

MEDICAL PHYSICS THESAURUS AND INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

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Abstract

The paper describes the development of the first Thesaurus of Medical Physics Terms (currently c. 3500 terms) and its International Dictionary, currently including 29 languages. The Dictionary has been used as a foundation for the development of the EMITEL e-Encyclopaedia of Medical Physics. The project for the development of the Dictionary and its translation has attracted more than 200 senior colleagues. The paper gratefully acknowledges the contribution of all those colleagues, forming the largest international network in medical physics. Currently the Dictionary is one of the main Reference sources in the profession, used by more than 2000 colleagues per month.

I. INTRODUCTION

The quick international dissemination of the e-Learning materials of project EMERALD [1] during the late 1990-ies led to the need of an International Dictionary of Medical Physics. To address this need a sub-task was added to the next project EMIT [2] (an EU Leonardo da Vinci project, 2001-04) for the creation of a Dictionary of Medical Physics – alongside with the development of e-Learning materials in the field of Ultrasound and MR Imaging. Initially the Dictionary had to include 5 main languages (English, German, French, Italian and Swedish), however after the first announcement of the Dictionary a number of colleagues from other countries volunteered to include their languages and by 2013 the Dictionary included 29 languages. A number of papers have described the development of the e-Encyclopaedia of Medical Physics EMITEL [3,4,5]. This papers aims to describe the development of its predecessor and companion – The Medical Physics Thesaurus and International Dictionary.

II. THESAURUS OF MEDICAL PHYSICS TERMS

The first and most difficult task of the Dictionary was to develop a Thesaurus of Medical Physics Terms. To deal with this the Working Group of the partnership selected 20 well known books covering various fields of the profession. All these books were in English and this was the language used for the creation of the Thesaurus. The terms were formed of one or more words (e.g. Dose, Absorbed Dose, Absorbed Dose Conversion Factor, etc). The most

important terms from these books were selected and listed in parallel tables. The initial list included almost 15,000 terms in English, but many were repetitions and old terms. Removing those reduced the number to about 8000. Following this the terms were grouped and distributed according to the field (specialism). This process included the following main steps:

- Merging identical terms;
- Grouping the terms according to their field (large groups);
- Grouping synonyms (and some homonyms) the terms (small groups);
- Identifying other terms (from medicine, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc) with specific use in Medical Physics;
- Creating a master table (Thesaurus) with Medical Physics Terms.

This way the first Thesaurus of Medical Physics was created, its initial number of terms being 3706. However this number included a small number of repetitions of terms known with their abbreviations (i.e. Modulation Transfer Function co-existed with MTF). At that stage this was necessary for formation of a printed alphabetical index.

Each term from the Thesaurus was assigned an ID number and from this moment all translations were based on the IDs of the English terms. Groups of translators were formed including specialists in the 6 main fields of the professions (Physics of: X-ray Diagnostic radiology, Nuclear Medicine, Radiotherapy, Ultrasound Imaging, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Radiation Safety). General terms were covered by all translators.

Soon the initial 5 languages were joined by additional translations into Spanish and Portuguese (please see at the end list of the Translation Groups). Parallel tables for each translation were created (aligned as per the term ID), forming a multilingual database. This allowed smooth move from one language to another – i.e. cross-translation between any two languages.

III. EMIT CT DICTIONARY

The need for electronic dissemination of the first Dictionary led to the inclusion of software developers in the team (AM Studio) in 2003. At that stage the development of a further Encyclopaedia was already planned and the interface of the Dictionary was made to be able to display text associated with the respective term from the Thesaurus database (temporarily filled with an image with the logo of the project).

The first e-Dictionary was developed early in 2003 and was engraved on a Mini CD, together with demos of the e-Learning materials EMERALD and EMIT (Figure 1). The Mini CD included an executive file of the Dictionary and required installation on the PC of the user. The interface required selection of the two languages for the translation (from .. to...) and included the necessary fonts. This user-friendly design allowed very easy use of the Dictionary. There were three Dictionary windows: the Left Search window (From), where the user types the term; the Left Display window, which presented a limited list of the respective Language table from the database (from the Input Language); a Right (To) window presenting the translation of the selected text from the Output language (Figure 1). Search was performed in the usual way of handling databases - the user types the first letters of the term in the Left search window and these letters call the respective initial term from the list of terms in the Display window.

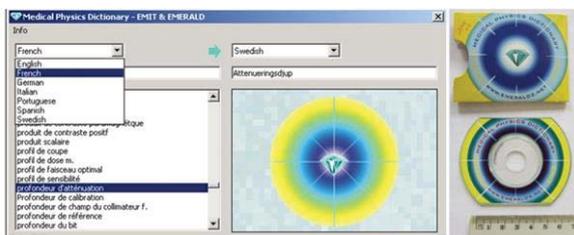


Figure 1. Screen shot of the Mini CD Dictionary and a photo of the CD.

One thousands of these Mini CDs were distributed free during the World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering in Sydney, Australia (August 2003). This distribution of the Dictionary and the Thesaurus of Medical Physics Terms triggered similar ideas for the development of similar Dictionaries in specific languages.

A special Conference (ICTP, Trieste, Italy, 2003) addressed the assessment of the Dictionary and found it extremely useful. This was supported by the use of the Dictionary during the International Medical Physics College on the following year (ICTP, Trieste, 2004). These two events and the World Congress triggered enormous interest in the Dictionary and a number of colleagues from various countries volunteered in the translation of the Thesaurus into their languages.

The novelty and comprehensive content delivered by the EMERALD and EMIT projects, as well as their global impact through our unique International Dictionary of Medical Physics Terms, led to the inaugural EU Leonardo da Vinci Award presented to the team of EMIT project (Maastricht, Netherlands, 2004) [6].

IV. WEB DICTIONARY

The inclusion of new languages in the Dictionary presented new challenges because of the different alphabets, which were difficult to be handled by the existing software. However at that time the current web technologies advanced enough to allow to transfer the Dictionary on the Web. A new domain was registered (www.emitdictionary.co.uk) and the new software was made by AM Studio (Figure 2).

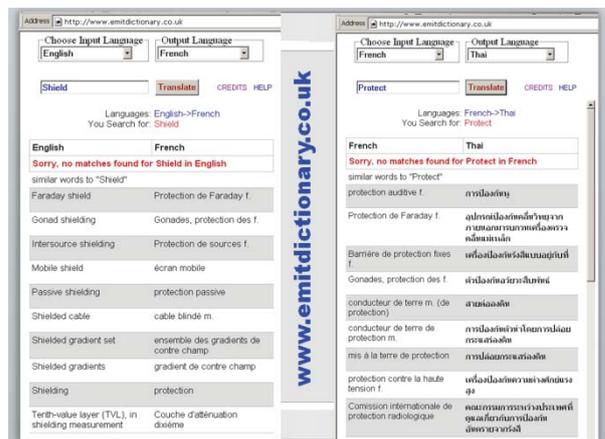


Figure 2. Screen shot of the first web design of the Dictionary

This Web Dictionary was using the users' Internet browser settings, hence it was working with various alphabets, as per the settings. This led to rapid expansion of the number of languages in the Dictionary.

The new web design included own search engine, what allowed direct search for terms, or part of terms, this way reducing the problems with possible misspelling.

The design again used a user-friendly interface with windows for Input and Output Languages and a small Search window for the term to be translated. The results were displayed as two parallel tables of corresponding terms (scrollable).

The new Web Dictionary was launched in 2005 and for several months attracted thousands of users. This led to further increase of the number of languages. This expanded use required a dedicated Coordinator to be used for providing link between the Groups of professionals translating the terms. A number of societies realised at this stage that no specific translation exists for some terms in their own language. The rapid development of the profession, often triggered by quick publications in English

had left some terms without sufficient coverage in the respective language. This triggered creation of national terms and respectively some changes in the Dictionary translations (all handled by the Coordinator and AM Studio).

V. EMITEL ENCYCLOPAEDIA WITH DICTIONARY

The initial idea of a Dictionary of terms with explanations was developed in a new project EMITEL, which aimed at developing explanatory articles for each term (and at the same time expanding the number of languages in the Dictionary) [7]. This project was approved by the EU Leonardo programme during 2006 and was announced during the 2006 World Congress of Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering in Seoul, South Korea [8]. While the previous EMIT project included as a partner the European Federation of the Organisations for Medical Physics (EFOMP), the new project EMITEL included as partner the International Organisation for Medical Physics (IOMP). These were the first large projects for both institutions, allowing them future inclusion and initiation of new projects and attracting respective funding.

A new web site was developed for EMITEL (www.emitel2.eu), handling both the Dictionary and the future Encyclopaedia [9]. New design was introduced (again by AM Studio, now a full partner to the project). It included a new web database, but still was using the initial parallel language tables, which proved very useful. Two Search Engines were designed – one of those being Multilingual (handling the Dictionary), the other one – in English, only for the Encyclopaedic entries (Figure 3) [10].

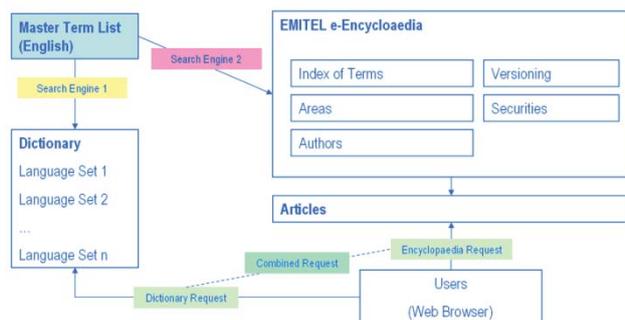


Figure 3. Diagram of the information flow of the EMITEL web site, including both the Encyclopaedia and Dictionary

During the process of this development the Thesaurus was updated due to the evolution of the profession in the past decade. To handle this the IDs of the existing terms were left ‘as is’ and a new continuation of the main English master file was made starting with ID 4000 (again including all new terms in alphabetical order from 4001 onwards). New 756 terms were added this way. However the existing terms (from the beginning of the project) were reduced with

990, excluding some terms which could be explained through other terms (and hence listed as similar to synonyms). Following this the overall number of terms in the Encyclopaedia was 3576. These final terms of the updated Thesaurus were explained in the Encyclopaedia with respective articles (and displayed in the Dictionary at www.emitel2.eu).

During the paper print of the Encyclopaedia (2010-12) the number of terms covered with articles was further reduced (mainly through merging of terms and excluding abbreviations), but the above number is still used on the web site.

VI. DICTIONARY USE AND CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that the Encyclopaedia web site www.emitel2.eu includes the Dictionary (used by many professionals), the old web site www.emitdictionary.co.uk is still alive and currently has some 1200 users per month. During the 3 months (April – June 2013) 4619 colleagues have used the old web site (Figure 4), while the new web site, including the Encyclopaedia and Dictionary, has been used by 10,174 colleagues.

Currently the Dictionary exists in 29 languages, translated by colleagues listed at the end of this paper. Thus the original 7 languages English, Swedish, Italian, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, were supplemented by new 22 languages (as per their inclusion): Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Greek, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovenian, Bengal, Chinese, Croatian, Iranian, Arabic, Malaysian, Russian, Thai, Turkish, Japanese, Finnish and most recently Korean.



Figure 4. Statistics of web Dictionary use in the period Apr-June 2013 (for www.emitdictionary.co.uk)

Today, 10 years since its first introduction the Dictionary of Medical Physics Terms continues to be one of the most important references of the profession. Thousands of colleagues use it every month. The constant assessment and update of the Dictionary through the bi-annual College of Medical Physics in ICTP, Trieste (including colleagues from c. 30 countries in each College) keeps the Dictionary up-to date and in line with the development of the profession.

The first Thesaurus of Medical Physics Terms provided background for other Dictionaries and will be the starting

point of a number of new projects for the international expansion of the profession.

One very important outcome of the project was that it collated for the first time in the profession a team of over 200 specialists from 29 countries. These included senior officers of IOMP, EFOMP, AFOMP, ALFIM and Past and Present Presidents of 21 National Medical Physics Societies. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

EMITEL gratefully acknowledges the volunteering translation of the Dictionary made by the following Contributors (included in the EMITEL Network together with the Contributors to the Encyclopaedia):

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VII. ANNEX: "HOW TO USE THE WEB DICTIONARY"

To use the Dictionary at WWW.EMITEL2.EU >> select *Dictionary* >> choose the Input and Output languages >> write the term you want to see at the window >> click Search. A list with terms is displayed, where the terms are found either as single word, or in combination with other words (the e-Dictionary assumes that the user's Internet

browser already supports the Languages). Terms without existing translation are in English.

To use the Encyclopaedic articles titles (quick search in English) >> select *Encyclopaedia* plus *Title* combo >> write the term you want to see in the window >> click Search. A list with terms is displayed – against each one is a blue hyperlink related to the area of the term >> click the hyperlink to read the article. This search covers only the titles of the articles. Some articles have two entries (related to two categories – e.g. Magnetic Resonance and Ultrasound) – in this case select the necessary category.

To search for a specific word/title within the text of the entire the user has to select *Encyclopaedia* plus *Search in Full Text* combo >> specify the category/area of the search (e.g. Radiotherapy) and proceed as above. In case of UK or American/English differences try both spellings or search only part of the term.

To use both the Encyclopaedia + Dictionary >> select *Combined* and proceed as above (this search is limited only to the title of the article, not inside its text). The text and images of the articles allow copy/paste in another file (N.B. formula-related text is presented as image).

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