

## LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH LATIN PHRASES: A ROOT-BASED APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

*This article addresses the use of Latin phrases in enriching English vocabulary. Latin phrases are still found in modern written English, especially in academic discourse, institutional mottos, public expressions, and also popular media. Because many of the vocabularies used in English rooted in Latin, learning those phrases Latin enable learners grasp English vocabulary on a morphological aspect. However, these are still rarely used as pedagogical resources in teaching English vocabulary and are more commonly found within philosophy, law, or classical studies. This study explores Latin expressions as a root-based pedagogy by examining how selected Latin phrases may enrich English vocabulary learning through latin roots, lexical derivation, and semantic continuity. Applying a qualitative model with a root-based approach, the study analyzes several well-known Latin expressions such as Cogito ergo sum, In vino veritas, Qui bene cantat bis orat, Mens sana in corpore sano, tempus fugit and Vita brevis, ars longa. The analysis focuses on productive Latin roots that continue shaping modern English vocabulary across semantic fields such as philosophy, psychology, rhetoric, medicine, communication, and academic discourse. These results show that a single Latin root can produce large English lexical fields without abandoning any continuity with the original meaning. The study further reveals that understanding Latin roots may strengthen learners' morphological awareness, inferential vocabulary learning, and understanding of academic vocabulary. Thus, Latin expressions are conducive not only to cultural or intellectual quotations but also to an academic tool for teaching English vocabulary.*

**Keywords:** latin, phrase, syntax, morphology, english vocabulary

### ABSTRAK

*Artikel ini hendak membahas penggunaan frase dalam Bahasa Latin untuk memperkaya kosakata Bahasa Inggris. Ungkapan-ungkapan dalam bahasa Latin dari karya klasik maupun sastra modern masih sering ditemukan dalam berbagai teks berbahasa Inggris, terutama dalam wacana akademik, moto institusi, ekspresi publik, hingga media populer. Mengingat sebagian besar kosakata bahasa Inggris berakar pada Latin, mempelajari frase ini memungkinkan siswa memahami kosakata bahasa Inggris secara lebih dalam melalui hubungan akar kata. Namun demikian, frase-frase semacam ini masih jarang dimanfaatkan sebagai sumber pedagogis dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris dan lebih sering ditemui dalam kajian filsafat, hukum, atau studi klasik. Penelitian ini membahas ungkapan Latin sebagai pedagogi kosakata berbasis morfologi dengan menelaah bagaimana ungkapan-ungkapan filosofis Latin dapat memperkaya pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris melalui kesadaran morfologis, derivasi leksikal, dan kesinambungan makna. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan metode berbasis korpus. Data dianalisis melalui beberapa ungkapan filosofis Latin terkenal seperti Cogito ergo sum, In vino veritas, Qui bene cantat bis orat, Mens sana in corpore sano, tempus fugit dan Vita brevis, ars longa. Analisis difokuskan pada akar kata Latin yang produktif, yang masih memengaruhi perkembangan kosakata bahasa Inggris modern dalam berbagai bidang makna seperti filsafat, psikologi, retorika, kedokteran, komunikasi, dan wacana akademik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa satu akar kata Latin dapat menghasilkan jaringan kosakata bahasa Inggris yang luas sekaligus tetap mempertahankan kesinambungan makna dengan bentuk aslinya. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman terhadap akar kata Latin dapat memperkuat kesadaran morfologis, kemampuan inferensi kosakata, pemahaman membaca, dan penguasaan kosakata akademik pembelajar. Oleh karena itu, ungkapan filosofis Latin tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai kutipan saja, tetapi juga sebagai sumber pedagogis yang bermakna dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris.*

**Kata kunci:** Latin, frase, morfologi, sintaks, kosakata bahasa inggris

### PENDAHULUAN

Learning languages is inseparable from the history of civilization and intellectual traditions. English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, did not develop in isolation but through contact with other languages. Latin, for example, played a central role in shaping English vocabulary, in many academic discourse. According to David Crystal, a large proportion of English academic and technical words derive from Latin, reflecting the historical prestige of Latin in education and scholarship (Crystal, 2019). This means, Latin is an important linguistic foundation for understanding English words. For this reason, examining Latin expressions may provide learners with meaningful insights into the structure and

meaning of English vocabulary rather than treating vocabulary learning as simple memorization. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2016)

Some of the most common Latin phrases we encounter are not just used in academic writing, but also in public speeches, institutional mottos, literature, philosophy, and digitally in our posts. Phrases such as *cogito ergo sum*, *in vino veritas*, and *mens sana in corpore sano* continue to be recognized even by individuals who have never formally studied Latin. This shows that Latin is still valued symbolically, intellectually and linguistically in society today. However, in language classrooms, these phrases are often regarded merely as quotations or cultural references instead of being explored as resources for developing vocabulary awareness. (Beard, 1990; Meissner, 1894; Hunt, 2016; Gheorghe, 2022)

In the study of language, vocabulary is often considered as the building block of communication, so mastery of vocabulary is very essential. Nation (2022) stated that vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in learners' reading comprehension, writing performance, and overall communicative competence. Those who have strong knowledge of vocabulary usually tend to better understand texts, express ideas clearly, and engage in academic discourse. Given its importance, it is unfortunate that vocabulary instruction in many educational contexts still utilises a memorization approach using isolated word lists. Schmitt (2000) emphasized that vocabulary learning involves more than rote repetition, as durable retention is associated with deeper levels of cognitive processing and meaningful use of language. Consequently, learners may struggle to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary independently when encountering new texts.

Morphological awareness is one method we can employ to overcome this hurdle. Bauer and Lieber (2013) explain that morphology plays an important role in understanding how words are structured and how meaning is formed through lexical processes. Morphological knowledge is generally considered to enhance vocabulary development and reading understanding while allowing learners to investigate the commonalities between words with knowledge of shared roots. Nagy et al. (1989) further note that recognizing morphological families helps learners connect unfamiliar vocabulary with previously learned words. Expanding on this view, since a high proportion of English academic vocabulary consists of Latin phrases, access to Latin word forms may assist learners in identifying frequently occurring lexical patterns in English. For example, understanding the Latin root like *scrib-* may support comprehension of English words such as *describe*, *inscription*, *manuscript*, and *scribble*. In this sense, Latin expressions can function as door for understanding broader vocabulary networks (Webb & Nation, 2017).

Compared to English, Latin has a lot of differences in grammatical arrangement of words; from a comparative grammatical perspective this could have a significant impact on how learners process meaning when it comes to sentences. Because Latin has a case-based system of morphology wherein grammatical function is expressed not by an invariant syntactic position, but by a series of ending changes, not its position in the sentence. In contrast, English relies more heavily on a relatively fixed Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) structure to convey meaning. As described in traditional Latin pedagogical sources (Wheelock, 2005), this structural distinction causes meaning in Latin to usually being expressed morphologically while English relies much more on word order. Such contrasts may assist learners in becoming more aware of the ways in which grammatical form contributes to meaning making across languages.

Latin phrases are not just linguistic artifacts, they are also vestiges of intellectual traditions that shaped Western culture. For example, *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) by René Descartes and *tabula rasa* associated with John Locke have conceptual meanings that elicit thoughts on identity, knowledge and human experience (Descartes, 1998; Locke, 1997). Accordingly, bringing statements like these into the vocabulary classroom may facilitate language, philosophy, culture, and history in the classroom. Linking the vocabulary to wider concepts may increase students' motivations as the vocabulary is related to something real now instead of just random lexical items.

Another important consideration is the role of root in vocabulary development. Etymological awareness enables learners to trace the historical origins of words and understand semantic transformations across time. Webb and Nation (2017) emphasize that knowledge of word origins and word families can support deeper vocabulary retention, as learners develop an understanding of relationships among lexical items rather than memorizing isolated forms. Many English learners encounter academic words that appear difficult because they are disconnected from their historical roots. By introducing Latin phrases, teachers may help students discover how English vocabulary evolved historically and conceptually. This process may reduce learners' anxiety toward unfamiliar academic vocabulary because words become more predictable once their roots and structures are understood. In

short latin roots can improve learners' lexical awareness and solidify their understanding of the vocabulary.

## METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative. The data consist of some selected Latin phrases such as *Cogito ergo sum*, *In vino veritas*, *Mens sana in corpore sano* etc. The analysis employs morphological feature particularly roots, along with lexical derivations and word families, and semantic field. The study is carried out using a root-based methodology and explores the usage of these expressions in real contexts, exploring how the roots of these phrases may aid vocabulary development in English. It examines how Latin roots create broader English lexical networks and contribute to learners' morphological awareness and inferential vocabulary learning. In short, the study intends to reveal latent possibilities of Latin expressions functioning as pedagogical tools for the expansion of the English vocabulary, based on word root.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that Latin phrases give rise to numerous English vocabulary items in various areas of discourse, whether academic, scientific, philosophical, or everyday expression. The analysis demonstrates that many English words commonly used today are morphologically derive from Latin. This finding indicates that Latin expressions may operate as cultural or intellectual quotes, but they also serve as powerful linguistic tools for vocabulary development.

### Corpus-Based Lexical Overview

The table below provides an overview of six selected Latin phrases that are analyzed in this study.

| Latin Phrase                     | Latin Root(s)                  | Core Meaning                | English Derivatives Lexical Family                                                              | Semantic Fields                                     |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Cogito Ergo Sum</i>           | <i>cogitare</i>                | think                       | Cogitation, cogitative                                                                          | Reasoning, mental activity                          |
| <i>In Vino Veritas</i>           | <i>Vinum/verus</i>             | wine; truth                 | vineyard, viniculture, verify, verdict, veracity, verifiable                                    | truth, honesty, rhetoric, agriculture, authenticity |
| <i>Qui Bene Cantat Bis Orat</i>  | <i>bene-, cantare-, orare-</i> | good/well; sing; speak/pray | benefit, beneficial, benevolent, chant, cantata, cantor, incantation, oration, orator, oratory. | music, rhetoric, religion, communication            |
| <i>Mens Sana in Corpore Sano</i> | <i>mens-, corpus-, sanus-</i>  | mind; body; healthy         | mental, mentality, corporeal, corpus, sane, sanity, sanitation, sanitary                        | Mind, health, body                                  |
| <i>Tempus Fugit</i>              | <i>Tempus, fugere</i>          | Time, to flee               | temporal, temporary, temporality, contemporary/fugitive, fugue, refuge                          | Time, movement                                      |
| <i>Vita Brevis, Ars Longa</i>    | <i>vita-, ars-</i>             | life/skill                  | vital, vitality, vitally, vitalism, vitamin, artist artistic, artisan, artificial               | life, living/ creativity, skill                     |

The data informed that a single Latin root may produce numerous English derivatives while still preserving semantic continuity with its original meaning. Pedagogically, this lexical productivity is significant because learners may expand English vocabulary more efficiently through root recognition rather than memorizing isolated lexical items. In other words, it functions as valuable linguistic resources for vocabulary enrichment in English language learning. The following sections provide detailed explanations and linguistic analyses, especially roots of each phrase discussed above.

## Cogito Ergo Sum

One of the best-known phrases in the history of western philosophy is *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I exist), which was coined by René Descartes

Here, we focus on the verb *cogito*. The term is ultimately based on the Latin verb *cogitare* (“to think”). The idea first appeared in René Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* (1637) in the French expression *Je pense, donc je suis* and was later expressed in its familiar Latin form, *Cogito, ergo sum*, in *Principles of Philosophy* (1644). Over time, this root has contributed to English expressions and scholarly discussions related to thinking and mental reflection. In this context, *cogito* derives from *cogitare* and is associated with the act of “thinking” as a foundational cognitive process. *Cogitare* is a fixed Latin verb form, not a productive root in English word formation, although related Latin derivations such as *cogitation* and *cogitative* reflect extensions of the *cogitare* family.

From a pedagogical perspective, this is significant because it shows how a single Latin expression can support deeper awareness of meaning-making in language. Instead of treating vocabulary as isolated units, learners are encouraged to see how meaning is constructed through structure and context. In this way, *cogito ergo sum* illustrates how language learning can move beyond memorization toward analytical understanding of linguistic form and meaning.

Additionally, one highly productive Latin verb, *cognoscere*, has generated a wide range of English derivatives, including *cognition*, *cognitive*, *recognition*, *cognizant*, *cognizance*, *incognito*, and *metacognition*. These derivatives illustrate how a single Latin verb can develop into an extensive lexical network in contemporary academic English. Although these words do not derive from *cogito* or *cogitare*, they belong to the same semantic field of mental processes. Therefore, *cognoscere*-based vocabulary and *cogitare*-based philosophical expressions can be regarded as conceptually related because both refer to aspects of human cognition, particularly thinking, knowing, and awareness.

## In Vino Veritas

The phrase *In vino veritas* (“In wine, there is truth”) comes from Roman intellectual tradition and expresses the idea that intoxication often reveals honest thoughts. Morphologically, The phrase contains the semantic element *ver*, which comes from the root adjective and noun in the Latin language *verus* and *veritas*, which means “truth”. This root continues to be very productive in English and is found in many academic and formal lexicon.

English derivatives include:

*verify*  
*verification*  
*verdict*  
*verity*  
*veracious*  
*verisimilitude*

These derivatives preserve semantic associations with truth, accuracy, authenticity, and reliability.

For example:

*verify* means “to confirm the truth of something,”  
*verification* refers to the process of proving accuracy,  
*verdict* historically derives from Latin *veredictum*, meaning “a true statement” or “a true saying.” It comes from *vērus* (“true”) and *dicere* (“to say” or “to speak”).,  
*verisimilitude* refers to the appearance of truth or realism, especially in literature. It describes the quality that makes a fictional story, character, or situation seem true, realistic, or believable. The word comes from Latin *verisimilitudo*, meaning “likeness to truth,” related to *vērus* (“true”) and *similis* (“similar” or “resembling”).

This semantic consistency demonstrates how Latin roots maintain conceptual continuity across centuries of lexical development. Morphologically, the phrase provides valuable opportunities for teaching derivational vocabulary. Learners may observe how one root generates nouns, verbs, adjectives, and abstract academic terminology:

*Verify*: verb,  
*Verification*: noun,

*Veracious*: adjective,  
*Verity*: abstract noun.

Such awareness could potentially enhance learners' skills in reading a text in which they encounter new words in an academic context. Pedagogically, *In vino veritas* is especially useful because many derivatives frequently appear in academic writing, legal discourse, literary criticism, and scientific communication. Consequently, understanding the root *verus-* may strengthen learners' academic vocabulary competence and reading comprehension.

### ***Qui Bene Cantat Bis Orat***

#### **Analysis of *bene*, *cantat-*, and *orat***

The phrase *Qui bene cantat bis orat* ("Who sings well prays twice") is traditionally associated with Augustine of Hippo, although its exact historical attribution remains debated. Philosophically, the expression reflects the idea that music intensifies emotional, spiritual, and religious experience. Linguistically, the phrase is particularly rich because it contains important lexical elements that continue to influence modern English vocabulary:

*Bene*: (good or well),  
*Cantare*: (to sing),  
*Orare*: (to speak or to pray).

These roots generated extensive English lexical families associated with morality, music, rhetoric, spirituality, communication, and verbal expression. Consequently, the phrase provides strong evidence that Latin phrases may function as valuable pedagogical resources for vocabulary development.

#### **Morphological Productivity of *bene-***

The Latin adverb *bene* is etymologically related to the adjective *bonus* (good). Within the phrase, *bene* functions adverbially to modify *cantat* ("sings"), emphasizing that sincere or beautiful singing possesses spiritual value equivalent to prayer.

Morphologically, the root *bene-* remains highly productive in English vocabulary and appears frequently in academic, legal, religious, and formal discourse.

Examples include:

*benefit*  
*beneficial*  
*benefactor*  
*beneficiary*  
*benevolent*  
*benediction*  
*benedictory*

These derivatives preserve conceptual associations connected to:

*goodness*,  
*blessing*,  
*usefulness*,  
*sincerity*,  
*and positive action*.

For example:

*benefit* originally refers to something "well done,"  
*beneficial* means producing positive effects,  
*benefactor* refers to someone who does good for others,  
*benevolent* means showing goodwill,  
*benediction* combines *bene* ("well") and *dictio* ("speech"), literally meaning "speaking well" or "blessing."

This demonstrates how one Latin root may generate extensive lexical families while preserving semantic consistency.

### **Morphological Productivity of *cantare***

The root *cant-* derives from the Latin verb *cantare*, meaning “to sing.” This root remains productive in English vocabulary and appears across literary, musical, rhetorical, and religious discourse.

Examples include:

*chant*  
*cantata*  
*cantor*  
*canticle*  
*enchant*  
*incantation*  
*recant*

These derivatives preserve semantic relationships connected to:

*singing,*  
*sound,*  
*ritual,*  
*voice,*  
*and spoken performance.*

For example:

*chant* refers to rhythmic or repeated singing,  
*cantata* designates a vocal musical composition,  
*cantor* refers to a religious singer or choir leader,  
*canticle* means sacred song or hymn,  
*incantation* originally referred to spoken or sung magical formulas,  
*recant* evolved semantically into “withdrawing previously spoken statements.”

The semantic evolution of *recant* is particularly interesting because it demonstrates conceptual movement from singing toward verbal withdrawal or rhetorical reversal. This illustrates how Latin roots may develop into abstract meanings far beyond their original literal sense. This broad semantic expansion strengthens vocabulary learning because students begin recognizing conceptual relationships among apparently unrelated English words.

### **Morphological Productivity of *orare***

The root *orat* (in English) derives from the Latin verb *orare*, meaning “to speak,” “to plead,” or “to pray.” This root remains highly productive in English academic.

Examples include:

*oration*  
*orator*  
*oratory*

These derivatives preserve semantic associations connected to:

*speech,*  
*rhetoric,*  
*prayer,*  
*worship,*  
*and verbal communication.*

For example:

*oration* refers to formal public speech,  
*orator* designates a skilled speaker,  
*oratory* refers both to rhetorical skill and spaces of worship,

The semantic development of the Latin verb *orāre* illustrates the close conceptual relationship between speech and prayer in the Latin intellectual tradition. In many classical and medieval contexts, prayer was understood as a formal act of speech addressed to a deity.

### *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*

The phrase *Mens sana in corpore sano* (“A healthy mind in a healthy body”), originating from Juvenal, is widely recognized as a philosophical reflection on the balance between mental and physical well-being. However, beyond its philosophical significance, the expression contains an extraordinarily rich lexical structure that demonstrates how Latin roots continue shaping modern English vocabulary.

Linguistically, the phrase contains three highly productive roots:

*mens-* (“mind”),  
*corpus-* (“body”),  
*sanus-* (“healthy” or “sound”).

These roots generated extensive English lexical families that preserve strong semantic continuity with their original Latin meanings.

The root *mens-* evolved into English vocabulary associated with thinking, consciousness, and intellectual activity. Derivatives include:

*mental*,  
*mentality*,  
*mentalism*,  
*mention*,  
*dementia*.

But what's even more interesting is how *mens* has evolved its way into modern psychological terminology. *Mental* refers more directly to the mind itself or to processes related to thinking, while *mentality* refers to a particular way of thinking or intellectual disposition. The word *mention* itself, for instance, has historically developed from the concept of “bringing something to mind.” This illustrates how a single Latin root expanded semantically from internal cognition to broader communicative and intellectual functions.

The second root, *corp-*, derives from the Latin *corpus* (“body”) and remains highly productive in English vocabulary. Derivatives include:

*corporal*,  
*corporation*,  
*corporeal*,  
*corpse*,  
*corpus*,

The semantic expansion of this root is especially remarkable. Originally referring to the physical human body, the root gradually expanded into abstract institutional meanings. For example: *corporation* metaphorically conceptualizes an organization as a “body” composed of members, *corpus* refers to a body of texts, and *corporeal* means physical or material existence.

This demonstrates how Latin roots evolve semantically while preserving conceptual cores. The notion of “body” becomes transferable to institutions, literature, military structures, and systems of knowledge.

The third root, *san-*, derives from Latin *sanus* (“healthy,” “sound,” or “rational”). This root produced a highly productive English lexical network including:

*sane*,  
*sanity*,  
*sanitation*,  
*sanitary*,  
*insane*.

This lexical family is particularly important because it demonstrates semantic continuity between physical health and mental stability. In both Latin and English, the concept of “soundness” extends simultaneously to:

*bodily health*,  
*rational thinking*,  
*and psychological balance*.

For example:

*sanity* refers to mental soundness,  
*sanitary* refers to hygienic conditions,  
*insane* literally means “not sound.”

Thus, one Latin root generates interconnected vocabulary across medicine, psychology, and public health discourse. From a pedagogical perspective, the phrase is exceptionally valuable because one short philosophical statement exposes learners to multiple semantic fields simultaneously:

*psychology,*  
*medicine,*  
*intellectual discourse,*  
*institutional language,*  
*health terminology.*

Once learners recognize English roots such as *corp-* or *san-*, they can infer meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary more independently. For instance:

*corporeal punishment* immediately suggests physical punishment,  
*sanitation* becomes understandable through its relationship to health,  
*corpus linguistics* becomes interpretable as a body of texts.

This strengthens inferential vocabulary learning because learners recognize vocabulary as interconnected systems rather than isolated lexical items.

Most importantly, the phrase reveals how deeply Latin shapes modern English conceptual vocabulary. Modern discussions of mental health, institutional systems, and bodily existence continue relying on roots inherited from classical Latin. Consequently, *Mens sana in corpore sano* demonstrates that Latin expressions may significantly enrich English vocabulary learning by revealing the hidden semantic architecture underlying modern academic English.

### ***Tempus Fugit***

The phrase *Tempus fugit* (“Time flies”) is one of the most enduring philosophical reflections on temporality in Western intellectual tradition. Although deceptively simple, the phrase contains a profound linguistic structure that demonstrates how Latin roots continue influencing English vocabulary related to time, movement, temporality, and human experience.

The first lexical element, *tempus* (“time”), generated one of the most productive semantic fields in English vocabulary. Derivatives include:

*temporal,*  
*temporary,*  
*contemporary,*  
*tempo, (the word comes from Italian tempo, which is derived from Latin tempus, meaning “time”)*  
*temporality,*  
*extemporaneous.*

These derivatives preserve strong semantic relationships with:

*time,*  
*duration,*  
*sequence,*  
*and temporal existence.*

For example:

*temporary* refers to something lasting only for a limited time,  
*contemporary* literally means existing “with the same time,”  
*tempo* refers to the speed or timing of music,  
*temporal* relates to worldly or time-bound existence.

The semantic continuity is striking because all derivatives remain conceptually tied to temporality despite appearing in different disciplines such as music, philosophy, history, and literature.

The second lexical element, *fugit*, derives from the Latin verb *fugere* (“to flee” or “to run away”). This root generated a remarkably productive English lexical family associated with escape, movement, disappearance, and instability.

English derivatives include:

*fugitive,*  
*refugee,*  
*fugue,*  
*subterfuge.*

The semantic relationships among these words reveal a fascinating conceptual pattern centered around movement away from something.

For example:

*fugitive* refers to someone fleeing,  
*refugee* refers to someone seeking escape or protection,  
*subterfuge* originally implied escaping through deception,  
*fugue* in psychology, metaphorically describes a mental flight from one's identity, often involving dissociation.

What makes *Tempus fugit* especially powerful philosophically and linguistically is the conceptual metaphor embedded within the phrase: time is imagined as movement. Rather than describing time statically, the phrase conceptualizes time as something fleeing rapidly beyond human control. This metaphor became deeply embedded in Western linguistic thought and continues influencing English expressions such as:

*time flies,*  
*fleeting moment,*  
*fleeting memory,*  
*fleeting opportunity.*

Thus, Latin not only contributed vocabulary to English but also shaped conceptual metaphors through which English speakers understand existence itself. Pedagogically, the phrase is highly valuable because learners encounter interconnected lexical systems involving:

*temporality,*  
*movement,*  
*escape,*  
*impermanence,*  
*human limitation.*

Understanding the root *tempus*- may help learners infer meanings of:

*temporal,*  
*temporary,*  
*contemporary,*  
*and tempo.*

Similarly, recognizing *fugere*- may assist learners in interpreting:

*fugitive,*  
*refugee,*  
*subterfuge,*  
*fugue.*

As a result, *Tempus fugit* clearly showed that Latin phrases may significantly enrich English vocabulary acquisition by teaching learners to recognize semantic continuity and metaphorical relationships across lexical families.

### ***Vita Brevis, Ars Longa***

The phrase *Vita brevis, ars longa* (“Life is short, art is long”), traditionally associated with Hippocrates’ *aphorismi*, expresses the philosophical idea that human life is temporary while knowledge, art, and skill endure beyond individual existence. Linguistically, the phrase is extraordinarily rich because it contains two highly productive roots that continue shaping modern English vocabulary:

*vita-* (life),  
*ars-* (skill, craft, or art).

The root *vita-* generated one of the largest lexical networks in English associated with life, vitality, energy, and survival.

English derivatives include:

*vital*,  
*vitality*,  
*vitamin* (from Latin *vita*, “life” + *amine*),  
*revitalize*  
*revitalization*

This demonstrates how a single Latin root—*vita* may undergo extensive semantic expansion while still preserving its conceptual core. The root *vita-* gradually evolved beyond its original biological meaning of “life” into broader semantic domains associated with emotional intensity, psychological vitality, energy, and social experience. Consequently, The semantic continuity across these derivatives demonstrates how Latin roots remain deeply embedded in the conceptual structure of modern English.

The second root is, *ars*, which in classical Latin did not merely signify “art” in the modern aesthetic sense. Rather, *ars* referred more broadly to systematic skill, disciplined technique, craftsmanship, and specialized practical knowledge. Over centuries, this root generated an extensive lexical family in English including *art*, *artist*, *artistic*, *artisan*, *artifact* and *artificial*. The semantic development of this root is particularly fascinating because it reflects major intellectual and cultural transformations in Western civilization.

Knowing roots such as *vita-* and *ars-* may substantially improve inferential vocabulary learning. When learners learn that *vita-* means life, they can derive sense for products like *revitalize* that were not familiar; the morphology itself describes the meaning of the word—to restore life or energy. In similar ways, knowing conceptual history of *ars* helps learners interpret expressions such as *artificial intelligence* through the idea of human-designed or skillfully constructed systems rather than merely “fake” objects. The word *artisan* also becomes more meaningful when learners recognize its historical connection to disciplined craftsmanship and technical expertise.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This study concluded that Latin phrases contain highly productive lexical roots that continue shaping modern English vocabulary across various semantic domains such as philosophy, psychology, rhetoric, medicine, communication, and academic discourse. The results show that, through a root based approach, a single Latin root can create large English lexicon families while maintaining conceptual continuity with its original meaning. The study concludes that the knowledge of etymology may reinforce morphological awareness and inferential vocabulary learning.

English teachers are encouraged to integrate selected Latin phrases into vocabulary instruction, particularly in teaching morphology, word formation, and academic vocabulary. The future of Latin-based vocabulary instruction may be pursued in a number of ways via classroom experiments, corpus expansion, or comparisons between levels of learners. In addition, combining language learning (vocabulary learning) with subjects such as philosophy, history and culture could provide more meaningful and intellectual learning experiences for students.

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