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Equivalence variation in English-Polish medical translation: A study of hyphenated terminological compounds with *-like*

Achieving interlingual equivalence is never easy, especially in specialized translation. Topic-specific terminology in most fields tends to be cognitively and semantically complex thus adding to the already difficult task of precise transferring of specialized meaning.

This presentation is a preliminary report on a study concerning English-Polish translation of phrases containing similitudinal *-like* adjectives. For the purpose of the analysis about 1000 such units have been extracted from four English medical textbooks along with their Polish equivalents found in published Polish translations. Combinations such as *Parkinson-like symptoms*, *migraine-like headaches*, *hepatitis-like clinical events* or *lymphoma-like proliferation* could be classified as strictly terminological phrases since the nouns comprising the similitudinal *-like* adjectives and the head nouns are medical terms. However, units such as *doll-like faces*, *doughnut-like densities*, *shawl-like distribution*, *button-like ulcer* or *sponge-like appearance* are hybrids of commonplace (i.e., non-specialized) words used in the adjectival part and (usually) terminologically-oriented head nouns. The phrases incorporating the similitudinal *-like* are semantically compositional and are used in medical texts to enhance the understanding of various properties of medical concepts (e.g., shape, size, color, origin).

One of the key features of specialized translation is terminological consistency. However, in the case of the similitudinal *-like* adjectives, the Polish equivalents display a certain level of variation (at the grammatical, morphological and lexical levels). Depending on the context and collocates, the Polish translations included combinations featuring the suffixal *-podobny* as in *alergicznopodobny*, prefixal *rzekomo-* as in *rzekomogrypowy*, or *pseudo-* as in *pseudozapalne*, the phrase *podobny do X*, or *przypominający X, typu X*. An attempt has been made to categorize the phrases with similitudinal *-like* adjectives in medical texts in order to identify lexical, structural and collocational patterns that would be helpful in achieving more consistent terminological equivalence.