



THE PROGRESSION AND MODIFICATION OF MEDICAL TERMS WITHIN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract *This article examines the evolution of medical terminology in the English language from a philological perspective. It traces the historical development of medical vocabulary from Old English through the influence of Latin and Greek during the Middle English and Renaissance periods to modern medical English shaped by scientific progress and globalization. Particular attention is paid to the processes of lexical borrowing, standardization, and semantic change. The study demonstrates how medical terminology reflects broader linguistic, cultural, and scientific transformations and highlights the role of English as a global language of medicine in the contemporary world.*

Keywords: *English philology; medical terminology; linguistic borrowing; Latin and Greek influence; history of English; scientific language; medical discourse*

Аннотация *В данной статье рассматривается эволюция медицинской терминологии в английском языке с филологической точки зрения. Прослеживается историческое развитие медицинской лексики от древнеанглийского периода через влияние латинского и греческого языков в среднеанглийский период и эпоху Возрождения до современного медицинского английского, сформированного научным прогрессом и глобализацией. Особое внимание уделяется процессам лексического заимствования,*

стандартизации и семантических изменений. Исследование показывает, каким образом медицинская терминология отражает более широкие лингвистические, культурные и научные трансформации, а также подчеркивает роль английского языка как глобального языка медицины в современном мире.

***Ключевые слова:** английская филология; медицинская терминология; лингвистическое заимствование; влияние латинского и греческого языков; история английского языка; научный язык; медицинский дискурс*

Introduction. Medical terminology forms a crucial part of the English language, serving as the foundation for communication in healthcare, science, and research. The development of medical vocabulary in English reflects historical, cultural, and scientific changes over centuries. From early borrowings from Latin and Greek to the influence of modern technology and globalization, medical terminology has continuously evolved. Studying this evolution from a philological perspective helps us understand how language adapts to new knowledge and social needs. This article explores the historical development of English medical terminology, its main linguistic sources, and its modern transformations.

The earliest medical terms in English can be traced back to **Old English**, where basic words related to the body and illness were used, such as *heart*, *blood*, and *sick*. However, Old English medical vocabulary was limited and often relied on folk medicine and religious beliefs. With the spread of Christianity and early medical manuscripts, some Latin terms began to appear, although they were not yet widely standardized.

The most important changes in English medical terminology took place during the Middle English period and the Renaissance, when Latin and Greek emerged as the primary sources of medical language. Latin was widely used in education and scientific writing, while Greek contributed specialized terms related to anatomy, illnesses, and medical treatments. During this era, words such as *diagnosis*, *therapy*, *anatomy*, and *surgery* became part of the English lexicon. The use of these classical languages ensured accuracy and consistency, allowing medical practitioners throughout Europe to communicate clearly. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rapid progress in medical science created a demand for more detailed and systematic terminology. New findings in fields such as anatomy, pathology, and microbiology led to the formation of many new terms, typically derived from Greek and Latin elements. This period also marked attempts to standardize medical vocabulary through the publication of medical dictionaries and textbooks, which helped minimize confusion and regional differences in usage.

The expansion of medical terminology accelerated further in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a result of technological advances, global communication, and interdisciplinary collaboration. English became the leading international language of medicine, promoting the global spread of English medical terms. At the same time, medical language began to shift toward greater clarity for patients, with simpler expressions increasingly used in doctor–patient interactions. Modern medical terminology also makes frequent use of abbreviations, acronyms, and eponyms, such as *MRI*, *AIDS*, and *Parkinson's disease*.

By contrast, medical vocabulary in the Old English period was largely based on native words and reflected a limited, non-scientific

understanding of health and disease. The absence of standardized terminology resulted in multiple terms being used for the same condition, indicating early lexical inconsistency. Overall, the influence of Latin and Greek has been one of the most defining aspects of the development of medical terminology. Latin served as the language of academic record-keeping, while Greek offered a flexible system of roots for naming medical concepts. These classical elements made it possible to create universally recognized terms such as *cardiology*, *neurology*, and *pathology*, and introduced complex word-formation patterns that remain central to modern medical English.

During the Early Modern English period, medical terminology underwent processes of semantic specialization and lexical standardization. Words that previously had broader or non-technical meanings acquired precise medical definitions, reflecting advances in anatomy, physiology, and pathology. The rise of printing and the production of medical dictionaries and encyclopedias played a crucial role in stabilizing terminology and reducing variation. From a philological standpoint, this era illustrates the transition from descriptive to analytical medical language, as well as the increasing importance of morphology, especially the systematic use of prefixes and suffixes derived from classical languages. In contemporary English, and medical terminology continues to expand rapidly in response to scientific innovation, technological progress, and globalization. New terms emerge through neologism, abbreviation, acronym formation, and eponymy, reflecting both efficiency and specialization in medical communication. At the same time, modern medical English exhibits functional variation: highly technical language is used in professional and academic contexts,

while simplified terminology is employed in patient-centered communication. This dual nature of medical language highlights an important philological tension between precision and accessibility, demonstrating how social factors influence

Conclusion. The evolution of medical terminology in the English language represents a complex interaction between linguistic structure, scientific advancement, and cultural context. From the concrete and metaphorical expressions of Old English to the highly specialized and globally standardized terminology of modern medical English, each historical stage reflects changes in medical knowledge and communicative needs. A philological analysis reveals that medical terminology is not merely a technical subsystem of language but a dynamic linguistic domain shaped by borrowing, semantic change, and standardization. Understanding these processes enhances our appreciation of English as a flexible and adaptive language and underscores the importance of historical linguistic awareness in contemporary medical communication.

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