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MECHANISMS OF EVOLUTION IN MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY: PROCESSES OF TERMINOLOGIZATION AND DETERMINOLOGIZATION

Mamatova Nilufar Abdukhoshimovna
Department of foreign languages
Andijan state medical institute
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Abstract: This study examines the processes of terminologization and determinologization within modern medical terminology. The research analyzes medical terms sampled from fiction and dictionaries to identify their structural and semantic characteristics. The findings confirm that medical terminology is primarily based on Greco-Latin elements and remains heavily influenced by classical languages. The article highlights that the boundary between specialized and general vocabulary is fluid; technological progress and societal interest increasingly turn highly specific medical terms into common parlance. While determinologization enriches the general language and simplifies communication, it risks losing the precision necessary for professional practice. The study concludes that understanding these dynamics is essential for the accurate use of medical language and effective communication between specialists and patients.

Key words: Terminologization, determinologization, medical terminology, semantic changes, professional discourse, Greco-Latin borrowings

For many years, linguists have studied the external forms of various types of vocabulary in modern speech, as well as the specific ways terms are used across different professional fields.

Societal changes have sparked interest in studying the language used within various professional spheres. It is important to note that vocabulary serves as a means of expressing the psychological characteristics of members of different social groups and of highlighting or drawing attention to specific information. Consequently, the linguistic specifics of modern medical terminology warrant particular attention in the current context. Every science employs its own specialized vocabulary - medicine being no exception - which has evolved over centuries of medical practice. Throughout history, specialized vocabulary has constantly interacted with general-purpose language: on the one hand, it emerges from the latter through the process of terminologization; on the other, it replenishes and enriches the general language system through the process of determinologization.

The aim of this study is to identify the characteristics of terminologization and determinologization regarding medical terms. The research material consists of terms denoting medical concepts from various fields of medicine, obtained through exhaustive sampling from works of fiction and dictionaries.

Various methods can be employed to study the word-formation of medical terms: classification and systematization; and description based on genetics, etymology, word-formation processes, and comparative analysis, etc. An analysis of existing studies has shown that, regardless of the language in which medical terminology is presented, it comprises a significant proportion of lexical and word-formation units sharing a common linguistic origin, as well as similar structural patterns. Linguistic literature addressing medical terminology devotes considerable attention to the structure of terms borrowed from Greek and Latin or artificially created using Greco-Latin terminological elements; the study of semantic changes; processes of

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secondary nomination and the terminologization of common vocabulary; and the linguistic specifics and dynamics of particular medical fields (pediatrics, pharmacy, ophthalmology, etc.). Furthermore, the classical languages - Latin and Greek - have remained the primary international source for the expansion of medical terminology. To this day, the vast majority of new terms introduced into clinical medical terminology bear the imprint of these languages; examples include “computed tomography” (from the Greek “*tomos*” - slice/section and “*grapho”*- to write), “biopsy” (from the Greek “*bios*” - life and “opsis” - sight/visual perception), “transplantation” (from the Latin “*transplantatio”* - transfer/grafting), and others.

We view the medical term as a linguistic sign serving the specific function of conveying information about a system of scientific knowledge and practical measures aimed at diagnosing, treating, and preventing diseases; preserving and enhancing human health and working capacity; and prolonging life. The scope of medical term usage is quite diverse (encompassing biology, physiology, pathological anatomy, internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, dentistry, oncology, etc.), while the language of medicine itself is subdivided into the language of science, the language of clinical practice, the language of textbooks and reference works, and the language of professional communication. Theoretically, any word can function as a term, but it only becomes one through the process of actualization - that is, by being extracted from the lexical-semantic system of the general literary language and integrated into a system of terminology. A term shares many similarities with a common word in terms of both grammatical categories and lexical-semantic characteristics. The semantic structure of a common word contains "semantic anchor points" that facilitate future scientific generalizations, and the lexeme undergoes specific developmental stages involving various levels of transformation.

Investigating the mechanism by which a common meaning is transformed into a terminological one constitutes a novel scientific challenge; addressing it requires, above all, an analysis of the underlying processes occurring within the word's semantic structure. It is essential to consider a complex array of features, as the formation of a terminological meaning is a multifaceted process affecting not only semantics but also the lexical unit's systemic connections, its paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties, and its derivational relationships. The significance of this issue for identifying the specific nature of terms and understanding the fundamental patterns governing the formation and evolution of individual terminological systems - combined with the fact that it remains unresolved in linguistics - underscores the relevance of this study. The differential approach -whereby a term is contrasted with a word in general usage - is typically employed as the guiding principle for term analysis. This method makes it possible to identify a range of essential properties distinguishing terms from general-purpose words, to uncover similarities in their semantics, structure, and grammatical form, and to determine specific paradigmatic characteristics as well as distinctive features regarding their role in sentence and text structure.

When examining the process of terminologization, we consider not only the distinguishing features of terms versus general-purpose words but also their shared, unifying characteristics; in doing so, we take into account recent research in terminology studies indicating that a clear-cut boundary cannot be drawn between specialized terminology and general vocabulary, given the close interconnections between terms and general-purpose words in many respects. Conversely, the process of determinologization involves a term becoming part of the general lexical system.

Technological progress and the virtually unlimited availability of information are turning previously highly specialized terminology into common parlance. Medical terminology holds a unique place in a language's lexical system due to its stylistic, semantic, and word-formation

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characteristics; it is distinguished by specific patterns of term formation and usage. The field of medicine attracts keen interest from both professionals and laypeople, not only because of its relevance and importance but also because of a growing understanding and awareness of its terminology.

Thus, the general-usage meaning is directly linked to the terminological one. In most cases, medical terminological naming is a deliberate act demonstrating that both terms and term systems - as distinct semiotic models within a theory - are constructed more rigorously and rely more heavily on the laws of formal logic than other components of the linguistic worldview. Consequently, the interrelationship and mutual interdependence of the logical and linguistic factors driving the development of term systems occupy a significant place among the many issues addressed in modern terminology studies.

In conclusion, the process of the determinologization of medical terms is complex and multifaceted. It reflects changes in science, medicine, and society as a whole. On the one hand, determinologization contributes to the enrichment of vocabulary, the simplification of communication, and a shift in the perception of medical knowledge. On the other hand, it can lead to a loss of precision and specificity in medical terminology, potentially hindering communication between specialists and patients. It is important to note that determinologization is not a process with a single, unambiguous nature; it can be either positive or negative, depending on the context. Overall, the determinologization of medical terms is an inevitable process that reflects the dynamics of language and societal development. Understanding this process and its consequences is essential for the effective and accurate use of medical terminology.

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