Comparative study on WHO Western Pacific Region and World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies international standard terminologies on traditional medicine: an analysis of the Mechanism of Diseases (Part 2)

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In the previous issue, we have, according to the book entitled *International Standardization of English Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Study of Theory, Summarization of Practice and Exploration of Methods*¹, briefly introduced and analyzed the first part of the terminologies concerning pathogenesis included in *WHO International Standard Terminologies on Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific Region*² (abbreviated as WPRO Standard instead of WHO Standard according to the present development of international standardization of traditional medicine maintained by WHO) and the *International Standard Chinese-English Basic Nomenclature of Chinese Medicine* compiled by World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies³ (abbreviated as WFCMS Standard). In this essay, we will try to introduce and analyze the second part of the terminologies concerning pathogenesis in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

表寒里热 exterior cold and interior heat; presence of exterior cold and interior heat

表热里寒 exterior heat and interior cold; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior heat and interior cold

表虚里实 exterior deficiency and interior excess; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior deficiency and interior excess

表实里虚 exterior excess and interior deficiency; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior excess and interior deficiency

In TCM, 表 and 里 simply refer to the exterior

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and interior parts of the body, also are frequently translated as external and internal. However, sometimes 表 and 里 are used together to form a concept to describe the close relationship between two organs. For instance, since the liver and the gallbladder are connected with each other in physiological functions and pathological changes, they are believed to be exteriorly and interiorly related to each other. Such a close relationship between these two organs is described as exterior and interior relationship.

表里俱寒 cold in both exterior and interior; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior cold and interior cold

表里俱热 heat in both exterior and interior; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior heat and interior heat

表里俱实 dual excess of the exterior and interior; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior excess and interior excess

表里俱虚 dual deficiency of the exterior and interior; a pathological state characterized by the simultaneous presence of exterior deficiency and interior deficiency

表里同病 dual disease of the exterior and interior; coexistence of diseases both in the exterior and interior

In the above terms, 俱 is identical with each other in meaning and function, but is translated somewhat differently. For instance, in 表里俱寒 (cold in both exterior and interior) and 表里俱热 (heat in both exterior and interior), 俱 is all translated as both. But in 表里俱实 (dual excess of the exterior and interior) and 表里俱虚 (dual deficiency of the exterior and interior), 俱 is translated as dual. For the sake of standardization, it seems necessary to use the same word, either both or dual, to translate the character 俱. Besides, in the above terms, the use of definite article is not in unison. Semantically speaking, it is necessary to modify exterior and interior with a definite article.

In WFCMS Standard, the word dual is also used to translate 俱. However, the structure of the concerned terms differs from that in WPRO Standard. In WFCMS Standard, for instance, the terms 表里虚虚 and 表里实实 are respectively translated as “deficiency in dual exterior and interior” and “excess in dual exterior and interior”.

表气不固; 里气不固 insecurity of exterior qi: failure of insufficient defense qi to protect the superficials of the body against external pathogens, the same as insecurity of defense qi

In TCM, 表气不固 and 里气不固 are similar to each other in meaning, but not exactly the same. Structurally speaking, these two terms should be translated differently because they are two separate terms. To make it differently, 表气 can be translated as exterior qi while 里气 can be rendered as defense qi or defensive qi. 不固 simply means weakness. To render 不固 as insecurity sounds somewhat awkward because insecurity is often associated with the state of safety. However in the term 里气不固, the phrase 不固 mainly describes weakened function of the defensive qi.

表邪入里 inward invasion of exterior pathogen: penetration of an externally contracted pathogen from the exterior into the interior

热邪入里 pathogenic heat passing into the interior: process of a disease where external heat pathogens enter the interior to cause an interior heat pattern/syndrome

表邪在里 exterior pathogen entering the interior: the process of a disease whereby the external pathogen attacks the exterior first, and then enters the interior, impairing visceral functions

In WFCMS Standard, the term 表邪入里 is rendered as inward penetration of exterior pathogen and 热邪传里 is rendered as inward transmission of pathogenic heat, sounding more expressive than that in WPRO Standard.

里病出表 interior disease moving out to the exterior: the process of a disease turning from the interior to the exterior through the struggle of the healthy qi against pathogens

寒热 cold and heat: 1) a pair of principles for differentiating the nature of disease: when yin is exuberant, there is cold; when yang prevails, there is heat; 2) chills and fever

寒寒 excess cold: a pathological change arising from contraction of yin cold pathogen

虚寒 deficiency cold: a pathological change arising when yang qi becomes insufficient and fails to provide adequate warmth

热结下焦 heat binding in the lower energizer: accumulation of heat in the intestines and bladder that causes lower abdominal distention and pain, constipation, short voidings of dark urine or even hematuria, and sometimes rigidity and tenderness of the lower abdomen accompanied by restlessness

The Chinese character 结 in 热结下焦 means gathering. That is why it is often translated as accumulation. In the West, translators like to ren-
der it as bind. Comparatively speaking, “bind” seems better than accumulation in revealing the connotation of 结 in this term.

下焦湿热，湿热下注 lower energizer dampness-heat: a pathological change characterized by dampness-heat pouring down into the lower energizer, including large intestinal dampness-heat, bladder dampness-heat, dampness-heat obstructing the essence chamber, and morbid leukorrhea, pudendal itch, and painful swelling of the lower limb joints caused by dampness-heat, the same as downward flow of dampness-heat.

In TCM, 下焦湿热 和 湿热下注 are two separate terms, though they are, to some extent, similar to each other in meaning. So it is better to translate these two terms separately in order to fully reveal the connotations of them. Since 下焦 湿热 is rendered as “lower energizer dampness-heat”, 湿热下注 can be rendered as “downward flow of damp heat”. In WFCMS Standard, 湿热下注 is rendered as dampness-heat pouring down, sounding quite vivid and clear.

热盛伤津 exuberant heat damaging fluid: the process by which excess heat dissipates body fluids, also the same as excessive heat damaging fluid.

寒包火 cold enveloping fire: a pathological change characterized by contraction of wind-cold with accumulated internal heat.

寒热错杂 cold-heat complex: a pathological change that causes complicated heat and cold conditions such as heat in the upper body with cold in the lower body, and cold in the exterior and heat in the interior.

In TCM, 寒热错杂 means simultaneous appearance of both cold syndrome and heat syndrome, such as 上寒下热 (heat in the upper while cold in the lower), 上热下寒 (cold in the upper while heat in the lower), 表寒里热 (exterior cold and interior heat) and 表热里寒 (exterior heat and interior cold) etc. In the current translation practice, 寒热错杂 is often rendered as “simultaneous occurrence of cold and heat syndromes” or “mixture of cold and heat”. To translate it as “cold-heat complex” is of course understandable and also concise.

上热下寒 upper body heat and lower body cold: a complex condition characterized by the simultaneous presence of heat in the upper body and cold in the lower body, the same as heat above and cold below.

上寒下热 upper body cold and lower body heat: a complex condition characterized by the simultaneous presence of cold in the upper body and heat in the lower body, the same as cold above and heat below.

In the current translation practice, 上热下寒 and 上寒下热 are often rendered as “heat in the upper and cold in the lower” and “cold in the upper and heat in the lower”. Comparatively speaking, the translations of these terms in WFCMS Standard sound clear in meaning. In WFCMS Standard, these two terms are rendered respectively as “upper heat and lower cold” and “upper cold and lower heat”, appearing identical with the original terms in structure and meaning.

寒热格拒 cold and heat repulsion: a form of pathological change in which extremely excessive cold forces heat to the extremities, and vice versa.

真寒假热 true cold with false heat: a pathological change marked by abundant yin-cold in the interior with pseudo-heat manifestations.

真寒假寒 true heat with false cold: a pathological change marked by excessive heat in the interior with pseudo-cold manifestations.

As to the translation of 真寒假热 and 真寒假寒, translators in China used to use pseudo to render heat. For instance, 真寒假热 used to be translated as “heat syndrome with pseudo-cold syndromes”, a liberal translation of course. To translate 真寒假热 and 真寒假寒 as “true cold with false heat” and “true heat with false cold”, comparatively speaking, seems quite natural and clear.

虚实 deficiency and excess: one of the guiding principles for analyzing the condition of the body’s resistance to pathogenic factors, in which deficiency refers to deficiency of the healthy qi and excess refers to excessiveness of the pathogenic qi.

虚 deficiency: 1) deficiency of the healthy qi; 2) weak constitution; 3) weak reaction against pathogens.

实 excess: 1) excessiveness of the pathogenic qi; 2) strong constitution; 3) strong reaction against pathogens.

虚实夹杂 deficiency-excess complex: a pathological state in which both excess of pathogenic qi and debilitation of healthy qi occur in the disease process.

虚寒夹实 excess with deficiency complication: excess condition complicated by deficiency symptoms with the former dominant.

虚实夹杂 deficiency with excess complication: deficiency condition complicated by excess symp-
toms with the former dominant

In WFCMS Standard, 虚实夹杂 is rendered into “deficiency-excess in complexity”, quite similar to that in WPRO Standard. In the current translation practice, the Chinese phrase 夹杂, literally meaning to be mixed up with or to be mingled with, is translated differently according to context. For instance, in the Chinese sentence 她说话夹杂浓厚的南方口音 (She speaks with a strong southern accent), 夹杂 can be translated as “to speak with”; in the Chinese sentence 这篇文章夹杂着一些英语词语 (The article is cluttered up with some English words), 夹杂 can be translated as “to be cluttered with”. In TCM translation, 夹杂 is also rendered as “complicated by”. Such a translation of 夹杂 is sometimes used in WFCMS Standard in which, for example, 实中夹虚 is translated as “excess complicated by deficiency”.

上虚下实 upper deficiency and lower excess: deficiency of healthy qi in the upper body and excess of pathogenic qi in the lower body, the same as deficiency above and excess below.

上实下虚; 上实下虚 upper excess and lower deficiency: exuberance of pathogenic qi in the upper body and deficiency of healthy qi in the lower body, the same as excess above and deficiency below.

In TCM, 上虚下实 and 上实下虚 are structurally quite the same as 上热下寒 and 上寒下热. However in WPRO Standard, 上热下寒 and 上寒下热 are rendered respectively as “upper body heat and lower body cold” and “upper body cold and lower body heat”; while 上虚下实 and 上实下虚 are translated respectively as “upper deficiency and lower excess” and “upper excess and lower deficiency”. For the sake of international standardization, it might be better to employ the same method to render these terms.

虚实真假 true or false deficiency-excess: false appearance of deficiency-excess manifestations opposite to the true nature of the disease.

真实假虚 true excess with false deficiency: excess symptoms pattern/syndrome with pseudo-deficiency.

虚假真实 true deficiency with false excess: deficiency symptoms pattern/syndrome with pseudo-excess.

In the early period of TCM translation, 真假虚实 were often translated as “asthenia-syndrome in appearance but sthenia-syndrome in nature” and “sthenia-syndrome in appearance but asthenia-syndrome in nature”. Such a way of translation sounds clear in meaning, but complicated in structure. In the current translation practice, these two terms are also rendered respectively as “excess syndrome with pseudo-deficiency symptoms” and “deficiency syndrome with pseudo-excess syndrome”, also appearing quite clear in meaning, but not concise enough in structure. Generally speaking, the translation of these two terms in WPRO Standard and WFCMS Standard is both clear and concise.

由实转虚 conversion of excess into deficiency: the process of a disease turning from excess of pathogenic qi into deficiency of healthy qi.

由虚转实 conversion of deficiency into excess: the process of a disease turning from deficiency of healthy qi into excess of pathogenic qi.

气虚 qi deficiency: a general term for deficiency of qi that leads to decreased visceral functions and lowered body resistance.

气不摄; 气不摄血 qi deficiency failing to control blood: a pathological change of qi deficiency in which qi is unable to retain the fluids (including blood).

To translate 气不摄血 as “qi failing to control blood” is understandable. However to translate 气不摄血 as “qi deficiency failing to control blood” seems difficult to understand. 气虚 (qi deficiency) naturally implies 气不摄 (failing to control blood). In fact, the term 气不摄血 in TCM, which means failure to control blood due to qi deficiency, mainly emphasizes the cause of “failing to control blood”.

气虚中满 qi deficiency with fullness in the middle: a pathological change of qi deficiency in which qi is insufficient for normal transportation and transformation in the middle energizer, thus causing epigastric and abdominal distension.

气虚血瘀 qi deficiency with blood stasis: a pathological change of qi deficiency in which qi is insufficient to maintain blood flow, thus resulting in blood stasis.

气机失调 qi movement disorder: a general term for disordered activity of qi in ascending, descending, exiting and entering.

气机郁滞; 气郁 qi movement stagnation: depressed and stagnant flow of qi that causes dysfunction of internal organs and meridians/channels, the same as qi stagnation.

In the early period of TCM translation, 气机 was rendered as “functional activities of vital energy”. Such a translation was gradually changed into “functional activities of qi”. To render it as
“qi movement” seems to be over simplified. Besides, 气机 循着 and qi 血 are two terms that are slightly different from each other in connotation. So it is better to translate them differently.

气郁化火 stagnant qi transforming into fire: a pathological change of long-standing stagnation of qi that transforms into fire

气陷不升 inhibited qi movement: impeded, obstructed or stagnant qi movement that impairs the functions of viscera and meridians/channels, the same as qi movement depression

气化不全 inhibited qi transformation: a pathological change of yang qi deficiency that decreases digestion and absorption, or impairs fluid metabolism leading to water-dampness retention or phlegm retention

气逆 qi counterflow: reversal of the normal downward flow of qi, the same as qi reflux

气陷 qi fall: a pathological change of deficient qi marked by failure in its lifting or holding function, also known as qi depression

气陷下陷 sunken middle qi: a pathological change of deficient spleen qi marked by its failure in upbearing the clear and other lifting or holding functions

The term 气陷 is often rendered as “qi sinking” and maybe that is why 气陷下陷 is rendered as “sunken middle qi”. In the current translation practice, the Chinese character 跌 is also frequently rendered as “collapse”. In WPRO Standard, 气逆 is rendered as “qi counterflow”, quite concise and clear. However in WFCMS Standard, this term is often translated as “reverse flow of qi”, reflecting a common practice in the current translation field.

气滞 qi stagnation: a pathological change characterized by impeded circulation of qi that leads to stagnation of qi movement and functional disorder of organs, manifested as distention or pain in the affected part

寒凝气滞 qi stagnation due to cold congealing: congealing effect of pathogenic cold that leads to stagnant movement of qi

气闭 qi block: a pathological change marked by obstruction of the normal movement of qi

气脱 qi collapse: desertion of qi due to sudden damage to the healthy qi, massive loss of blood, profuse sweating, excessive vomiting and diarrhea, or due to prolonged consumption in a chronic disease

血瘀 blood deficiency: any pathological change characterized by deficiency of blood which fails to nourish organs, tissues and meridians/channels

血瘀 blood stasis: a morbid state of blood stagnancy in a certain area of the body caused by sluggish flow of qi, deficiency of qi or blood, trauma, or yin-cold

血逆 blood counterflow: a pathological change characterized by reverse flow of blood in the meridian/channel causing separation of qi and blood

血热 blood heat: a pathological change in which exuberant heat or fire enters the blood, usually causing hemorrhage

血寒 blood cold: a pathological change in which cold either externally contracted or originated from yang deficiency, entering the blood aspect, causes qi stagnation or blood stasis by its congealing effect

血随气逆 blood flowing counterflow with qi: a pathological change in which the upward adverse flow of qi leads blood rushing upward

In TCM, expressions like 血逆 and 血随气逆 are seldom used. These expressions, appearing like TCM terms, might be developed and used in other East Asian countries.

亡血; 脱血 blood collapse: acute critical deficiency of blood, mostly due to massive hemorrhage, also called blood desertion

气血失调 disharmony of qi and blood: any failure in the mutually coordinating relationship of qi and blood

气滞血瘀 blood stasis due to qi stagnation: a pathological change in which a long-standing or severe stagnation of qi impedes the flow of blood, a condition characterized by coexistence of qi stagnation and blood stasis

气病及血 qi disease affecting the blood: a pathological change in which diseased conditions of qi tend to induce blood disorders

血不归经; 血不循经 blood failing to stay in the meridians: a pathological change that causes extravasation of blood

In the terms of 血不归经 and 血不循经, the Chinese character 经 all refers to blood vessel, not meridian. The so-called 血不归经 and 血不循经 all describe the pathological condition in which the blood fails to circulate inside the vessels due to qi deficiency, blood stagnation or fire and heat invasion. That is why these two terms are often rendered as “blood fails to circulate inside the vessels” or “failure of blood to circulate in the vessels”. Semantically speaking, to translate 归 and 循 as “circulate” sounds much better than to render them into “stay”. 
血热妄行: frenetic movement of blood due to heat: a pathological change extravasation of blood in which heat forces

To translate the Chinese character 妄 in 血热妄行 as frenetic, sounds vivid and accurate. In current translation practice, this term is often liberally translated as “bleeding due to heat” or “extravasation of blood due to heat”. Comparatively speaking, the translation in WPRO Standard is more desirable and practical.

气随血脱: blood qi collapse following bleeding: a pathological change in which massive loss of blood leads to collapse of qi

In TCM, 气随血脱 and 血脱气脱 are two terms with different emphasis and therefore it might be better to translate them differently. The term 气随血脱 emphasizes the process of cause and effect, sounding dynamic; while 血脱气脱 stresses the result of cause and effect, appearing static.

气血两虚: dual deficiency of qi and blood: simultaneous presence of qi deficiency and blood deficiency

气血两虚: dual deficiency of qi and yin: simultaneous deficiency presence of qi deficiency and yin deficiency

伤津: damage to fluid: a general term for various impairments and loss of body fluid

津脱: fluid collapse: a severe form of damage to fluid, usually due to profuse sweating, excessive vomiting or diarrhea

津液亏损: fluid-humor depletion: a pathological change marked by insufficiency of body fluid-humor that fails to moisten the body tissues

In these terms, 津液 generally refers to body fluid or just fluid and therefore it seems unnecessary to translate 津 and 液 separately. In the current translation practice, 亏损 is also frequently rendered as consumption, a liberal translation of course.

津枯血燥: fluid consumption and blood dryness: a pathological change in which insufficiency of fluid gives rise to blood dryness with endogenous heat

津亏血瘀: fluid depletion and blood stasis: a pathological change in which fluid deficiency cau-

ses stagnation of blood flow

气随液脱: qi collapse due to humor depletion: a pathological change in which qi collapse occurs following massive loss of fluid

In TCM, 气随血脱 (qi collapse following massive bleeding) is a commonly used term. But 气随液脱 sounds quite alienate and it perhaps is another special expression used in some East Asian countries. Though such a term is also included in WFCMS Standard, it perhaps is not an authentic TCM term.

气不化津: qi failing to form fluid: insufficient yang qi with reduced vaporizing action failing to induce the formation of body fluid

In WFCMS Standard, there is no such a term of 气不化津. However it has included another term 气不化水 which is rendered as “qi failing to transform into water”. In fact, both 气不化津 and 气不化水 are seldom used in TCM fields and they might be special terms developed in other regions.

The above is a brief introduction and analysis about some of the terms concerning pathogenesis of TCM. More discussions about this part of terminologies will be continued in the next issue of the Journal of Chinese Integrative Medicine.

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