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**PSEUDO-INTERNATIONALISMS IN THE LANGUAGE OF
MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE AS A CHALLENGE FOR
TRANSLATION STUDIES**

У статті досліджено проблему перекладу псевдоінтернаціоналізмів у медичному дискурсі. Наведено способи мінімізації й уникнення помилок в усному та писемному мовленні студентів вищих медичних навчальних закладів у процесі вивчення англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням.

Ключові слова: *псевдоінтернаціоналізм, медична термінологія, лексичне значення, лексичне запозичення, медичний дискурс.*

The present paper focuses on medical false cognates in Ukrainian and English. The authors suggest the typology of pseudo-internationalisms in the process of learning English at medical universities. The ways to minimize and avoid errors in oral and written speech of students at higher medical educational institutions have been described. The study of English pseudo-internationalisms in the language of medicine and healthcare is important for developing the guidelines to eliminate possible mistakes in written translation, and to avoid misunderstanding in a foreign-language clinical setting. The authors emphasize the necessity to pay special attention to pseudo-internationalisms in medicine and healthcare when developing academic ESP syllabi at medical universities. The research will be useful for translation studies, teaching English as a second language, and developing multilingual competence of future doctors.

Key words: *pseudo-internationalism, medical terminology, lexical meaning, lexical borrowing, medical discourse.*

Translation of medical discourse requires not only a high level of language proficiency, but relevant medical knowledge as well. In this context, a significant role belongs to “translator’s false friends”, also known as false cognates and pseudo-internationalisms, which are frequently found in specialized languages, and the language of medicine is no exception [1; 3]. The term “translator’s false friends” was introduced by French linguists Maxime Kœssler and Jules Derocquigny in 1928 [7]. There are two ways to explain the causes of pseudo-internationalisms formation: 1) occasional coincidence of sounds in languages that are not in contact; 2) nonrandom coincidence, due to changes in the semantics of genetically close cognate words [2]. It is well known that a great number of medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek. However, some lexical units can have different meanings in various European languages despite the same etymological origin (for instance, Spanish *embarazada*, meaning “pregnant”, not “embarrassed”; and *constipado*, meaning “head cold”, and not “constipation”).

The present paper focuses on medical false cognates in Ukrainian as opposed to English. However, it is obvious that the range of languages compared to English can be infinitely expanded. The study of Ukrainian-English pseudo-internationalisms in the language of medicine and healthcare as a manifestation of homonymy in unrelated languages is important for developing the guidelines to eliminate possible mistakes when writing research papers and case reports, to avoid misunderstanding in a foreign-language clinical setting (i.e., to ensure the doctor’s effective communicate with patients and other medical professionals). Our research will be useful for translation studies, teaching English as a second language, and developing multilingual competence of future doctors.

This research paper presents the attempt to structure and classify the most common pseudo-internationalisms which can be encountered in medical translation and in healthcare setting. Table 1 represents English false cognates that have completely different lexical meanings in Ukrainian. They can be easily confused due to their similar spelling. In addition, correct translations are provided in each particular case.

Table 1

Pseudo-international words in the language of medicine and healthcare

“False friend” and its correct translation into Ukrainian	Possible mistake and reverse translation
accurate: <i>точний</i>	акуратний, охайний: <i>tidy</i>
actual: <i>дійсний, реальний, фактичний;</i> actually: <i>насправді</i>	актуальний: <i>relevant, topical;</i> актуально: <i>smth. is of current interest, smth. remains pertinent</i>
angina: <i>стенокардія, грудна жаба</i>	ангіна: <i>quinsy, tonsillitis</i>
aspirant: <i>претендент, кандидат</i>	аспірант: <i>postgraduate student</i>
climax: <i>кульмінація (захворювання)</i>	клімакс: <i>menopause, climacteric period</i>
complexion: <i>колір обличчя</i>	комплексія, будова тіла, статура: <i>build, bodily constitution</i>
concurrent: <i>одночасний, супутній (про захворювання)</i>	конкурент: <i>competitor</i>
data: <i>інформація, дані</i>	дата: <i>date</i>
delicate: <i>тонкий, ніжний, тендітний, делікатний (такий, що вимагає обережного ставлення)</i>	делікатний (тактовний): <i>tactful, considerate</i>
doze: <i>дрімота, в'ялість</i>	доза: <i>dose</i>
expertise: <i>професійна компетентність, високий професіоналізм</i>	експертиза: <i>expert examination, expert evaluation</i>
ferment: <i>закваска, бродіння</i>	фермент: <i>enzyme</i>
glands: <i>залози</i>	мигдалики: <i>tonsils</i>
hospital: <i>лікарня</i>	госпіталь: <i>military (army) hospital</i>
insult: <i>образа</i>	інсульт: <i>stroke</i>
invalid: <i>недійсний</i>	інвалід: <i>disabled, challenged person</i>
mosquito: <i>комар</i>	москіт: <i>sandfly</i>
plaster: <i>гінс</i>	пластир: <i>band aid, adhesive patch</i>
preservative: <i>консервант</i>	презерватив: <i>condom</i>
receipt: <i>квитанція, чек;</i> recipe: <i>кулінарний рецепт</i>	медичний рецепт: <i>prescription</i>
resin: <i>смола, канифоль, каучук</i>	гума: <i>rubber</i>
sodium: <i>натрій</i>	сода: <i>soda</i>
spectre: <i>привид</i>	спектр: <i>spectrum, range</i>
technique: <i>технологія, методика</i>	техніка, обладнання: <i>equipment, machinery, appliances</i>

In addition, some lexical units can assume “falseness” in certain expressions, for instance: **periodic** acid – “йодна кислота” (**NOT** “періодична”), and therefore, require the background knowledge from appropriate reference literature.

In the process of teaching English for Specific Purposes in higher education, it is necessary to compile the dictionaries of pseudo-internationalisms, prepare additional training materials, and suggest students the exercises which develop the skills of translation, understanding and correct usage of interlingual homonyms, which are found in medical terminology most often. Errors can also be avoided by using the relevant reference literature, textbooks on the history of medicine, etc. When studying the medical “false friends” the teacher should explain the causes of their origin, where possible. For instance, when discussing the word “angina”, one should mention the parallel borrowing of the word from Latin into Ukrainian and English. However, the meanings of the borrowed word in two languages initially differed [6]: in Ukrainian, the word was borrowed from the Latin as “angina tonsillitis” – “*choking due to inflammation of the tonsils*”, while the English word “angina” comes from another Latin term “angina pectoris” – “*suffocative chest pain*”.

Table 2 presents English internationalisms from medical settings, some lexical meanings of which coincide with corresponding meanings of borrowed words in the Ukrainian language (“genuine international meanings”) [4]. However, numerous pseudo-internationalisms may have, along with these coincidences, other quite “unexpected” meanings (which are referred to as “pseudo-international meanings”), depending on the context. It is necessary to point out that these lexical units are associated with the greatest number of errors in translation [5].

Table 2

Internationalisms with multiple meanings

Polysemantic words	Genuine international meaning	Pseudo-international meaning
aggressive, <i>adj</i>	агресивний	інтенсивний, наполегливий
activity, <i>n</i>	активність	діяльність

arrest , <i>n</i>	арешт	зупинка (<i>серця</i>)
attack , <i>n</i>	атака	напад (<i>серцевий</i>)
argument , <i>n</i>	аргумент	суперечка
Caucasian , <i>n</i>	кавказець	представник європеїдної раси
comfort , <i>n, v</i>	комфорт	втішати, заспокоювати
complex , <i>adj</i>	комплексний	складний
compromise , <i>v</i>	йти на компроміс; компрометувати	піддавати ризику
dramatic , <i>adj</i>	драматичний	різкий, неочікуваний
episode , <i>n</i>	епізод	напад (хвороби), криз
thesis , <i>n</i>	тези	дисертація
figure , <i>n</i>	фігура	рисунок; число
fruit , <i>n</i>	фрукт	плід
medicine , <i>n</i>	медицина	ліки
phenomenon , <i>n</i>	феномен	явище
problem , <i>n</i>	проблема	задача, вправа
realize , <i>v</i>	реалізувати	чітко уявляти, усвідомлювати
regular , <i>adj</i>	регулярний	нормальний, звичайний, стандартний
specific , <i>adj</i>	специфічний	конкретний; питомий
suspended , <i>adj</i>	суспендований, у стані суспензії	тимчасово припинений; відсторонений від виконання обов'язків
sympathy , <i>n</i>	симпатія	співчуття

During English-Ukrainian translation of medical texts, students can consult the supporting materials, similar to Table 2 given above (for such cases as, for example, “heart attack” – “*серцевий напад*”). However, in the process of Ukrainian-English translation (e.g., when writing essays, drafting reports, etc.), students should be advised to refer to these polysemantic lexical units cautiously, since their genuine international meanings (i.e., those which are easily accessible due to similar sounding) can be used very infrequently. For instance, in translating such expressions as “комплексний підхід” or “реалізувати проект”, it is better to use words that are less polysemantic, such as “*comprehensive* approach” (instead of “*complex*”) and “*to implement* a project” (instead of “*to realize*”), respectively, in order to avoid ambiguity. The suggested material in Tables 1 and 2 is expected

to facilitate the process of mastering pseudo-internationalisms in medical English by future doctors. This list is by no means exhaustive – it stipulates further development and elaboration.

The main objective of today's higher medical education is to prepare qualified specialists who will be able to work in a foreign language professional environment. False cognates can significantly impede the communication process, resulting in misunderstanding and misleading actions in the diagnosis and treatment. We suggest that academic syllabi should pay special attention to false friends in medicine and healthcare. Therefore, in the process of teaching English as a lingua franca, students should be cautioned against the potential false friends through the use of compiled multilingual dictionaries of pseudo-internationalisms in English and other European languages.

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