

Analyzing the quality assurance of medical translation through the Editing and Revision process with special reference to selected medical books

Miss. Sheliyna Sivanesan¹ & Dr. B. Rajesh²,
¹Lecturer (Probationary), Dept. of Translation Studies,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka and
Ph.D. Research Scholar, Tamil University, Thanjavur.
sheliyna@univ.jfn.ac.lk



²Associate Professor, Department of Translation, Tamil University, Thanjavur.
bagavathirajesh1974@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the role of editing and revision in ensuring the quality of medical translation, focusing on selected medical texts written by Dr.C.S.Jamunananstha, Deputy Director, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Using qualitative methods, including comparative and descriptive analyses, it explores the translator's presence and absence within translated medical works. The primary data comprises translation of Tamil medical texts into English and discussion with the medical officer, while the study is supported by secondary sources such as glossaries and relevant sources. The research highlights the critical importance of revision and editing in maintaining translation accuracy and transparency. As guided by Mossop's (2020) framework, it identifies revision's dual purpose: addressing textual issues and enhancing linguistic and semantic quality while preserving fidelity to the source text. Editing, on the other hand, focuses on improving style and readability for the target audience, differentiating it from revision, which ensures consistency with the original content. The study evaluates quality control methods, including self-revision, inter-revision, and collaborative revision, for their effectiveness in addressing unidiomatic expressions, omissions, and errors caused by interference from the source language. The research also emphasizes the need to meet client requirements, safeguard the integrity of the target language and ensure translations meet their intended purpose. By combining theoretical perspectives with practical analysis, it provides a comprehensive view of how editing and revision contribute to produce a high-quality medical translation.

Keywords: Editing and Revision, Fidelity and Readability, Medical Translation Quality, Translator's Visibility, Quality Control Processes.

1. Introduction

Medical translation is a specialized field that demands precision, clarity, and cultural sensitivity. Its success hinges not only on linguistic accuracy but also on adherence to the expectations of the target audience. Revision and editing, as integral components of translation quality assurance, play a critical role in meeting these demands. While the terms "revision" and "editing" are often used interchangeably, they refer to distinct processes.



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்
பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
"காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்"



According to Mossop (2020), revision involves critically assessing the translated text to ensure fidelity to the source and addressing errors or inconsistencies. Editing, on the other hand, focuses on improving the target text's style, coherence, and readability, tailoring it to the target audience's needs. Together, these processes ensure that medical translation meet both linguistic and professional standards.

Errors or ambiguities in medical texts can lead to misdiagnosis, improper treatment, or legal consequences. Furthermore, medical translations must bridge the cultural and terminological gaps between the source and target languages, requiring nuanced handling of technical vocabulary and cultural references. This makes revision and editing indispensable in ensuring that translations are accurate, culturally appropriate, and fit for purpose.

Despite the importance of revision and editing in translation, the field has received limited academic attention, particularly concerning medical texts. Many studies focus on the broader aspects of translation quality assurance but fail to explore the translator's role and visibility within the revision and editing processes. Additionally, while existing research highlights the significance of revision and editing in maintaining translation fidelity (Schäffner, 2018), there is limited exploration of the practical strategies employed by revisers and editors in specific contexts, such as medical translation. This gap leaves questions about how these processes ensure the integrity and usability of medical translations.

The lack of comprehensive studies addressing both theoretical frameworks and practical applications of revision and editing in medical translations underscores the need for further exploration. As cited by Pym (2014), quality assurance in translation extends beyond error detection to include stylistic and functional considerations, yet the integration of these elements in medical translation remains under-researched. By drawing on Mossop's (2020) frameworks, this research examines the dual objectives of revision: resolving textual issues and improving the semantic and linguistic quality of translations. It also delves into editing, highlighting its role in ensuring readability and stylistic consistency for target audiences. In doing so, the study underscores the importance of a systematic approach to revision and editing, contributing to a deeper understanding of quality assurance in medical translation.

1. Materials and Methods

This study primarily employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating comparative and descriptive analyses to examine the processes of editing and revision in medical translation. The qualitative approach seeks to uncover patterns in translators' strategies for ensuring fidelity and transparency in the translated texts. Key quality metrics, including terminological consistency, syntactic accuracy, and semantic fidelity, are utilized to assess the effectiveness of the translations.

Primary Data Sources:

The primary data sources for the study are taken from



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்
பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
"காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்"



1. Dr. Jamunanantha,C.S. காசத்தினை நிறுத்தும் உத்தி) 2008), சுக வலம்புரி, and கடல்கோள் காவுகொண்ட சமூக உளம்) 2004).
2. Translation: Strategy to stop Tuberculosis, Suga Valampuri and Psycho-Social Consequences of Tsunami.
3. Discussion with the Medical Officer-Dr.C.S.Jamunanantha

Secondary Data Source:

1. Mossop, B. (2020). Revising and Editing for Translators (4th ed.). Routledge.
2. Resurreccio, V.M, Davies, M.G. (2007). Medical Translation Step-by-Step Learning by Drafting. Routledge. Taylor and Francis Group. London and New York.
3. Venuti, L., (1995). The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation. London/New York: Routledge.

2. Results and Discussion

To determine the quality of the translation work revision in Translation is important since the translator can make mistakes during the translation process. Some such mistakes may be bigger or specific.

“Revision is essential because every translator makes mistakes, often big mistakes. Also, national and international translation standards recognize that every translation should be self-revised after it's drafted, and that some if not all translations should be revised by a second translator (Mossop, 2020, p.xii)”.

As mentioned by the statement, the process of revision plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of medical translations, as it addresses errors and inaccuracies that may arise during the initial translation phase. Mossop (2020) underscores the necessity of revision, stating that “every translator makes mistakes, often big mistakes” (p.xii). This insight reflects the inherent challenges faced by translators, where precision is paramount. The revision process is essential not only to correct errors but also to ensure that the translation meets the standards expected by the target audience, whether in terms of linguistic accuracy or adherence to terminologies.

In medical translation, the distinction between revision and editing becomes evident. Mossop (2020) highlights that revision involves reading through the translation to identify and correct problems, while editing pertains to improving the original text or translation, often without consulting the source text (p.xii). In the context of medical books, where accuracy and clarity are vital, the revision process becomes more complex due to the specialized terminology involved. A medical reviser must ensure that the translation remains faithful to the source text while adapting it to the linguistic conventions of the target language.



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்
பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
“காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்”



For example:

Source Text: நோயாளி வந்தவுடன் ஒரு மாதிரியும் அடுத்தநாள் அதிகாலை மறு மாதிரியும் வைத்தியசாலையில் மறு மாதிரியும் சளிப்பரிசோதனை செய்யப்படும்.

(காசத்தினை நிறுத்தும் உத்தி, 2008, P. 49)

Draft-Target Text: When a patient gets there a sputum smear microscopy is examined in a particular manner; the next morning, it is examined in another manner; and in the hospital, it is examined differently.

Appropriate Target Text: When a patient gets there, a sputum smear specimen is examined; another is then examined again early in the following day; and an additional sputum smear sample is examined at the hospital.

In the given translation, the term “ஒரு மாதிரியும்” introduces ambiguity, as it can be misinterpreted as “in a particular manner.” As a result, the initial draft inaccurately implies that there are three distinct procedures for sputum smear microscopy. Following a detailed analysis of the source text, “ஒரு மாதிரியும்” was accurately translated as “a sputum smear specimen,” thereby resolving the ambiguity. This correction ensures that the translation aligns with the intended meaning of the original text. This adjustment reflects the principle of Synonym Translation Equivalence (1988, p. 84), which underscores the importance of selecting contextually appropriate equivalents. This revision reflects the application of Synonym Translation Equivalence (1988, p. 84), emphasizing the importance of selecting the most contextually appropriate equivalent during the revision process. Such clear attention to detail exemplifies the critical role of editing and revision in ensuring quality in medical translations.

The importance of a reviser’s skill in identifying issues during the revision process cannot be overstated. Mossop (2020) emphasizes that the goal of revision is “not to make changes; it’s to notice problems,” and a skilled reviser’s most crucial ability is to spot issues while reading (p.xii). In medical translations, this skill is particularly critical because unidiomatic expressions, mistranslations, and omissions can lead to misinterpretations of medical information, potentially compromising patient safety. Therefore, revisers must possess not only linguistic expertise but also a deep understanding of medical concepts to accurately assess and improve the translation.

For Example:

Source Text: சளிச் சோதனைக்கான காரணம்

1. காசநோயைக் கண்டறிதல்
2. காசநோய் சிகிச்சையின் முன்னேற்றத்தைக் கண்டறிய



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்

பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
“காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்”



(காசத்தினை நிறுத்தும் உத்தி, 2008, P. 12)

Target Text: The reason for the sputum smear microscopy

1. To diagnose Tuberculosis
2. To monitor the progress in Tuberculosis treatment

The medical term “நோயைக் கண்டறிதல்” is best translated as “diagnosis,” as it refers to identifying the nature of a disease through its symptoms. Accordingly, in this context, “காசநோயைக் கண்டறிதல்” is translated as “to diagnose tuberculosis” rather than its literal meaning, “to identify the tuberculosis disease.” Similarly, in the source text “காசநோய் சிகிச்சையின் முன்னேற்றத்தைக் கண்டறிய,” the phrase “முன்னேற்றத்தைக் கண்டறிய” is rendered as “to monitor the progress” instead of the literal translation, “to identify the improvement.” In medical terminology, physicians typically monitor the progress of treatment. Thus, the term “கண்டறிதல்” can be translated as either “diagnose” or “monitor,” depending on its context. This approach follows Peter Newmark’s concept of recognized translation equivalence (1988, p. 106). The example aligns with Mossop’s principle that revision is about spotting problems. Here, potential ambiguities in the literal translations are identified and resolved with recognized equivalents that align with medical context and audience expectations.

Mossop (2020) also addresses the impact of content editing in medical translations, noting that a failure to edit the original text for clarity before translation can lead to errors in the final product. He argues that scientific editors should collaborate closely with translators to ensure accuracy, especially when the translator lacks specific scientific or technical knowledge (p.76). In medical texts, where precision is vital, the collaboration between editors and translators ensures that the translated content is not only linguistically correct but also conceptually accurate, reflecting the nuances of the original medical information. Further, ambiguity in sentence structure arises from the order of words or phrases within a sentence, which can lead to multiple interpretations of its meaning due to how the words are arranged. The following example illustrates ambiguities that may occur in sentence structure during the translation process.

For Example:

Source Text: இழப்புக்களை எதிர்கொள்ளல்.

நெருங்கிய உறவுகளின் இழப்பு, பிரிவு, பொருட்களின் இழப்பு என்பன வாழ்வுடன் பிரிக்க முடியாதவை .சாதாரண சூழலில் ஒவ்வொருவரும் பிரச்சினை இல்லாது இழவு கொண்டாடப்படுகின்றது .உறவினர், நண்பர்கள், அயலவர்கள் வந்து கொண்டாடுவர் . இங்கு அவ்வாறு அல்ல.

(கடல்கோள் காவுகொண்ட சமூக உளம், 2004, P.17).

Edited Source Text: இழப்புக்களை எதிர்கொள்ளல்.



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்

பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
“காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்”



நெருங்கிய உறவுகளின் இழப்பு, பிரிவு, பொருட்களின் இழப்பு என்பன வாழ்வுடன் பிரிக்க முடியாதவை .சாதாரண சூழலில் எந்தவொரு நபரிற்கும் பிரச்சினை இல்லாது இழவு அனுஷ்டிக்கப்படுகின்றது .உறவினர், நண்பர்கள், அயலவர்கள் வந்து அனுஷ்டிப்பர் .இங்கு அவ்வாறு அல்ல.

Target Text: Coping with losses.

Loss of close relations, separation, and loss of goods are part and parcel of life. Under normal circumstances, everyone observes the loss without issue. Relatives, friends and neighbours gather to observe. That is not the case here.

In the source text, the sentence சாதாரண சூழலில் ஒவ்வொருவரும் பிரச்சினை இல்லாது இழவு கொண்டாடப்படுகின்றது poses challenges in conveying the intended meaning in the target language due to its lack of coherence. To address this, the sentence was revised to சாதாரண சூழலில் எந்தவொரு நபரிற்கும் பிரச்சினை இல்லாது இழவு அனுஷ்டிக்கப்படுகின்றது. Additionally, the term இழவு கொண்டாடப்படுகின்றது is inappropriate, as it implies celebrating a loss, which is not suitable in the context of someone's death. It was therefore replaced with the more contextually appropriate phrase இழவு அனுஷ்டிக்கப்படுகின்றது. After these edits, the revised sentence was translated as: “Under normal circumstances, everyone observes the loss without issue.” This translation employs Newmark’s (1988, p. 88) modulation procedure, which involves altering the form of expression or perspective while retaining the original meaning. Here, the terms “கொண்டாடப்படுகின்றது-celebrates” and “அனுஷ்டிக்கப்படுகின்றது-observes” reflect differing attitudes towards the event, and the modulation ensures the target text is both accurate and comprehensible, aligning with the cultural and contextual expectations of the audience.

In terms of translation quality, Mossop (2020) suggests that “acceptable quality means satisfying clients,” which in the medical field translates to meeting the accuracy and clarity requirements of the intended audience (p.2). The concept of “fit for purpose” is particularly relevant in medical translations, where the primary goal is to convey complex medical information in a way that is understandable and actionable for the target audience. Mossop (2020) further notes that the reviser's role in ensuring the translation's suitability for its purpose whether for medical professionals or patients is paramount, as it ensures that the translated text serves its intended function without unnecessary adjustments to perfection (p.8). This approach balances the need for accuracy with the practical constraints of time and resources, making it an essential guideline for high-quality medical translation.

3. Conclusion

The importance of revision and editing in medical translation cannot be overstated, as they ensure the accuracy, clarity, and usability of translations in a high-stakes field. This study has



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்
பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
“காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்”



underscored the critical roles of these processes in bridging linguistic, cultural, and terminological gaps between source and target languages. Drawing on Mossop's (2020) frameworks and supported by comparative and descriptive analyses, the research has illustrated how revision focuses on textual fidelity and linguistic precision, while editing enhances readability and stylistic alignment for the target audience. The findings reveal that effective revision and editing address omissions, and inaccuracies, mitigating the risks associated with linguistic interference from the source text. By categorizing revisions into pragmatic and didactic types, the study highlights the dual applicability of these processes in professional and educational contexts. The analysis also emphasizes the importance of tailoring translations to client specifications while preserving the integrity of the target language.

By integrating theoretical insights with practical applications, this research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of quality assurance in medical translation. It fills a significant gap in the literature, providing a framework for examining the translator's visibility and the nuanced roles of revision and editing. The conclusions drawn from this study have implications for translators, revisers, and educators, offering practical guidelines to enhance the quality of medical translations and ensuring that they are fit for purpose.

References

- Mossop, B. (2020). *Revising and Editing for Translators* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Pym, A. (2014). *Exploring Translation Theories* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Resurreccio, V.M, Davies, M.G. (2007). *Medical Translation Step-by-Step Learning by Drafting*. Routledge. Taylor and Francis Group. London and New York.
- Schäffner, C. (2018). Translation and quality assurance: Key issues in research and practice. *Translation Studies Review*, 10(1), 23–38.
- Venuti, L. (2008). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge.
- Gouadec, D. (2007). *Translation as a Profession*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.



அறிவியல் தமிழ்த்துறை, தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தஞ்சாவூர் (ம)
மருதம் கலை இலக்கிய ஆய்வு மையம், கும்பகோணம்
மற்றும்

பிரணவ் தமிழியல் ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட காலாண்டு சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
"காலந்தோறும் தமிழில் அறிவியல்"

