

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: A SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH IN ESL/EFL CONTEXT

Muhammad Hammad Hussain Shah Bukhari¹, Amna Saleem², Lt. Col. (R) Dr. Shahab-ud-Din Shah³, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shafiq⁴

¹ Assistant Professor of English Department of English, Emerson University Multan, Pakistan.

² Lecturer in English Department of English, NCBA&E, Sub-Campus Multan, Pakistan.

³ Professor of English, Department of English, NCBA&E Sub-Campus Multan, Pakistan.

(Corresponding Author) ⁴Department of English, NCBA&E
Sub-Campus Multan, Pakistan.

Email: hammadbukhari335@gmail.com amnasaleem06@gmail.com
mshafiq3448@gmail.com

Muhammad Hammad Hussain Shah Bukhari, Amna Saleem, Lt. Col. (R) Dr. Shahab-Ud-Din Shah, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shafiq. Teaching Vocabulary Through Morphological Analysis: A Synthesis Of Research In Esl/Efl Context -- Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 20(1), 1279-1287. ISSN 1567-214x

Key Words: Teaching Vocabulary, Morphological Analysis, Unfamiliar Words, Constituent Parts, Affixes, Suffixes, Roots, Prefixes, Explicit Instruction, Multi-Faceted Educational Contexts.

ABSTRACT

The comprehensive review gives a synthesis of the existing body of literature on the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary through morphological analysis of the unfamiliar words when encountered in reading a text in ESL/EFL context. Morphological analysis involves breaking down unknown words into their constituent parts in order to infer their meanings. The paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of morphological analysis in increasing vocabulary acquisition across diverse learners. Furthermore, the paper explores various pedagogical strategies, leveraging morphological analysis instruction, and word-formation analysis. Various studies are presented in the synthesis, examining the impact of breaking words into parts across learners of different backgrounds, age groups and proficiency levels. Findings of the study suggest that breaking words into parts arguments vocabulary learning and helps learners ESL/EFL to generate the meanings of the unfamiliar words. The paper also identifies

gaps in the existing literature. Despite a few limitations, morphological analysis becomes a useful strategy in the acquisition of language at target. The synthesis calls for further research in order to maximize its implementation in multi-faceted educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Gone are the days when grammar was prioritized over vocabulary. Lexis is the centre of any language learning and teaching programme. Acquisition of robust vocabulary should be a cornerstone of literacy development. Not only does lexical knowledge facilitate communication, but also impacts reading comprehension and academic success. Rote memorization is losing its grounds and is passing way to latest strategies for the learners to grasp the intricate web of word's the paper terms its focus to an alternative approach that is morphological analysis. Whenever learners are exposed to language at target, they encounter the unknown words which hinder their comprehension. Morphological analysis involves breaking down words into their constituent morphemes – prefixes, roots and suffixes in order to generate their meanings.

Morphological analysis provides a more in-depth understanding of vocabulary of the language concerned. It helps learners dissect unknown words and guess their meanings. Despite its potential, the morphological analysis in vocabulary instruction is generally ignored. The study aims at synthesizing the existing body of literature in this domain, investigating the adaptability of breaking words into their parts in vocabulary teaching.

Through a comprehensive revision of the existing body of literature in morphological analysis, various strategies will be explored, leveraging such a useful strategy. The impact of these strategies on diverse learners including various age groups, backgrounds and proficiency levels. The study also highlights gaps in current research – especially need for longitudinal studies. In doing so, the study underscores the potential of instruction on the strategy of breaking words in their constitution's parts. The difficulties faced by learners while using morphological analysis are also mentioned. The ways to make this analysis more suitable are suggested in the section of pedagogical implications. It is emphasized that learning vocabulary in a language cannot be obtained overnight. It needs consistent attention, practice and motivation.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed in the study is the absence of a comprehensive study, synthesizing and building upon the previous research on breaking words into parts in vocabulary teaching to ESL/EFL learners. Though the studies conducted in this domain have their own worth, there is need for an exhaustive study which offers the findings of the research on one platform. Additionally, the gap between theoretical research and practical applications needs to be fulfilled.

Significance of the Study

A comprehensive study which offers the findings of the research conducted on morphological analysis of unfamiliar words, holds significant value. The study

will provide understanding of effective methodologies used by researchers in their studies, bridging the gap between theory and practice. The pedagogical implications suggested for language teachers will open new horizons of knowledge about the strategy of morphological analysis. Most of these implications will be enriched by the findings of the research studies in the domain.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effectiveness of morphological analysis in augmenting vocabulary acquisitions through various studies in the domain.
2. To provide pedagogical implications, based on the findings of the previous research for language teachers.

Research Question

1. How does morphological analysis impact vocabulary learning for ESL/EFL learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study conducted by Abdullah et al. (2023) attempts to find out the efficacy of using the morphological analysis strategy to enhance learner's lexical acquisition and reading comprehension. The study was conducted in the English Department, Universities Muhammadiyah University of Parepare. As for teaching vocabulary with morphological analysis strategy, significant disparities were found between the mean pre-test score (58.57) mean and the mean post-test score (84.28). Additionally, the t-test calculation indicated the t-test value (9.75) exceeded the t-table value (2.052) at a significant level of 0.25, with $df=27$. Using the morphological analysis strategy resulted in notable enhancement in learners' lexical acquisition and reading comprehension.

The major objective of Anastasiou and Griva's study (2009) was to find out the impact of instruction in morphological on ESL learners with and without spelling challenges. Additionally, the study aimed at assessing the viability of incorporating morphological strategies instruction given in the classroom. The intervention was conducted, involving primary Greek speakers. As for the treatment group, explicit instruction in inflectional and derivational patterns was given to them. On the other hand, the control group was taught English spelling using a conventional approach, relying on visual-memory techniques. The results indicated that explicit morphological instruction had positive effects, regarding the targeted morpheme patterns. The observations from classroom setting indicated the meta-morphological training resulted in active engagement among the students. The interviews from the teachers revealed that they regarded the intervention as a practical and effective approach to increase learners' morphological processing skills regarding spelling.

The study conducted by Anwar and Rose (2020) aimed to explain the important role of morphological knowledge and instructions in the context of teaching English as a foreign language to junior high schools in Indonesia. In this descriptive study, literature review was the major concern. The data for the

study was got from articles and books. While reviewing and reading the material, the data was analyzed by a content analysis. The findings revealed that when taught and instructed in morphological analysis of unfamiliar words, EFL learners had significant great achievement. It facilitated the learning process involved in vocabulary. All this resulted in their better English proficiency.

Baumann et al. (2003) have conducted a quasi-experimental study to find out the impact of morphemic and contextual analysis instruction (MC) in comparison to textbook vocabulary instruction (TV) integrated into social studies lessons. The subjects of the study were 157 5th grade students across eight classrooms. TV students surpassed in textbook vocabulary while MC students showed a stronger ability to generate meanings of new affixed words. This second group demonstrated improved skills in guessing the meanings of words with both morphological and contextual clues on a delayed assessment. In the meanwhile, both groups performed similar in terms of comprehension. The outcomes of the study underscored the significance of teaching specific vocabulary and utilization of morphological analysis of the unfamiliar words. The effectiveness of incorporation of contextual analysis into instruction was also emphasized in the study.

In the domain of English language teaching at the secondary level, Behlol and Kiani's study (2011) aimed to evaluate the impact of structural and contextual method for lexical instruction. With an exponential design, the study employed pretest and post-test method. The subjects of the study were the students of Government Secondary Schools of District Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The study utilized t-tests to find out the differences between group scores. As for high achievers, the contextual method was found more useful. On the other hand, the structural method was more effective for average and low achievers. With the contextual approach, the high achievers were able to study words in different contexts, making use of contextual clues given there. Owing to their engagement with morphological analysis of words the average and low achievers increased their performance.

The primary objective of Callies's study (2016) was to scrutinize the extent to which ESL and EFL variants are impacted by overarching cognitive processes involved. Through a meticulous analysis of a comparative corpus, the study gave insight to lexical innovation within derivational morphology. Two major findings were observed. First, interlingual innovations were rooted in the influence of the learners' native language, resulting from cross-linguistic interactions. Second, intralingual innovations came from various processes, regarding learner's second language. It is posited that the innovative phenomena can be exploited through the lens of underlying cognitive mechanism.

In a longitudinal study Chen (2022) explored the relationship between morphological analysis instruction and vocabulary enhancement. The subjects of the study were Chinese learners in the context of English as a second language. The findings of the study demonstrated that the focus on morphological process resulted in significant progress in learning new word. A direct link was found between lexical growth and morphological instruction. The theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings paved way to enhance

confidence in teaching vocabulary to ESL learners. The teachers came organize some activities to hold learners's develop understanding of the whole mechanism involved in breaking the word into parts for guessing the meanings of the unknown words in an English text.

The study conducted by Gellert et al. (2021) recruited the students with limited lexical knowledge, a group prone to facing challenges in reading comprehension. As for the previous research it was indicated that morphological analysis of words improved the vocabulary skills of the students concerned. The study expanded on these results while finding out intermediate and long-term impacts of morphological interventions on untaught words and pseudo-words. The subjects of the study were divided into a morphological intervention group and a control group. As for the members of the morphological intervention group, they significantly improved their abilities to analyze and both taught and untaught words containing taught morphemes. This group also had moderate effects and describing possible meanings of pseudo words with known roots morphemes. Such effects lasted even after ten months for instructed. It was observed that reading comprehension with instructed words slightly improved showing no impact on conventional vocabulary measures or reading comprehension.

Hengli's study (2018) investigated whether the knowledge of derivational morphology has positive effect in comprehension and vocabulary learning. The focus was on the ability Chinese students learning English in two groups at Hong Kong Baptist University. While assigning an experimental task, the study evaluated the decoding skills of the subjects in deriving word, their performance in reading and lexical knowledge. ANOVA I method was employed in the study. Findings of the study revealed that derivational knowledge not only contributed to enhance comprehension acquisition, but also improved lexical ability of the subjects of the study. The experimental group outperformed the other group suggesting that knowledge of derivational morphology played a significant role in learning of new English words.

Jarad (2015) conducted a study to explore the impact of instruction on morphological analysis in comprehension and language learning. The subjects of the study were taught the most common thirty roots and thirty prefixes. As for intervention, vocabulary and comprehension skills were improved. Morphemic analysis became a useful strategy, helping students understand the word at target and comprehend the text in reading. It equips the language learners with skills to read more difficult academic texts. The more words the learners know, the better the comprehension. The findings of the study suggested a morphemic approach for vocabulary programme.

In their study (2019) Jiang and Kuo focus on lexical growth and morphological awareness in EFL College students with various proficiency levels in Taiwan. The results highlighted that even proficient EFL learners struggled with morphological rules. As for vocabulary gap, it widened among different reader levels. The impact of orthographic changes on morphologically complex words varied for assessing base meaning. Progress in different aspects of

morphological awareness differed among readers of different proficiency levels.

Newton (2018) is of the view that academic vocabulary consists of words with morphemic structures of Greek and Latin lexicons. Many language teachers ignore this potential factor in vocabulary teaching. Newton's study has reported about a 3-year longitudinal qualitative case study, based on the experiences and observations of three elementary teachers. In a professional development programme these teachers were informed about morphemic features of academic words. Data from the teachers demonstrated that a teacher-centred approach was shifted into a student-centred approach. Findings of the study have revealed that teachers should be engaged in exploring the rich date of morphemic structures of the academic words. Certainly, their morphological knowledge will enrich learners' morphological awareness through instructional programmes meant for augmenting lexical knowledge.

In their study Rasinski et al. (2011) have argued for the vocabulary teaching in the elementary grades by focusing on the structural analysis of words, particularly the English words from Greek and Latin affixes and roots. Then the study offered some useful teaching strategies centring around on Greek and Latin derivatives to increase lexical growth. Real word examples were included to show how a vocabulary teaching plan based on morphological analysis could be practised within a classroom. As a result, the utilization of word origin is recommended in order to enrich vocabulary growth.

Sulistiyawati et al. (2021) explored morphological teaching strategies to enhance language learners' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Various studies in morphological analysis are mentioned with their findings. It is thought necessary that learners should be made aware of the parts of a word – prefixes, roots and derivational and inflectional suffixes. The background knowledge of the learners might be used in guessing the meanings of the unfamiliar words encountered during reading in language at target. Teachers and researchers should try the level best to collect data in order to enrich the vocabulary of language learners. When instructed, they will be able to infer the meanings of the unknown words.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

What follows are pedagogical implications for ESL/EFL teachers based on research in morphological analysis in teaching vocabulary.

1. Employ both contextual and structural methods strategically for high, average and low achievers in order to increase lexical gains.
2. Use morphological interventions and check out its effect for a longer period.
3. Start with known roots and morphemes and then expand to more complex words and structures giving chances to students to build on their schematic knowledge.

4. Use digital tools and various apps to facilitate morphological analysis of the unfamiliar words. Instruct students how to generate the meanings of the unfamiliar words into recognizable morphemes.
5. Advise students to transfer morphological analysis abilities to pseudo words. It will broaden the lexical knowledge of the students.
6. Develop holistic reading approach, combined with morphological analysis of the unknown words.
7. Align assessment with instructional objectives emphasizing the skills of students in segmenting words in morphemes.
8. Encourage students while providing feedback on their morphological analysis of words. It will foster their metacognitive awareness.
9. Teach students to use contextual clues for the none syllabic words. For example, words like ‘soma’, ‘hem’, ‘deft’, cannot be further broken.
10. Instruct students to do when morphological analysis fails. For example the word ‘outage’ does not mean out of age. In such case, contextual clues and schematic knowledge can help.
11. Ask ESL/EFL learners to check and double-check the meanings derived from the knowledge of morphemes – affixes and roots against the given context.
12. While teaching heterogeneous classroom, emphasize on contextual usage and direct translation along with the use of morphological analysis.
13. Avoid using the strategy of morphological analysis when their time and curriculum constraints. Instead, teach words in context or through real-word applications, while given learner’s lists of words belonging to core vocabulary.
14. Foster a stranger vocabulary foundation while engaging learners through storytelling, visual aids and interesting activities coupled with the strategy of breaking words into parts.

CONCLUSION

Morphological analysis of words is a powerful strategy to teach vocabulary, particularly in ESL/EFL contexts. It rejects the habit of memorizing word list. Instead, learners start thinking about. They become more inquisitive and active in this learning process when they try to generate the meanings of words via morphological analysis. Rasinski et al. (2011) have remarked that the systematic, ongoing and consistent integration of Latin and Greek roots into vocabulary instruction offers awesome potential for enhancing students’ academic growth. With incorporation of morphological analysis, teachers offer students a fresh perspective. It keeps the students busy in a hunting game. While piecing together different parts learners uncover meanings of the unknown words. As a result, learning becomes more engaging and interactive, providing learners for real-world language encounters. The hurdle ESL/EFL learners may face in the morphological analysis of words is the deficiency of proper attention to the parts of the word at target. It is worth-mentioning that a positive correlation between the lexical size of the learners and their morphological knowledge exists (Rabadi, 2019).

Future research should find out the effect of morphological analysis. It would be beneficial to explore its impact across various age groups and cultures. Moreover, the role of corpora in augmenting this teaching method may be investigated. The combination of morphological analysis with contextual

analysis would provide ESL/EFL learners a more comprehensive approach to language learning while equipping them for future linguistic endeavors.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M., Badaruddin, S., Sarlin, S., Ahmad, A, R, & Sunarlia, L. (2023). Morphological analysis strategy used to enhance the student's vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. *Xlingual*, 16(3) 140-147.
- Anastasiou, D., & Griva, E. (2012). Morphological Processing strategies: An intervention for spelling difficulties in English Language. *English Language Teaching*, 5(4), 15-23.
- Anwar, I. & Rosa, R, (2020). The role of morphological awareness and explicit morphological instructions in ELT. *Journal of Linguistics Literature and Literature Teaching* 4 (1), 28-37.
- Baumann, J.F. Edwards, E.C., Boland, E.M., Olejnik, S., & Kamennui, E.J. (2003). Vocabulary tricks. Effects of instruction in morphology and context on fifth-grade students' ability to derive and infer word meanings. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(2), 447-494.
- Bhelol, M., & Kiani, M.M. (2011). Comparative effectiveness of contextual and structural methods of teaching vocabulary. *English Language Teaching*, 4(1), 90-97.
- Callies, M. (2016). Towards a process-oriented approach to comparing EFL and ESL varieties: A corpus-study of lexical innovations. *International Journal of Learner Corpus Research*, 2(2), 229-251.
- Chen, L. (2022). Enhancing Chinese learners of English vocabulary growth through morphological instruction. *The Educational Review, USA*, 6(4), 124-132.
- Gellert, A.S., Arnbak, E., Wischmann, S., & Ellbro, C. (2021). Morphological Intervention for students with limited vocabulary knowledge: short-and long-term transfer effects. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(3), 583-601.
- Hengli, L. (2018). The significance and implication of teaching derivational morphology for Chinese L2 learners. *US-China Foreign Language*, 16(7), 351-369. doi:10.17265/1539-8080/2018.073001
- Jarad, N. I. (2015). Morphological analysis increases vocabulary and improves comprehension. *Glottodidactica*, 42 (2), 31-43.
- Jiang, Y, L., B., & Kuo, L-J. (2019). The development of vocabulary and morphological analysis: A longitudinal study with college EFL students. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 40(4), 877-903.
- Newton, J. (2018). Teachers as learners: the impact of teachers' morphological awareness on vocabulary instruction. *Education Sciences*, 8(4), 1-9. doi: 10.3390/educi8040161.
- Rabadi, R. I. (2019). Morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge among English language learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 43-63.
- Rasinski, T.V., Padak, N., Newton, J., & Newton, E. (2011). The Latin – Greek connection: building vocabulary through morphological study. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(2), 133-141. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01015.
- Sulistiyavati, E., Nugroho, A. & Bram, B. (2021). Morphological teaching strategies to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge and reading

comprehension. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 179-190.
<http://doi.org/10.33541/jet>2.2472>