

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

1.0 Background :-

In spite of the fact that English morphology studies have been incepted lately in linguistics; these studies have acquired an overwhelming importance in the field of English language learning and acquisition.

According to Leiber (2009) ‘morphology is the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they are used in sentence’. Thus morphology studies the formation of words in English language and how this formation is largely dependent on sentence structure in which the word is deployed.

Forming words in English language takes two main ways; deriving new lexemes from other words by adding a prefix or a suffix, e.g. “happy”, “unhappy” and “happiness”. This process happens to be called derivational morphology which is concerned with creating a new word though a related one. The other way is forming words using inflectional processes, which result in a modified version of a word (Delahunty & Garvey: 76). These processes are often applied to words in sentences in order to meet the grammatical needs of the sentences such as tense, gender or number. For instance the variant forms of the verb ‘to walk’ ‘walk’ and ‘walks’ are used for the present simple whereas “walked” is used for the past simple.

As stated above, words may be constructed of more than one morpheme, a morpheme is the smallest form (i.e, spoken or written units) that has meaning or grammatical function (Delahunty & Garvey:2010 ; p 76).

From the point of view of the function of the morphemes in words, morphemes may be divided into three classes, derivational, inflectional and root (Delahunty & Garvey:2010; p- 123).

Adding derivational morphemes to a word or root creates a different lexeme but a related one for example adding the derivational morpheme (er) to the verb read results in the “noun reader”. The following words contains a number of derivational morphemes: manhood, kingdom, actor, active, reactor. (Delahunty & Garvey:2010 ; p- 76).

On the other hand, adding an inflectional morpheme to a word or root, merely creates a modified version of the word to which it is added, inflections are added to words to indicate grammatical functions such as past tense plural or comparison, as shown in the words below: paint-ed, books smaller, (Delahunty & Garvey:2010 ; p- 76).

This research studies the role of morphological skills in learning English words, it investigates EFL students’ abilities informing words properly more specifically it explores EFL students’ abilities in using various types of morphemes in forming words, including both derivational and inflectional morphemes.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

learning to form words properly or producing derivative forms of words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs requires more practice on using

suffixes and the rules that govern their usage in word structure – mastering various word structures is one of the basic levels of language proficiency.

Despite the necessity of learning morphological skills for EFL students or learners at the university level they are observed to have some difficulties in dealing with morphologically complex words, thus they appear to experience hardships in nominal, verb, adjective or adverb derivative forms, as well as inflected forms for example changing adjective ‘free’ into a noun ‘freedom’ and turning an adjective or a noun into a verb, e.g. ‘modern’ ‘modernize’ strength ‘strengthen’ respectively. These problems in forming words at various positions in sentence structure have bad effects on EFL students’ linguistic performance.

In response to these problems, the current study will find out the reasons behind such difficulties and suggest multiple techniques of forming words in different types of sentence structure and the research also shows how word forms are responsive to various sentence structures, thus getting EFL students or learners to experience dealing with various formations of words in different sentence structures.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to:

- Identify and describe the role of morphological skills in learning L2 English morphology.
- Identify and explain the difficulties that EFL students face in dealing with morphologically complex words. In different sentence structures such as derivative forms of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as well as inflected form.
- Building on the previous points, the study suggests effective ways to improve EFL students’ morphological processing of words.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Is there a gap between EFL students' morphological knowledge and their practice and application of morphology?
2. What techniques can be proposed to improve EFL learners' morphological skills?
3. What are the difficulties that EFL students' might face when they use various types of morphemes in forming words?
4. What are the reasons behind EFL students' poor performance of morphology?

1.4 Research Hypotheses:

- a- There is a big gap between what EFL students' know about morphology and what they can actually do in morphology.
- b- Examining various types of forming words for EFL students' may help EFL teachers suggest suitable procedures or techniques for EFL students' to do morphology.
- c- Using some morphemes in words may sometimes be problematic particularly when they are added to a words, such as terror terrify, horror-horrify, wife-wives, moreover some morphemes are similar in sound and shape but they are different in meaning for instance the agentive morphemes in **seller** and the comparative morpheme in **taller**.
- d- EFL students' low performance in morphological skills may be attributed to inappropriate teaching methods and techniques.

1.5 Significance of the research

This study is significant since it draws attention to one of the most important areas of second language learning and acquisition (i-e., learning

morphological skills). The researcher tries to identify and describe the role of morphological skills in learning English language decoding abilities.

Moreover, it demonstrates the way EFL learners or students learn such skills and to what extent they might be different in morphological derivation and inflection of words. The study also proposes several techniques and explanations in the field of teaching and learning Metalinguistic knowledge that are useful for both EFL teachers and learners.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on investigating the process of learning morphological skills in EFL students or learners at the university level.

The study attempts to identify and describe the role of metalinguistic knowledge in English language learning and explain the difficulties that affect EFL student's performance in dealing with both derivational and inflectional morphology of words.

1.7 Methodology of the research

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative analyses and the researcher prefers to use a test in examining the students' metalinguistic knowledge due to the practical nature of such skills; the thing that makes them impossible to be examined by other means such as free writing, questionnaire or interview.

The population consists of all the English language students at the university level. A sample of 35 students was randomly selected from Sudan University of Science and Technology; College of languages.

Their age range is between 17 and 19 years old, the students have spent nine years in learning English. The students are requested to answer a test that contains a variety of items. These items are designed to measure and explain the way, EFL students learn and practice morphological skills and the challenges that EFL students experience when producing derivative forms of verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives (see the appendix).

The data will be collected and analyzed by means of descriptive analysis. The results relating to the assumption of the research which deal with the matter of learning morphological skills will be presented in terms of statistical analyses of each question or section.

Based on EFL students' scores in the numerous tasks of the test, an interpretation will be given to the significant differences among the EFL students' performance in different type's questions.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

This study will focus on investigating morphological skills problems that encounter EFL students at the university level. It will take the students of College of Languages Sudan University of Science and Technology as a case study. The researcher will distribute a test among the students.

The time frame is the academic year 2015-2016.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
AND
PREVIOUS STUDIES

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Part One: Theoretical Framework:

2.1 Introduction:

In chapter one, the study introduces the term “morphology”, and its relation to English word formation, the study also states the problem of the research. Moreover it presents the research questions as well as the research hypotheses.

This chapter consists of two parts:

- (a) Part one: theoretical framework.
- (b) Part two: the previous studies.

Part one is going to introduce the English word, its definition, relationships, constituent parts and its internal organization (Delahunty & Garvey: 2010).

Part two reviews some of the previous studies that relate to the current study.

2.2 What is a word?

Many definitions of a word in English can be given or cited from the literature. According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2000: 1490) “A word is a single unit of language which means something and can be spoken or written” e.g. Do not write more than 2000 words! Do you know the words to this song?

Bloomfield classic definition of a word can also be considered “a minimum free form of language”. (Bloomfield: 1923)

Robins (1975) said that

“when sentences of the same language are studied and compared. It is seen that certain stretches in them exhibit an internal stability peculiar to themselves. These stretches may appear at different places in sentences relative to each other (the kitten saw the pigeons, the pigeon saw the kitten, two and five makes seven) and may be separated by other stretches (the kitten, I bought, saw the pigeons). Or by momentary pauses (the puppy, the kitten and the children were all playing when it started to rain) but they do not permit internal rearrangement of their constituent parts nor the insertion of comparable and virtually unlimited further stretches of utterance and they may not in normal speech interrupted by any pause. These unitary stretches represent what are called ‘words’”.

In addition to the previous definitions and on the same line of debate, someone might say a word is a stretch of letters that occurs between two blank spaces (Lieber 2009, p. 3). But someone else is bound to point out that words do not have to be written for us to know that they are words. And in spoken language or (signed) language, there are no spaces or pauses to delineate words yet we know what they are.

On the other hand, linguists define a morpheme as the smallest unit of language that has its own meaning, simple words like giraffe, wiggle, yellow are morphemes but so are prefixes like (re-) and (pre-) and suffixes (-ize) and (-er) so the term ‘morpheme’ can be used to come up with a more precise and coherent definition of a word, thus a word is one or more morphemes that can stand alone in a language. With reference to (Lieber

2009, p. 4) words that consist of one morpheme like door, book and just can be termed as simple words and those are made up of more than one morpheme like opposition, intellectual, crystallize are called complex words.

2.3 Words and Lexemes Types and Tokens:

This linguistic classification of words is taken from Lieber, (2009), it introduces words as lexemes types and tokens, for example there is a number of ways to study the following sentence: My friend and I walk to class together because our classes are in the same building and we dislike walking alone. The key question to study this sentence is: How many words occur in it? Lieber, (2009) states that there is a number of ways to count such words and for counting them it is useful to use special terms. For example, if we are counting every instance in which a word occurs in a sentence regardless of whether that word has occurred or not we are counting word tokens and thus we have 21.

If however we are counting a word once no matter how many times it occurs, we are counting word types and we have 20 types. A different way of counting these words is to count word lexeme which can be thought of as families of words that differ only in their grammatical forms; singular and plural forms of a noun (class, classes) present, past and participle forms of verbs (walk, walks, walked, walking) different forms of pronouns (I, me, my, mine) each represent a single lexeme, counting lexemes in this way, there would be 16 lexemes in the sentence above.

2.4 Morphology:

In his explanation for the term morphology, Mark Aronoff (N.D.) attributed it to the German poet, novelist, playwright and philosopher Johann Wolfgang Van Goethe (1749 – 1832) who coined it early in the 19th century in a biological context. Its etymology is Greek. Morph means ‘shape’,

‘form’ and morphology is the study of form or forms. In linguistics, morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure and how they are formed.

2.5 The Significance of morphology:

According to Lieber, (2009) the importance of using morphology comes from different reasons, one reason for having morphology is to form new lexemes from old ones and this is referred to as lexeme formation, lexeme formation can do one of three things: (Lieber, 2009: p6).

a. Change the part of speech or category of a word. For example, turning verbs into nouns or adjectives, or nouns into adjectives.

V → N amuse → amusement

V → A impress → impressive

N → A monster → monstrous

b. Some rules of lexeme formation do not change category but they do add substantial meaning.

A → A negative A happy → unhappy

N → N a place where N lives orphan → orphanage

V → V repeat action wash → rewash

c. Both category and meaning lexeme formation.

V → A able to be ved wash → washable

N → V remove N louse → delouse

Having rules of lexeme formation allow for a measure of economy in the mental lexicons: parts can be recycled as it were to come up with new words. It is probably safe to say that all languages have some ways of forming new lexemes although these ways differ from language to another.

Sometimes morphology is used even if there is no need for a new lexeme. For example each lexeme can have a number of word forms. The lexeme ‘walk’ has forms like (walk, walks, walked, walking) that can be used in different grammatical contexts. When forms of a word is changed to fit in a particular grammatical context, this what linguists call ‘inflection’.

Inflectional word formation is a word formation that expresses grammatical distinctions like number (singular vs. plural) tense (present vs. past) person (first, second or third) and case (subject, object possessive) among others.

2.6 What is a morpheme?

According to Aronoff (N.D.) a major way of investigating words, their internal structure and how they are formed is through the identification and study of morphemes. Morphemes are often defined as the smallest linguistic pieces with grammatical function for meaning. A morpheme may consist of a word such as ‘hand’ or meaningful piece of word such as the (-ed) of looked that cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts. Another definition of a morpheme is a pairing of sound and meaning, however this definition cannot be used since some morphemes have no concrete form or no continuous form. The term morph’ is sometimes used to refer to the phonological realization or a morpheme, for example the past tense morpheme (-ed) has various morphs it is realized as (-t) after the voiceless (p) in jumped and in (-d) after the voiceless (l) of repelled and as (əd) after the voiceless (t) of root or the voiced (d) of wed (rooted, wedded).

If one takes the word reconsideration, it can be broken into three morphemes re-consider- and -ation, -consider is called a stem. A stem is a base morpheme to which another morphological piece is attached. A stem

can be simple, made of only one part or complex, itself made up of more than one piece. It is best to consider, ‘consider’, a simple stem and we could also call, consider a root. A root is like stem in constituting the core of the word to which other pieces attach but ‘root’ refers only to morphologically simple units. For example, disagree is the stem of disagreement because it is a base to which ‘ment’ attaches but agree is the root. Returning now to reconsideration re-consider- and –ation are both affixes which they are attached to the stem, affixes like re- that go before the stem are called prefixes and those like –ation that come after are suffixes.

2.6.1 Types of Morphemes:

Besides being bound or free, morphemes can also be classified as root, derivational or inflectional.

1. A Root Morpheme is a basic morpheme to which morphemes are attached, it provides the basic meaning of the word e.g. the morpheme ‘saw’ is the root of ‘sawers’).
2. Derivational morphemes are added to forms to create separate words e.g. (-er) is a derivational morpheme or suffix whose addition turns a verb into a noun, usually an agent for example (paint) + (er) creates ‘painter’.
3. Inflectional morphemes do not create separate words, they merely modify words to fit in certain grammatical contexts such as plurality as the (-s) of magazines does or past tense as the (-ed) of barbecued does. English has eight inflectional morphemes.
4. A root of a word is a morpheme that is left over when all derivational and inflectional morphemes have been removed. For example, in immovability (im), (abl) and (ity) are all derivational morphemes and when they are removed we are left with ‘move’ which cannot be further divided into meaningful pieces and must be the word’s root.

2-6-2 What is the difference between word root and word base?

It is better to distinguish between root and forms to which affixes are attached. In movable (-able) is attached to (move-) which is the word's root. However (im-) is attached to movable and not to move so movable is a stem to which affixes are attached, so while roots may be bases, bases are not always roots.

2.7 English Inflectional Morphology:

As Delahunty & Garvey (2010) state, inflectional morphemes change the form of the word to indicate grammatical properties. English has eight inflectional morphemes listed in table (2.1) along with the properties they indicate.

Table (2.1) The eight inflectional morphemes of English language

Nouns	{-s}	Plural	The birds
Noun phrases	{-s}	genitive/possessive	The bird's song
Adjectives/adverbs	{-er}	comparative	faster
	{-est}	superlative	fastest
Verbs	{-s}	3 rd person singular present tense	proves
	{-ed}	Past tense	proved
	{-ing}	Progressive/present participle	is proving
	{-en}	Past participle	has proven/ was proven

As stated in table (2.1), these are the regular English inflections that are added to the vast majority of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs to indicate grammatical properties such as tense, number and degree. They are also the inflections that are added to new words coming into the language. For example, an (-s) is added to the noun 'throughput' to make it plural.

When words are borrowed from other languages, regular English inflections are added to them in most cases. For example, we pluralize the Italian noun *operetta* as *operettas* rather than *operette* as the Italian does.

As table (2.1) shows that English has eight inflectional morphemes, those morphemes are used to indicate grammatical properties, such as plurality, tense and number. However, because of its long history, English has many irregular forms.

- First irregular words may use different inflections than regular ones. For example, the modern past participle of a verb is (ed) but the past participle of *freeze* is *frozen*.
- Second, irregular forms may involve internal vowel changes as in *man/men*, *grow/grew*.
- Third, some forms are historically unrelated forms, ‘*went*’ the past tense of ‘*go*’ historically was the past tense of different verb “*wend*” this sort of realignment is known as suppletion. Other example of suppletion include *good. Better best and bad, worse and worst*.
- Fourth, some words show no inflectional change “*sheep*” is both singular and plural, “*hit*” is both present and past as well as past participle.
- Fifth, many borrowed words especially nouns have irregular inflected forms. For example *alumna* and *cherubim* are the plural of *alumna* and *cherub* respectively. Irregular forms demonstrate the abstract status of morphemes. Thus the word “*men*” realizes the two morphemes {*man*} + {*plural*} “*went*” realizes {*go*} + {*past*} English.
- A final issue is that different groups of English speakers use different inflected forms of words, especially of verbs when this happens the

standard variety selects one and rejects others as non-standard or not English. For example English speakers use the singular form of the verb 'be' in the past tense {was} regardless of what the subject of its clause is e.g. We was there yesterday.

2.8 English derivational Morphology:

Derivation is process of creating separate but morphologically related words. It involves one or more changes in form or example (1) it can involve prefixing as in resaw or suffixing as in sawing , sawer, sawable.

Another type of derivation involves a change in the position of the primary stress in a word

Table (2.2) A change in the position of the primary stress in the English word:

'permit (n)	per'mit(v)
'contract (n)	con'tact(v)
'perfect (adj)	per'fect(v)
'convert (n)	con'vert(v)

Table (2.2) explains how shift of primary stress in a word represents a kind of derivation.

In some derivationally related words only. Feature of the final consonant changes, usually its voicing.

Table (2.3) A change of the voicing of the final consonant

advice	advise	/s/	/z/
belief	believe	/f/	/v/
mouth	Mouthe	/θ/	/ð/
breath	breathe	/θ/	/ð/

Table (2.3) shows how the final consonant in a word usually changes its voicing.

In some cases adding a derivational morpheme induces a change in stressed vowel.

Table (2.4) A change in the stressed vowel

divine	divinity	/ /	/ /
profane	profanity	/e/	/ /
serene	serenity	/ /	/ /

Table (2-4) show adding a derivational morpheme

In other cases, the addition of suffixes triggers a change in the final consonant of the root. For example an alveolar consonant becomes palatal with the same voicing value.

Table (2.5) The addition of suffixes triggers a change in the final consonant of the root

part	partial	/t/	/ /
face	facial	/s/	/ /
seize	seizure	/z/	/ /
remit	remission	/t/	/ /

Table (2.5) states show the addition of a suffix triggers a change in the final constant of the root.

In multisyllabic word with stressed tense vowel, the palatalization may be accompanied by a laxing of that vowel.

Table (2.6) Multi-syllabic word with stressed tense vowel

collide	collision	/d/	/z/	/ /	/i/
elide	elision	/d/	/ /	/ /	/i/

Sometimes the addition of a derivational affix requires a change in the stress pattern, with consequential changes in the pronunciation of vowels. In most cases an unstressed, vowel is pronounced as schwa.

Table (2.7) Sometimes the addition of derivational affix requires a change in the stress pattern

'telegraph	te'legraphy
'regal	re'galia
'tutor	tu'torial

Table (2.7) show how an unstressed vowel is pronounced as schwa.

In still other cases there are suffixing, stress migration with a change of vowel quality and a change of consonant.

Approve approbation /u/ → /d/ , /v/ → /b/

English allows us to change a word's part of speech without any change of form e.g. 'saw'. The noun and 'saw' the verb.

- This saw is too dull. (n).
- Do not saw that board! (v).

Other examples include hit, buy, dust, autograph brown-bag, which can all be both nouns and verbs – change of part of speech without any corresponding formal change is called conversion, functional shift or zero derivation.

2.8.1 How to do morphological analysis:

In the literature of morphological analysis, Oiry states that there are some basic questions to be asked, these questions are:

- (a) What pieces does this word have?
- (b) What does each of them mean?
- (c) How are they combined?

These questions are asked when a set of linguistic data such words or sentences is given, for analysis.

2.8.2 Steps of doing morphological analysis:

According to Hodge (1969) both morphology and syntax follow the same basic principle of analysis, that of substitution. In order to identify elements and separate them for analysis, the analyst seeks to find utterances which differ in only one respect. If one takes the sentences. I saw the shore line and I saw the life line, they are seen to differ by having shore in one and life in the other. The meaning is also quite different and we conclude that shore and life are different and meaningful pieces of the language. If one compares I saw the book, I saw the books and I saw the booklet we will conclude that the -s of books and the let of booklet are separate meaningful elements, but we also note that book may occur without either of them.

In the same way other kinds of structural element such as stress and intonation can be abstracted.

For example ‘I saw a black bird’, the person speaking refers to a particular kind of bird. Whereas in ‘I saw a black bird’ the speaker indicates only that the bird was black. It may have been a black bird but might just as easily have been a crow or a raven. In such a case the stress pattern can be abstracted as meaningful element. This same contrast of patterns, occurs in for example, the White House where the president of the United States lives and the white house (which indicates a particular house of that colour.

There are many kinds of morphology that are more complex than this but this basic method that looks for forms with minimal differences and figures out how to describe that difference is always a good approach.

Languages are generally made of words and in turn some words are composed of smaller meaningful pieces that are called morphemes. When

trying to analyze a language, words of a language are decomposed into morphemes.

Example: The word “players” has three morphemes play + -er + -s.

A morpheme can be a subpart of a word to break a word into morpheme, try starting at the beginning of the word and see how many meaningful subpart's does the words consist of? For example in the word ‘unbreakable’ the first two letter ‘un’ are independently meaningful in a way that just the first letter ‘u’ is not ‘un’ means something like ‘not whatever’ and the changes the meaning of the word it attaches to in a predictable way: subparts like ‘u’ or ‘n’ do not have this property this means that ‘un’ is a morpheme. Another morpheme is break which is independently meaningful and so is the last part of the word ‘able’. So unbreakable has three morphemes un-break-able, some words have just one morpheme for example ‘love’ has only one morpheme so it cannot be divided into meaningful subparts.

Different kinds of morphemes can be defined based on various properties like where they show up in words. All morphemes are either free or bound.

- -free: A free morpheme is one that can stand on its own as an entire word e.g. the, cat, run, pretty –
- bound: a bound morpheme cannot stand on its own but rather attached to a free morpheme.

Example: re, un, er, rewrite, unhappy, etc.

Another type of classification of morphemes is:

Root: The primary piece of meaning in a word to which affixes can be added in English; a root is often a word in itself. Example cat, pretty, dog.

Affix: a morpheme which attaches to roots or (stems) changing their meaning in regular ways.

Affixes are either prefixes (those which go before words) or (suffixes those that come after words).

Examples:

Prefix: reread, unloved

Suffix: quicker, reads, books.

Null morpheme

One sheep three sheepØ

One fish four fishØ.

2.9 Summary:

This part tackles the various criteria of defining the English word. It also investigates morphology and why languages have morphology. This section studies morphemes and types of morphemes. It also studies both types of morphology; inflectional morphology and derivational morphology in addition to how to do morphological analysis.

Part Two: Previous Studies

This section is devoted to review the previous studies. The present study was not taken in concern as a separate topic in the past. For this reason other related topics will be presented in chronological order.

2.10 Study one:

Fadl Almola (2000) conducted a study on the relation between teaching and learning new English lexis. In his study, he discusses the teacher's techniques of teaching new English lexis and the strategies that are adopted by ESL learners in learning such words.

The researcher divided the sample into two groups 180 students and 70 teachers; the relevant data has been obtained by administering one questionnaire to the 180 subjects and another one to 70 teachers. Each of the two questionnaires includes fifteen questions.

The study points out that it is important to know the morphology of the new item, which means to know the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it.

He asserts that teachers should aim at the relationships between parts of speech having a common root or stem, saying that knowing the patterns will ease or facilitate understanding.

This view contributes to the main stream of the current study which investigates the learners' morphological abilities and how they can make use of such abilities in learning and acquiring new English words.

One of the findings that needs to be considered is that the study of the relationship between techniques of teaching new words and the strategies that are used by the learners is that the most preferred techniques are teaching words in context, inferring, word relation, giving examples and using morphological cues.

While the most preferred strategies of learning were inferring, using bilingual dictionaries, corrections, of miss learn and asking teachers for explanations and translation.

2.11 Study two:

Another study of the relationship between English language learning and teaching techniques that are used by Sudanese university students to learn new English words was carried out by Ruqiya Ali Hamoda (1998). The sample of the subjects was drawn from third and fourth years of the Department of English at the faculties of Arts at the universities of both Khartoum and Shendi.

A Questionnaire has been administered to ten teachers of both universities; the teachers' questionnaire consisted of 10 questions. The other questionnaire was administered to eighty students, it includes ten questions.

In one of her strategies, Hamoda recommends the use of morphemic analysis which is the process of deriving words meaning by analyzing its meaningful parts or morphemes; such word parts include root words, prefixes and suffixes. She insisted that the students must learn the morphology of a word to analyze it. Then he/she can infer the meaning of the word and use it correctly.

Building on the previous points, this study considers morphemic analysis as a backbone of word learning. Another strategy that is recommended is that teachers can make word families instead of individual word forms to let learners form a habit of considering word derivation. In addressing cognitive strategies, she states that the learner might deduce from the syntactic structure of the word whether the word is an adjective, verb or adverb. These are intralingual cues provided by knowledge of morphology of English.

2.12 Study three:

Badriya Alfarsi (2008) carried out a study that examines Omani

EFL learners' morphological awareness and vocabulary size. The study is interested in whether morphological awareness and vocabulary size are correlated and whether performance on morphological awareness discriminates between the students' performance in complex words vs. simple words.

To answer the research questions, the researcher adapted McBride-Chang's et al (2005) Morphological Awareness test and Nations Vocabulary Level test.

The participants in the study were 54 Omani EFL learners, enrolled in an English intensive programme at the Ibri College of Applied Sciences, Oman.

All the participants completed both tests; descriptive statistic, reliability measures and correlation coefficients were calculated and reported.

The results reveal that the students displayed low overall morphological awareness of word formation rules: morpheme identification (the analytic aspects). Or morphological structure (the synthetic aspects), however the student performed somewhat better in the analysis section than in the synthesis section. Also the result show that the students' vocabulary size is within the 2000 word level indicating that they will struggle to understand an average text.

The results illustrate that for the learners of this study, there is no relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary size and between morphological awareness and word complexity. The study fails to show any correlation between the constructs due to some factors of floor effects, task difficulty and instrument item designs.

2.13 Study four:

In a paper entitled, "The Role of Morphological Awareness in English

as a Second Language Acquisition”, Elsaghir has been working daily with 31 EFL students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, Albanian, Arabic (Iraqi dialect) Bosnian, Chinese, French (Cameroon and Gabon) Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu and vernacular Liberian English. The students’ grades range from 9th through 12th. The vast range of academic and English language proficiency differences and the wide inventory of native language with such small groups of students pose particular challenges to any English language teacher.

Elsaghir, used to conduct a daily examination of cross-linguistic differences in the classroom.

Students were asked to say or write (if possible) the translation of simple nouns and their corresponding plurals in their native languages (e.g. mother, head, chair, sun, child, etc).

Students then were instructed to identify the inflectional suffixes, prefixes or markers for plural in their L1 and to provide a short list of their own vocabulary showing these inflections. Finally students were asked to explain to the classroom in English these plural inflections in their languages.

The immediate results of this simple experiment were shocking, both to the students as well as to the researcher. None of the students seem to have had any formal morphological processing instructions in their native languages and thus they were surprised to discover the similarities as well as the differences between English and their L1 in terms of this grammatical function. Furthermore the students discovered that while English plural inflections are always suffixes, Tagalog inflections were prefixes, Arabic inflections were both infixes and suffixes and Chinese

inflections were totally separate particles (morphemes) added before the nouns. This cross-linguistic experiment has shown indeed significant degrees of morphological awareness in word recognition and students became more motivated to conduct their own linguistic experiments.

2.14 Study five:

In a paper, written by Singson, Mahony and Mann, they say that, they are concerned with the possibility that since English spellings can also encode morpheme-sized units, certain morphological skills might be related to decoding ability. As a measure of morphological skills, they consider the ability to recognize derivational suffixes as morphological units that distinguish nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. They state that a brief review of some English spelling patterns that transcribe morphemes could be important to the decoding of English. Moreover for evidence about how morphemic transcription could be of importance to decoding, they claim that they need to consider another type of derivational suffix, namely those non-neutral suffixes that do cause phonological shifts, e.g. the spelling of word pairs like reduce, reduction, atom, atomic, personal, personality. In each of these pairs, there is also a base and a derived form, each derivational suffix changes the pronunciation of the base. The suffixes -tion, -ic, and -ity alter the base's stress, the pronunciation of certain consonants, etc, yet the spelling of the base remains constant.

2.15 Summary:

This part reviews some of the previous studies that relate to the main topic of the study. Moreover the next chapter will perform the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Chapter Three

Design and Methodology of the Study

3.0 Introduction:

This chapter is devoted to the description and explanation of the research methodology and the procedures used during the study. It describes the design of the study: the subjects, data collection instruments and the reliability and validity of the instruments. Finally it gives information about the data analysis.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Population

The population of the study is all the English language students in the second year at the Sudanese universities. Their age range is between 17 and 19. The students' age and sex difference is not regarded as significant in terms of language development. They have been exposed to English language for nine years; four years at the basic school level, three years at higher secondary school and two years at the university level. They belong to different socio-economic backgrounds in the Sudanese society. Their native language is Arabic. Approximately most of the subjects have similar backgrounds in terms of language exposure and knowledge. So they are supposed to practice and recognize English grammar appropriately in general and dealing with English morphology in particular.

3.1.2 Sample

A sample of 35 students was randomly selected from Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages, the second

year. The reason behind choosing the second level students is that students should have completed the syllabus in basic English grammar so they should be able to deal with English morphology properly.

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

To gather the data required, there are several methods which can be used but the researcher chose to test the students for the reason that the area of morphology cannot be fully covered through free writing or by taking random samples.

One method used to collect data in descriptive research is a test. Tests may be formal language tests like writing an assignment or doing communicative activities. Seliger and Shohamy cited in Alaadin (1989: 176) define a test as a procedure used to collect data on subjects' ability or knowledge of certain disciplines. In second language acquisition research, tests are generally used to collect data about the subjects' ability in and knowledge of the second language in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, metalinguistic awareness and general proficiency. Indeed the test used to collect data for this study was designed to elicit data relating to EFL students' morphological skills.

The students were asked to answer four questions; question one is a theoretical one, it discusses some definitions and concepts while the other three questions encourage the students to practice morphology.

3.3 Reliability

Joppe, cited in Golafshani, (2000) defines reliability as: the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of

the study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

The researcher has found out about the reliability of the test by piloting it for small group of students.

3.4 Validity

Joppe, cited in Golafshani, (2000) provides the following explanation of what validity is in quantitative research: validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit “the bull’s eye” of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions and will often look for the answers in the research of others.

For the present study, the test has acquired its validity after it has been checked by two college instructors. Their advices and observations have been taken in consideration then the last version of the test has been distributed among the students.

3.5 Procedure

The test was conducted a class at the end of the second semester (September 2016). A period of 40 minutes was allocated for this test. The students were tested under examination conditions under direct supervision from the researcher and with a assistance from the lecturer of the Department of English Language. This was done to make sure that the students did not receive any assistance inside and outside the lecture room. It should be noted that there was no preparation for the test by the students.

3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study has been analyzed by means of descriptive statistics. According to Welman and Kruger, cited in Alaadin (1994: 208) descriptive statistics is concerned with the description or summarization of the data obtained from a group of individuals. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to reduce large amounts of data to facilitate drawing conclusions about them.

The result pertaining to the central hypothesis deals with the difference between the students' morphological knowledge and their application and practice of morphology. Were presented in terms of percentage of each question of the test and each sub-question was measured by scores. The total scores of each question are eight marks except question two which was six marks because it consisted of six items. In each question, a table and figure were used to illustrate the percentage of errors committed by the students in order to show the students' performance in morphology.

3.7 Summary

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to collect data. It includes:

- The population and sampling.
- Data collection instruments.
- Reliability and validity of the instrument.
- Procedure and techniques of data analysis.

The present study adopts a descriptive analytical method to analyze data and reach the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

OF THE RESULTS

Chapter four

Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the data collected through the study instrument. The analysis will appear in four tables and figures.

4.2 Analysis and discussion:

The section below presents analysis of the students' answer to the test.

4.2.1 Question one:

This question was designed to check the students' morphological knowledge.

Table (4-1) Students' morphological knowledge:

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
0-3	6	17.1
4-6	19	54.3
7-8	10	28.6
Total	35	100

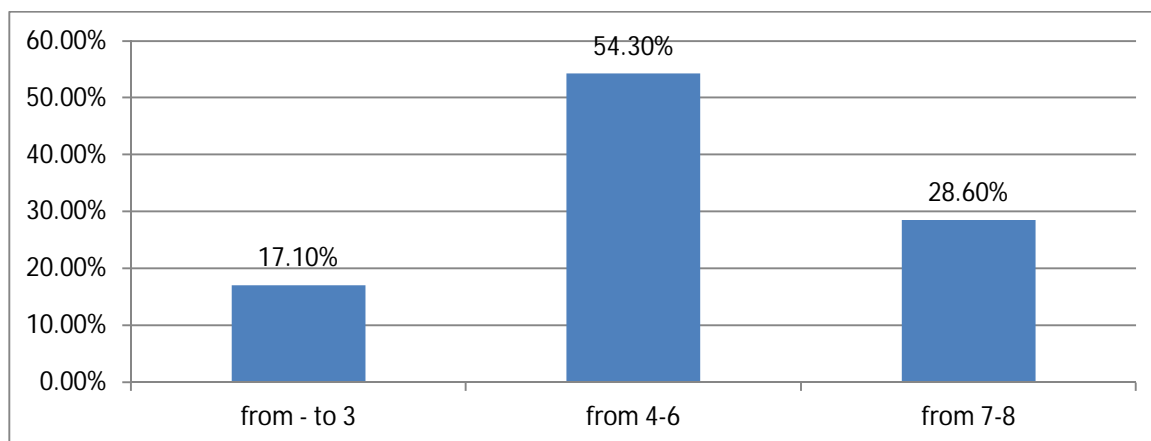


Figure (4-1) Students' morphological knowledge

The above table and figures illustrate the percentage of the respondents to question 1 which is about the students' knowledge of morphology. 6 of the students scored below the average with the percentage of 17.1% . 19 of the students scored from 4 - 6 with the percentage of 54.3%. 10 students scored from 7-8 with the percentage of 28.6%. in conclusion we find that 29 students scored above the average with the percentage of 82.9% which indicates that the students' morphological knowledge is very rich.

4.2.2 Question two:

Question two was designed to check the students' ability to add suffixes or prefixes to the words given.

Table (4-2) Students' ability to add suffixes or prefixes to the words given.

Statement	frequency	Percentage
yes	22	62.9
no	13	37.1
Total	35	100

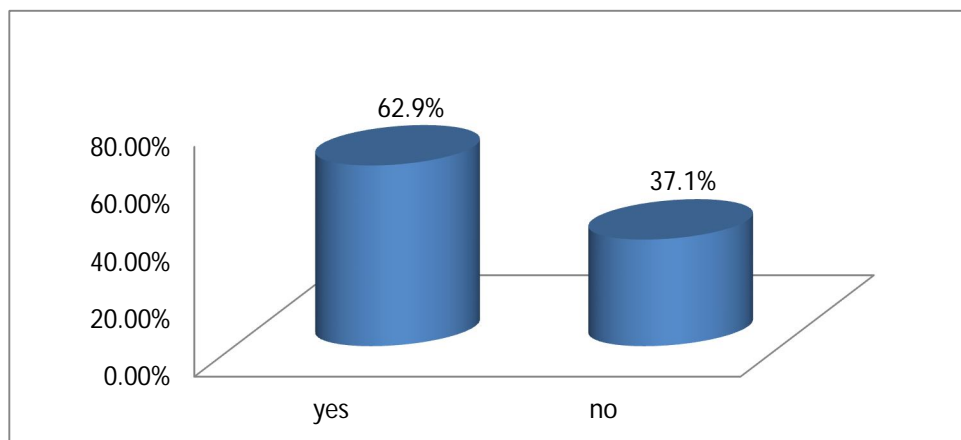


Figure (4-2) Students' ability to add suffixes or prefixes to the words given.

In question 2, the students are asked to add a suffix or prefix to the given words. 22 of the students scored above the average with the percentage of 62.9% but 13 of the students scored below the average with the percentage of 37.1% the difference in the percentage indicates that most of the students are good at adding a suffix or a prefix. However the whole percentage is less than the percentage of morphological knowledge in question 1 the thing that indicates that the students have little difficulty in practicing morphology.

4.2.3 Question three:

This question was designed to check the students' ability to form words.

Table (4-3) Using suitable forms of words.

Statement	frequency	Percentage
yes	21	60
no	14	40
Total	35	100

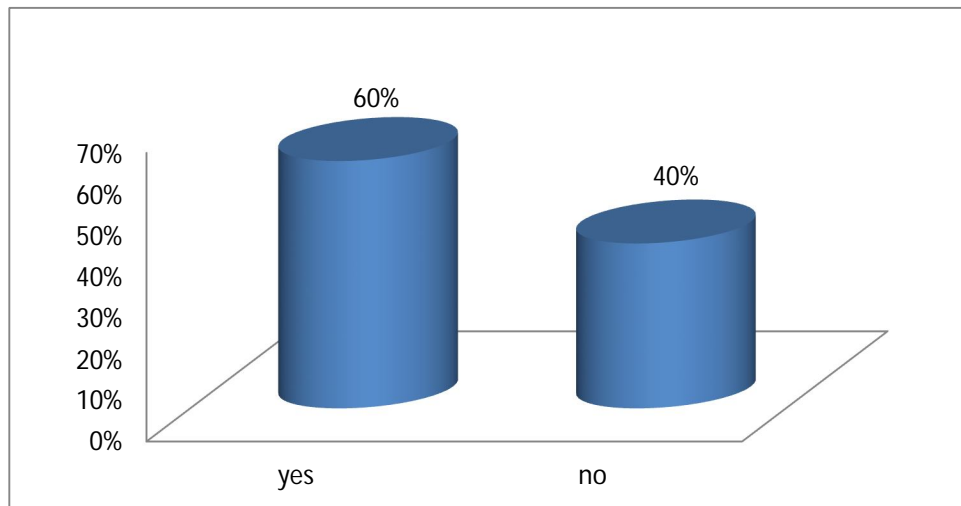


Figure (4-3) Using suitable forms of words

The above table and figure illustrate the percentage of the respondents to question 3 which is about using the suitable forms of words to complete the sentences. 21 of the students scored above the average with the percentage of 60% but 14 of the students scored below the average with the percentage of 40% .The figures and the percentages show that the students have some difficulty in forming words compared to their morphological knowledge in question 1.

4.2.4 Question four:

Question four consists of two parts. Part A was designed to check the students' skill in forming verbs by adding one of the suffixes given. Part B was designed to check the students' ability to write the plural forms of the nouns given.

Table (4-4) Forming verbs and plural nouns.

Statement	frequency	Percentage
yes	28	80
no	7	20
Total	35	100

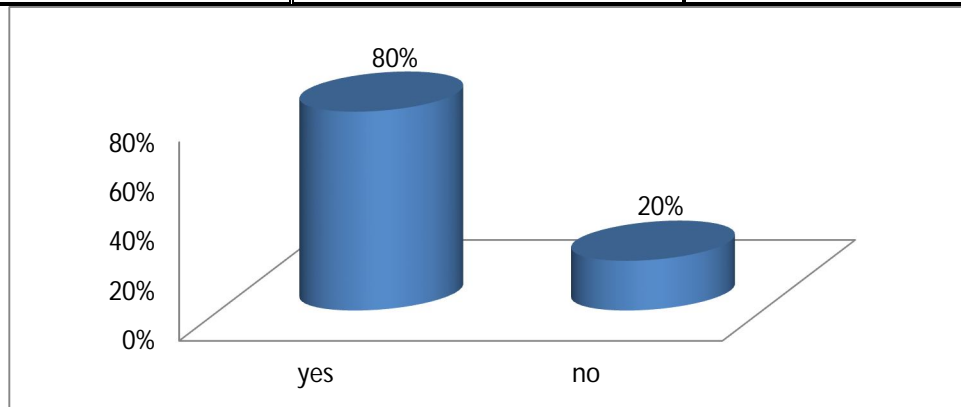


Figure (4-4) Forming verbs and plural nouns

The above table and figures illustrate the percentage of the respondents to question 4 which is made of two parts, part A is about adding the suffixes to words to make verbs and part B is about writing the plural forms of the nouns given. 28 of the students scored above the average with the percentage of 80% and 7 of the students scored below the average with the percentage of 20%. Although most of the students have succeeded in answering question 4 their percentage is less than their percentage in question 1 the thing that confirms that their morphological knowledge is better than their morphological practice.

Table (4-5)

Statistics:

No	Statements	Mean	Std. deviation	median	Chi- square	sig
Q1	A. Answer the following questions:	2.1	0.68	2	7.6	0.022
Q2	Use the words in the brackets at the end of each sentence to make words which fit in the spaces :(you must either use a prefix or a suffix)	0.63	0.49	1	2.3	0.128
Q3	Use the suitable from of the words in the brackets to complete the sentences	0.60	0.49	1	1.4	0.237
Q4	A. make verbs by adding one of the suffixes below	0.80	0.41	1	12.6	0.000

From table (4-5) above, we observe that the figures indicates that all the probable values in chi-square were little or less than the significant standard (0.05) that stand for many differences which have statistical evidences among the view of researched except the question No (2 & 3) because the proper significance is larger than (0.05) therefore there are no statistical differences.

4.3 Summary:

This chapter has presented the analysis and discussion of the data that were collected through the test. It has used tables and figures to explain the students' answers of the test. The next chapter will provide a conclusion and recommendation.

Reliability Statistics

0.674	0.821

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Chapter Five

Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter will answer the research questions and verify the hypotheses. It will make use of data in chapter four.

5.2 Answer to the Research Questions and Hypotheses:

This section sums up the results in order to provide answers for the research questions and to verify the hypotheses.

5.2.1 Research Question one and Hypothesis one:

Q1: Is there a gap between students' morphological knowledge and their practice and application of morphology?

H1: There is a big gap between what EFL students know about morphology and what they can actually do in morphology.

Table (4.1) and figure (4.1) show that there is a gap between the students' morphological knowledge and their practice and application of morphology. So question one is positively answered and hypothesis one is clearly confirmed.

5.2.2 Research Question Two and Hypothesis Two:

Q2: What techniques can be proposed to improve EFL learners' morphological skills?

H2: Examining various types of forming words for EFL students may help teachers suggest suitable procedures or techniques for EFL students to do morphology.

Table (4.2) and figure (4.2) reveal that EFL students are good at adding suffixes and prefixes to words thus the table and the figure prove that the types of questions given provide suitable ways for the students to practice morphology therefore question two is positively answered and hypothesis two is confirmed.

5.2.3 Research Question Three and Hypothesis Three:

Q3: What are the difficulties that EFL students might face when they use various types of morphemes in forming words?

H3: Adding some morphemes to words may sometimes be problematic particularly when they are added to words such as terror – terrify, horror–horrify, wife – wives. Moreover some morphemes are similar in sound and shape but they are different in meaning for instance the agentive morpheme in seller and the comparative morpheme in taller.

Table (4.3) and figure (4.3) show that EFL students have some difficulties in forming words, so question three is positively answered and hypothesis three is confirmed.

5.2.4 Research Question Four and Hypothesis Four:

Q4: What are the reasons behind EFL students' poor performance of morphology?

H4: EFL students' low performance in morphological skills may be attributed to inappropriate teaching methods and techniques.

Table (4.4) and figure (4.4) show that most of EFL students have some difficulties in practicing morphology, so question four is clearly answered and hypothesis four is confirmed.

So all the questions have been answered and all the hypotheses have been confirmed.

5.3 Recommendations:

The study offers the following recommendations:

1. Teachers should encourage EFL students to practice morphology.
2. Teachers should offer continuous proposals and exercises for EFL students to experience various types of forming words.
3. EFL learners should be encouraged to use various types of morphemes in forming words.
4. To improve EFL students' performance in morphology teachers should improve their teaching methods of morphology.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research:

While conducting the research, the researcher noticed that the following areas need to be investigated:

1. The effect of teaching methods on developing morphological skills.
2. The reasons behind the gap between EFL students' morphological knowledge and their practice of morphology.
3. The relation between morphological skills and decoding abilities in English language.

5.5 Summary:

Chapter five has answered the research questions and verified the hypotheses. It has also offered some recommendations and suggestions for further research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix
Sudan University of Science and Technology
College of Graduate Studies
MA applied linguistics

Dear student,

This test is intended to collect data for an M.A. thesis. The aim of the study is to investigate the EFL students' morphological skills at the university level. The information provided will remain confidential and will be used for the intended purposes of the research.

The test consists of four questions. You are kindly requested to answer the questions of the test.

Thank you for your help
Almukashfi Babiker Osman
Phone: 0907672090

A Test on Morphological Skills

Q 1: A. Answer the following questions:

1. What is a prefix?
.....
2. What is a suffix?
.....
3. Define the root of the word?
.....
4. Put (✓) or (X) at the end of each sentence:
 - a. The addition of the suffix ‘-ful’ to the word ‘care’ changes it from a noun to an adjective. ()
 - b. The addition of the prefix ‘un-’ to the word ‘happy’ changes its category. ()

Q 2: Use the words in the brackets at the end of each sentence to make words which fit in the spaces: (You must either use a prefix or a suffix).

1. the boy’s father died while he was trying to save him from the car. (sad)
2. In many countries people who fought for are now national heroes, (free)
3. The Sudanese community should take care of children (home).
4. this paragraph! (write).
5. this knot! (tie)
6. Take care! Do not it. (use).

Q 3: Use the suitable form of the words in the brackets to complete the sentences:

1. All the people working in the research department are (science).
2. I still haven't received my to the party, (invite).
3. The doctor came (quick).
4. The child's mother screamed (loud).
5. The company failed to the old set of mobiles (modern).
6. Violence During the night (intense).
7. He is too old to be (produce).
8. He is not very about the outcome of the interview (hope).

Q 4: A. Make verbs by adding one of the suffixes below:

-fy	-ize	-en
-----	------	-----

fertile short
glory pure
terror horror

B. Write the plural form of the following nouns:

knife man



Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies



**Investigating the Problems that Encounter EFL
Students in Morphological Skills
at the Tertiary Level**

(A case study of EFL students at Sudan

University of Science and Technology)

**تقصي مشاكل مهارات البناء الصرفي للكلمات التي تواجه دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة
أجنبية بالجامعات بالمستوى الثالث
(دراسة حالة جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا)**

**A thesis Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for M.A Degree in Applied Linguistics**

Submitted By:

Almukashfi Babiker Osman Eheimir

Supervised by :

Dr. Taj El-Sir Hassan Bashoum

2016

Dedication

To my family

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Taj Elsir Hassan Bashoum for his insightful guidance and support.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the following: the students of college of languages Sudan University of Science and Technology for their consent of participation; to the staff of college of graduate studies who participated in revising the test; to the staff of the library of the Faculty of Arts University of Khartoum for their cooperation and to my beloved family for their encouragement to carry out the study.

Abstract

This study investigates the problems that encounter EFL students in morphological skills at the university level. The study adopts a descriptive analytical method. A test is used as an instrument for data collection. A sample of 35 students is randomly selected from the Sudan University of Science and technology, college of languages. The data obtained from the sample provides answers for the research questions. The data is analyzed using SPSS program, the most important results of the study are: First EFL students' morphological knowledge is better than their practice and application of morphology, Second the types of questions given by EFL teachers provide suitable ways for the students to practice morphology, Third, question three reveals that EFL students have some difficulties in using some morphemes to form words, Fourth EFL students' low performance in morphological skills is attributed to inappropriate teaching methods, moreover the study offers the following recommendations: a- Teachers should encourage EFL students, to practice morphology. b- Teachers should offer continuous proposals and exercises for EFL students to experience various types of forming words. c- To improve EFL students' performance in morphology teachers should improve their teaching methods of morphology. Finally the study offers some suggestions for further research.

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي مشاكل مهارات البناء الصرفي للكلمات التي تواجه دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية بالجامعات وقد اتبعت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. واستخدمت الاختبار كأداة لجمع المعلومات المطلوبة. وقد أخذت عينة عشوائية قوامها (35) دارساً من طلاب جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا ، كلية اللغات وقد رفدت المعلومات المستخلصة من العينة الإجابات اللازمة لأسئلة البحث ، إذ تم تحليل المعلومات باستخدام برنامج التحليل الإحصائي ، و قد تمثلت أهم نتائج الدراسة في الآتي: أولاً: إن معرفة الطلاب بالبناء الصرفي للكلمات أفضل من قدرتهم علي تطبيق هذه المعرفة علي الكلمات. ثانياً: أن أنواع الأسئلة المطروحة علي الطلاب أتاحت فرصاً أفضل للطلاب للممارسة مهارات البناء الصرفي للكلمات. ثالثاً: كشف السؤال الثالث إن دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لديهم بعض الصعوبات في استخدام مهارات البناء الصرفي. رابعاً إن الأداء المتواضع لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية في مهارات البناء الصرفي ربما يكون مرده لطرائق التدريس غير الملائمة لهذه المهارات بالإضافة إلي ذلك فقد قدمت الدراسة التوصيات التالية: أ - يجب علي المعلمين أن يشجعوا دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية علي ممارسة مهارات البناء الصرفي للكلمات. ب- كما يجب علي المعلمين تقديم التمارين والخطط المستمرة للدارسين لتمكينهم من اختبار قدراتهم في مجال البناء الصرفي للكلمات. ج- لكيما يرفع الطلاب قدراتهم في مجال مهارات البناء الصرفي للكلمات يجب علي المعلمين تطوير طرق تدريسهم لهذه المهارات. وأخيراً فقد قدمت الدراسة بعض المقترحات للدراسات المستقبلية.