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EQUIVALENCE ISSUES IN THE TRANSLATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract
The translation of pharmaceutical terminology presents significant challenges due to the specificity, complexity, and cross-disciplinary nature of the field. Achieving equivalence between source and target languages is essential to ensure accurate communication, patient safety, and regulatory compliance. This article examines the types of equivalence in pharmaceutical translation, identifies common problems faced by translators, and proposes strategies to overcome these issues. The study highlights the importance of linguistic precision, subject-matter expertise, and standardization in the translation process.

Keywords: Pharmaceutical translation, terminology, equivalence, medical language, translation challenges.

Introduction

In recent decades, the rapid development of the pharmaceutical industry and the globalization of healthcare systems have significantly increased the demand for high-quality pharmaceutical translation. Medical information, drug instructions, clinical trial documentation, and regulatory texts must be accurately translated to ensure effective international communication and patient safety. In this context, pharmaceutical translation has emerged as a highly specialized field that requires not only linguistic competence but also in-depth knowledge of medical and pharmacological concepts.

One of the central challenges in pharmaceutical translation is achieving equivalence between the source and target languages. Unlike general translation, pharmaceutical texts are characterized by strict terminology, standardized expressions, and a high degree of precision. Even minor deviations in meaning

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can lead to misunderstandings, incorrect dosage instructions, or misuse of medications, which may pose serious risks to human health.

The concept of equivalence, therefore, plays a crucial role in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of translated pharmaceutical materials. It involves not only the correct transfer of lexical meaning but also the preservation of semantic, functional, and pragmatic aspects of the original text. However, achieving full equivalence is often complicated by differences in language structure, terminology systems, and cultural as well as regulatory frameworks.

This article aims to analyze the main problems of equivalence in the translation of pharmaceutical terminology and to explore effective strategies for overcoming these challenges. By examining common difficulties and practical solutions, the study seeks to contribute to improving the quality and consistency of pharmaceutical translation in a global context.

Methods

This study applies a qualitative and descriptive research approach to analyze equivalence issues in the translation of pharmaceutical terminology. The research is based on the examination of various pharmaceutical texts, including drug leaflets, clinical trial documentation, and medical guidelines.

A comparative analysis method was used to identify differences between source and target language terminology. Selected pharmaceutical terms were analyzed in context to determine how equivalence is achieved or distorted during translation.

In addition, the study relies on established translation theories and internationally recognized terminology standards. The analysis focuses on identifying common translation problems and evaluating the strategies used to resolve them.

Analysis and Results

The analysis of pharmaceutical translation demonstrates that achieving complete equivalence is a complex and challenging process. A review of different pharmaceutical materials, such as drug leaflets, clinical documents, and medical guidelines, highlights several recurring issues.

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To begin with, the absence of direct lexical equivalents between languages often results in partial equivalence. This is particularly evident in the case of newly developed medicines and modern treatment approaches. Translators frequently rely on strategies such as borrowing, calquing, or descriptive translation, which, although useful, may affect terminological uniformity.

In addition, semantic variation poses another significant difficulty. Many pharmaceutical terms are context-dependent and may carry different meanings in different situations. The findings indicate that insufficient background knowledge can lead to inaccurate interpretation and inappropriate term selection.

The use of abbreviations and acronyms also presents notable challenges. Since these forms are not always standardized across languages, incorrect interpretation or failure to clarify them can reduce the clarity and precision of the translated text.

Moreover, variations in regulatory systems and cultural contexts influence translation decisions. Differences in drug classification, dosage units, and naming conventions require translators to adapt content to ensure it is appropriate and understandable for the target audience.

The results further show that the application of standardized terminology resources greatly enhances translation quality. Translators who utilize international databases and professional guidelines achieve higher levels of consistency and accuracy compared to those relying only on general references.

The findings of the study reveal that achieving full equivalence in pharmaceutical translation is often problematic. One of the most frequent issues is the absence of direct lexical equivalents, particularly for newly introduced drugs and medical concepts.

The analysis also shows that semantic ambiguity significantly affects translation accuracy. Certain pharmaceutical terms vary in meaning depending on context, which increases the risk of incorrect interpretation.

Another important result is related to the use of abbreviations and acronyms. These elements are not always consistently translated, leading to potential misunderstandings in the target text.

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Furthermore, differences in regulatory systems and cultural contexts were found to influence translation outcomes. Variations in drug classification, dosage units, and naming conventions create additional challenges for translators.

Discussion

The results indicate that equivalence in pharmaceutical translation should be viewed as a dynamic and context-dependent process rather than a fixed correspondence. The lack of direct equivalents and semantic complexity requires translators to make informed decisions based on both linguistic and professional knowledge.

The study also highlights the importance of using standardized terminology resources and international guidelines. Translators who rely on such tools are more likely to produce accurate and consistent translations.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the need for interdisciplinary competence. Effective pharmaceutical translation requires not only language skills but also a solid understanding of medical and pharmacological concepts.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that equivalence in pharmaceutical translation is not always absolute but rather relative. It requires a careful balance between linguistic accuracy and practical clarity, supported by professional expertise and reliable resources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the translation of pharmaceutical terminology is a highly complex and specialized task that demands both linguistic competence and domain-specific knowledge. Achieving full equivalence in pharmaceutical translation is often challenging due to lexical gaps, semantic variations, the use of abbreviations, and differences in regulatory and cultural contexts. These factors make it necessary for translators to apply informed strategies that balance linguistic accuracy with functional clarity.

The study highlights that the use of standardized terminology resources, adherence to international guidelines, and collaboration with subject-matter experts significantly enhance translation quality. Continuous professional

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development is also essential, as pharmaceutical language is constantly evolving. By employing appropriate translation strategies and relying on reliable resources, translators can ensure more consistent and precise renderings of medical texts.

Overall, ensuring equivalence in pharmaceutical translation is crucial for maintaining patient safety, supporting effective communication, and facilitating the global exchange of medical knowledge. Future research may focus on developing advanced tools and methodologies to further assist translators in achieving higher levels of accuracy, consistency, and reliability.

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