

ROLE OF MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS IN ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AT ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Morphology is a prominent and building block of linguistics. It must be learnt by the English users at primary and elementary level. It plays an important role in learning and teaching English in EFL/ESL classes. It promote English language elements such as ((Grammar and Vocabulary), including language communication skills (writing, speaking and reading). Morphology also improves student's linguistic competency and performance. It is the study of word and its structure (affixes, prefixes and suffixes) as well as formation of words. Morphological analysis is a linguistic approach that involves breaking down words into their smallest units of meaning, known as morphemes. Morphemes are the building blocks of words and carry essential meaning. Morphological analysis examines the structure and formation of words, exploring prefixes, suffixes, roots, and other morphological elements. By understanding the morphological makeup of words, linguists, language learners, and researchers can gain insights into word meanings, origins, and relationships between words. This analytical process contributes to language acquisition, vocabulary development, and a deeper comprehension of linguistic structures within various languages. This research delves into the critical role of morphological analysis in elevating reading comprehension and fostering vocabulary development among elementary education students. Recognizing the foundational significance of vocabulary in overall literacy skills, this study explores how a targeted approach to morphological analysis can enhance students' ability to comprehend texts and expand their lexical knowledge. The study aims to contribute valuable insights to educators and curriculum developers, shedding light on innovative and pedagogically sound strategies to empower young learners with strong foundational reading and vocabulary skills, thereby paving the way for academic success and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Morphology, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Elementary Education, Words, language, Teaching Morphology, Formation of Words, Stem, Prefixes, Suffixes, Free, Bound and Zero Morpheme, EFL/ESL Learning, etc.

Introduction

Morphology

Morphology is derived from the Greek word; "Morph," which means form or shape, and "-ology," denoting the study of something. According to Bauer (1988, pp. 248), morphology is the examination of the forms of words. In simpler terms, morphology is the investigation of how words are formed from smaller elements, and the modifications applied to these smaller elements in the process of constructing lexemes and word-forms. From a linguistic perspective, many experts define morphology as the study of the internal structure of words. McCarthy (2002, pp.16) specifies that the area of grammar concerned with the structure of words and the

relationships between words involving the morphemes that compose them is technically referred to as morphology.

The term "Morphology" has been present in the English language since 1828. Initially, it referred to the branch of biology concerned with the form of living organisms, their parts, and the relationships between their structures (Tokar, pp. 1). However, for the purposes of this paper, we will focus on morphology from a linguistic perspective. The term "Morphology" did not become established as a branch of linguistics until the nineteenth century (Katamba, 1993, pp. 3).

Morphology encompasses the examination of word formation, including the mechanisms through which new words emerge in languages. Aronoff (2011, pp. 2) emphasizes that morphology pertains to the mental system involved in word formation and constitutes a branch of linguistics focused on words, their internal structure, and the processes by which they come into being. Similarly, Lieber (2009, pp. 2) defines morphology as the exploration of word formation, encompassing the creation of new words in a language and the variation of word forms based on their usage in sentences. The morphological process of affixation, involving the addition of prefixes and suffixes to simple words or root/stem/base, exemplified by words like "happy," "happily," "unhappy," and "unhappily," illustrates how words take on different forms. This morphological process plays a crucial role in developing linguistic competence, as well as semantic and pragmatic understanding, contributing to vocabulary enhancement among elementary school students.

The application of morphology and its rules is deemed effective in enhancing students' linguistic competence. Furthermore, teachers aspire to utilize morphology as a valuable approach to discover additional strategies for augmenting students' lexical capacity (Domingez, 1991, pp. 39). English Department students are required to establish a strong knowledge foundation in comprehending word structure and the process of word formation. This is achieved through the assistance of language teachers who guide the development of English morphological awareness (Oz, 2014, pp. 83).

The evolution of morphology in linguistic study reflects a dynamic journey from early structural analysis to a more nuanced understanding of language structure and formation. Initially concerned with identifying and classifying morphemes, the field has evolved to encompass a broader exploration of the morphological processes that shape words. Early linguistic scholars focused on the morphological typology of languages, categorizing them based on their structural features. Over time, research delved into the intricacies of inflection, derivation, and compounding, reveals the multifaceted nature of morphological phenomena. The advent of generative grammar and cognitive linguistics further enriched the study, integrating insights from syntax, semantics, and psycholinguistics. In contemporary linguistics, the evolution of morphology involves interdisciplinary collaboration, incorporating insights from cognitive science, computational linguistics, and neuro-linguistics to deepen our understanding of how morphological structures contribute to language processing and comprehension. The evolution of morphology reflects a continuous refinement of methods and theories, resulting in a more comprehensive and interconnected exploration of the intricate patterns that underlie the formation of words in diverse languages. Vogt & Giribet (2010)

Morphology plays a fundamental role in the English language as it focuses on the study of the structure and formation of words. By examining morphemes, including prefixes, roots, and suffixes, morphology provides essential insights into how words are constructed and how their meanings can be inferred. This understanding is crucial for vocabulary development, allowing individuals to decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words and discern nuances in language usage.

Morphology also contributes to effective communication and writing, as knowledge of word structure aids in spelling, word choice, and the creation of coherent sentences. Moreover, recognizing morphological patterns facilitates language acquisition by revealing commonalities among words, enhancing both receptive and expressive language skills. In essence, morphology is integral to the intricate tapestry of the English language, influencing not only vocabulary but also reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and overall linguistic competence. Giyatmi (2019)

The implementation of morphology and its rules is deemed suitable for enhancing students' linguistic competence. Additionally, teachers aim to utilize morphology as an effective approach to discover additional strategies for augmenting students' lexical capacity (Domingez, 1991, pp. 39). Students majoring in the English Department are required to establish a solid knowledge foundation in comprehending word structure and the process of word formation. This is facilitated with the assistance of language teachers who guide the development of English morphological awareness (Oz, 2014, pp. 83).

Perez (2014) elucidates various objectives and advantages of studying morphology. Quoting Fasold (2006), one of the objectives of studying morphology is the creation of new words and the restructuring of existing ones. Clearly, the understanding of morphology can be utilized to enhance vocabulary. A substantial vocabulary, coupled with the ability to predict meanings, significantly contributes to English language skills, encompassing reading, speaking, and writing. Biemiller and Slonim, as cited in Akbulut (2017, pp. 10), underscore that a learners' robust vocabulary knowledge directly influences their proficiency in reading comprehension.

Morphological competence is a crucial component in assessing higher proficiency levels in both ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language). This is why derivational and inflectional morphology are extensively utilized in advanced-level English international tests such as FCE, CAE, and Cambridge ESOL's TOEFL (Perez, 2014). The exploration of English morphology facilitates the identification of connections between English and other languages, such as the linguistic relationship between English and Greek.

Understanding these morphological elements empowers readers to unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words and infer the meanings of entire words based on their morphemic components. This skill is particularly beneficial in comprehending complex texts, where a robust vocabulary is essential.

In the context of reading comprehension, morphological analysis aids in identifying word families and discerning the relationships between words with common roots or affixes. For example, recognizing that "teach" is the root of "teacher" and "teaching" allows readers to make informed guesses about the meanings of these related words. This not only enhances vocabulary but also facilitates a deeper understanding of the nuances within a text. Carlisle (2007)

Furthermore, morphological awareness contributes to recognizing grammatical structures, which is vital for comprehension. By breaking down words into morphemes, readers can discern the grammatical functions of different elements in a sentence, leading to a more accurate interpretation of the overall meaning. This skill is particularly beneficial when encountering complex sentences or unfamiliar syntactic structures. Readers equipped with morphological skills can deduce the meanings of compound words by examining the morphemes that constitute them. This ability is instrumental in navigating academic texts, technical literature, or any material that introduces specialized vocabulary.

Literature Review

Ngene (2019) discusses the realm of linguistics, the morphological approach to vocabulary delves into the study of word forms and their internal structure, emphasizing the analysis of morphemes—the smallest units of meaning. This approach is grounded in the understanding that words can be broken down into morphological components, such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots, each contributing distinct semantic or grammatical information. By scrutinizing the morphological intricacies of words, scholars gain insights into how language evolves and constructs meaning. This approach proves instrumental in comprehending the relationships between words, their etymological origins, and the ways in which morphological processes shape lexical diversity. In literature, the morphological approach unveils the nuanced layers of expression within a text, enriching the exploration of linguistic nuances and contributing to a deeper understanding of the intricacies of vocabulary usage.

Fazio & Gallagher (2014) discussed that morphology, the study of the structure and formation of words, plays a crucial role in enhancing vocabulary by providing insight into the building blocks of language. Understanding morphological principles allows individuals to decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words, predict the meaning of new terms, and identify relationships between words with shared roots, prefixes, or suffixes. For instance, recognizing the common morpheme "bio-" meaning life, helps connect words like biology, biography, and biosphere. This knowledge enables learners to make educated guesses about the meanings of words they encounter, facilitating vocabulary expansion and fostering a deeper comprehension of language intricacies. In essence, a grasp of morphology serves as a powerful tool for unlocking and mastering a diverse range of words, empowering individuals to navigate and express themselves more effectively in the linguistic landscape.

Clahsen et al, (2010), describes the morphology is an invaluable asset in the field of education, particularly in language instruction. By incorporating morphological concepts into teaching practices, educators can empower students to decipher and construct words independently. Breaking down words into morphemes, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, provides a systematic approach to understanding the structure and meaning of words. This knowledge not only aids in vocabulary acquisition but also enhances reading comprehension and writing skills. Morphology enables students to discern word relationships, infer meanings, and apply learned patterns to decipher unfamiliar terms. Integrating morphological awareness into teaching strategies promotes a deeper understanding of language, fostering linguistic competence and enabling students to navigate complex texts more effectively. Ultimately, morphology contributes significantly to language education by equipping learners with the tools to unlock the richness of vocabulary and comprehend language nuances.

Manyak et al, (2018) discussed the realm of elementary education, morphology plays a pivotal role in fostering language development among young learners. By introducing basic morphological concepts like prefixes, suffixes, and root words, educators provide students with a foundation for understanding the structure and meaning of words. Teaching morphology at the elementary level helps children break down unfamiliar words into recognizable components, facilitating both reading comprehension and vocabulary expansion. Moreover, morphological awareness aids in spelling and word formation, contributing to improved writing skills. As students grasp the building blocks of language through morphology, they develop a more profound understanding of words and their relationships, laying the groundwork for effective communication and literacy. Integrating morphology into elementary education thus becomes a fundamental element in nurturing linguistic competence and fostering a lifelong love for learning.

Tong (2011) explores that morphological plays a pivotal role in enhancing reading comprehension by providing readers with a strategic framework for deciphering the structure and meaning of words. Understanding the morphemes within words, such as prefixes, roots, and suffixes, empowers readers to break down complex terms and infer their meanings, even when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. This morphological awareness enables readers to make educated guesses about the definitions of words, anticipate contextual nuances, and navigate the subtleties of language. By honing these analytical skills, individuals can approach texts with a more profound understanding of word relationships, leading to improved comprehension as they connect the morphological components to broader concepts. Ultimately, the role of morphological analysis is instrumental in fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced grasp of language, significantly contributing to enhanced reading comprehension abilities.

Silverman et al, (2017), discusses that vocabulary comprehension is a fundamental aspect of elementary school literature, playing a pivotal role in shaping students' language skills and overall academic success. As children engage with diverse literary works during this formative stage, they encounter a spectrum of words that contribute to expanding their lexical repertoire. The exposure to rich and varied vocabulary in literature not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters critical thinking and comprehension abilities. Through age-appropriate texts, elementary school literature serves as a conduit for students to grasp nuanced meanings, infer context, and develop a love for reading. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to comprehend and utilize new words within the context of stories, fostering a holistic approach to language acquisition that goes beyond mere memorization, laying the foundation for a lifelong appreciation of literature and effective communication.

Fahrurrozi & Hasanah (2020) explores that vocabulary comprehension is integral to the enhancement of English skills in elementary school, particularly within the context of literature. As students engage with a diverse range of texts, they encounter unfamiliar words that stimulate cognitive processes, encouraging them to infer meanings based on context. This active interaction with vocabulary not only enriches language proficiency but also fosters a deeper understanding of the nuances within the English language. The exposure to varied words within literary contexts cultivates not just memorization but a comprehensive grasp of language usage, aiding students in articulating thoughts and ideas effectively. Moreover, vocabulary comprehension contributes to heightened reading comprehension, enabling students to navigate complex texts with greater ease. By intertwining language acquisition with literary exploration, elementary school literature serves as a potent vehicle for nurturing a strong foundation in English, facilitating both expressive and receptive language skills that are crucial for academic success and lifelong communication.

Analysis

Morphological analysis plays a pivotal role in vocabulary development by offering a systematic and insightful approach to understanding the structure, derivation, and meanings of words. Morphemes, the smallest units of meaning, include prefixes, suffixes, and roots, and a mastery of morphological analysis equips learners with a valuable toolkit for deciphering and expanding their vocabulary.

One key aspect of morphological analysis in vocabulary development is its contribution to word recognition. Understanding the morphemes within a word allows learners to identify and connect related words, discerning patterns and relationships. For instance, recognizing the

common root "bio-" in words like biology, biography, and biodegradable facilitates the understanding of diverse terms, significantly expanding one's vocabulary.

Moreover, morphological analysis fosters an appreciation for the nuances of word meanings. By breaking down complex words into their constituent morphemes, learners can deduce the meanings of unfamiliar terms, even in specialized domains. This skill proves particularly valuable in academic or technical settings where a rich vocabulary is essential for comprehension.

The role of morphological analysis extends beyond passive recognition to active word construction. As learners grasp the rules governing the combination of prefixes, suffixes, and roots, they can create and understand new words. This process not only reinforces existing vocabulary but also empowers learners to deconstruct unfamiliar terms encountered in their reading, promoting a deeper understanding of language.

Additionally, morphological analysis contributes to language acquisition by enhancing spelling skills. Recognizing morphemes aids in spelling words accurately, as learners can apply consistent rules for affixation and word formation. This connection between morphology and spelling reinforces vocabulary development, as correct spelling is closely tied to understanding the morphological components of words.

Educational strategies incorporating morphological analysis prove effective in vocabulary instruction. Explicit teaching of affixes, roots, and word families enables learners to make meaningful connections between words, fostering a more extensive and nuanced vocabulary. Regular practice in identifying morphemes in reading materials and word lists solidifies these skills, contributing to the overall growth and versatility of learners' vocabularies.

Vocabulary development not only facilitates word recognition, comprehension, and accurate spelling but also empowers learners with the skills to actively construct and expand their vocabularies. Integrating morphological analysis into language education provides a holistic approach to vocabulary development, enriching learners' linguistic abilities and promoting a deeper understanding of the intricate nature of words.

Elementary Education

Elementary education holds significant importance as it serves as a foundational tool for literacy development, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language skills. Introducing elementary students to morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning in language, provides them with a systematic approach to understanding and manipulating words. One critical aspect of morphological analysis in elementary education is its contribution to decoding skills. By breaking down words into prefixes, suffixes, and roots, students can decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words. This skill is particularly valuable in early reading stages when students are encountering a variety of words with diverse morphological structures. Understanding the morphemic components of words enhances students' ability to independently read and comprehend texts. Jang et al, (2021)

Furthermore, morphology fosters a deeper understanding of vocabulary relationships. Elementary students can recognize the connections between words with shared roots or affixes, expanding their word knowledge exponentially. For example, understanding the root "play" in words like play, player, and playful allows students to make meaningful connections and infer the meanings of related terms.

In the context of spelling and word construction, morphology provides elementary students with a set of rules for affixation and word formation. Learning how prefixes and suffixes modify the meaning of a base word not only improves spelling accuracy but also

reinforces the understanding of word meanings. This active engagement in constructing and deconstructing words contributes to a more robust vocabulary.

Morphological analysis is also a valuable tool for educators in designing effective vocabulary instruction. Integrating morphemes into lesson plans allows teachers to impart not only isolated word meanings but also the structural patterns that govern word formation. This approach is particularly beneficial for young learners as it provides a systematic and logical framework for understanding the intricacies of language.

As elementary education serves as the bedrock for future academic success, incorporating morphological analysis into language instruction equips students with skills that extend beyond the early grades. It lays the groundwork for advanced reading comprehension, effective writing, and a sophisticated command of language. By empowering students with morphological awareness, elementary education sets the stage for a lifelong journey of linguistic exploration and proficiency.

Significance of the Study

The study of the role of morphological analysis in elementary education holds significant importance as it directly impacts reading comprehension and vocabulary development among young learners. Morphology, focusing on the structure and formation of words, serves as a crucial bridge between decoding and comprehension skills. By introducing elementary students to morphological analysis, educators empower them to break down complex words into meaningful components, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. This process aids in deciphering the meanings of unfamiliar words and fosters a more nuanced understanding of language.

One key benefit of incorporating morphological analysis in elementary education lies in its positive impact on reading comprehension. When students can recognize and understand the morphemes within words, they develop the ability to infer meanings, make predictions, and comprehend texts more effectively. For instance, recognizing the prefix "un-" can help a child understand the negation of a word, enhancing their comprehension of various vocabulary contexts. Moreover, morphological analysis contributes significantly to vocabulary development. By teaching students the building blocks of words, educators empower them to not only grasp the meanings of specific terms but also apply these morphological principles to decipher a broader range of words. This knowledge extends beyond rote memorization, fostering a more dynamic and versatile vocabulary that students can employ in both reading and writing.

In elementary education, where foundational skills are established, morphological analysis serves as a powerful tool for literacy development. It not only equips students with the skills to decode and comprehend texts but also lays the groundwork for a strong and expanding vocabulary. This, in turn, enhances overall language proficiency and sets the stage for a lifelong love of reading and effective communication. Therefore, understanding the role of morphological analysis is crucial for educators in tailoring instructional approaches that maximize the potential of elementary students in reading comprehension and vocabulary enrichment.

Conclusion

Role of morphology in elementary education is paramount for fostering enhanced reading comprehension and vocabulary development. By introducing students to the intricacies of word structure, educators lay the foundation for a more profound understanding of language. Morphological analysis empowers young learners to deconstruct complex words into manageable components, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, enabling them to decipher meanings with greater ease. This skill proves invaluable in enhancing reading comprehension, as

students learn to navigate texts more effectively, make informed predictions, and infer contextual meanings. Furthermore, the impact extends beyond comprehension to vocabulary development.

Through morphological awareness, students not only acquire the meanings of specific words but also gain a versatile toolkit for deciphering a broader range of terms. This nuanced understanding of language contributes not only to academic success but also to the development of effective communication skills. In the dynamic landscape of elementary education, where foundational literacy skills are established, integrating morphological analysis becomes a cornerstone in shaping lifelong learners with a rich vocabulary and a deep appreciation for the intricacies of language. Therefore, the intentional incorporation of morphological analysis in elementary education is a pedagogical imperative with far-reaching implications for students' linguistic proficiency and academic success.

Further Studies

Further studies on the role of morphology in enhancing reading comprehension and vocabulary development in elementary education can explore several avenues to deepen our understanding of the subject. Firstly, investigations could delve into the efficacy of specific instructional methods for teaching morphological awareness to young learners. Comparative studies could evaluate the impact of various approaches, such as explicit instruction, games, or interactive activities, on students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

Additionally, longitudinal research can be conducted to assess the long-term effects of morphological instruction throughout elementary education. Tracking students over several years would provide insights into the sustained impact of morphological awareness on their reading abilities, vocabulary growth, and overall language skills.

Furthermore, studies might focus on the potential transferability of morphological knowledge to different academic subjects. Research could explore whether students who receive explicit morphological instruction demonstrate improved comprehension not only in language arts but also in science, social studies, and other content areas.

Closely related is the investigation into the role of technology in morphological instruction. Studies could assess the effectiveness of digital tools, educational apps, or online platforms in delivering morphological lessons and engaging elementary students in interactive learning experiences.

Moreover, research could examine the influence of socio-economic factors on the development of morphological awareness in elementary students. Understanding how various demographic variables impact the acquisition of morphological skills can inform educators and policymakers in designing targeted interventions for diverse student populations.

Educators often incorporate morphological analysis into reading instruction to empower students with the tools necessary for independent comprehension. Teaching morphological awareness allows students to build a more sophisticated and nuanced vocabulary, equipping them to tackle a variety of texts with confidence. The role of morphological analysis in enhancing reading comprehension is foundational, providing readers with a strategic approach to decode words, infer meanings, and navigate the intricate landscape of language in diverse textual contexts.

In summary, further studies in this area can contribute valuable insights to pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and educational policies, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of morphological instruction in elementary education.

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