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**The specificity of the suffix “-ul” and its combinations in Latin anatomical terminology**

**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the study of suffix –ul specificity in Latin anatomical terminology and comparison of the usage of terms with this suffix in common Latin and medical Latin. The publication focuses on all meanings of the suffix –ul.

**Key words:** the suffix –ul, diminutival meaning, medical terms, word sense discrimination function, anatomical terminology, common Latin, medical Latin or Latin of medicine.

The study of the specificity of medical terms, their usage and formation contributes tocorrect comprehension and usage of terms in medical practice. The suffix –ul is the most widespread suffix of nouns in anatomical terminology. There are various combinations of the suffix –ul: -ulus, -olus, -ellus, -illus, -culus; therefore, the author of the article investigates all combinations of this suffix because all of them have the same meaning. This suffix denotes different parts of the body and organs (Lat. fonticulus, glandula, auricula, scapula, lingula et cetera) as it is important to know the specificity of its usage.

The aim of the article is to study the specificity of the suffix –ul and its combinations.

The subject of the study involves terms with the suffix –ul and its combinations in anatomical terminology.

The object of the study is reference books in anatomical terminology, anatomical nomenclatures and dictionaries.

Topicality of the research is determined by a large number of medical terms with the suffix –ul in anatomical terminology which any specialist in medicine must know very well. The study of the specificity of such terms allows to adopt structure of anatomical terms with the suffix –ul and improve Latin language proficiency in medicine.

Scientific novelty implies production of other meanings and interpretation of the suffix –ul in medical terms in addition to the well-known diminutival meaning.

So far the suffix –ul has been investigated in the works by Arnoudov, Kazachenock, Krakovetskaya, Rudritis, Sobolevsky, Yarkho. All the scientists focuse on diminutival meaning of the suffix. In fact suffix “-ul” is part of many terms, for instance: auricula (dim. of auris, ear), lingula (dim. of lingua, tongue), tuberculum (dim. of tuber, tuber), geniculum (dim. of genu, knee), ductulus (dim. of ductus, duct), fossula (dim. of fossa, pit), lobulus (dim. of lobus, lobe), capitulum (dim. of caput, head), foveola (dim. of fovea, pit), sacculus (dim. of saccus, sac), arteriola (dim. of arteria, artery), nodulus (dim. of nodus, node), septulum (dim. of septum, septum), corpusculum (dim. of corpus, body), venula (dim. of vena, vein), cerebellum (dim. of cerebrum, brain), vesicula (dim. of vesica, bladder), ossiculum (dim. of os, bone) etc.

The above mentioned scientists consider the meaning of the medical terms with the suffix –ul to be easily defined by removing -ul: for example one can get to know the meaning of the term “lobulus” on condition of understanding the word “lobus”. This is as it should be. But the author of the article has a point that it is not quite correct towards all medical terms with the suffix –ul. Specific character of some medical terms suggests that a word without –ul doesn’t always have something to do with medicine. Medical terms are specific because it is not always easy to define the meaning of a word correctly by removing –ul. For example, clavicula (Engl. clavicula) is known to be derived from the Latin word “clavis” (key). But as a medical term clavicula is not a small key. This is a part of the body. The same case is with the word musculus (Engl. muscle): the word comes from mus, muris m (mouse). So, the literal meaning of the word “musculus” is a small mouse. There are more examples, such as: fonticulus derives from fons, fontis m (spring); glandula takes origin from glans, glandis f (acorn); medulla comes from the adjective medius,a,um (middle).

It is worth focusing on the word “fibula”. In common Latin this word means a hairpin, while in anatomical terminology and in Latin of medicine, the word is used to denote “fibula”, a part of the body. That is one more reason for being attentive when working with words like “fibula”. One more example is a word “tonsilla” which means a wharf pillar in common Latin. This word was only used first in the works by Cicero, Cornelius Celsus and Plinius Caecilius in the meaning “tonsil gland”. The well-known word “insula” (Engl. island, more correct translation “islet”) is also common in anatomical terminology, for instance “insula faciei superorbitalis cerebri” (Engl. island of superorbital surface of brain). This is an idle attempt to try to consult a Latin dictionary searching the word “insa” or “insus” from which insula is formed by means of the suffix –ul. The word “insula” comes from the word combination “in salo” (in the open sea), salus is the sea in Latin. The word “vitellus” (dim. of vitulus) is a calf, a bull-calf. In anatomical terminology, Latin of medicine, vitellus means a yolk.

Besides, there are terms in which the suffix –ul performs word sense discrimination function: in some anatomical nomenclatures (International anatomical nomenclature edited by Prof. Zhdanov) caput and capitulum are not synonyms: caput denotes any head of any size, even the smallest one, whereas capitulum is only the head of inferior limb of humerus (superior limb of humerus has a head named caput). There is one more example: jugum and jugulum. The word “jugum” means a yoke, a ridge of furrow connecting two points meanwhile jugulum denotes throat (Stedman’s medical dictionary). The mentioned words “glandula” and “glans” (literal meaning “acorn”): glandula means gland, glans is used to denote head of penis.

The word “vallecula” (dim. of valles, valley) is a special term in anatomical terminology. This term is only used for denotation pits and folds pertaining to larynx, according to BNA guide (for example vallecula epiglottica – epiglottic pit). The terms “anus” and “anulus” were not very different in ancient Rome, inspite of the suffix “ul” in the word “anulus” both of them had the same meaning “ring”. By the way, International anatomical nomenclature edited by Prof. Zhdanov emphasizes the fact that the word “anulus” is spelled with one “n” though rules of Latin grammar allow double spelling: one “n” or two “n”. Now in common Latin “annulus” is dim. of “anus” with the meaning “small ring”. In anatomical terminology there are terms “anulus” (ring) and “anus” (anus).

Some terms in anatomical terminology do not have the same meaning in different reference books. For example, the terms “malleolus” and “malleus”. According to Stedman’s dictionary the words “malleolus” and “malleus” are not synonyms (both of them have the meaning “hammer”). International anatomical nomenclature edited by Prof. Zhdanov makes difference between these terms: malleus is a hammer, malleolus is an ankle.

In addition it should be pointed out that there are some medical terms with –ul in which etymology is difficult to find out: scapula, mandibula, oculus, macula and so on. Etymology of these words represents a wide field for research.

All the above mentioned leads to the conclusion that medical terms with the suffix –ul can’t be interpreted as only diminutival ones. One should keep in mind that common Latin and Latin of medicine are two different languages. Due to specificity of medical terms the origin of terms should be clarified in medical dictionaries or anatomical nomenclature guides. In addition to diminutival meaning, words with the suffix –ul have other meanings: for example they form medical terms using common Latin (mus \ musculus, clavis \ clavicula, glans \ glandula, fons \ fonticulus) and, besides, medical terms with the suffix –ul have the sense differential function (caput \ capitulum, jugum \ jugulum).

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