

A CONTRASTIVE LOOK AT THE SYNONYMIC RELATIONSHIP OF FRENCH AND SLOVAK TERMS IN THE FIELD OF GERIATRICS

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the synonymic relationship between equivalent French and Slovak specialised terms in the field of geriatrics, and the implications it may have when translating specialised (geriatric) texts. In the theoretical framework, medical terminology and, in particular, geriatric terminology, is defined with a specific focus on key characteristics of medical terms, drawing primarily on the works of Horecký (1956), Masár (1991), Pavlovič et al. (2011), Karwacka (2015) and others. The controversial role that synonymy may have in determining terminological equivalents is also discussed. Based on the classification by Karwacka (2015), synonymic pairs of geriatric terms identified during the phase of compilation of a terminological glossary in the field of geriatrics in French and Slovak are categorised into groups based on the nature of the synonymous term and illustrated with examples. Overall, five types of synonyms were identified (eponym – non-eponymous term; international – domestic term; term – colloquial name; English term – domestic term; term – acronym), which may pose challenges for medical translators.

Key words: synonymy, terminology, geriatrics, equivalence

1. Introduction

Our interest in researching geriatric terminology has been sparked by recent developments in the world population and the ever-increasing numbers of elderly

people in the world. As evidenced by the report of the United Nations – the World Population Prospects (2022) – persons aged 65 years or older outnumbered children under age five for the first time in 2018 and by 2050 the number of persons aged 65 years or more worldwide is estimated to be more than twice the number of children under age 5. This is also closely linked with increasing life expectancy (current life expectancy for France and Slovakia being 83 years and 77.86 years, respectively¹) which places new demands on the healthcare and social care sectors, not only due to the growing numbers of elderly people who may seek medical assistance or institutional care in various facilities, but also due to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had above all on the older generations.

This paper presents only a part of more extensive research carried out as a part of the author's PhD. research project entitled *Ekvivalentácia francúzskej a slovenskej terminológie z oblasti organizácie opatrovateľskej a medicínsko-sociálnej služby pre seniorov (Identifying French and Slovak Equivalents in the Field of Conception of Medical and Social Care for the Elderly)*, dealing both with conceptual and terminological differences in the organisational structure of the above-mentioned field in France and Slovakia and in the terms designating the most common diseases of the elderly.

This paper discusses the latter and aims at presenting selected synonymic pairs of geriatric terms observed in the process of determining French and Slovak equivalents in the field of geriatrics, and the challenges synonymy may pose for specialised translators. The identified cases of synonymy in geriatric terminology have been categorised according to the nature of the synonymous term, drawing largely on the classification framework presented by Karwacka (2015), which is complemented with respect to the examined field and language combination, and subsequently illustrated by selected synonymic pairs of geriatric terms.

2. Defining medical and geriatric terminology

Medical terminology, as defined by Pavlovič et al. (2011, 4), represents a concept with a twofold meaning: (1) a scientific discipline, the study of concepts and their representations (i.e. terms) in medicine and healthcare, and (2) a set of terms from

¹ <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SVK/slovakia/life-expectancy>. Accessed: 4 November 2022.
<https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/FRA/france/life-expectancy>. Accessed: 4 November 2022.

special fields of medicine and healthcare in a given language, the meaning of which has been defined and is generally understood. The origins of this definition of medical terminology can be traced to the traditional twofold understanding of terminology as such, established by Ivan Masár, author of key publications on terminology in Slovakia, who sees terminology both as a science (science dealing with the creation, use and properties of terms) and as a set of terms (system of specialised terms in various scientific fields) (Masár 1991, 17).

The concept of geriatrics² itself is defined in the document *Koncepcia zdravotnej starostlivosti v odbore geriatra (HealthCare Conception in the Field of Geriatrics)*, published by the Slovak government in 2006, as a specialised field dealing with healthcare for the elderly, i.e. persons aged 65 and above (Valentovič 2006, 1). In light of Masár's definition, we may analogically approach geriatric terminology from two points of view: as a scientific discipline studying concepts and terms in the field of geriatrics as well as a set of terms in this field. For the purposes of this paper, geriatric terminology is understood in the latter (linguistic) meaning, i.e. as a set of terms (linguistic representations of mental concepts) belonging to the field of geriatrics which have a precisely defined meaning.

3. Fundamental features of medical (and other) terminology

In the following section, we introduce the specific properties of medical terminology in order to be able to subsequently point to a link between the distinctive characteristics of medical terms and terminological synonymy. Within Slovak terminology, key publications dedicated to the properties of the terms are represented by the works by Masár (1991) and Horecký (1956), while their classification has more recently also been adopted by other authors, e.g. Wrede – Štefčík – Drlík (2015) and Pavlovič et al. (2011). Since our focus is on medical (and more specifically geriatric) terms, we introduce key characteristics of medical terms drawing primarily on the work of Pavlovič et al. (2011) – *Slovenská lekárska terminológia (Slovak Medical Terminology)* where the authors provide a rather extensive list of medical term properties, but we also supplement this list with the

² Besides the term *geriatrics*, we may also come across the synonymous term *clinical gerontology*.

above-mentioned sources. Pavlovič et al. (2011, 17-24) list the following properties of medical terms:

1. standardised form – according to Pavlovič et al. (2011) and Masár (1991), standardised form represents the most basic feature of the term since specialised communication takes place exclusively using standard language.
2. motivation – the motive and the way in which the term has been created should be clear. Within medical terminology, motivated terms prevail over non-motivated ones. The motivation of terms helps to ensure systematicity and the formation of classification schemas in conceptual terminological systems of medical disciplines. However, this aspect is counteracted by the standardisation and internationalization of professional terminology and borrowing words from foreign languages (above all from English).
3. systematicity – a term is understood as a systemic element, which is reflected not only in the classification of terms into classes, subclasses, groups, subgroups, etc., but also in the choice of the same language means to convey certain meanings, e.g. the suffix *-itis* is used to designate inflammatory diseases (*bronchitis, gastritis, nephritis*) and, conversely, names of non-inflammatory diseases are usually formed using the suffix *-osis* (*neurosis, periodontitis, dermatosis*).
4. stable form – Horecký (1956) posits that without stability, specialised communication as such would not be possible. However, according to Pavlovič et al. (2011), stability does not entail strict invariability and must not hinder progress in the field and its terminology.
5. unambiguity and accuracy – one term should designate only one concept, but this *ideal* situation is often unfeasible in practice. It is also worth noting that in relation to terminology, we speak of relative unambiguity, i.e. a specific term is characterised by unambiguity within a single field or adjacent fields.
6. conceptuality – the conceptual side of the term consists of a set of statements (predicates) giving rise to the so-called *logical spectrum of the concept*.
7. derivability – the ability of a term to serve as a derivative basis used to create other nouns, adjectives and verbs, i.e. new valid specialised terms.

8. shortness – a term's shortness must not stand in opposition to its unambiguity and accuracy. In current Slovak terminology, multi-word terms prevail over single-word terms.
9. internationality (translatability) – terms formed using Greco-Latin morphemes best meet the requirement of translatability (Masár 1991).
10. colloquiality – colloquiality plays an important role in medical language as every citizen (not being an expert in the field) has the right to receive information about their health in a comprehensible form.
11. psychological acceptability – acceptability of the term means that it is accepted and used by a specialized community. When resolving specific disputes or issues, the opinions of experts in the field should be given priority.
12. expressiveness – the ability of a term to express clearly and intelligibly the concept; however, expressiveness is subordinate to the term's naming function.

In light of these characteristics and given the main research subject of this paper, the characteristics which appear crucial for examining terminological synonymy of geriatric terms are the properties of unambiguity and accuracy, alongside with the stable form of a term, since they seem to be in their very essence contrary to the existence of two (or more) synonymous terms. Out of the listed characteristics, the synonymy of geriatric terms arises primarily from the properties of internationality and colloquiality, which are complemented by other characteristic features of medical terminology, i.e. the ability to act as eponyms and acronyms (Karwacka 2015).

3.1. *Terminological synonymy*

In broader terms, synonymy can be defined as a relationship between words (i.e. lexical units) which are characterised by a different phonetic structure, but have the same or very similar meaning (Masár 2000, 44). In this paper, terminological synonymy is hence understood as lexical synonymy, i.e. a relationship between terms (specialised lexical units) which have the same or very close meaning and differ in their phonetic structure, e.g. *cievna mozgová príhoda – porážka (cerebrovascular accident – stroke)*.

The issue that has to be considered here is what type of synonymy best characterises the synonymy of geriatric terms that are being put under scrutiny in this paper, as scholarly literature lists various types of synonymy, such as complete³, incomplete or loose (Silaški 2009). Regarding terminological synonymy, Sager (1990, 58) acknowledges that modern terminological theory accepts the existence of synonymic expressions and variants of terms and rejects the narrow prescriptive attitude of the past which associated one concept with only one term, recognising that one concept can have as many linguistic representations as there are distinct communicative situations. Hence, Sager's viewpoint seems to do away with the general controversy surrounding the issue of synonymy in terminological context (the terminological principle *one term = one concept*) that has been pointed out by a number of researchers (e. g. Poláčková 1993; Silaški 2009; Khantakova et al. 2020 and others).

In this paper we present examples of synonyms occurring in various contexts and communication situations, from highly specialised through popular scientific to lay, which are not always interchangeable. Therefore, the type of synonymy that is being examined can be regarded as loose.

4. Methodology

The methodology applied in this research involved three consecutive steps. Firstly, we selected and compiled French and Slovak resource materials from the field of geriatrics, ranging from highly specialised texts and research articles to information materials for the general public. Since we worked with text materials in French (and not English, representing today's *lingua franca*) and Slovak (a language of lesser diffusion), the number of Slovak translations of French texts from the studied field was limited and did not allow us to create a parallel corpus. The corpus was compiled manually and the materials were selected primarily based on the criteria of theme and genre relevance (resource materials dealing with various topics of geriatrics of specialised, popular scientific and lay nature), up-to-dateness, form of publication (both printed and electronic resources), and linguistic form (only written texts). The corpus consisted of specialised publications (e.g. *Geriatrics* (2010) by Hégyi and Krajčík, *Soignants en gériatrie. Donner de la vie aux années* (2010) by

³ Also referred to as total or absolute synonymy.

Crépet), specialised bilingual and monolingual medical dictionaries (e. g. *Dictionnaire médical* (2004) by Quevauvilliers, *Vademecum medici* (2003) by Šašinka et al. etc.), online articles generally dealing with various diseases of the elderly, as well as information and materials available on the official websites of the French and Slovak geriatric association – e.g., the journal *Geriatrics*⁴, *Livre Blanc de la Gériatrie Française*⁵). Secondly, we manually extracted geriatric terms (overall, 92 terms were collected) and established synonymic relationships based not only on the criteria of meaning, as we also included terms with identical or very similar meaning, yet varying degree of formality (occurring in formal or informal context) and considered them to be synonymous since the type of synonymy that was being examined was loose. Thirdly, we proceeded to analyse and classify them into categories as described below.

5. Research findings

In the following sub-sections, we present 5 categories of geriatric term synonyms according to the nature of the synonymous term, drawing primarily on the classification by Karwacka (2015) and complementing this classification based on other features of medical terms discussed above. Occasionally, for one term, two synonymic relationships were identified, each time with a different synonym (e. g. for the term *l'ostéoporose* (*osteoporosis*), there is the synonym *la raréfaction de l'os* (*bone thinning*) (category of international term – domestic term) but also *le voleur d'os silencieux* (*silent thief of bones*) (term – colloquial name). For the sake of clarity, the pairs of synonymous terms in French and Slovak are presented at the end of each sub-section in the form of a summarising table and back-translation into English is provided.

5.2. Medical eponyms

Eponyms constitute an integral part of medical terminology. Their occurrence in the field of medicine has long been the subject of lively interest of various researchers (e. g. Bujalková 1999; Páč 2010; Karwacka 2015 and others). The term “eponym”

⁴ Available at: <https://www.geriatri.sk/casopis-geriatria/>. Accessed 13 November 2022.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.cnpgeriatrie.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Livre-blanc-de-la-g%C3%A9riatrie-modifi%C3%A9.pdf>. Accessed 13 November 2022.

(from the Greek word *epónymos*) can be understood as “given to someone or something else” (Džuganová and Poláčková 2002, 272). In this context, Bujalková (1999, 193) defines an eponym as a term that connects a certain thing with a person of the real or fictional world or with a certain place that lends it its name. In medical terminology, Bujalková distinguishes 4 possible types of eponyms that correspond to their origin: terms based on the names of highly regarded doctors (most frequent), terms based on the names of patients who suffered from the given disease (less frequent), terms based on the place of medical discoveries, i.e. ethnotoponyms (occasional), and terms based on a fictive person from ancient mythology or the Bible (Bujalková 194).

Within the examined Slovak and French geriatric terminology, we identified only the first group of eponyms (related to the names of highly regarded doctors). The most well-known eponyms referring to the diseases of the elderly people are beyond any doubt the terms *Alzheimer's disease* and *Parkinson's disease*. In addition to these, the terms *dementia with Lewy bodies* and *Horton's disease* are also common. We also included the terms *Werner syndrome*, *Cockayne syndrome* and *Hutchinson-Gilford syndrome*, which are not diseases of old age in the strictest sense of the word, but are closely related to the ageing process as they are rare syndromes of premature (pathological) ageing manifesting at a younger age.

As stated by Karwacka (2015, 275), within the same language, an equivalent may exist for the same concept, in addition to the medical eponym, which does not have the form of an eponym (the two then make so-called doublets – i.e. terminological variants having the same meaning). She concludes that, as a result, the transfer of eponyms within the medical sphere may give rise to a potential translation problem if a term exists in the form of an eponym in one language and its equivalent in another language does not have the form of an eponym, but takes on a descriptive form or is formed on a Greek or Latin basis. Consequently, this not only hinders the process of identifying and assigning equivalents, but inevitably, also brings about a shift in the stylistic value of the expression. Pairs of doublets identified in geriatric terminology in Slovak and French are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that all the terms for the given diseases function as eponyms in both languages, which could be explained by the fact that they all designate very well-known diseases (or syndromes). In addition to these eponymous forms, three

of them also have equivalent descriptive form expressions that are either based on the Greco-Latin name of the disease or are its literal translation. The terms *dementia with Lewy bodies*, for which there is no non-eponymous equivalent in either Slovak or French, and *Alzheimer's disease*, which in French has no equivalent in a descriptive form, while in Slovak it is often referred to as *choroba zabúdania (forgetting disease)*, present an exception. Moreover, *choroba zabúdania* has a more colloquial character and would be likely found in a popular scientific text or text for the lay public (it may as well be written with quotation marks). Colloquiality as one of the typical features of medical terminology will be discussed in more detail in a separate section. In addition to the term *Cockayne's syndrome*, in Slovak resources we also came across the term *Neal-Dingwallova choroba (Neill-Dingwall disease)* since the disease was first described by the English physician Edward Cockayne and later by researchers Mary Dingwall and Catherine Neill. In the examined French resources, we have come across only the term *le syndrome de Cockayne*, and in neither of the examined languages have we identified the equivalent of this term in a non-eponymous form.

Table 1. Eponyms and their equivalents

French eponym	French non-eponymous synonym	Slovak Eponym	Slovak non-eponymous synonym
<i>la maladie d'Alzheimer (Alzheimer's disease)</i>	–	<i>Alzheimerova choroba (Alzheimer's disease)</i>	<i>choroba zabúdania (forgetting disease)</i>
<i>la maladie de Parkinson (Parkinson's disease)</i>	<i>la paralysie agitante (paralysis agitans)</i>	<i>Parkinsonova choroba (Parkinson's disease)</i>	<i>choroba trasľavej obrny (shaking palsy disease)</i>
<i>la démence à corps de Lewy (dementia with Lewy bodies)</i>	–	<i>demencia s Lewyho telieskami (dementia with Lewy bodies)</i>	–
<i>la maladie de Horton (Horton's disease)</i>	<i>l'artérite giganto-cellulaire (giant cell arteritis)</i>	<i>Hortonova choroba (Horton's disease)</i>	<i>obrovskobunková artritída (giant cell arteritis)</i>
<i>le syndrome Hutchinson Gilford (Hutchinson-Gilford syndrome)</i>	<i>la progéria (progeria)</i>	<i>Hutchinson-Gilfordov syndróm (Hutchinson-Gilford syndrome)</i>	<i>progeria (progeria)</i>
<i>le syndrome de Werner (Werner syndrome)</i>	<i>la progéria de l'adulte la pangéria (adult progeria, pangeria)</i>	<i>Wernerov syndróm (Werner syndrome)</i>	<i>progéria dospelých pangéria (adult progeria, pangeria)</i>
<i>le syndrome de Cockayne</i>	–	<i>Cockayneov syndróm</i>	–

(Cockayne
syndrome)

Neal-Dingwallova
choroba
(Cockayne syndrome,
Neill-Dingwall disease)

5.2. International terms

On the issue of synonyms, Pavlovič et al. (2011, 21) posit that in medical terminology, terminological pairs consisting of an international and a domestic term are generally accepted. These terms differ from each other in their expressive quality and can serve to distinguish between highly professional and popular communication settings. They further underline that in terminological dictionaries or databases, the ideal situation is to provide synonymous triplets, i.e. *domestic term* – *Latin term* – *English term*.

In her study on the issues of synonymy of medical terms in the English-Russian-Slovak language combination, Poláčková (1993, 331) states that the problem of synonymy mainly concerns clinical medicine. In anatomical nomenclature, on the other hand, in the vast majority of cases, a term in one language corresponds to exactly one term from another language provided that terms of Latin or Greek origin are not taken into account. For instance, French and Slovak adopt the term *femur* – in Slovak *stehenná kosť*, in French *l'os de la cuisse*, in English *thighbone* (EN) – which forms a part of the name of a serious fracture that older people can suffer from as a result of falling. In both French and Slovak, we can identify the following synonymous pairs: *zlomenina krčka femuru* – *zlomenina krčka stehennej kosti* (SK) and *la fracture du col de fémur* – *la fracture du col de l'os de la cuisse* (FR) (*femoral neck fracture* – *fracture of the neck of the thigh bone*).

In French and Slovak medical language related to the elderly, we identified several pairs of equivalent synonyms consisting of an international term of Greco-Latin origin and a domestic French/Slovak equivalent. These represented typical diseases of the elderly, such as *osteoporosis*, *arthritis* or *phlebitis*, which is a concomitant disease of long-term attachment to the bed. Furthermore, this type of synonymy was also identified in relation to terms *age spot* (*liver spot*), *bedsore*, and *cerebrovascular accident*. Synonymous doublets are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. International and domestic terms

French term	Slovak term
<i>l'ostéoporose (osteoporosis)</i> <i>la raréfaction de l'os (bone thinning)</i>	<i>osteoporóza (osteoporosis)</i> <i>rednutie kostí (bone thinning)</i>
<i>l'arthrite (arthritis)</i> <i>l'inflammation des articulations (joint inflammation)</i>	<i>artritída (arthritis)</i> <i>zápal kĺbov (joint inflammation)</i>
<i>la phlébite (phlebitis)</i> <i>l'inflammation des veines (vein inflammation)</i>	<i>flebitída (phlebitis)</i> <i>zápal žíl (vein inflammation)</i>
<i>le lentigo sénile (senile lentigo)</i> <i>la tache de vieillesse (age spot)</i>	<i>senilné lentigo (senile lentigo)</i> <i>starecká škvrna (age spot)</i>
<i>le décubitus (decubitus)</i> <i>l'escarre, la plaie de lit (bedsore)</i>	<i>dekubitus, dekubit (decubitus)</i> <i>preležanina (bedsore)</i>
<i>l'ictus, l'apoplexie (ictus, apoplexy)</i> <i>l'accident vasculaire cérébral (cerebrovascular accident)</i>	<i>iktus, apoplexia (ictus, apoplexy)</i> <i>mozgová cievna príhoda (cerebrovascular accident)</i>

Regarding the terminology of clinical medicine, Poláčková (1993, 332) draws on Petrovsky's typology of synonyms (1983, 423) and distinguishes two types of synonymous terms based on the criterion of semantics. The feature characterising equivalent synonyms is that their phonetic form reflects the same motivational feature, expressed by different word-forming elements of the same meaning. In contrast, the sound forms of interpretive synonyms result from different motivational features. Poláčková talks about so-called *heteronyms* – words that come from different languages, but whose roots and word-forming elements have the same meaning, which are common in Slovak. She further claims that English clinical terminology uses names taken from classical languages and phonetically and morphologically adapts them to English language rules, while no doublets are present. The same is true of French. In our case, this gives rise to a disparity between the number of terms in Slovak and French, as two Slovak terms (international and domestic) correspond to one French term. Examples are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Asymmetry between international and domestic terms in French and Slovak

French term	Slovak term
<i>l'obésité (obesity)</i>	<i>obezita (obesity)</i> <i>tučnota (obesity)</i>
<i>la malnutrition (malnutrition)</i>	<i>malnutrícia (malnutrition)</i> <i>podvýživa (malnutrition)</i>
<i>la rétention urinaire (urinary retention)</i>	<i>retencia moču (urinary retention)</i> <i>zadržovanie moču (urinary retention)</i>
<i>la constipation/obstipation (constipation/obstipation)</i>	<i>konstipácia/obstipácia (constipation/obstipation)</i> <i>zápcha (constipation/obstipation)</i>
<i>la raideur articulaire (joint stiffness)</i>	<i>artikulárna stuhnutosť (articular stiffness)</i> <i>stuhnutosť kĺbov (joint stiffness)</i>
<i>la faiblesse musculaire (muscular weakness)</i>	<i>muskulárna slabosť (muscular weakness)</i> <i>svalová slabosť (muscular weakness)</i>
<i>la fragilité (fragility)</i>	<i>fragilita (fragility)</i> <i>krehkosť (fragility)</i>
<i>l'immobilité (immobility)</i>	<i>imobilita (immobility)</i> <i>nehybnosť (immobility)</i>
<i>la vulnérabilité (vulnerability)</i>	<i>vulnerabilita (vulnerability)</i> <i>zraniteľnosť (vulnerability)</i>
<i>l'adiposité (adiposity)</i>	<i>adipóza (adiposity)</i> <i>stukovatenie (adiposity)</i>

5.3. Colloquial names

According to Pavlovič et al. (2011, 23), a particularly important feature of medical language is its colloquiality. This can be explained by the fact that the recipient of health information is ultimately a patient who does not generally have a medical background, and therefore should be entitled to receive information in a comprehensible, i.e. lay language. The authors further assert that in the practical nomenclature of colloquial (informal) speech, motivated terms should be preferred, especially those which are created using domestic word-formation means and domestic bases (Pavlovič et al. 2011, 18). Buffa (1953) also stresses the requirement of motivation. He argues that a colloquial word may be raised to the level of a term only if it is linked to the definition of the term by a certain semantic relationship. One of the possibilities of using a colloquial expression as a term is

through the transfer of meaning based on the similarity of activity or form (Buffa 1953, 65-66).

Cataract and glaucoma belong among the most common causes of vision loss in elderly people (Harvey 2003). Besides the terms *katarakta* (*cataract*) and *glaukóm* (*glaucoma*), their domestic colloquial names exist in Slovak as well, namely *sivý zákal* (*grey opacity*) (or *belmo* – *white of the eye*) and *zelený zákal* (*green opacity*) that are motivated by the external, visible symptoms of the given diseases (grey and green colour of the eye). In French, however, such colloquial synonyms are lacking, which leads to an asymmetry with respect to Slovak. Another asymmetric relationship can be observed in the French synonymous pair *le syndrome de désadaptation psychomotrice* – *le syndrome post-chute* (*psychomotor disadaptation syndrome* – *postfall syndrome*) which corresponds to only one term – *popádový syndróm* (*postfall syndrome*) in Slovak. An example of a colloquial name being created from the transmission of meaning on the basis of internal relationship is the previously mentioned term *osteoporosis*, also called *tichý zlodej kostí* (*silent thief of bones*) in Slovak, and *le voleur d'os silencieux* (*silent thief of bones*) or *le mal silencieux* (*silent evil*) in French. The internal relationship is identical in both languages and results from the disease not having any visible symptoms in the early stages.

The term *la fracture du col de fémur* (*the femur neck fracture*) is also designated by the same colloquial expression in Slovak and French, i.e. *la fracture de la hanche* – *zlomenina bedra* (*fracture of the hip*), and is sometimes referred to in Slovak as the *last fracture*, being a fracture that can have life-threatening consequences for the elderly. Colloquial names have also been found for the term *l'accident vasculaire cerebral* – *cievna mozgová príhoda* (*cerebrovascular accident*), which is referred to as *le coup de sang* in French, and as *mŕtvica* or *porážka* (*stroke*) in Slovak. Finally, the term *la tache de vieillesse* – *starecká škvrna* (*age spot*) which is also referred to by its colloquial name *la fleur de cimetière* in French with a strongly pejorative, even morbid connotation (literally meaning a *cemetery flower*). In Slovak, the equivalent colloquial name does not exist. The identified examples of synonymous pairs consisting of a medical term and a colloquial name are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Terms and colloquial names

French term	French colloquial name	Slovak Term	Slovak colloquial name
<i>le syndrome de désadaptation psychomotrice (psychomotor disadaptation syndrome)</i>	<i>le syndrome post-chute (postfall syndrome)</i>	–	<i>popádový syndróm (postfall syndrome)</i>
<i>la fracture du col de fémur (femur neck fracture)</i>	<i>la fracture de la hanche (fracture of the hip)</i>	<i>zlomenina krčka stehennej kosti (femur neck fracture)</i>	<i>zlomenina bedra (fracture of the hip) posledná zlomenina (the last fracture)</i>
<i>le cataracte (cataract)</i>	–	<i>katarakta (cataract)</i>	<i>sivý zákal (grey opacity) belfmo (white of the eye)</i>
<i>le glaucome (glaucoma)</i>	–	<i>glaukóm (glaucoma)</i>	<i>zelený zákal (green opacity)</i>
<i>l'accident vasculaire cérébral (cerebrovascular accident)</i>	<i>le coup de sang (stroke)</i>	<i>cievna mozgová príhoda (cerebrovascular accident)</i>	<i>mŕtvica (stroke) porážka (stroke)</i>
<i>l'ostéoporose (osteoporosis)</i>	« <i>le voleur d'os silencieux</i> » <i>(silent thief of bones)</i> « <i>le mal silencieux</i> » <i>(silent evil)</i>	<i>osteoporóza (osteoporosis)</i>	„ <i>tichý zlodej kostí</i> “ <i>(silent thief of bones)</i>
<i>la tache de vieillesse (age spot)</i>	« <i>la fleur de cimetièrre</i> » <i>(cemetery flower)</i>	<i>starecká škvrna (age spot)</i>	–

5.4. English terms

In some cases, synonymy resulted from the adoption of an English term which was used in parallel with a French or Slovak term. For instance, the French term *le syndrome de l'épuisement professionnel (syndrome of professional exhaustion)* is one such example, with its Slovak counterpart being *syndróm profesionálneho*

vyhorenia. The syndrome is frequently developed by medical staff in geriatric wards or hospices who are in daily contact with terminally ill elderly people, and therefore, death. In both languages, the term *burn-out* is often employed to designate this syndrome in English. Another example is the term *le syndrome de fragilité – syndróm krehkosti*, designating one of the typical geriatric syndromes. In Slovak, a term borrowed from an English term is used as well, the so-called *frailty syndrome*, while the English term does not occur in French, again leading to a terminological asymmetry.

Table 5. Domestic terms – English terms

French term	English term	Slovak term	English term
<i>le syndrome de l'épuisement professionnel (syndrome of professional exhaustion)</i>	<i>le burn-out</i>	<i>syndróm profesionálneho vyhorenia (syndrome of professional exhaustion)</i>	<i>burn-out</i>
<i>le syndrome de fragilité (frailty syndrome)</i>	–	<i>syndróm krehkosti (frailty syndrome)</i>	<i>frailty syndróm (frailty syndrome)</i>

5.5. Medical acronyms

Levická (2006, 18) regards acronyms (as well as abbreviations) as specific types of synonyms. According to Palkovič (2012, 6), the process of acronymization can be defined as a word-formation process consisting in shortening multiword expressions using their initial letters, while a vowel usually read with the individual letters of the alphabet is added to them.

Karwacka (2015, 276) states that the tendency to shorten expressions and create acronyms is another characteristic feature of medical terminology. This is also confirmed by Poštolková et al. (1983) who state that the preservation of doublets in a complete (explicit) and shortened (implicit) form of the term is a common phenomenon in medicine, the use of these forms depending on the given context or communication situation (cited in Pavlovič et al. 2011, 21). Karwacka (2015) asserts that since English has the status of a *lingua franca* of the medical sphere, English acronyms may be transferred to another language in which the acronym formed from the domestic form of the term is not commonly used (e.g. *CT, LDL, HDL*). At this point, however, it is worth noting that, even in the field

of medicine, French maintains its reluctance to accept English terms by rejecting some of the internationally recognised and widely used English acronyms (*AIDS*, *DNA*, *RNA*, etc.) and using acronyms created based on French terms (*SIDA*, *ADN*, *ARN*). With regard to the most common diseases of the elderly, we identified this tendency in connection with the term *dementia with Lewy bodies*, which occurs in Slovak as the English acronym *DBL (dementia with Lewy bodies)*, while French uses its own acronym *DCL – la démence à corps de Lewy*. The same applies to the Slovak term *reumatoidná artritída začínajúca vo vyššom veku* designated by the English acronym *EORA (elderly-onset rheumatoid arthritis)*, while the acronym *PRdt* is used in French, which stands for *polyarthrite rhumatoïde à début tardif*. In other cases, French acronyms corresponded to Slovak acronyms (see Table 6: *DMLA – VPDM*, *AVC – CMP*, *HTA – AH*, *AGC – OBA* and others). In both situations, however, this diversity of acronyms, exacerbated by the fact that acronyms can appear in texts on their own (i.e. without the full name of the given disease), places increased demands on the translator who has to carry out thorough terminological research in order to ensure their adequate correspondence.

Table 6. Terms and acronyms

French acronym	Slovak acronym
<i>DCL</i> <i>la démence à corps de Lewy</i> (<i>Dementia with Lewy bodies</i>)	<i>DLB</i> <i>demencia s Lewyho telieskami</i> (<i>Dementia with Lewy bodies</i>)
<i>PRdt</i> <i>polyarthrite rhumatoïde à début tardif</i> (<i>elderly-onset rheumatoid arthritis</i>)	<i>EORA</i> <i>reumatoidná artritída</i> <i>začínajúca vo vyššom veku</i> (<i>elderly-onset rheumatoid arthritis</i>)
<i>DMLA</i> <i>la dégénérescence maculaire liée à l'âge</i> (<i>age-related macular degeneration</i>)	<i>VPDM</i> <i>vekom podmienená degenerácia makuly</i> (<i>age-related macular degeneration</i>)
<i>AVC</i> <i>l'accident vasculaire cérébral</i> (<i>cerebrovascular accident</i>)	<i>CMP</i> <i>cievna mozgová príhoda</i> (<i>cerebrovascular accident</i>)
<i>HTA</i> <i>l'hypertension artérielle</i> (<i>arterial hypertension</i>)	<i>AH</i> <i>artérová hypertenzia</i> (<i>arterial hypertension</i>)
<i>AGC</i> <i>l'artérite giganto-cellulaire</i> (<i>giant cell arteritis</i>)	<i>OBA</i> <i>obrovskobunková artritída</i> (<i>giant cell arteritis</i>)

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented selected examples of synonymy in French and Slovak geriatric terminology with a specific focus on challenges that may arise for specialised translators dealing with the field of geriatrics. Terminological synonymy was approached from the lexical point of view (regarding terms as specialised lexical units) and more specifically, was understood not as absolute synonymy but rather as loose synonymy, given that the identified synonymous pairs: (1) were extracted from various resource materials related to different contexts and communication situations (from highly specialised texts and research articles through popular scientific texts to information intended for the general public), (2) were not interchangeable at all times, and (3) differed in terms of their expressive value.

The identified synonymic pairs were categorised according to the nature of the synonym into five distinctive groups (eponym – non-eponymous term; international – domestic term; term – colloquial name; English term – domestic term; term – acronym), resulting from key features of medical terminology: existence of medical eponyms that were created based on the names of renowned doctors, penetration of internationalisms into national terminologies, presence of colloquial names, use of adopted and well-established English terms and frequent use of medical acronyms.

Numerous examples of geriatric term synonyms occurring in the examined field have also confirmed Sager's (1990) claim that the seemingly controversial nature of synonymy in terminology (synonymy to some extent standing in opposition to the fundamental properties of medical terms, such as unambiguity, accuracy, and stability) is no longer regarded as highly problematic, and the existence of various synonymous variants has now become more accepted.

Last but not least, we have also identified cases of asymmetric synonymy when there was a disproportion between the number of terms in French and Slovak, e.g. an eponym having a non-eponymous form in one language but not the other, a term having a colloquial name in one language but not the other, a term having both the international and domestic form in one language but only the international form in the other, etc. This may pose specific challenges for specialised translators from the given field and require them to consistently implement their research

competence in order to find and assign correct equivalents with the closest possible expressive value.

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LA RELATION SYNONYMIQUE ENTRE DES TERMES SPÉCIALISÉS FRANÇAIS ET SLOVAQUES DANS LE DOMAINE DE LA GÉRIATRIE

Résumé

L'article vise à présenter la relation synonymique des termes spécialisés observée dans le processus de détermination des équivalents français et slovaques dans le domaine de la gériatrie et les implications qu'elle peut avoir lors de la traduction de textes spécialisés (gériatriques). Dans le cadre théorique, la terminologie médicale et, en particulier, la terminologie gériatrique, est définie avec un accent particulier sur les caractéristiques clés des termes médicaux, en s'inspirant principalement des travaux de Horecký (1956), Masár (1991), Pavlovič et al. (2011), Karwacka (2015) et d'autres, tout en discutant du rôle controversé que la synonymie peut avoir dans la détermination des équivalents terminologiques. Sur la base de la classification de Karwacka (2015), les paires de termes synonymes de gériatrie identifiés lors de la phase de création d'un glossaire terminologique du domaine de la gériatrie en français et en slovaque sont catégorisés en groupes en fonction de la nature du terme synonyme et démontrés par des exemples. Au total, 5 catégories de paires

de synonymes ont été identifiées (éponyme – terme non-éponyme ; terme international – terme domestique ; terme – nom familier ; terme anglais – terme domestique ; terme – acronyme), qui peuvent poser des défis aux traducteurs médicaux.

Mots clés : synonymie, terminologie, gériatrie, équivalence.

KONTRASTIVNI PRISTUP FRANCUSKIM I SLOVAČKIM SINONIMNIM TERMINIMA U PODRUČJU GERIJATRIJE

Sažetak

U ovom se radu raspravlja o sinonimiji u francuskim i slovačkim ekvivalentnim terminima u području gerijatrije, kao i o implikacijama sinonimije za prevođenje specijalističkih (gerijatrijskih) tekstova. U teorijskom se dijelu medicinska odnosno gerijatrijska terminologija definiraju na temelju ključnih karakteristika zacrtanih u Horecký (1956), Masár (1991), Pavlovič et al. (2011) i Karwacka (2015), a zatim se raspravlja o kontroverznoj ulozi sinonima pri određivanju terminoloških ekvivalenata. Na temelju klasifikacije koju je predložila Karwacka (2015) sinonimni parovi gerijatrijskih termina identificirani tijekom izrade francuskog i slovačkog terminološkog glosara kategoriziraju se u skupine prema naravi sinonimnog odnosa uz navođenje primjera. Pronađeno je pet tipova sinonima (eponim – neeponimni termin; međunarodni – domaći termin; termin – kolokvijalni naziv; engleski termin – domaći termin; termin – akronim), koji mogu predstavljati izazov za prevoditelje u području medicine.

Ključne riječi: sinonimija, terminologija, gerijatrija, ekvivalencija