Ahmad Ahsan (India)

Dnipro, State Institution "DNIPROPETROVSK MEDICAL ACADEMY of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine"

Research advisor: lecturer Shubkina K.A.

THE LANGUAGE OF MEDICINE (MEDICAL LATIN & MEDICAL ENGLISH)

Latin (lat.: *lingua latīna*) is a classical language belonging to the Italic branch of the Indo-European languages [1, p. 66].

Vulgar Latin developed into the Romance languages, such as Italian, French, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. Latin, Greek and French have contributed many words to the English language. In particular, Latin (and Ancient Greek) roots are used in English descriptions of theology, biology, science, medicine and law. Latin is taught in primary, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions around the world [4, p. 121-130].

The Latin influence in English has been significant at all stages of its insular development. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, English writers cobbled together huge numbers of new words from Latin and Greek words, dubbed *"inkhorn terms"*, as if they had spilled from a pot of ink. Many of these words were used once by the author and then forgotten, but some useful ones survived, such as *'imbibe'* and *'extrapolate'*. Many of the most common polysyllabic English words are of Latin origin through the medium of Old French. Romance words make respectively 59%, of English vocabulary [3, p. 125].

The influence of Roman governance and Roman technology on the less-developed nations under Roman dominion led to the adoption of Latin phraseology in some specialized areas, such as science, technology, medicine, and law. For example, the Linnaean system of plant and animal classification was heavily influenced by Historia Naturalis, an encyclopaedia of people, places, plants, animals, and things published by Pliny the Elder. Roman medicine, recorded in the works of such physicians as Galen, established that today's medical terminology would be primarily derived from Latin and Greek words, the Greek being filtered through the Latin.

Latin is a synthetic, fusional language in the terminology of linguistic typology. In more traditional terminology, it is an inflected language, but typologists are apt to say *"inflecting"*. Words include an objective semantic element and markers specifying the grammatical use of the word. Word order is not as important in Latin as it is in English, which is less inflected. The general structure and word order of a Latin sentence can therefore vary [4, p. 121-130].

Latin sometimes uses prepositions, depending on the type of prepositional phrase being used. Most prepositions are followed by a noun in either the accusative or ablative case: *"ad usum internum"* (for internal use), with *"usum internum"* being the accusative forms of *"usum, i n; internus, a, um"*, internal use; and *"cum extracto"* (with extract), with *"extracto» being* the being the ablative form of *"extractum, i n"*, extract.

Medical terminology is language used to precisely describe the human body including its components, processes, conditions affecting it, and procedures performed upon it. Medical terminology is used in the field of medicine.

Medical terminology has quite regular morphology, the same prefixes and suffixes are used to add meanings to different roots. The root of a term often refers to an organ, tissue, or condition. For example, in the disorder hypertension, the prefix *"hyper-"* means *"high"* or *"over"*, and the root word *"tension"* refers to pressure, so the word *"hypertension"* refers to abnormally high blood pressure.[2, p. 254] The roots, prefixes and suffixes are often derived from Greek or Latin, and often quite dissimilar from their English-language variants.[1, p. 70] This regular morphology means that once a reasonable number of morphemes are learnt it becomes easy to understand very precise terms assembled from these morphemes. A lot of medical language is anatomical terminology, concerning itself with the names of various parts of the body.

In forming or understanding a word root, one needs a basic comprehension of the terms and the source language. For example, if a word was to be formed to indicate a condition of kidneys, there are two primary roots – one from Greek (νεφρός – *nephr(os)*) and one from Latin (*ren(es)*). Renal failure would be a condition of

kidneys, and *nephritis* is also a condition, or inflammation, of the kidneys. The suffix *-itis* means inflammation, and the entire word conveys the meaning inflammation of the kidney. To continue using these terms, other combinations will be presented for the purpose of examples: The term *supra-renal* is a combination of the prefix supra- (meaning *"above"*), and the word root for kidney, and the entire word means *"situated above the kidneys"*. The word *"nephrologist"* combines the root word for kidney to the suffix *-ologist* with the resultant meaning of *"one who studies the kidneys"* [3, p. 95].

Medical terminology often uses words created using prefixes and suffixes in Latin and Ancient Greek. In medicine, their meanings, and their etymology, are informed by the language of origin. Prefixes and suffixes, primarily in Greek – but also in Latin, have a dropable *-o-*. Medical roots generally go together according to language: Greek prefixes go with Greek suffixes and Latin prefixes with Latin suffixes. Although it is technically considered acceptable to create hybrid words, it is strongly preferred not to mix different lingual roots. Examples of well-accepted medical words that do mix lingual roots are *neonatology* and *quadriplegia* [2, p. 170].

In English, the most common vowel used in the formation of the combining form is the letter -o-, added to the word root. For example if there is an inflammation of the stomach and intestines, this would be written as gastro- and enter- plus -itis, gastroenteritis. In the process of creating medical terminology, certain rules of language apply. These rules are part of language mechanics called linguistics. The word root is developed to include a vowel sound following the term to add a smoothing action to the sound of the word when applying a suffix. The result is the formation of a new term with a vowel attached *(word root + vowel)* called a combining form.

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