

Letter to the Editor.

Translation inaccuracy issue in specialized literature – practical and didactic perspectives

Konrad Opaliński

University of Zielona Gora

Annually, several textbooks on diagnosing mental disorders and a considerable number of monographs dedicated to specific psychological disorders appear on the Polish publishing market. A significant portion of these works constitutes translations of foreign-language textbooks into Polish. These translations should be free of errors not only in terms of language but, above all, in terms of content. This means that the content contained in different versions of the same textbook should be consistent. This also applies to the concepts and terminology used in these textbooks. However, the practice shows that the translations of monographs appearing on the Polish market may contain, and indeed do contain, content that differs substantively from the content found in the original textbooks.

To illustrate the problematic nature of terminological inconsistencies, I will use the example of the textbook *DSM-5 bez tajemnic. Praktyczny przewodnik dla klinicystów* by James Morrison (translated by Robert Andruszko) published by Jagiellonian University Press, which was the first textbook on the Polish market to describe the new DSM-5 classification [1].

In Chapter 2, which deals with schizophrenia spectrum disorders and other psychotic disorders, the term *zaburzenie schizofrenoidalne* was presented. The problem with this designation is that the term *zaburzenie schizofrenoidalne* not only does not appear in Polish psychiatric nosology but is also absent in the original version of the *DSM-5 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders* [2] and its Polish language version *DSM-5 kryteria diagnostyczne zaburzeń psychicznych* [3].

In the English-language and Polish-language versions of the DSM-5 textbook, the term *zaburzenie schizofrenoforniczne* (295.40) is used (in the original, “schizo-

phreniform disorder”). The Polish-language versions of the DSM-5 also provides an alternative term, which is *zaburzenie pod postaciąschizofrenii* [2, 3].

Importantly, the concept of “schizophreniform disorder” is also present in the original English-language textbook by James Morrison, indicating that the original version of the textbook aligns with the terminology used in the DSM-5 [4].

Furthermore, two other textbooks by James Morrison available on the Polish publishing market translate the term *zaburzenie schizofreniformiczne* (in the original, “schizophreniform disorder”) differently, and also differently from each other. In the textbook *Wywiad diagnostyczny z dziećmi i młodzieżą* (translated by Robert Andruszko) also published by Jagiellonian University Press, this term is translated as *zaburzenie pod postaciąschizofrenii* (consistent with the terminology used in the Polish-language version of the DSM-5), and the term *zaburzenie schizofrenopodobne* does not appear anywhere in the text [5]. On the other hand, in the next Polish translation of James Morrison’s textbook *Wstępny wywiad diagnostyczny* also published by Jagiellonian University Press (translated by Marta Kapera), in the section devoted to disorders similar to schizophrenia, the term *zaburzenie schizofreniformiczne* appears (not *zaburzenie schizofreniformiczne*) – grammatically closest to the original, but slightly different from the appropriate term used in the Polish translation of the DSM-5 textbook [6].

The inconsistency in translating terms from foreign-language literature into Polish can pose a problem not only for practitioners but especially for beginners, for whom familiarizing themselves with classification systems, the similarities and differences between these systems, as well as the differences between different editions of the same systems, can be very challenging, not to mention understanding diagnostic systems and their various language versions. Moreover, clinicians do not always consult original diagnostic textbooks but rely on textbooks that describe them, such as James Morrison’s monographs.

This issue underscores the importance of a substantive and scientific evaluation of the content contained in translations of diagnostic textbooks. From the perspective of practice and education, it is essential not to create unnecessary nosological entities beyond necessity.

References

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Address: Konrad Opaliński
University of Zielona Gora
e-mail: kopalinski@uz.zgora.pl