

# **Dis/Similarities between Patient Information Leaflets in Britain and Italy: Implications for the Translator**

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## **ABSTRACT**

While we can observe macro-pragmatic equivalence between patient information leaflets (PILs) across languages based on common macro-aims, it is rare to encounter other types of equivalence. Indeed, different cultural backgrounds and assumptions about the readers and their roles motivate significant non-equivalence at the syntactic, structural, lexico-semantic and micro-pragmatic levels. Failure to recognize such differences may affect the process of translation and result in particularly inadequate (cf. Nord 1997) translations. I present the results of a contrastive analysis of a small corpus of British and Italian PILs with the aim to foreground the most significant dissimilarities between the two. Based on the results of this analysis, I look at Italian PILs translated into English in order to assess their functional adequacy. I argue that the characteristics of the genre justify a functional approach to translation and, accordingly, recourse to a strong cultural adaptation to the social needs of the target language.

**KEYWORDS:** adaptation, contrastive studies, Languages for Special Purposes, patient information leaflets, speech act theory.