

A Functional Approach to Medical Translation: a Skopos Theory-based Study

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Abstract

This study investigates how skopos theory explores translation strategies in medical texts, focusing on the translator's role in ensuring coherence and effective communication of health information. From a functional perspective, a critical analysis is carried out on selected texts provided by a U.S. health institution in charge of providing patients with healthcare information. The texts are originally published in the English language and translated into Arabic. The paper aims at assessing the translator's fidelity and the impact of translation methods on the clarity of medical information addressed to laypeople who are not specialized in medical terminology and have limited knowledge in this field. The study concludes that intratextual and intertextual coherence can be achieved via specific translation strategies such as explicitation, addition and substitution while other strategies, such as literal translation may fail to convey medical information to the target audience. The findings highlight the translator's crucial role in ensuring that non-experts understand health information. Applying skopos theory prioritizes the target audience's needs, leading to more effective communication and improved accessibility.

Keywords; communication- intratextual coherence- intratextual coherence- medical translation- skopos theory.

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Introduction

Translation is regarded as a communicative process that involves conveying a message from one language to another, rather than simply transferring words. It ensures access to information and disseminates knowledge. It encompasses the task of communicating an intended message while addressing the needs and expectations of the target audience. To achieve this, it requires an effective use of translation methods that respect the specific contexts in which the information is presented. Indeed, transferring medical information is critical. It should absolutely ensure that it is accessible and comprehensible to non-experts. Hence, translators should adopt a relevant approach to make the information comprehensible to the target audience, prioritizing both clarity and contextual relevance. By focusing on the audience's understanding, translators ensure that health information is conveyed accurately and effectively. Skopos theory, is a functionalist approach. It emphasizes the importance of considering the purpose of the text as a guiding principle in translation choices. It asserts that the target text form should be determined by its intended function for its audience. This theory provides a framework for analyzing how translation choices can impact both intratextual and intertextual coherence, focusing on the fact that the message is conveyed effectively to the recipient. Within this context, the main question addressed in this paper is: How do translation choices affect the intratextual and intertextual coherence of medical information based on skopos theory? The aim is to explore the impact of specific translation choices on the coherence of medical information, particularly for non-expert recipients while maintaining fidelity to the source text. By examining various examples, the analysis will highlight the significance of employing appropriate translation methods that effectively convey the intended message and enhance communication between the source text producer and the target audience. The methodological framework consists of analyzing selected examples from "MedlinePlus," an online health information provider operated by "the U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM)." This resource, which is part of "the National Institutes of Health (NIH)" offers health information to non-expert people regarding diseases and medical procedures (MedlinePlus, 2023). The analyzed medical texts are translated by "Health Information Translations," a US project aimed at assisting healthcare providers in conveying health information to non-English speaking general public (Health Information Translations, 2024).

1. Translating medical information for non-experts

Laypeople or non-experts may not be familiar with medical terms and concepts. Hence, it can be challenging for translators to convey health information to non-expert target audience. In this case, priority should be given to simplicity and clarity by choosing adequate translation strategies that satisfy the expectations of the target audience. The translation process should focus on the reception situation in the target language by communicating the intended meaning "within an acceptable rendition in the reader's language." (Fischbach, 1962, p. 464)

The use of translation methods in accordance with the reception situation aims at ensuring that non-specialists have access to health information. These methods, which may include explanation, explication, and adaptation, are meant for ensuring the communicative function of medical texts and meeting non-expert target audience's needs. This requires translators to be careful about the transmission of scientific concepts to the target audience and be able to adapt health information for non-experts. Therefore, this strategy essentially emphasizes the function of the text and the recipient's needs, (Abdullah Hasan Alhussaini, 2021, p. 15- 16).

For the purpose of ensuring accessibility of medical information to non-expert patients, the European Union (EU) (EUR-Lex, 1992) stresses that the terms used in medicines brochures should be “clear and understandable.” This emphasis is extended to the translation of medical brochures as well, as translation plays an important role in transmitting health information to patients who need these brochures in their target language. Consequently, the translator’s choice has a considerable effect on the patient’s comprehension of health information.

Translating medical information can be challenging due to lack of a comprehensible language in the source text. The source text producers, who are often health specialists, may fail to convey the intended meaning effectively and may employ complicated linguistic forms that hinder the understanding of the text. As a result, the translator would face an incomprehensible or incomplete message. Owing to that, the translator is supposed to make an extra effort to achieve the communicative function of the target text, by re-expressing the original meaning for better communication with the target audience (Munoz-Miquel, Ezpeleta-Piorno, & Saiz-Hontangas, 2018, p. 180).

1. Functional translation theories

In the 1970s, German theorists started focusing on functional equivalence rather than linguistic equivalence, emphasizing faithfulness to the target text. The functional approach in translation studies is based on the communicative function and the goal of the target text. (Munday, 2016, p. 73) From the perspective of functional theories, translation is not considered as a simple literal transfer but rather as a purpose-oriented action that is guided by the expectations of the target audience. Thus, the form of the target text is determined by the expectations of the audience who needs it. Greater priority should be given to the goal of the translation and more freedom is allowed in the decision-making process provided that communication is achieved. This would lead to a different linguistic form of the target text compared to the source text. (Schaffner, 1998, p. 115- 116).

From a functional perspective on medical translation for laypeople or patients, the features of the target text are guided by the expectations of the target audience. This implies that translators should fundamentally aim for clarity, accuracy, and accessibility of health information by choosing methods that enhance comprehension while preserving the intended medical information.

1.1. Text type

The function of the text is the main focus in Katharina Reiss’ translation approach, as it should be the guiding rule for translators, rather than viewing translation as a simple word-for-word or a sentence-for-sentence transfer. This functionalist approach establishes a distinct text type for each of the following functions: “informative,” “expressive,” and “operative” (Munday, 2001, p. 73). Each type has specific characteristics and purposes and appropriate translation methods should be employed in accordance with the text type. For instance, the translation of an informative text should focus on the content, using a “logical language dimension” along with “explicitation as required” (Munday, 2001, p. 75). The translation of an expressive text should preserve its form through “an aesthetic language dimension,” while the translation of “an operative” text should be “appellative-focused”, aiming for “an equivalent effect” (Munday, 2001, p. 75).

From the perspective of text typology, medical translation requires to focus on achieving the communicative function of the medical text and to have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter. When translating healthcare documents, for instance, translators should be familiar with medical concepts terminology in the target language (Reiss, 2000, p. 70). Hence, the employed methods in translating medical texts can reflect the translator's level of knowledge in the subject matter.

1.2. Skopos theory

Skopos is a Greek word which means the aim, the purpose or the function. It represents "the highest rule of a theory of translational action" that determines the action of translation and guides the translator's method and strategies (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 90). This theory focuses on the target text called "translatum," emphasizing that "a translatum is always the result of a process" and taking into consideration the purpose of the translation and the function of the target text (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 11). The translation process is guided by its "purpose" and a successful translation action depends on its adequacy with the "translation situation." Therefore, translators should be aware of the purpose of the translation in order to adapt the translational process to achieve the intended aim (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 85-89).

Reiss and Vermeer (2014, p. 91) state that the "skopos" or the "purpose" of translation can be decided by "commissioners" or "publishers" who may be involved in the translation process, setting rules for the target text. In this case, the translator should respect this skopos and follow the decided rules. For instance, the publisher of a technical medical book may set the skopos of the translation as producing a translated book with simplified information accessible by non-specialized audience. Thus, the translator should follow the skopos of the translation by choosing appropriate methods that achieve this purpose, such as explication and explanation.

Based on the skopos theory, translators should not be limited to the source text content and its linguistic form but also to the contextual elements and cultural differences (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 138). This means that the translation action does not necessarily follow the literal meaning of the words but it should take into consideration their function in the context. The translator's choices should ensure that the target text is acceptable by the target audience within the contextual communication framework. For instance, the translation of a medical document intended for patients may require the translator to simplify the language and avoid medical jargon, using clear explanations and plain language.

1.2.1. Intratextual coherence

Reiss and Vermeer (2014, p. 98) establish a rule regarding the coherence of the target text, referring to intratextual coherence. It is one of the basic rules of skopos theory, stipulating that the target text message should be interpretable as "sufficiently coherent in itself" within the reception context (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 98). This implies that the translator is in charge of making the target text message understood and communicating the intended information for the target audience. Reiss and Vermeer (2014, p. 98) point out that translation choices can impact the intratextual coherence of the target text if the translator does not deal with the text as one piece

In application of this rule in medical translation, intratextual coherence is considered as an important element in the process of translating health information, as the target text should maintain a logical structure and clarity and convey the intended information to the audience. For

instance, choosing terminology that is relevant to the context clarifies the medical information and fulfils the comprehension purpose. Prioritizing intratextual coherence in medical translation ensures the understanding and the communication of health information.

1.2.2. Intertextual coherence

Reiss and Vermeer (2014, p. 102) emphasize the importance of maintaining intertextual coherence based on “the translator’s understanding of the source text” as well as the function of the target text. The application of this rule implies the focus on “the coherent transfer of the source text,” as the translator interprets the message as “the recipient” and then “encodes” it as “a re-producer” for the target recipient (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 102). Building on this point, it is important to prioritize the understandability of target text before assessing the intertextual coherence rule, as the translator should be aware that the audience will receive the information as an independent text (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 103).

Based on skopos theory, medical translation requires achieving intertextual and ensuring that essential information is preserved. Hence, it is crucial for the translator to fulfil intertextual coherence by employing adequate translation methods to ensure that the target audience understands the message accurately. Accordingly, the translator of health information is responsible for transmitting the message and achieving coherence between the source and target texts

2. Methodology of analysis

A critical analysis is conducted on ten (10) source texts in English, along with their corresponding Arabic translations, selected from MedlinePlus (MedlinePlus, 2021). This analysis aims to assess the translations through the framework of skopos theory, specifically focusing on both intratextual and intertextual coherence. Following the analysis, the findings will be presented and discussed to reach a conclusion about the impact of translation choices on effectively conveying health information to the target audience.

2.1. Analysis of intratextual coherence

In this section, we will analyze the intratextual coherence of the selected source texts (ST) and their corresponding target texts (TT) in light of skopos theory.

Example 1

ST

“Tuberculosis or TB is a disease caused by germs called bacteria that most often affects the lungs. You can get infected with TB when **you breathe in the germs**. You are at a higher risk to get TB if you have a weak immune system. This system can be weakened by poor diet, **illness**, medicines, stress and other causes.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

“السل هو مرض تسببه الجراثيم المسماة بالبكتيريا التي تؤثر في الغالب على الرئتين. وقد تصاب بالسل عند **تنفس هذه الجراثيم**. يزداد احتمال تعرضك للإصابة بالسل إذا كان جهاز المناعة لديك ضعيفا. ويضعف جهاز المناعة بسبب سوء التغذية أو الإصابة بالمرض أو تناول الأدوية أو لأسباب أخرى.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

This example is extracted from a text that offers information about tuberculosis disease including its signs, types of infection, related-tests, and hospital care. Coherence is maintained throughout most parts of the TT which are built on the definition of tuberculosis disease and its causes. The information is transferred to the TT audience in accordance with the purpose of the translation. However, the TT is marked by some incoherence elements that lead to possible misunderstanding and incoherent interpretation of the message by the TT audience. The translation of the clause “when you breath in the germs” (MedlinePlus, 2021) is ambiguous for the recipient. Its equivalent in the target language could suggest that the germs themselves are breathing, which is scientifically inaccurate. The use of the word breathing is incoherent with the intended information, as the association of the breathing action directly with the word germs may confuse the audience. Therefore, we suggest to modify this translation by substituting the word breathing with the word inhaling in order to refer to the action of breathing in the air that contains germs. This translation choice ensures clear communication by eliminating ambiguity and maintaining medical accuracy.

Additionally, the translator chose to use a phrase which conveys the idea of catching the disease, presenting incoherence and confusing the audience’s understanding of the message. The use of the definite article ال (the) in the target text implies that the disease being referred to is tuberculosis. This translation choice provides inaccurate medical information to the target audience who would think that tuberculosis specifically weakens the immune system. Consequently, omitting the definite article ال leads to more clarity and conveys accurate information on the fact that the immune system may be weakened by any disease. The translation choice of removing the definite article aims at achieving intratextual coherence in the target text, enabling the recipient to understand the message that any disease can weaken immunity.

Example 2

ST

“Symptoms may start soon after you are around **things** (triggers) that cause your asthma attacks. This is an early phase response. Or they may start several hours after **exposure** (late phase response).” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

“قد تبدأ الأعراض بعد فترة وجيزة من وجودك بالقرب من أشياء (محفزات) تسبب لك نوبات الربو. حيث إنها مرحلة الاستجابة المبكرة. أو قد تبدأ بعد عدة ساعات من **التعرض** (مرحلة الاستجابة المتأخرة).” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

This example is extracted from a document that explains symptoms of asthma disease and its prevention. The information is related to the human body’s response to triggers that cause asthma attacks. The choice of conveying the information by employing a word-for-word approach results in incoherence in some parts of the text. Choosing a literal equivalent to the word things, alongside the word “triggers,” (MedlinePlus, 2021) creates redundancy. Skopos theory’s coherence rule states that the target audience should receive a coherent text and be able to acquire the intended information in a clear way. Thus, the literal equivalent should be omitted, as it represents an unnecessary addition and does not enhance the meaning.

Furthermore, the translation choice in the sentence “أو قد تبدأ بعد عدة ساعات من **التعرض**” (MedlinePlus, 2021) does not comply with the skopos theory’s coherence rule. The target text fails to convey the complete intended information and creates confusion to the audience. According to the

skopos theory's coherence rule, the text should be viewed as a whole in order to interpret the message coherently. As a result, we recommend some modifications for clarity and intratextual coherence. The recommended translation choice is to add لهذه المحفزات for providing the necessary context and ensuring that the audience understands the target text message. The suggested addition achieves intratextual coherence and provides clearer understanding of asthma symptoms and responses.

Example 3

ST

“**Stay inside** when air pollution, pollen, or dust levels are high.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

“ابق في الداخل عندما تكون مستويات تلوث الهواء أو حبوب اللقاح أو الغبار مرتفعة.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The example is extracted from a document that explains asthma disease and its signs. It also provides instructions for affected people to take care of their medical condition and prevent asthma attacks. The translation choice of using the phrase "ابق في الداخل" (MedlinePlus, 2021) leads to incoherence of the target text. The intended message of avoiding exposure to elements present in the air such as pollution, pollen, and dust is not effectively communicated to the audience. The skopos theory's coherence rule states that the target text should be interpretable as coherent by the recipient. Choosing the literal equivalent "ابق في الداخل" (MedlinePlus, 2021) fails to communicate the intended information in a comprehensive way. The target message is incomplete and lacks contextual clarity. The phrase "ابق في الداخل" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (Staying inside) does not emphasize the importance of avoiding exposure to those elements, as the audience may not connect staying inside with the risk posed by them.

In accordance with the skopos theory's coherence rule, the translation choice should focus on delivering the message more clearly to raise the target audience's awareness of the importance of avoiding exposure to asthma triggers. To achieve this, we suggest using the verb تعرض (to get exposed) in the imperative form to stress the importance of avoiding asthma triggers and effectively convey the intended information to the audience in a coherent and clear way.

Example 4

ST

“A breathing tube is put into your mouth. This tube is attached to a machine that **will breathe for** you during surgery.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

“يوضع أنبوب تنفس في فمك. ويكون هذا الأنبوب موصولاً بجهاز يقوم بالتنفس بدلاً منك أثناء الجراحة.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The text in example 4 explains a procedure performed during an open-heart surgery including the placement of an artificial respiratory system to assist the patient in breathing during the operation. The translation choice in the sentence "يقوم بالتنفس بدلا منك" (MedlinePlus, 2021) creates ambiguity, not enabling the target audience to interpret the message coherently. The function of the artificial respiration system is not effectively communicated, as the use of the verb "يتنفس" (to breathe) is misleading and not coherent with the word "الجهاز" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (the machine) in this context. This causes confusion for the audience by implying the information that the machine breathes, while the intended message is that it assists with breathing.

To achieve intratextual coherence, the translation choice should effectively convey the intended information, enabling the recipient to interpret the message coherently. For this purpose, we suggest making the target text more coherent by communicating the intended information, accurately, regarding the purpose of the artificial respiration system. This would allow the audience to understand the target text message effectively.

Example 5

ST

"You can see the pictures of your heart on the screen and also hear sounds of your heart." (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

"يمكنك رؤية صور قلبك على الشاشة فضلاً عن سماع أصوات قلبك." (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The example is extracted from a document that explains the cardiac ultrasound test or echocardiogram. It introduces the test and describes its procedures. The purpose of this test is to show blood flow through the heart. Choosing a literal equivalent for the word sounds presents an issue of intratextual coherence, as the audience may not be able to understand the intended medical information. In the context of cardiac ultrasound test (echocardiogram), the term نبضات (heartbeats) is more accurate and conveys the intended meaning effectively. It refers to the sounds made by the heart that can be heard during the medical test.

Alternatively, the term ضربات (heartbeats) can also be employed, as it similarly communicates the idea of the sounds made by the heart. Choosing either نبضات or ضربات allows coherent interpreting of the intended message in accordance with the medical context. The suggested equivalents effectively communicate the intended information about the heart's activity during the echocardiogram, providing clarity and coherence for the target audience.

2.2. Analysis of intertextual coherence

In this section, we will analyze the intertextual coherence of the selected source texts (ST) and their corresponding target texts (TT) in light of skopos theory.

Example 1

ST

“An EKG is a test that records the electrical activity of the heart. With each heart beat, an electrical impulse travels through the heart.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

"التخطيط الكهربائي للقلب هو فحص يسجل النشاط الكهربائي للقلب. فمع كل نبضة قلب تنتقل دفعة كهربائية عبر القلب."
(MedlinePlus, 2021)

The example is extracted from a document that explains the functioning of EKG test (Electrocardiogram), its purpose, and the preparation procedures the patient should follow. The text serves to define the test and explains the electrical activity of the heart. The intertextual coherence in this example is maintained effectively through the translator's choice in encoding the message as a re-producer for the target recipient. The verb "تنتقل" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (to move) is used to convey the action of the heart's electrical impulses. The source text's producer uses the verb "travel" to describe the movement of electrical impulses, which is interpreted as "تنتقل" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (move), accurately providing the idea of electrical impulses moving through the heart. This choice is made in accordance with skopos theory's fidelity rule by ensuring coherence between the translatum and the ST information. Consequently, the intertextual coherence in this example is determined by the translator's understanding of ST.

Example 2

ST

“Call your doctor right away if you have bleeding at the site that will not stop.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

"اتصل بالطبيب على الفور في حالة حدوث نزيف متواصل بموضع القسطرة لا ينقطع." (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The text represents an instruction intended for patients who have undergone a heart cath (heart catheterization). This medical procedure is used for examining the blood vessels in the heart and involves the insertion of a tube called a catheter into a blood vessel. The instruction emphasizes the emergency of contacting a healthcare professional in case of persistent bleeding at the catheter insertion site. In this example, intertextual coherence is achieved through the translator's choice to add the word "القسطرة" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (heart cath) to "موضع" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (site), referring to the heart catheterization site. The source text's producer limits the information in the word "site" (MedlinePlus, 2021), assuming its understanding by the ST audience according to the context. The addition in the target text aims for more precision and understanding of the intended message. Accordingly, this choice enhances intertextual coherence by ensuring the skopos (purpose) of the translatum (target text) of communicating the ST information related to the medical procedure.

Example 3

ST

“You **will have an echocardiogram** before and after the stress test.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

”ستقوم بعمل مخطط لصدى القلب قبل وبعد اختبار الإجهاد.“ (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The text refers to a medical test called a stress echocardiogram, which combines testing the body’s response to physical stress with taking images of the heart using ultrasound. It is extracted from a document that indicates preparations required for the test and explains its functioning. The translation of “You will have an echocardiogram” (MedlinePlus, 2021) does not achieve a coherent transfer of the ST information. The focus is shifted from undergoing a test to the act of performing it. This translation choice lacks precision and may mislead the target audience. The purpose of the ST is to inform patients that they will undergo an echocardiogram before and after a stress test to examine their heart activity. Thus, we suggest substituting the verb ستقوم with the verb ستخضع (will undergo) to ensure intertextual coherence and enhance clarity.

Example 4

ST

“There are two types of TB infection, latent and active. Latent infection is when you may have no signs of TB. **The bacteria are in your body, but they are not active.**” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

”تصنف عدوى مرض السل إلى نوعين، العدوى الكامنة حيث لا يشعر المريض بأي من أعراض السل، نظرا لوجود البكتيريا غير النشطة في جسمه.“ (MedlinePlus, 2021)

This example is extracted from a document that explains tuberculosis, including its signs, prevention, and related medical care. The text describes a specific type of TB infection named latent infection, which is caused by inactive bacteria. The translation choice in the sentence "نظرا لوجود البكتيريا غير النشطة في جسمه" (MedlinePlus, 2021) leads to intertextual incoherence, as it does not specify the type of bacteria being mentioned in the text. While the source text indicates that the bacteria causing tuberculosis are inactive, the target text does not convey the information accurately to the audience. Due to the translation choice, a missing message is detected in the target text about the nature of bacteria causing TB latent infection.

The source text producer conveys the message that tuberculosis is caused by specific inactive bacteria that remain in the human body. The use of the definite article the with the word bacteria implies that the bacteria being referred to are those causing TB but are inactive. The intertextual incoherence is caused by the use of the phrase "غير النشطة" (MedlinePlus, 2021) (inactive) alone, as the target audience may interpret it as referring to any type of inactive bacteria rather than those actually causing tuberculosis. Hence, the target text sentence does not convey the ST information accurately. The target message implies that any type of bacteria in the body could be inactive and not necessary those causing tuberculosis. To achieve intertextual coherence and

ensure fidelity, it is recommended to clarify the message by incorporating the phrase المتسببة فيه (the bacteria causing it) to explicitly link the inactive bacteria to tuberculosis.

Example 5

ST

“A negative test often means that you are not infected. **The skin test may not react** if you have a weak immune system.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

TT

“تعني النتيجة السلبية للاختبار في الغالب عدم إصابتك بهذا المرض. **قد لا يعود اختبار الجلد بنتائج** إذا كان جهاز المناعة لديك ضعيفا.” (MedlinePlus, 2021)

The text is extracted from the same document mentioned in example 4, which explains tuberculosis. It outlines the procedures used by medical staff to detect tuberculosis infection. The source text explains that a weak immune system may prevent the skin test from reacting as expected, possibly hindering accurate results. In the target text, the choice of interpreting the idea by employing the verb "يعود" (MedlinePlus, 2021) successfully achieves intertextual coherence. Conversely, a literal translation (قد لا يتفاعل) would not be appropriate according to the context. Therefore, the coherent translation choice to convey the intended message about the skin test performance is more appropriate and transfers the information to the recipient accurately.

However, intertextual coherence could be further enhanced by adding the adjective واضحة (clear) to convey the idea of clear results and achieve greater precision in accordance with the context. The suggested addition maintains intertextual coherence, ensuring the understanding of the idea that a weak immune system may hinder the clarity of test results.

3. Findings and discussion

The analysis of intratextual and intertextual coherence in the provided examples demonstrates how specific translation choices can affect the clarity and the delivery of medical information to the target audience. These choices significantly impact the understanding and the interpretation of the source text message.

Omission can be an appropriate translation choice to achieve intratextual and intertextual coherence. In the analysis of example 1, the translation choice of omitting the definite article achieves more clarity and communicates the intended information effectively to the target audience. For the purpose of skopos theory's coherence rule, omission can also be employed to avoid redundancy and deliver a coherent and clear message. In the analysis of intratextual coherence in example 2 and intertextual coherence in example 3, it is recommended to omit unnecessary words to avoid redundancy and focus on delivering the message accurately.

Moreover, substitution is a translation method that can achieve intratextual and intertextual coherence. The purpose is to ensure that the message is understood by the target audience, by removing ambiguity and preserving the accuracy of medical information. In the analysis of

intratextual coherence in example 1 and intertextual coherence in example 3, substitution is recommended to enhance the message clarity.

In some cases, literal translation may not be an appropriate choice to achieve intratextual coherence, as it can fail to communicate the intended message accurately. In example 3, choosing a literal equivalent may lead to an incomplete message in the target text, as it may not convey the intended information. Instead, it is recommended to interpret the message according to the context to deliver the message clearly to the audience and achieve the translation informative purpose. The same recommendation applies to the translation of the sentence "You can see the pictures of your heart on the screen and also hear sounds of your heart" (MedlinePlus, 2021) where the translator employed a literal equivalent, leading to intratextual incoherence due to contextual inaccuracy. The term *نبضات* or *ضربات* would be more accurate and communicates the medical information effectively according to the context.

Furthermore, addition can be an effective translation choice to achieve intertextual coherence with the aim of a coherent transfer of the source information. In example 2, the translator successfully added the word "القسطرة," (MedlinePlus, 2021) enhancing the target audience's understanding and providing a clearer message. Also, the analysis of example 5 provides a recommended addition of the adjective *واضحة* (clear) to preserve intertextual coherence and enable the target audience to understand the intended information.

Moreover, explicitation is a translation method that can achieve intertextual coherence by clarifying the message and enabling the target audience to acquire the medical information clearly and effectively. In example 4, it is recommended to explicit the source text information about inactive bacteria causing tuberculosis. The choice of explicitation in the translation of medical information induces a more explicit interpretation of the source text and communicates the information clearly.

Study limitations

While the results of our study provide a functional analysis of translation practices in the medical context, the research scope is constrained by certain limitations that require further work for more comprehensive studies in medical translation. These limitations include the sample size, the specific texts selected, and the applicability of Skopos theory in translating medical texts.

The analysis of ten (10) medical texts enabled us to come to a conclusion about the impact of various translation methods on intratextual and intertextual coherence of medical information. However, a larger sample dealing with a more diverse health topics would provide a broader conclusion about the effect of translation choices. Further studies involving additional texts could refine the accuracy and feasibility of our findings.

Furthermore, our study analyzes selected texts provided by a health institution but this selection may not encompass all the features of texts handled by different healthcare institutions. Consequently, a wider and more varied set of texts from diverse sources could enrich the analysis and provide in-depth results regarding the effect of translation choices in the medical context.

In terms of the application of skopos theory in the analysis of the selected texts, it aims to highlight the translator's functional role in conveying health information. Accordingly, the theory stresses the importance of achieving the purpose of the translation and adapting the process to achieve this goal. However, certain limitations are identified regarding its applicability to

medical translation. By focusing on the target text, the translator may fail to maintain the accuracy of medical information as presented in the source text. Additionally, skopos theory does not provide clear procedures for translating medical texts that involve specialized terminology or scientific language with legal aspects. Consequently, the emphasis on the purpose of the translation may impact the translator's fidelity to the source text, leading to alteration of medical information. To deal with these limitations, the application of skopos theory could be supported by complementary translation strategies adapted to medical texts, enhancing effective transmission of health information. The purpose is to reach a balance between skopos theory's functional approach and preserving fidelity to the source text.

Conclusion

This paper explored how specific translation choices affect intratextual and intertextual coherence of medical information, based on skopos theory. The findings show that translation methods such as omission, substitution, and explicitation have a significant impact on the accuracy, clarity, and overall comprehension of medical information. It is recommended to employ omission to eliminate redundancy and enhance text clarity. From the perspective of skopos theory, Additionally, intratextual and intertextual coherence can be achieved through substitution provided that the message is understood in the target language. By prioritizing the target audience's needs, this method fulfills the informative purpose of translation. It effectively removes ambiguity and enhances the clarity of the message, enabling the audience to acquire the intended medical information without confusion. Moreover, employing word-for-word or literal translation may fail to convey the intended message. As demonstrated in the analysis, using literal equivalents can lead to intratextual incoherence and create contextual issues, resulting in misunderstanding and hindering effective communication. In some cases, the purpose of translation cannot be achieved through literal translation, as it may cause misinterpretation and deliver incomplete health information to the target audience. The study also finds that addition and explicitation are effective methods for translating medical information, ensuring clear communication, particularly in a healthcare context. To summarize, the findings of the study demonstrate that translation choices play a critical role in making health information accessible and ensuring effective communication. Skopos theory provides a valuable framework for guiding translation methods by prioritizing the needs of the target audience. Further research studies may enrich these findings by investigating translation training in the medical field, aiming to establish guidelines and strategies for translators. This could ultimately improve the quality of medical translations, ensuring effective communication of health information.

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