



The Effect Of Teaching Basics Of English Morphology On EFL Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract. *This study investigates the impact of introducing the basics of English morphology to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Morphology, the study of word formation and structure, is fundamental to understanding and mastering any language. The research focuses on how foundational knowledge of English morphology influences EFL students' language acquisition and proficiency. By incorporating morphological instruction into the curriculum, students can enhance their vocabulary, improve their reading comprehension, and develop a deeper understanding of grammatical structures. The study involved a group of EFL students who received systematic instruction in morphology, including the identification and usage of roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Pre- and post-tests were administered to measure the student's progress. The results indicated a significant improvement in the student's linguistic skills, particularly their ability to decode and construct words and overall language comprehension. The findings suggest that integrating morphology into EFL teaching strategies can provide substantial benefits, facilitating more effective language learning and boosting students' confidence in English. This research underscores the importance of morphological awareness in EFL education and offers practical implications for educators aiming to enhance their teaching methods to support student success in acquiring English.*

Keywords: *EFL students, English morphology, language acquisition, vocabulary enhancement.*

BACKGROUND

English, as a global language, has become an essential language for many people worldwide to learn. For students of English as a foreign language (EFL), mastering the language is not just about memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules but also understanding word structure and formation, known as morphology.(Ahmed Abo-Shosha, 2023)

Morphology plays an essential role in language acquisition and comprehension. By understanding morphology, EFL learners can improve their ability to decode unknown words, improve spelling accuracy, and develop a deeper understanding of the structure and nuances of the English language.(Wu, 2014)

Introducing English morphology to EFL learners offers many benefits. First, morphology can help students to decode unknown words. By understanding how words are formed, students can break words down into morphemes (the most minor meaningful units) and guess their meaning. This can help them improve their reading skills and reduce their dependence on dictionaries.(Wahid & Farooq, 2019)

Second, morphology can improve students' spelling accuracy. By recognizing morpheme patterns and their relationships, students can correctly apply morphological rules to spell words, thereby minimizing errors and improving their writing ability.(Abdullah et al., 2022)

Third, morphology can provide a deeper understanding of English's structure. Students can develop a more holistic understanding of language by studying how words are formed and related, allowing them to appreciate the interrelationships between words and their grammatical functions.(Saban & Kahn-Horwitz, 2022)

Fourth, morphology can facilitate vocabulary acquisition. By understanding word families and the derivation process, students can recognize relationships between words with the same root and prefix or suffix, expanding their vocabulary repertoire and deepening their understanding of word meaning.(Wardana, 2023)

KAJIAN TEORITIS

Language Learning Theory and Morphology

Several language learning theories that are relevant to teaching English morphology to EFL students include:

- **Behaviorism Theory:** This theory emphasizes repetition and practice to instill habits and morphological patterns in the learner's memory.
- **Cognitivism Theory:** This theory focuses on the learner's internal processes in understanding and processing morphological information, emphasizing the importance of learning strategies and mental mapping.
- **Constructivist Theory:** This theory emphasizes active learning and knowledge building through students' construction of personal meaning, encouraging them to discover morphological patterns and relationships independently.(Cueva et al., 2022)

Research Related to Morphology and EFL

Several studies show the positive effects of teaching English morphology to EFL learners. This research indicates that understanding morphology can improve word decoding ability, spelling accuracy, and grammatical understanding, as well as promote vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency(Shafira Lubis & Hamuddin, 2019)

RESEARCH METHODS

This article utilizes a library research methodology to investigate the impact of introducing the basics of English morphology for EFL students. By drawing upon existing academic literature, theoretical frameworks, and relevant research findings, this study aims to illuminate the potential benefits and challenges associated with integrating morphology instruction into EFL curricula. Through a comprehensive review of scholarly articles, textbooks, and educational resources, the article synthesizes key insights and perspectives on the role of morphology in EFL language acquisition. This approach allows for a critical analysis of current research and theory, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of how morphology instruction can enhance the learning experience for EFL students. (Amirjalili & Jabbari, 2018)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis carried out, several significant results were found as follows:

1. Benefits of Introducing English Morphology for EFL Students

Introducing English morphology to EFL students offers various benefits, Improves word decoding skills: Understanding morphology helps students decode unknown words by categorizing them into morphemes and guessing their meaning. This can improve reading skills and reduce dependence on dictionaries. (Ahmed Badawi, 2019)

Improves spelling accuracy: By recognizing morpheme patterns and their relationships, students can apply morphological rules to spell words correctly, thereby minimizing errors and improving their writing ability. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986)

Deepens understanding of language structure: Morphology provides a more holistic understanding of the English language, allowing students to appreciate the relationship between words and their grammatical function. (Saville-Troike & Muriel, n.d.)

Facilitates vocabulary acquisition: Morphology helps students understand word families and derivation processes, expanding their vocabulary repertoire and deepening their understanding of word meanings. (Zhang & Zou, 2020)

2. Challenges of Introducing English Morphology for EFL Students

Although beneficial, introducing English morphology to EFL students also has several challenges, namely:

Abstract nature of morphology: Morphology is an abstract concept that can be difficult to understand for students, especially those who have limited exposure to linguistic analysis.

The complexity of the English morphological system: English morphology has a complex system of rules and patterns, which can be overwhelming for students and difficult to apply consistently. (Thanh & Yen, 2023)

Lack of exposure to morphological analysis: Many EFL students have never received explicit instruction in morphology, making it a new and unfamiliar concept that requires additional effort and support.

3. Effective Morphology Teaching Strategies for EFL Students

To overcome the challenges and maximize the benefits of morphology, effective teaching strategies need to be implemented, such as:

Contextual approach: Incorporating morphological concepts in authentic language contexts, such as stories, songs and real examples, to make it more meaningful and interesting for students.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or Projector
- Markers or Pens
- Song: "Unbelievable" by EMF (or a song of your choice with multiple uses of "un-")
- Worksheet with blanks for identifying words with "un-" and their opposite meanings

Visual aids: Use diagrams, tables, and word maps to illustrate morphological relationships and patterns, helping students visualize abstract concepts.

Morpheme Type	Example	Non-Example	Description
Root Word	play	unplay	Core meaning of the word
Prefix	re-	replay, rewrite	Added before the root, changing meaning
Suffix	-er	player, teacher	Added after the root, creating a new word class

Practical activities: Engage students in hands-on activities, such as sorting words into morphological categories, creating word families, and analyzing morphological patterns in texts, to encourage active learning and strengthen understanding.

Gradual introduction: Introduce morphological concepts gradually, starting with basic patterns and building up gradually, to avoid feeling overwhelmed and ensure a strong foundation.

A variety of exercises: Provides a variety of exercises that vary in form and level of difficulty to meet students' learning styles and preferences, as well as strengthen their understanding of morphological concepts. (Bajrami & Iseni, 2023)

4. Theoretical and Applied Implications

This research has several important theoretical and applied implications. Theoretically, this study strengthens the understanding of the important role of morphology in EFL language acquisition and highlights its benefits in improving various aspects of language proficiency. The findings of this research also contribute to the development of theories of effective language teaching by informing pedagogical strategies that can be used to meaningfully integrate morphology in the EFL curriculum.(Al-Shboul et al., 2022)

Appliedly, this research provides practical guidance for teachers and curriculum designers in developing effective morphology teaching programs for EFL students.

The findings of this research can be used to inform the selection of appropriate instructional materials, teaching methods, and assessments to ensure that students gain maximum benefit from learning morphology.(Badawi, 2019)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introducing English morphology to EFL students has been shown to provide numerous benefits in enhancing their overall language abilities. Research findings indicate that morphology assists students in decoding unfamiliar words, improving spelling accuracy, deepening their understanding of language structure, and facilitating vocabulary acquisition.

Despite the challenges associated with teaching morphology, effective instructional strategies, such as contextual approaches, visual aids, hands-on activities, gradual introduction, and varied exercises, can empower students to overcome these challenges and reap the maximum benefits from morphology instruction.

This study acknowledges certain limitations, such as its focus on EFL students at the junior high school level. Further research is warranted to investigate the impact of morphology on students at different levels and in diverse learning contexts.

In light of the study's conclusions, it is recommended that EFL teachers integrate morphology into their curricula and employ effective instructional strategies to help students maximize their gains from morphology learning. Additionally, the development of more diverse and engaging morphology teaching materials and resources for EFL students is strongly encouraged.

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