : 125) induced by polysemy within the lexicon of the medical field, very rich to explore and whose structure is not homogenous.

In order to contribute to improve the practice of translation in the circumstances of changing meanings of the terms belonging to a specific area of activity, in this study we will analyze the medical lexicon through terms that come either from the general language or from the related disciplines. We will thus highlight a terminology subject to high evolutionary dynamics. Related disciplines include a multidisciplinary lexicon bringing together terms used in various specialty areas such as: sports, botany, mechanical engineering, construction, wood industry, computer science, geography, chemistry, advertising, information science, pharmacology, physics etc.

Taking as support the 2010 edition of a specialized medical dictionary - MD (*Dicţionar Medical,* Rusu V.), we analyzed a corpus of selected terms extracted from this work, illustrating the interference of specialized meanings with the meaning of the terms in the general language, which represents a difficulty during the accurate decoding of terminological units. In order to clarify the meaning of the terms submitted for analysis and to ensure translation accuracy, we have also consulted numerous bibliographic sources and multiple general and specialty dictionaries, Romanian and French, namely *Dictionnaire abrégé des termes de médecine* (Delamare, 2012), *Dicţionarul ortografic, ortoepic şi morfologic al limbii român*e (Ediţia a II-a, 2010) and *Grand Dictionnaire*

Terminologique in electronic format, so that the study becomes more accurate.

We will first illustrate some parameters allowing differentiation between terminology and common lexicon and then we will present a perspective on the terms that move from the common language in medical lexicon in order to envisage the interferences and the displacements of the meaning, proving the lexicalization and assimilation process of the terms that were analyzed in the medical specialized language.

2   Terminology and common lexicon

Terminology and common lexicon represent two completely different approaches, distinguished through five factors: function, domain, users, communication situations and types of speech (Cabré 1998: 192).

The term is a component of a terminology or a specialized language and represents the denomination of concepts in scientific and technical fields. It is distinguished of the words of common lexicon by completing a fundamentally referential function. The science uses such a unit to accurately represent the real and especially to analyze the referred concepts. Thus, as Guilbert asserted, "the meaning of the term is its reference to the object or to the being designated" (Guilbert 1981: 189).

The definition of a term through extension corresponds to a definition by reference. Most of the definitions of specialized literature emphasize the relation between terminological and linguistic aspects of the word. As terminological unit, the term can be expressed by a word of common language used with a specialized meaning, a syntagm forming a unit of meaning, a name, an abbreviation, an acronym or a scientific name in Latin or Greek. It is a monosemic use of a lexical unit in a particular specialty area compared to the word which designates a polysemic use of a lexical unit, admitting varied meaning (Țenescu 2014: 386).

A major difference between lexicology and terminology is that the first focuses on the words and their meanings (we started from the word towards the concept) while the terminology describes the concepts and their names (we start from the concept towards the term).

The fundamental distinction between the word and the term is closely related to the reference field. Based on the idea that every term is necessarily a lexical unit taken from the general vocabulary and any word can acquire the term status within of a referential field narrowly defined, depending on extra-linguistic

13

notional criteria, we propose to highlight the medical terms coming from common language and emphasize interferences and displacements of meaning, evidencing lexicalization and assimilation process of analyzed terms in the medical specialized language.

3 Classification of medical terms originating from the common language

Taking into account that specialized languages are "introduced" by the intermediary of the common language (Klaus 1978: 48), their basic concepts are defined using the words of that language and the formulas that are later deducted derived from these basic concepts using the logic. In the specialized literature, the researchers also noted the existence of multiple interferences, since it was found that the two categories have in common a considerable number of "abstract terms that are used either for the expression of logical thinking, or used to describe the real".[1]

The specialized terms are frequently words borrowed from general lexicon and redefined in order to be used in any particular area, which is explained by the practice of designation by analogy (*the teeth of a wheel / teeth of a gear; the right of a car wing*, etc.) Conversely, there are also cases where specialized lexicons provide to the current language many words (processes of determinologisation), whose particularity is decreasing.

Specific medical lexicon includes a wide range of terminological units with a high degree of specialization, nominal specialized syntagms, neologisms, abbreviations, loans, which allow its identification and its differentiation from other specialized lexicons.

In order to highlight the existence of the interference between general lexicon of the language (common vocabulary) and medical specialized lexicon, we have analyzed the corpus of the terms selected from the medical dictionary (Rusu V., 2010) and then we studied the definition of the entries in the explanatory dictionary (DEX[2]), view to

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[1] Verbs such as: *constituer < to create, forme < to forme, presenter < to present, varier < to vary*, etc.; adverbs as like: *généralement < usually, respectivement < respectively* etc.; names as like: *aspect < aspects, cause < cause, méthode < method, nombre < number, résultat < result, structure < structure, système < system, théorie < theory, etc.*
[2] DEX - Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language (III edition, 2009, revised and enlarged); http://dexonline.ro/

clarifying the meaning in the common language. We also consulted the GDT[3] to illustrate the typology of the source areas of migratory terms.

Through the comparison of the definitions of the terms chosen, we found a specialized meaning in the medical field for a total of 272 terminological units, used to accomplish a specific linguistic operation in the specialized field. We have differentiated 118 simple terms coming from the lexicon of common language and 154 complex terms (terminological syntagms) which have in their structure at least one word belonging to the common lexicon.

The simple term refers to the lexical units composed of only one graphical entity. This group includes the terms formed of a single base (A), as well as derivatives, namely the terms containing a radical and one or more derivational morphemes (B).

Examples (A):

agrafă < fr. agrafe < engl. staple
bloc < fr. bloc < engl. block
colier < fr. collier < engl. collar
fantă < fr. fente < enlg. slot/slit
manevră < fr. manœuvre < enlg. manouvre /operation
mesager < fr. messager < engl. messenger
mulaj < fr. moulage < engl. molding
navetă < fr. navette < engl. shuttle
pavilion < fr. pavillon < engl. pavilion ; etc.

Examples (B):

avivare < fr. avivement < engl. avivement
bibloc < fr. bibloc < engl. biblock
reactivare < fr. réactivation < engl. reactivation
termocuplu s.n. < fr. Thermocouple < engl. thermocouple

The complex term refers to the terms formed of several graphical entities of which one, at least, belongs to the common lexicon. This situation is more common in terminology than in common language and it gives rise to terminological syntagms:

Examples:

barieră alveolocapilară < fr. barrière alvéolo-capillaire < engl. alveolar-capillary barrier

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[3] GDT - *Grand Dictionnaire Terminologique (Great Dictionary of Terminology)*; http://gdt.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/index.aspx (last consultation, May 5, 2014)

barieră hematoencefalică < fr. barrière hémato-encéphalique < engl. blood-brain barrier

bloc neuromuscular < fr. bloc neuromusculaire < engl. neuromuscular block

dom pleural < fr. dôme pleural < engl. pleural dome

epurare extrarenală < fr. épuration extrarénale < engl. extrarenal clearance

franje sinoviale < fr. franges synoviales < engl. synovial fringes

matitate cardiacă < fr. matité cardiaque < engl. cardiac mattness

mesaj hormonal < fr. message hormonal < engl. hormonal messages

MD contains 154 terminological syntagms, a relatively high number compared to the simple terms, in agreement with the specialty literature data supporting that these categories of terms represent the largest part of the entries in the specialized dictionaries (L'Homme, 2004: 59).

It is also necessary to distinguish between simple terminological units and polylexical one side/firstly (stable terminological syntagms, but with a non-idiomatic function, one of the terms being univocally determined) and simple and complex phraseological units, on the other side. Phraseological units represent the series of constructions halfway between syntagmatic terms and completely free combinations (Cabré, 1998 : 162).

Compared to phraseological units, the polylexical terminological units such as:

barieră placentară < fr. barrière placentaire < engl. placental barrier;

filtrare glomerulară < fr. filtration glomérulaire < engl. glomerular filtration ; epurare extrarenală < fr. épuration extrarénale < engl. extrarenal clearance,

are composed of two or more lexemes, of which one is a strictly specialized term and the others are easily substituted by third parties. The components of the polylexical terminological units are univocally associated and one or few of the terms does not have any combinatorial restrictions.

Using the same phonetic system and the same grammar as the common language, the medical field includes a variety of terms necessary to name or to describe the specific concepts, an aspect that explains the frequent cases of interference between common language and specialized languages. That is the case where the words acquire new meanings in the scientific and technical language, and vice versa, certain terms penetrate into the common language with

connotative meanings (Țenescu, 2009: 37).

4 Dynamics of the meanings of migratory terms in the medical lexicon and the source-areas

The specific knowledge in medical sciences field are transmitted, understood and acquired through the scientific language, using specialized terms specific to the given field, but also terms from the general language. To illustrate this aspect we performed an inventory of terms that have migrated from the common language in medical vocabulary where they have been integrated with a specialized basic meaning.

We have also identified several simple and complex terms (terminological syntagms) which have undergone the phenomenon of migration from the common language to other specialty areas, related to several fields of knowledge. The analysis is illustrated with examples from the letters A and B (table 1 and table 2).

Table 1

Simple migratory term	*Source areas of migratory term*
1. agrafă < fr. agrafe < engl. staple	Clothing industry; printing; mechanical engineering; Construction / Building.
2. amorsă s.f. < fr. amorce < engl. primer	Biology; sport; information technology.
3. baleiaj s.n. < fr. balayage < engl. scanning	Sport; information technology; electronics; telecommunications; military; television; linguistics.
4. balon s.m. < fr. ballon < engl. balloon / ball	Sport; aeronautics; navy seal; chemistry; finance; electricity; industry (oil and natural gas; leather)
5. balotare s.f. < fr. ballottement < engl. sloshing	Astronautics; mechanical engineering; aeronautics.
6. bandaj s.n. < fr. bandage < engl. bandage	Automotive industry; sport; botany; mechanical engineering; building; timber industry.

7. bandă s.f. < fr. bande < engl. strip	Industry (automotive, leather); sport; mechanical engineering; sociology; biology; information technology; military; navy seal; metallurgy
8. bloc s.n. < fr. bloc < engl. block	Information technology; mechanical engineering; geography; chemistry; building; advertising; information science; statistics; aeronautics; economy; timber industry; metallurgy; art.
9. blocaj s.n. < fr. blocage < engl. blocking	Sport; finance; telecommunication; mechanical engineering; building; printing; electronics; information technology; pharmacology.
10. bujie s.f < fr. bougie	Pharmacologie; physique; telecommunication; psychologie; art; métallurgie; industrie automobile; génie mécanique.
11. burjeon s.n. *< fr. bourgeon < engl.bud*	Agriculture; botany; biology.
12. buton s.n. < fr. bouton < engl.button	Industry (clothing, paper); sport; information technology; mechanical engineering; food; pharmacology; electricity; navy seal; metallurgy; botany; telecommunication; art.

Table 2

Terminological syntagms	*Migratory term*	*Source areas of migratory term*
1. atitudine Kirmisson *< fr. attitude de Kirmisson < engl. Kirmisson attitude*	*attitude*	Psychology; commerce; sport.
2. arierație mentală *< fr. arriération mentale < engl. mental retardation*	*retardation*	Psychology
3. bandeletă reactivă *< fr. bandelette réactive < engl. reagent strip*	*strip*	Photography; chemistry; timber industry.

4. *balotare fetală* *< fr. ballottement fœtal < engl.* *fetal sloshing*	*sloshing*	Astronautics; mechanical engineering.
5. *barieră alveolocapilară* *< fr. barrière alvéolo-capillaire <* *engl. alveolocapillary barrier*	*barrier*	Transport; sport; building; security; chemistry; electricity; geography; aeronautics.
6. *barieră hematoencefalică* *< fr. barrière hémato-encéphalique* *< engl. hematoencephalic barrier*		
7. *barieră placentară* *< fr. barrière placentaire* *encéphalique < engl. placental* *barrier*		
8. *barieră reproductivă* *< fr. barrière reproductive < engl.* *reproductive barrier*		
10. *blocaj articular* *< fr. blocage articulaire < engl.* *articular blocking*	*blocking*	Handling and storage; sport; finance; mechanical engineering; telecommunications; metallurgy; forestry; oil and natural gas; printing; electronics; information technology; pharmacology.
11. *bordură în perie* *< fr. bordure en brosse < engl.* *brush border*	*border*	Art; navy seal; agriculture; sport; furniture; building; printing; audiovisual; garment industry.
	brush	Automotive industry; tooling; sport; painting; botany; jewelry store; agriculture; ecology; leather industry; printing.
12. *bulion de cultură* *< fr. bouillon de culture < engl.* *culture broth*	*broth*	Food; sugar industry; sport; printing; glass; journalism; finance.

culture	Food; agriculture; environmental protection; psychology; biology; philosophy; education; pharmacology.	

5   Conclusions

Motivated by the difficulty of "not recognizing in the lexical units belonging to the usual language the use of real terms falling within a special language" (Durieux 1997: 100), this study highlights a dynamic terminology and provides a clear understanding of the term and its use both by specialists and all those who, for various purposes, are interested in specialized lexical units.

We emphasize the fact that a significant proportion of the common lexicon words play an essential role in the scientific expression and within specialized lexicons. The words that come from the common lexicon can be found not in one specialty area, but in a large number of specialties.

The passage of the words of common language into the medical lexicon reveals interferences and displacements of meaning and certifies lexicalization and assimilation process of analyzed terms in the medical specialized language (Lungu Ştefan 2012: 80). The examples discussed also confirm the projection of the medical lexicon in other specialized areas where the meanings multiply, thus satisfying various terminological needs.

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