

## RENDERING ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS OF BIOLOGICAL TEXTS FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses some effective ways of translating scientific data in the form of abbreviations and symbols of biological texts from English language into Uzbek. It provides a number of examples for rendering such data and gives clear practical recommendations for future translators.

**Key words:** biological texts, abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, scientific texts, homonymy.

Science language is broad and complex as it is developing day by day. Scientific translation including biological texts is mainly about translating terms. The goal of scientific translation is to deliver scientific message properly and effectively, presenting well expressed information. Byrne referred to scientific translation as a communicative service, which offers new information for new audience, since scientific translation is regarded as communicative service; it certainly involves three main people. Which is the author, the translator and the reader<sup>60</sup>. There are many problems that translators can face to transfer ideas of the author to the reader.

One of the most frequent problems that scientific translators have to deal with is the translation of abbreviations or acronyms related to the field. Both of them are shortened form of words or phrases. An abbreviation is typically a shortened form of words used to represent the whole. They are formed from usually using the initial

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<sup>60</sup> Byrne, J. Technical translation: Usability strategies for translating technical documents. Dordrecht: Springer. 2006.

components of longer names or phrases and each letter is pronounced individually. For instance, CEO (Chief Executive Officer), UN (United Nations), EU (European Union), and etc. That is the main distinct feature of abbreviation from acronym.

An acronym is an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of each word in a set phrase or series of words and pronounced as a full word. For example, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), NASA (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and etc. Sometimes they are formed from using syllables as in Benelux (Belgium, Netherland, and Luxembourg), or a mixture of the two, as in radar (Radio Detection and Ranging).

Science texts can include abbreviation and acronyms as well. In case when they are used in source text, the translator should transfer them in an appropriate and understandable way for readers' convenience. First of all, it should be mentioned that abbreviations should be used as an aid to the reader rather than as a help the author and therefore their use should be limited as much as possible.

To avoid repeating long names or terms, it is often possible to use pronouns, reference words or to paraphrase a long word after its first use such as “the drug”, “the substance”, “the disease”. In Chemistry, for instance, standard chemical symbols and trivial names or their symbols (Zn, Mg, H, Fe N, and etc.) may also be used.

When translating abbreviations in a text, translators, first, define each of them and introduce them in parentheses the first time they are used, for example, “nucleic acids” (NA) = “nuklein kislotalar” (NK), ribonucleic acid (RNA) = ribonuklein kislota (RNK), messenger RNA (mRNA) = informatsion RNK (iRNK), and so on.

In cases of so much repetition of the same abbreviations, it would be better for translators to give them at the beginning of the material as most frequent used ones, so that it will be comfortable for both translators and readers.

From time to time, homonymy can be seen in abbreviations as well. [homonym is a word that is spelt like another word (or pronounced like it) but which has a different meaning, for example “can” meaning “be able” and “can” meaning “put something in

a container”]<sup>61</sup> Take I – O for example. While a common abbreviation in the tech world that stands for input – output, in the biotech world I – O stands for immuno-oncology [immuno-onkologiya (IO)], the area of research involved in stimulating the immune system to fight cancer. Also, in Astronomy, one of Jupiter’s moons is called I-O.

Another example can be the abbreviation AD. Its meanings in different field of science are as following:

- In Physiology – Alzheimer’s Disease;
- In History – Anno Domini;
- In Academic science – Associate Degree;
- In Mathematics – Average Difference;
- In Medical sphere – After Death<sup>62</sup>, and etc.

Besides this, scientific texts frequently contain tables, diagrams, equations. They, in turn, include some symbols relating to the specific field. Not requiring introduction, international units of measurement, other common units and elements can be used without definition in the texts. For example, in biology we often see symbols like mm – millimeter (a unit of measurement of length equal to one thousandth of a metre), mmol – millimole (a unit of measurement of the amount of a substance equal to one thousandth of a mole<sup>63</sup>).

Reporting numerical data is also very important in translating biological texts. Standard metric units are used for reporting length, weight, and volume. Internationally accepted and standardized symbols such as x, y,  $\mu$  7x8 (related to microscope, 56 times bigger) should not be changed.

Another way of avoiding misunderstanding or misconception of the readers is giving biological symbols with their definitions in brackets when they are used for the first time in the text and then leaving definition and brackets. For example, ♀ (related

<sup>61</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 9<sup>th</sup> edition (e-version)

<sup>62</sup> abbreviations.com

<sup>63</sup> Dictionary of Medical Terms 4<sup>th</sup> edition A & C Black London 2004 p.247

to female) and ♂ (related to male) when used in the first time and then used just symbols itself.

As biology is a broad science, sometimes it can be seen some linear, cubic, and capacity measures in biological texts, when translating them from English into Uzbek, it should be converted into uzbek system. For example: 1 pint = 0.568 liter; 1 quart = 2 pints = 1.138 liter, or 1 inch (in) = 2.54 centimeter (cm); 1 square inch (in<sup>2</sup>) = 6.45 cm<sup>2</sup> and so on.

For telling the temperature in both Celsius and Fahrenheit, the following can be used as a general guideline:

- $-20^{\circ}\text{C} = -4^{\circ}\text{F}$
- $-17.8^{\circ}\text{C} = 0^{\circ}\text{F}$
- $0^{\circ}\text{C} = 32^{\circ}\text{F}$  (Freezing Point)
- $10^{\circ}\text{C} = 50^{\circ}\text{F}$
- $20^{\circ}\text{C} = 68^{\circ}\text{F}$

To convert degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Celsius, it should be multiplied by five-ninth after subtracting 32; to convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, it should be multiplied by nine-fifths and then add 32.

In conclusion, scientific text translators are not like other translators, because there are some skills and expertise that they should have to do a good translation. This is because scientific translation is not just to render ideas or information, but rather to transfer new invention and technology that may help other countries. Scientific translators should be familiar with current practices and they should know specific science field and languages well. In this paper, some problems such as rendering abbreviations, symbols, and other measurement units which translators encounter while translating biological texts are discussed and given some recommendations.

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