

Specijalna bolnica in Serbian and its English Equivalents

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The current study seeks to investigate the corresponding English equivalents of specijalna bolnica, and to identify the problems in rendering this lexical item into English. The analysis starts from the renderings of specijalna bolnica on the investigated institutions websites. The findings reveal that the translators opt for formally corresponding lexical items, which results in the transparent target language collocations. A translator's choice should be governed by the purpose of translation, prospective readership and the English language variant. Yet, in the case of particular institutions increasingly expanding into the field of health tourism, an effect-oriented descriptive equivalent is recommended.

Keywords: *Serbian, English, translation, equivalent, correspondent*

1. Introduction

Every country designs and develops its health-care system in accordance with the needs of the population it serves and available resources. In Serbia, the health needs of the population are met through the services provided by the network of health-care institutions at three levels. At the primary level, health care is provided by *domovi zdravlja* (primary health centers). The most familiar health institution that provides sophisticated health-care services at the secondary level is *bolnica* (hospital). The patients of all ages with all kinds of illnesses and medical conditions are treated in general hospitals. Also, there are hospitals that provide more specialized care, i.e. *specijalne bolnice*, the translation of which is in the focus of this study. According to Article 112 of the Law on Health Care, *specijalna bolnica* "engages in the specialist, consulting, and inpatient health-care activity in the field for which it has been founded, laboratory and other diagnostics, as well as the pharmaceutical health-care activity through the hospital pharmacy" (Law on Health Care). Article 113 also states that there is a *specijalna bolnica* that "in engaging in the health-care activity, uses a natural factor of treatment" so that it "may also provide the services in tourism, in accordance with the regulations governing the area of tourism" (Law on Health Care).

As *specijalna bolnica* covers two different kinds of hospitals, we anticipated that there might be a few different translations of the same lexical item in English. Therefore, we set out to investigate its corresponding English equivalents and to identify the problems in rendering this lexical item, or possibly a term¹, into English. The primary purpose is to reach conclusions regarding the alternative equivalents and provide practical solutions for translators.

2. Equivalence and correspondence in translation

Translation is "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another" (Catford 1965: 1) with a particular emphasis on "rendering the meaning of a text ... in the way that the author intended the text" (Newmark 1988: 5). Being simultaneously "an art, science and a skill" (Nida 1964: 3), and a "matter of taste" (Newmark 1988: 6) on top of that, translation served as a means of intercultural communication from ancient times. Consequently, this

multi-faceted activity has been approached differently within theoretical reflection. Within the linguistic perspective, the notions of equivalence and correspondence have a vital role. Most researchers and practitioners agree that the main task of a translator is to establish a relationship of equivalence between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). However, answers to the question 'What translation equivalent (TE) does a translator set out to attain?' differ widely.

Catford (1965: 27) distinguishes a textual TE that is any TL form which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form. For Catford (1965: 32), a formal correspondent is "any TL category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL". Rather than features of the form of the SL, Nida (1965, Nida and Taber 1982) stresses the semantic quality and views equivalence as "a very close similarity in meaning as opposed to similarity in form". Hence, dynamic equivalence should be achieved and "the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida 1964: 166; Nida and Taber 1982: 12) is to be sought. Relying on Nida's positions, Newmark (1988, 1991) further develops a communicative approach to translation. In furnishing his theory, Newmark introduces the distinction between semantic and communicative translation and stresses the following aspects: the purpose of the translation, the nature of the readership and the type of text. Communicative translation, as Newmark points (1988: 47) out, "attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership". Both semantic and communicative translation comply with the accepted syntactic equivalents or correspondences for the two languages in question (Newmark 1991). The former being focused on the meaning is mainly for expressive texts, whereas the latter focused on the effect is mainly for informative and vocative ones.

3. Methods of the study

To find the TEs of *specijalna bolnica* in English, we initially consulted the official websites of the investigated institutions listed in the Register of the Ministry (Ministry of Health). As the Register is based on the data from January 2016, we performed a Google search to identify newly established institutions in private property containing the same lexical item in their legal names. The translators' strategies and the text segments considered equivalent were noted down.

Corpora played a significant part in this study. Given that corpus resources are very useful in translating in a non-native language as these provide evidence of natural ways of expressing ideas in the TL (Kenny 2013: 1421), an additional TL general English reference corpora search was performed. The corpora of the two TL variants, British English (BrE) (Davies BYU-BNC) and American English (AmE) (Davies COCA), were searched to back up the evidence on the conceptual information of the employed TEs. Finally, the corpora resources were consulted to gain additional insights regarding the collocational potential of the lexemes neglected by translators, and, in turn, to find other adequate lexical combinations.

4. Results and discussion

Eight of 31 investigated institutions entered in the Register have the content of their websites presented both in Serbian and English. The online presentations in the two languages of three more institutions were identified through Google search. Only in seven instances is the TE of *specijalna bolnica* offered: *special hospital* features on five websites, whereas *specialized hospital* is an option in two cases. Serbian *specijalna bolnica* consists of two lexemes: adjective *specijalan,a* modifying the noun *bolnica*. In both TEs, literal rendering is evident as they are made on the basis of substituting the corresponding adjectives to collocate with the noun *hospital*.

In the case of *special hospital*, sticking to the exact meaning of the original component words is evident as *special* is a standard TE of the adjective *specijalan,a*. Yet, specialized dictionaries leave some doubts regarding the used TE adequacy. According to the available online dictionary, it as a successful TE as a *special hospital* is "a hospital for the medical and surgical care of patients with specific types of diseases" (Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary). However, the *Dictionary of Medical Terms* arouses suspicion as it defines *special hospital* as "a hospital for people whose mental condition makes them a potential danger to themselves and/or others". Given the conflicting differences in entries, the corpora search was performed to eliminate all ambiguities regarding the referential meaning of the TL collocation. After eliminating the duplicates, the output from running a query resulted in 17 hits in BrE corpus and 16 hits in AmE corpus. The results from the BrE variant, including example (1), corroborate the later dictionary definition.

(1) Families who fear that a *special hospital* is too close have accused health service managers of snubbing their request for consultation. (BNC: [K3CW_newsp_other_report](#))

In view of this, the back-translation of BrE *special hospital* appears to be *duševna bolnica*. On the other hand, a few examples from AmE corpus are supportive of the former dictionary definition, as illustrated by:

(2) There's a *special hospital* he went to in Vienna where they make wooden limbs. (COCA [FIC: BkJuv:FearLoathing](#))

These findings indicate that the semantic scope of the SL item is much wider than its TE. Thus, it might be argued that *specijalna bolnica* and *special hospital* are an instance of false collocational pairs with a partial overlap in meaning. It is debatable, however, whether this TE could achieve "equivalent effect" (Newmark 1988), i.e. the same effect on the readership of the translation, the native BrE community in particular, as is obtained on the readership of the original.

As for *specialized hospital*, the SL collocation has undergone the same process of literal or word for word translation. The modifier of the headword is the adjective derived from the verb *specialize* (*specijalizirati, obući se za određenu oblast* (Mičić 2011)) that means "designed for a particular purpose; concentrating on a particular activity or subject" (*Dictionary of Medical Terms*). Reasonably, the presence of the SL is less strongly felt than with a *special hospital*. The findings reveal AmE preference for a *specialized hospital*. The BrE corpus offers only one example of this lexical item, again related with providing mental

health services, whereas five examples found in AmE corpus refer to the institutions focusing care and treatment on a single specialty as in:

(3) Barr came to Lunsford with an idea for a *specialized hospital* catering to catastrophic illnesses, like heart disease emphysema and trauma-related accidents. (COCA: [MAG Forbes](#))

Consulting the specialized dictionaries available to us cannot shed any new light as they do not include an entry to *specialized hospital*. Reference is, however, made in the glossary provided by the *World Health Organization* that defines it as "A hospital admitting primarily patients suffering from a specific disease or affection of one system, or reserved for the diagnosis and treatment of conditions affecting a specific age group or of a long-term nature". This indicates that it would be an appropriate TE for *specijalna bolnica* as it is defined in the Law on Health Care.

The logic underlying these TEs is clearly governed by the grammatical rules involved in the formation of words and their combinations. As the collocational patterning differs among languages, further corpora search was aimed at finding other collocation pairs synonymous with the identified options. As English makes more use of double-noun compounds than Serbian, we researched *noun+noun* combinations. Two nouns came up as the collocates of *hospital*. The noun *specialist* (*specijalista, stručnjak za određenu oblast* (Mičić 2011)) collocating with *hospital* resulted in five hits in BrE and four hits in AmE corpus equally distributed in the written and newspapers genres including:

(4) The neurologist diagnosed a possible brain haemorrhage, and had Rose admitted to a *specialist hospital* in London. (BNC: [AS0 W non ac medicine](#))

Further, AmE corpus also offers 16 examples of the noun *specialty* (*struka, specijalnost* (Mičić 2011)) premodifying *hospital* mostly from newspapers register and two examples from the academic genre. As example (5) proves, *specialty hospital* achieves the desirable result in translation.

(5) The Hospital for the Ruptured and Crippled continued to service the community as a *specialty hospital* dedicated to the science of orthopaedics. (COCA [ACAD OrthoNursing](#))

A different problem altogether is pointed to by the third noted translators' practice: *omitting* the TE. The SL original remaining in the TL presentation on three websites implies that it is not easy to find an adequate TE. Considering the purpose of translation, omission might be a good choice. Namely, the TEs suggested above serve the purpose with the institutions promoting medical treatments and services to international patients. However, it is unlikely that the desired effect is achieved when they are employed for translating the names of the health-care institutions offering a range of additional non-medical contents and are typically set in tourist destinations.

These have always been an indispensable part of the Serbian health-care system, and as such mentioned in Article 113 of the Law on Health Care and registered. Yet, their orientation toward health tourism is evident in recent decades. Besides medical, health-care and diagnostic facilities, the inpatients and outpatients have been increasingly offered spa and wellness facilities. This makes these institutions efficient not only for the treatment of diseases, rehabilitation and recovery after acute medical conditions but also for prevention.

Accordingly, all previously discussed TEs can be ruled out as they would result in a loss in a semantic content. Following Baker (1992), it might be claimed that the SL item and investigated TEs would actually result in non-equivalence due to extra-linguistic factors. In other words, non-equivalence can be established since the TL has no direct equivalent for a lexical item in the SL.

These institutions, *Specijalna bolnica Merkur* in Vrnjačka Banja being the most renowned one, are the instances of cultural objects with connotations that are specific to the native speaking community. In view of this, *specijalna bolnica* can be considered a culture specific item. Although it is not always clear which words and expressions should be classified as such, in the field of translation studies *culture-specific expressions* refer to the words that signify concepts that are related to a specific culture (Terestyényi 2011: 13). According to Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural words, *specijalna bolnica* belongs to social culture.²

Given that "anything that can be said in one language can be said in another" (Nida and Taber 1982: 4) "and often has to be" (Newmark 1991: 8), it is needed to find the lexical item linked to its referent. It should be also born in mind that culture specific items are context dependent, as Terestyényi (2011) stresses. Opting for translation in a roundabout, descriptive way seems sensible. An adequate translation also implies a translator's contrastive competence in finding and using "words and structures other than the corresponding ones to render the same or similar meaning" (Mičić 2013: 229). Rather than focusing on its individual components and the meaning each word possesses in its own right, the focus should be on the meaningful equivalent of a collocation as a whole. In this respect, a *medical spa* as a 'tailor-made' descriptive equivalent seems as an adequate option as it can convincingly transfer the most important components of the SL item meaning into the TL. In compliance with Newmark's (1988, 1991) approach, it also makes the cultural content of the original lexical item more accessible to a reader. Given that the purpose of translation is seen in terms of attracting prospective international customers, a *medical spa* is not only informative but, by implication, more appealing and as such more effective.

5. Conclusion

The translation of Serbian *specijalna bolnica* results in *one-to-many* English equivalents. In the examples from the websites we have observed, translators give preference to formally corresponding items in rendering the lexical item. The translators' logic underlying the choice of collocations is clearly governed by the grammatical rules involved in the formation of words and their combinations, which resulted in transparent TL collocations: *special hospital* and *specialized hospital*. In AmE usage, a *special hospital* is semantically close to the SL lexical item. It is, however, disputable whether it is an effective TE in BrE considering what a native layman would have in mind when faced with the translated material. Hence, the later TE proves to be a better choice as it leaves no possibilities of misinterpretation. When priority is given to the semantic or conceptual compatibility, *specialist hospital* and *specialty hospital* prove as adequate TEs as they are familiar in BrE and AmE respectively and communicate the same message.

In sum, the dictionaries' entries and corpora findings reveal that the TEs are to a certain extent near-exact match in terms of semantics and that the translator's choice should be made based on the TL variant and prospective readership. In AmE, the preference should

be given to a *specialized hospital* in academic texts, whereas *specialty hospital* can function an appropriate TE in the informative texts oriented toward wider readership. A *specialist hospital* seems appropriate when writing for BrE readers.

As regards the institutions increasingly expanding into the field of health tourism, *specijalna bolnica* calls upon a 'tailor-made' TE. Rendering with an adequate descriptive equivalent, such as *medical spa*, could be acceptable to the readership a translation is intended for. As it conveys cultural content of the SL lexical item, it might be considered a necessary effect-oriented variation.

Notes:

1 A *term* is different from a *word* as term contains a concept in a specific domain (Khan 2016). Given that *specijalna bolnica* is not included in all medical dictionaries available to us, there is room for discussion whether it should be considered a term.

2 As regards cultural words, Newmark (1988) offers the following classification: 1) ecology, 2) material culture (artefacts), 3) social culture – work and leisure 4) organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts, and 5) gestures and habits.

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