

Difficulties in Learning Medical Terminology: Perspectives of EFL Students at Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology

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Abstract:

This study investigates how EFL students at Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology perceive the importance of learning medical terminology and the difficulties they encounter while learning it. The study used a quantitative research design, a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 17 statements was distributed online to 30 EFL students, including two thematic categories: perspectives on the importance of medical terminology, and the difficulties in learning it. The findings show that students hold positive perspectives about the importance of learning medical terminology, particularly regarding its relevance to their future careers, professional communication, and writing medical reports, though they were less concerned about its effect on general English proficiency or on their self confidence in medical settings. Thus, students reported that the major difficulty stemmed from the large number of terms to memorize and the challenge of retaining them without regular practice, in addition to maintaining on memorization-based teaching methods. However, pronouncing medical terms and connecting them to clinical settings were not perceived as major difficulties, which contrasts with much of the existing literature. These results suggest that the main challenge for Agelat EFL students lies in how medical terminology is taught and improved rather than in the language itself, pointing to a need for instructional approaches that incorporate contextual practice use of medical terminology.

Key Words: medical terminology; EFL students; language learning; difficulties; perspectives; Libya

الصعوبات في تعلم المصطلحات الطبية: وجهات نظر الطلاب الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المعهد العالي للعلوم والتقنية بالعجيلات

الملخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية نظر الطلاب الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمعهد العالي للعلوم والتقنية بالعجيلات لأهمية تعلم المصطلحات الطبية، وكذلك الصعوبات التي يواجهونها أثناء تعلمها. أعتمدت هذه الدراسة تصميمًا بحثيًا كميًا، حيث تم توزيع استبانة مغلق يتضمن على 17 عبارة عبر الإنترنت على 30 طالبًا من الطلاب الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية شمل فئتين موضوعيتين: وجهات النظر حول أهمية المصطلحات الطبية، والصعوبات في تعلمها. وأظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب لديهم آراء إيجابية بشأن أهمية تعلم المصطلحات الطبية، لا سيما فيما يتعلق بارتباطها بمهنتهم المستقبلية، والتواصل الفعال، وكتابة التقارير الطبية، في حين أبدوا اهتمامًا أقل بشأن تأثيرها على الكفاءة العامة في اللغة الإنجليزية أو على ثقتهم بأنفسهم في البيئات الطبية. وبالتالي، أفاد الطلاب بأن الصعوبة الرئيسية تكمن في العدد الكبير من المصطلحات التي يتعين حفظها، وصعوبة الاحتفاظ بها دون ممارسة منتظمة، بالإضافة إلى الاستمرار في اتباع طرق التدريس القائمة على الحفظ. ومع ذلك، لم ينظر إلى أن نطق المصطلحات الطبية وربطها بالسياقات السريرية على أنها صعوبات كبيرة، وهو ما يتعارض مع كثير من الدراسات الموجودة. وتشير هذه النتائج إلى أن الصعوبة الرئيسية التي تواجه الطلاب الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العجيلات تكمن في طريقة تدريس المصطلحات الطبية وتحسينها، وليس في اللغة ذاتها، مما يبرز الحاجة إلى إتباع مناهج تعليمية تدمج التدريب على استخدام المصطلحات الطبية في سياقات عملية. الكلمات الدالة: المصطلحات الطبية؛ طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؛ الصعوبات؛ وجهات النظر؛ ليبيا

1-Introduction

English has become a core language of medicine and clinical settings across the world, and this brings a lot of pressure for many students who study and work for medical professionals in a foreign language. In Libya, as in many countries where English is not the first language, students studying medicine, nursing, pharmacy and other health disciplines are expected to read textbooks, follow lectures, and eventually communicate with colleagues and patients largely in English, even though many arrive at university with a fairly limited grounding in the language itself. Layered on top of general English, these students then must learn medical terminology, a vocabulary system built mostly from Greek and Latin roots that behaves quite differently from everyday English and is rarely taught with the same care as general vocabulary.

At Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology, EFL students preparing for medical and health-related fields face this challenge directly. Medical terminology is not simply a longer word list to memorize; it is made up of prefixes, roots, suffixes and combining forms that carry specific meanings, and getting these combinations wrong, or mispronouncing them, can lead to real confusion in a clinical setting. At the same time, teaching in Libyan classrooms has often leaned on traditional, memorization-based methods rather than approaches that build language skills through practical use (Shihiba, 2011), and this gap between how the terminology is taught and how much students are expected to retain and apply it raises real questions about how well students are actually being prepared.

Despite the particular role medical terminology plays in EFL students' academic and future professional lives, comparatively little research has looked directly at how students in institutes like Agelat perceive its importance or describe the specific difficulties they face while learning it. Most of what is known comes from broader studies on EFL learning or general ESP (English for Specific Purposes) contexts, rather than from students' own experiences of this particular subject. This study addresses that gap by asking Agelat EFL students directly, through a structured questionnaire, both how they view the importance of medical terminology and what they find difficult about learning it.

The next section sets out the statement of the problem, followed by the aims of the study and the research questions guiding the investigation. This is followed by a review of the relevant literature on medical terminology, its components, and the difficulties EFL students commonly encounter. The methodology section then describes the quantitative

survey design, sampling and data collection procedures used to gather the students' perspectives, before the data analysis, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for future research and practice.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Recent studies have revealed that Libyan EFL teachers continue to use traditional methods of teaching English language in schools, which do not reach the students' communicative learning outcomes defined in the curriculum (Shihiba, 2011). Thus, EFL students at Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology lack of English proficiency levels, making them less qualified to cope with intricate nature of medical terms.

1.2 Aims of the Study

- To investigate the perspectives of Agelat EFL Higher Institute of Science and Technology students about learning medical terminology.
- To identify the difficulties faced by Agelat EFL Higher Institute of Science and Technology in learning medical terminology.

1.3 Research Questions

Q1- What are the perspectives of Agelat EFL Higher Institute of Science and Technology in learning medical terminology?

Q2- What are the difficulties Agelat EFL Higher Institute of Science and Technology face in learning medical terminology?

2-Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In a borderless world, English language has evolved as a primary medium for global communication with over 1.45 billion speakers worldwide. This expansive use of the language has significantly embedded the medical community, as it is widely adopted as the standard language for medical healthcare and international conferences, which in turn has led to the predominance of English in medical education. Learning medical terms in EFL context tends to be more complex than other majors. The difficulty of learning medical terminology relies on distinct aspects as Shihiba, (2011) said that Libyan EFL teachers continue to use traditional methods of teaching English language in schools, which fail to reach the students' communicative skills. Thus, Libyan EFL students lack English proficiency levels, making them less qualified to cope with intricate nature of medical terminology.

2.2 Medical Terminology

EFL students need to be professional in English language to function properly in their medical field. Moreover, EFL students need to increase their medical terminology as it is a necessary requirement to communicate with other professionals, patients and doctors, it is also important for other related medical usage such as writing reports and reading medical letters (Alazemi et al., 2024). However, learning medical terminology adds an additional burden on EFL students who are already struggling with learning English language, as it consists of Greek and Latin roots.

Medical terminology basically consists of prefixes, roots, and suffixes words and combination of vowels (Do, 2023). The root of the words defines the meanings, whereas the prefixes and suffixes modify the meaning or specify the part of speech. Moussedek, (2026) stated that despite this being taught by teachers to help students understand the medical terms, it remains a significant challenge for them to recognize the parts that build up these terms.

2.3 Importance of Medical Terms

Medical terminology is an essential area that examines the principles of creating, pronouncing and describing terms that demonstrate human anatomy and physiology such as organs, systems, structures and functions, as well as body parts, diseases, clinical applications, laboratory procedures, diagnostic techniques and medical surgeries (Abdullah, 2013). The main aim of medical terminology education is to ensure healthy communication between patients and healthcare professionals and to provide the necessary information of medical terms for a common language used in medicine. Using a method called “term analysis” in medical terminology education is crucial to organize and analyze medical terms. The structures of medical terms (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) are analyzed and interpreted separately. Moreover, learning and remembering medical terms become more challenging if the pronunciation is not known to be professionally written and pronounced. Therefore, correct pronunciation of medical terms is an essential part to prevent confusion and misunderstanding (Hasan, 2026).

Medical terminology knowledge is also important for medical care professionals as it improves effective communication and job performance. In addition, it helps the work process and facilitates the health sectors understand properly what needs to be done to

ensure that patients have what they need for their health and wellbeing. Medical terminology is also used to identify patients' conditions and to accurately describe the necessary procedures as these terms are needed to provide every treatment, prescription and diagnosis in daily medical routine (Khan, 2016).

2.4 Components of Medical Terms

As mentioned above, there are four main components of each medical term (prefix, root, suffix and combining vowel), with a minimum of one word root. Roots are often located at the center of the term and form the core meaning of a word. These roots stem from Greek and Latin origin, for instance, pharmaco- relates to drugs, and dermat- refers to the skin. Moreover, Ahmed (2022) demonstrates that Latin roots represent anatomical structures and Greek roots represent a condition, illness, diagnostic and treatment. Therefore, EFL students need to understand these structures to help them learn how to better describe their patient's needs.

Prefixes are added to the beginning of a root word to modify its meaning and provide additional information about the term to indicate its time, place type or quantity. For instance, anti- (against), hypo- (below or deficient), and hyper- (above or excessive).

Suffixes are located at the end of a root word, which indicates a condition, process, or specialty. Common suffixes include -itis (inflammation), -ology (study of), and -emia (blood condition). These suffixes typically represent an illness and/or its effects, or a surgical diagnostic procedure.

Finally, a combining form, which is a combination of a vowel (usually an 'o,' or sometimes an 'I') and a word root. The combining vowel allows one or more-word parts to join together, either by adding a suffix or using one or more-word roots.

2.5 Difficulties in Learning Medical Terms

Due to its complicated structure, and Latin or Greek roots, learning medical terminology could lead to many difficulties which might be unfamiliar for many EFL students. EFL students find learning medical terms difficult to understand and memorize because they are not native English speakers which in turn adds to the burden of trying to learn the language itself and medical terms.

Learning medical terminology requires a sufficient level of cognitive ability to memorize these terms besides their pronunciations, applications and meanings which can

overwhelm students, as Bali, (2026) stated that immoderate information processing can hinder learning outcomes.

A study conducted by Rohrer and Pashler (2007), has shown that the volume of innovative terms introduced in a short period makes retention more difficult. Moreover, learning medical terminology demands consistent learning and reinforcement. Studies have revealed that EFL students struggle with long term retention as a result of inadequate repeating and practicing. In addition, the similarity between terms, such as “hypertension” and “hypotension,” irritates confusion and retrieve difficulties. As mentioned above, medical terms are derived from Greek and Latin origins, which might be unfamiliar to many EFL students, thus, this unfamiliarity creates additional difficulties and challenges to be understood and memorized. Furthermore, using prefixes, roots and suffixes of medical terminology can be difficult for students who have not been taught proper linguistic skills.

Medical terminology also requires EFL students to have a clear understanding of pronunciation and spelling. Mispronunciation can lead to misunderstanding or confusion in clinical settings, emphasizing the importance of mastering this skill (Mayer & Moreno, 2003). EFL students fail to engage meaningful learning due to the traditional methods of teaching medical terminology which often rely heavily on rote memorization. Studies have shown that teaching EFL students with traditional methods that lack contextual and practical applications often result in difficulties in connecting abstract terms to real world situations, thus reducing their effective engagement and motivation.

Using technology for learning medical terminology is also useful and used in many educational settings. A study conducted by Mayer, (2002) showed that teaching students with interactive tools such as flash cards and digital platforms improve students’ engagement and retention. However, integrating these tools into curriculum remains inconsistent.

Learning medical terminology can lead students to be anxious and pressured as stated by (Thistlethwaite et al., 2012). Therefore, this anxiety can impede students from being able to take part and function effectively, making them less focused and motivated to keep information.

Students with weaker language skills and low confidence can find learning medical terminology difficult. Therefore, it is essential for students to be able to have supportive environments to build confidence and develop their learning skills (Vu et al., 2025).

3-Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study employs a quantitative research design using a survey approach. Research design is described by Leedy and Ormrod (2015, p.92) as "the overall structure for the procedure the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects, and the data analyses the researcher conducts." This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of EFL students in Higher Institute of Science and Technology in Agelat and the difficulties they face in learning medical terminology. The research design serves as a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data, ensuring that the aims of the study are achieved in a systematic and rigorous manner. According to Cresswell and Cresswell, (2018), quantitative research is proper when the researcher aims to test objective theories by examining relationships among variables through numerical data collection and statistical analysis. A survey research design was chosen to investigate the students' perspectives on the importance of learning medical terminology and to identify the difficulties they face. Survey research is a quantitative method of data collection that involves gathering information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Dörnyei, 2009). The quantitative approach was selected for two reasons. First, it allows for the collection of data from a relatively large sample of students within the constraints of time and resources available for this study. Second, quantitative data analysis provides objective, numerical results that can be systematically compared and interpreted. These characteristics make the quantitative survey design well suited for investigating Agelat EFL students' perspectives on the importance of learning medical terminology and identifying the difficulties they face in learning them.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

This study employed only one data collection instrument, which was a structured questionnaire administered to obtain quantitative data from EFL students at Higher Institute of Science and Technology in Agelat involved in the study. According to Brown (2001, p. 6), a questionnaire is "any written instrument that provides respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." An online closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to 30 Agelat EFL students at Higher Institute of Science and Technology. The questionnaire items were self-developed based on a review of

relevant theoretical literature and earlier empirical studies. It was organised into two main thematic categories, each forming a set of related statements, for a total of 17 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (Dörnyei, 2009) including strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. According to Nayak and Singh (2015, p. 111), Likert scales are "summated scales, that is, the overall scale score may be a summation of the attribute values of each item as selected by a respondent." Closed-ended questionnaires were considered appropriate due to their simplicity in coding and tabulation and their capacity to gather data from a broad sample (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

3.3 Sampling and Participants

According to Kumar (2011, p. 177), sampling is "the process of selecting a few from a bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation, or outcome regarding the bigger group." In this study, a non-probability purposive sampling method was employed for selecting participants. Purposive sampling method was deemed appropriate for selecting participants based on their specific traits and experiences instead of random groups. Participants included of 30 EFL students from Higher Institute of Science and Technology in Agelat.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

At the outset of the data collection process, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time and were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially. In addition, Participants were also informed that their responses will remain confidential and will be used merely for research purposes (Mack et al., 2005).

4-Data Analysis

This section presents the data analysis drawn from a closed-ended questionnaire, employing a quantitative approach to investigate EFL students' perspectives of Higher Institute of Science and Technology in Agelat on the importance of learning medical terminology and to identify the difficulties they face.

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire administered online to 30 EFL students in Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology. The questionnaire was divided into two thematic categories: (1) students' perspectives on the importance of learning medical terminology (Statements 1–7); and (2) difficulties in learning medical terminology (statements 8-17). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert

scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). For clarity, Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses are merged to indicate disagreement, and Agree and Strongly Agree are combined to indicate agreement.

Table 1

Students' Perspectives on the Importance of Learning Medical Terminology

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Learning medical terminology is essential for my future career in the medical field.	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	17.2%	79.3%
2	Medical terminology helps me communicate effectively with other healthcare professionals.	0.0%	3.6%	21.4%	50.0%	25.0%
3	Learning medical terms improves my ability to communicate with patients.	6.9%	6.9%	13.8%	44.8%	27.6%
4	Learning medical terms helps me write accurate medical reports.	3.6%	0.0%	17.9%	35.7%	42.9%
5	Learning medical terms improves my overall English language proficiency.	0.0%	3.4%	37.9%	41.4%	17.2%
6	Learning medical terminology helps me learn new terms more easily.	0.0%	3.4%	3.4%	69.0%	24.1%
7	Learning medical terminology increases my confidence in clinical settings.	0.0%	0.0%	37.9%	27.6%	34.5%

Source: developed by the researcher based on Alazemi et al., (2024).

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

Table 1 has shown that students held a generally positive view of medical terminology and its importance to their studies and future work. Statement 1 recorded the strongest agreement, with 79.3% of students strongly agreeing and 17.2% agreeing that learning medical terminology is essential for their future career in the medical field, while only one student (3.4%) disagreed. This result suggests that students clearly connect their coursework to their professional goals, even before they enter clinical practice.

Statement 4, on writing accurate medical reports, also revealed strong agreement (78.6% agree/strongly agree, and statement 6, learning medical terminology makes it easier to learn new terms, was agreed on by 93.1% of respondents. Statement 2 and 3, both about communication, with healthcare professionals and with patients respectively, followed a similar pattern of majority agreement (75% and 72.4% agree/strongly agree. Statement 3 had the highest SD in Table 1, and combined with 13.8% disagreement, this points to somewhat more varied opinions on whether medical terminology directly helps patient communication compared with the other statements.

Two statements stood out as comparatively weaker, though still positive overall. Statement 5, on whether learning medical terms improves general English proficiency, had the lowest level of agreement in the table, and the largest neutral response (37.9%), indicating that a good number of students are unsure whether the two skills carry over to each other. Statement 7, on confidence in clinical settings, likewise showed a large neutral response (37.9%) alongside solid agreement (62.1% combined). Together, these two results suggest that while students value medical terminology for career and communication purposes, they are less certain about its broader effect on their English ability or their confidence once they are actually in a clinical environment.

To sum this up, positive perspectives were held across all seven statements, which falls between “agree” and “strongly agree” on the five-point scale. This shows a fairly uniform and strongly favorable outlook toward the value of learning medical terminology among Agelat EFL students.

Table 2

Difficulties in Learning Medical Terminology

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
8	My teachers mainly rely on memorization to teach medical terminology, rather than practical application.	0.0%	18.5%	14.8%	51.9%	14.8%
9	Learning medical terminology causes me anxiety or stress.	0.0%	19.2%	42.3%	19.2%	19.2%
10	I feel less confident in my abilities when I struggle to master medical terms.	0.0%	7.7%	15.4%	34.6%	42.3%
11	I find it difficult to memorize the large number of medical terms needed.	0.0%	7.7%	11.5%	61.5%	19.2%
12	I often confuse similar-sounding medical terms (e.g., “hypertension” and “hypotension”).	0.0%	7.7%	46.2%	30.8%	15.4%
13	I struggle to retain medical terms over the long term without regular practice.	19.2%	7.7%	11.5%	42.3%	19.2%
14	The Greek and Latin origins of medical terms make them difficult to understand.	7.4%	11.1%	25.9%	40.7%	14.8%
15	I find it hard to break medical terms into their prefixes, roots, and suffixes.	14.8%	22.2%	18.5%	29.6%	14.8%
16	I have difficulty pronouncing medical terms correctly.	48.1%	29.6%	14.8%	3.7%	3.7%
17	I find it difficult to connect medical terms to real-world clinical situations.	29.6%	14.8%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%

Source: developed by the researcher based on Alazemi., (2024).

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

Table 2 presents a more mixed picture than Table 1. Statement 8, teachers rely mainly on memorization instead of practical application, revealed agreement from 66.7% of students, pointing to memorization-based instruction still being the norm as students experience it in their classes. Statements 10 and 11 were the two most agreed-with statements on the difficulty side of the questionnaire: 76.9% of students agreed or strongly agreed that struggling with medical terms lowers their confidence, and 80.7% agreed that the sheer number of terms they need to memorize is difficult to manage. Together, these two results describe the volume of vocabulary as the central source of strain reported by students, and this strain appears to carry over into how capable they feel as learners.

Statement 13, retaining medical terms over the long term without regular practice, showing that opinions here were the most divided of any item: 19.2% strongly disagreed while 61.5% agreed or strongly agreed. Statement 14, on the Greek and Latin origins of medical terms, drew moderate agreement (55.5%), and statement 12, confusing similar-sounding terms such as “hypertension” and “hypotension,” sat closer to the middle with almost half of respondents (46.2%) staying neutral rather than taking a clear position. Statement 9, anxiety or stress caused by learning medical terminology, produced the largest neutral response in Table 2 (42.3%) and only moderate agreement (38.4% combined), suggesting that anxiety is present for some students but is not something the group as a whole strongly identifies with.

The clearest reversal in the whole questionnaire came from statement 16, pronouncing medical terms correctly. Here, 77.7% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they find pronunciation difficult, giving this statement by far the lowest level of agreement. Statement 17, connecting medical terms to real clinical situations, also leaned toward disagreement (44.4% disagree/strongly disagree versus 33.3% agree/strongly agree. Statement 15, breaking terms into their prefixes, roots and suffixes, was fairly evenly split between agreement (44.4%) and disagreement (37%). These results indicate that students do experience real, memorization- and retention-related struggles with medical terminology, but they do not see pronunciation or applying terms in clinical contexts as major obstacles.

5-Discussion

The first theme in the literature review concerns how EFL students perceive the value of learning medical terminology, and the Table 1 results line up closely with what the literature describes. Alazemi et al. (2024) argue that medical terminology is necessary for communicating with other professionals and patients and for practical tasks such as

writing reports and reading medical letters, and the students in this study reflected exactly that pattern. These findings also align with previous researches conducted by Abdullah (2013), Hasan (2026), and Khan (2016). Statements 1, 3 and 4, covering career relevance, patient communication and report writing, were among the highest-rated statements in the questionnaire. The strength of agreement on item 1 in particular (96.5% agree/strongly agree) supports the view in the literature review that medical terminology functions as more than a language skill for these students, it is tied directly to their sense of professional identity and future employability.

At the same time, the questionnaire results add some nuance that the literature review does not fully capture. Students were less convinced that learning medical terminology improves their general English proficiency (statement 5) or their confidence in clinical settings (statement 7), both of which had the largest neutral responses in Table 1. The literature review frames medical terminology learning as feeding into overall English development and professional confidence, but the comparatively muted response to these two items suggests students may experience the link between medical terminology and general language skill as more indirect than the literature assumes, or perhaps as something they have not yet had the chance to test in a real clinical setting.

The second theme, difficulties in learning medical terminology, is where the data both confirms and complicates the literature review. Several core claims are strongly supported. Sweller (1988), cited in the literature review, links heavy cognitive load to poorer learning outcomes, and Rohrer and Pashler (2007) found that introducing too many new terms in a short period makes retention harder, both claims are reflected in students' strong agreement that memorizing large volumes of terms is difficult (statement 11, 80.7%) and that struggling with terms lowers their confidence (statement 10, 76.9%). Statement 13's high level of agreement on long-term retention without practice also matches the literature review's point that retention problems stem from inadequate repetition and reinforcement. Statement 8's finding, that teachers still lean on memorization over practical application, directly echoes Shihiba's (2011) observation that Libyan EFL teachers favor traditional teaching methods, and this appears to be a persistent issue rather than one that has faded since that earlier study.

Other parts of the literature review, however, are only partly supported or run against what the data shows. Thistlethwaite et al. (2012) describe anxiety as a notable consequence of

learning medical terminology, yet statement 9 in this study produced a fairly level of agreement response, with 42.3% of students staying neutral and just under 40% agreeing that they feel anxious or stressed. This does not rule out anxiety as a factor, but it does suggest it may be less common among this particular group than the literature implies. The clearest contrast, though, is around pronunciation. The literature review treats correct pronunciation as an essential and difficult part of learning medical terms, warning that mispronunciation can lead to confusion in clinical settings (Mayer & Moreno, 2003), however statement 16 shows the opposite pattern: over three-quarters of students disagreed that they struggle with pronunciation. A similar, though less extreme, pattern appears with statement 17 on connecting terms to real clinical situations, where more students disagreed than agreed. One possible explanation is that EFL Agelat students, while facing real difficulty with the sheer volume and retention of medical terms, may have had enough classroom exposure to pronunciation drills specifically that this particular skill no longer feels difficult to them, even though other aspects of learning medical terminology, memorization, long-term retention and dealing with unfamiliar Greek and Latin roots, remain genuinely challenging.

Taken as a whole, the two themes complement each other in an expected way: students who see clear value in learning medical terminology (Theme 1) are also the ones reporting real, specific difficulties in learning it (Theme 2), particularly around volume of terminology and retention rather than pronunciation or application. This combination, high perceived importance paired with persistent memorization-related struggles, points to a fairly clear implication for teaching at Agelat Higher Institute: instruction that continues to rely mainly on rote memorization is unlikely to resolve the difficulties students report, and approaches that build in regular spaced practice and more contextual, applied use of terms may address the specific gap between what students learn and what they currently struggle with.

6-Conclusion

This study set out to examine how EFL students at Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology view the importance of learning medical terminology and what difficulties they encounter while learning it. The findings show that students hold a consistently positive view of medical terminology, seeing it as directly tied to their future careers, their

ability to write accurate reports, and their capacity to communicate with colleagues and patients. At the same time, the same students report real and specific difficulties, but these difficulties are concentrated in particular areas rather than spread evenly across the subject. The large number of terms that has to be memorized, and the difficulty of retaining it without regular practice, emerged as the clearest sources of strain, and these struggles appear to lower students' confidence in their own abilities. Pronunciation and the application of terms to real clinical situations, by contrast, were not experienced as major obstacles, which runs against what much of the literature on medical terminology learning would predict. Read together, these results suggest that:

1. the core problem facing Agelat EFL students is not unfamiliarity with the subject or an inability to sound the terms out, but rather how the terms are taught and reinforced over time.
2. Since teaching in the setting still leans heavily on memorization rather than practical application, this study's findings point toward a fairly direct implication:
 - shifting instruction toward spaced practice and more contextual use of terminology is likely to address the specific gap between what students are expected to learn and what they currently find difficult, without needing to give additional attention to pronunciation work that students do not report struggling with.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting its findings. First, the sample was limited to 30 EFL students from a single institution, Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology, selected through non-probability purposive sampling. This makes the sample small and specific to one context, so the results cannot be generalized to EFL students learning medical terminology at other institutes in Libya or elsewhere. Second, the study relied entirely on a quantitative, closed-ended questionnaire. While this approach was proper to capturing sorts of agreement and disagreement across a large set of statements, it does not allow students to explain, in their own words, why they find certain aspects of learning medical terminology more difficult than others. A closed-ended format cannot fully capture the reasoning behind, for example, why students report struggling with retention specifically but not with pronunciation.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for teaching medical terminology at Agelat Higher Institute of Science and Technology.

1. First, since students clearly identified the large number of terms and long-term retention, rather than pronunciation, as their major difficulties, teachers should move away from memorization-heavy instruction and instead build in regular, spaced review of previously taught terms across the term, rather than treating each list of terms as something to be learned once and left behind.
2. Second, teachers can make more explicit use of term analysis, breaking terms down into their prefixes, roots, suffixes and combining forms, since this structural approach is already part of how medical terminology learning is meant to work but appears to be underused in practice at Agelat.
3. Third, given that students' value medical terminology mainly for its career relevance and communication value, lessons could be organized around realistic tasks, such as writing short patient notes or explaining a term to a patient, so that the terms is attached to the professional situations students are ultimately preparing for.
4. Fourth, the study found that interactive tools such as flashcards and digital platforms are associated with improved engagement and retention in the wider literature, so the Institute could consider incorporating simple digital or app-based practice tools besides classroom teaching to support the repeated exposure that students say they lack.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the limitations noted above, several areas for future research emerge from this study. Future studies could replicate this questionnaire across a larger sample drawn from several Libyan institutes offering medical and health-related programmes, which would allow the findings to be compared across contexts and would strengthen their generalizability beyond Agelat. A mixed-methods design that follows up the questionnaire with interviews or focus groups would also be valuable, since it could help explain why students experience the large number of terms and retention as their central difficulties while not experiencing pronunciation as difficult, a pattern this study can describe but not fully account for. Finally, it would also be useful for future research to move beyond self-reported perspectives and examine students' actual performance on medical terminology, for example through vocabulary tests or classroom-based assessments, to see whether perceived difficulty lines up with measurable gaps in knowledge.



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