

Exploring problems among EFL University Students in Using Class- changing and Class -maintaining Prefixes

Mohamed Osman Khatir Adam ¹ . Nada Sid Ahmed Eljack² Department of English – College of Languages-Sudan University of Science and Technology²

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating problems among EFL university students in using class-changing and class-maintaining prefixes. It is a descriptive and analytical study. The tool of the study was a diagnostic. The tool has been tested for reliability and validity by number of English teachers. But they checked it and confirmed that it is valid and reliable. Alpha's method for measuring reliability and validity of the tools was used and confirmed that the test was highly reliable and valid. The test was also tested and retested and gave similar results. EFL university students of the 4th year were chosen as a sample for the study. They were one hundred students majoring in English at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages. Eighty of them were given the test because twenty of them were absent. The results were statistically analyzed by using (SPSS) statistical programme. The findings revealed that class-changing and class-maintaining prefixes were problematic area for EFL university students. The results also revealed that class-changing prefixes were more problematic than class-maintaining prefixes. On the basis of these results, the researcher recommended that both class changing and class maintaining prefixes should be explicitly taught for EFL university students. FL university students need more concentration on class changing prefixes since they were more problematic. Then the researcher has suggested that the area of class-changing and class-maintaining prefixes should be researched in the future studies. Syllabus designers should include class changing and class maintaining affixes in university curricula.

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي المشكلات التي يواجهها الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في الجامعات السودانية في استخدام وحدات بناء الكلمات الإشتقاقية المغيرة وغير المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام. استخدمت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. ولقد تم استخدام الإختبار التشخيصي كأداة للحصول على البيانات. وللتأكد من صلاحية و موثوقية الإختبار تم عرض الإختبار على عدد من معلمي اللغة في الجامعات السودانية وكذلك تم استخدام معادلة ألفا لقياس موثوقية و صلاحية أدوات جمع البيانات. و من ثم تم إختبار و إعادة إختبار الامتحان. و أكدت جميع هذه الإجراءات صلاحية و موثوقية الإختبار. عينة الإختبار هم طلاب المستوى الرابع الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية بكلية اللغات في جامعة السودان للعلوم و التكنولوجيا. و عددهم مائة. تم إختبار ثمانون منهم و ذلك بسبب غياب عشرون منهم. ولقد تم أيضا تحليل البيانات باستخدام البرنامج التحليلي (SPSS). وأظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون مشكلات في استخدام وحدات بناء الكلمات الإشتقاقية المغيرة وغير المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام. و ان وحدات بناء الكلمات المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام تمثل مشكلا أكبر للطلاب. و

بناء على ذلك أوصى الباحث بأن تدرس وحدات بناء الكلمات المغيرة وغير المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام بشكل مباشر للطلاب وبتركيز أكثر على وحدات الكلمات المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام. واخيرا اقترح الباحث بان تجرى المزيد من البحوث في وحدات بناء الكلمات الإشتقاقية المغيرة وغير المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام في الدراسات اللاحقة. و على مصممي المقررات في المراحل الجامعية أن يضمنوا وحدات بناء الكلام المغيرة وغير المغيرة لأجزاء الكلام في المقررات الجامعية.

Introduction

The subject of class- maintaining and class-changing prefixes covers a significant area in the field of foreign language learning and teaching. These derivational affixes have a very important place in the word-formation mechanism. These derivational morphemes can derive new words or change the form of a word to give new meaning. All prefixes are derivational morphemes. Francis Katamba (1993) defines morphology as “the study of structure of words.” They applied to the original roots or existing words to change either the lexical category or meaning of the word they attached to. Words in English are made up of bases and bound morphemes which are affixes. A base, root or stem is a morpheme which creates the core of a word. It is a unit to which other morphemes are added or it is what remains when all the affixes are peeled away. All these roots or bases belong to one of the lexical categories which are known as open class words. They are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. These classes of words can accept affixes while closed class words do not accept affixes. Morphemes are divided into two types, free and bound morphemes. A free morpheme is a word that can stand alone to give meaning by itself. For example *sleep* is free morpheme. While bound morpheme cannot stand alone to give meaning by itself. As (a) in *asleep*, the prefix (a) cannot stand alone by itself to give meaning. A prefix in English is a bound morpheme that can be attached to the beginnings of the root of a word to create either a new word or a new

form of the same word. This process of attaching prefixes to the roots of words is known in linguistics as prefixation. A prefix is also a letter or a group of letters which are placed before the stem of a word. Francis Katamba (1993) stated that “Most of the words we use in a daily basis have been part of the language for a long time.” But this does mean that we only memorize these words. But also we could create new ones. A prefix has been defined in Wikipedia Dictionary as “A morpheme added to the beginning of a word to modify its meaning.” In Oxford Advanced learner’s Dictionary “a letter or group of letters added to the beginnings of a word to change its meaning, such as –un in unhappy and –pre in preheat.” Francis Katamba (1994, p. 41) states that “in many cases, and to a varying degrees, we can reconstitute words we encounter as the need arises or even occasionally coin new ones.” This means new words come into language in a daily basis. Prefixation is probably the commonest method of forming new words in the sense of lexical terms. The needs for using affixes are important part in the process of teaching and learning. It is indispensable for building strong knowledge, whether in early years or advancing college. Using prefixes is a productive way of forming words and EFL students need to master them in proper academic writing and for communication. EFL university student scan learn prefixes and use them to become more proficient in language arts and to upgrade their linguistic competence.

Edin Dupanovic (2019) states “Affixation is very productive word-formation process in the ” Despite this importance of prefixes in the field of linguistics and their core part in spoken and written language. But they are still problematic for EFL university students. That is to say many of learners of English as a foreign language learn words as chunks without knowing the constituent parts of these words. Some learners also prefer learning prefixes as separate words. This way of learning is mostly dependant on memorization. Academic language needs mastery in using both class-maintaining and class-changing prefixes.

English language, and it generally involves the use of two types, prefixes and suffixes. The following tables give some few examples on class changing and class maintaining prefixes:

Class-maintaining prefixes

Class maintaining prefixes refer to those prefixes which do not change the class or the stem of a word (part of speech) to which they are added to. They change the meaning and maintain the words within the same class or category and more productive than class-changing ones.

The table below shows some few examples of class maintaining prefixes.

Prefix	Meaning	Example
a-	Not	Amoral
anti-	Against	Anti abolitionism
in-	Not	Incomplete
dis-	Opposite of	Disagree
re-	Again	Redo
ab-	Away/not	Absent abnormal
il-	Not	Illegal
im-	Not	Impossible
un-	Not	Uncertainty
Pre-	Before	Preschool
Fore-	In advance	Foresee
non-	not/ without	non-alcoholic
mal-	bad or badly	Malnutrition
mis-	Badly/wrongly	Misleading
de-	the opposite of	decode/decrease
Pseudo-	False/not genuine	Pseudoscientific
tele-	Far/ over along distance	Telebanking
Post-	After	Postgraduate
Ex-	Former	ex-wife
Pro-	In favor of	Proclaim
ir-	Not	Irregular
Con-	With/together	Construct
Com-	With/together	Complex

Class-changing prefixes

Class changing prefixes refer to those prefixes which change the class or the meaning of a word into a word to which they are added to. In other words they

The following is a list of class- changing prefixes:

a-	having quality of	Asleep
be-	To cause something	Belittle
be-	To put a magic	Bewitch
be-	To be a fiend	Befriend
em	In /within	Embolden
en-	In/ within	Enable/ encircle
Ben-	Good	Beneficial
bi	Two/ both	Bifocals / bipolar
Mal-	Bad	Malnutrition
Non-	Not /lacking	Nonsense
poly	Many	Polygamy
Over-	More than usual	Overcooked/ oversensitive
Super-	Above/ excessive	Superlative

change the class or part of speech of the words to which are attached to. Class changing prefixes in English language are not as much as class maintaining prefixes.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

- 1 To find out and exploring the problems of using class changing and class maintaining affixes among EFL university students at Sudanese universities.
2. To answer the questions and hypotheses of the study.

Questions of the study

- 1, To what extent do EFL university students face problems in using class changing and class maintaining affixes?
2. what is more problematic area for EFL university students?
 - a. Is it class maintaining area or class changing area?

Hypotheses of the study

- 1.EFL university students do face problems in both class changing and class maintaining prefixes areas.
2. Class changing area is more problematic than class maintaining area.

One of the related studies was carried out by Khidir (2017) Sudan university of Science and Technology, college of languages. The study aimed at investigating and finding out the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in using derivational morphemes. In this research the researcher investigated the difficulties Encountered EFL undergraduates in using derivational morphemes. It is a descriptive and analytical study. For collecting data, the researcher used a diagnostic test as a tool for the study. For doing so, the researcher has chosen a number of thirty students of the second level randomly. They were majoring in English at Sudan University of Science and technology. The students were from both genders and their ages were ranging between 20 -22 years.



All of them were given the test. The data collected was analyzed statistically by using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings of the study have revealed that the undergraduate students were facing morphological difficulties in using and understanding derivational morphemes. The most difficult morphemes for the students were adjectival morphemes. The students also cannot distinguish the types of morphemes. In addition to these difficulties, class changing prefixes were problematic area for EFL university students in general and they lack morphological awareness too. They could not differentiate the constituent parts of the words.

Based in these findings, the researcher has recommended the following: The students should extend their knowledge in derivational morphemes. The students need more practice to master derivational morphemes and derivational morphemes should be taught in early stages. Moreover, teachers should bear in mind that, the students at the university level should receive more practice on the use of derivational morphemes.

These findings led the researcher to suggest the following: more researches should be carried out on derivational morphology in general. More concentration should be on derivational morphemes. The Sudanese educational system should contain teaching derivational morphemes. EFL university teachers of English should be aware that the EFL university students have taken enough practice on derivational morphemes.

The second related study has been conducted by Ahmed (2017). The study

aimed at investigating the problems encountered by EFL secondary school students in using English derivational morphemes. The descriptive and analytical method has been used in this study. A questionnaire and a diagnostic test were used as tools for data collection. The sample of this study were (50) students from Singa secondary school, Singa locality, Sinnar State. The students were given the test. Then a number of ten teachers of English at secondary schools from Singa locality, Sinnar State were randomly chosen and responded to the questionnaire. The data collected was manually analyzed by using frequency and percentage. The results revealed that most of EFL secondary school students were encountered problems in using derivational morphemes when forming nouns and adjectives.

Most of the EFL secondary school teachers of English agreed that sufficient exercises and activities in English derivational morphemes were not being taught in the present syllabus.

The researcher recommended that secondary school students should make efforts and specify some time for improving derivational morphemes. Besides, teachers of English at secondary schools should use the strategy of morphological analysis as appropriate technique to help the students in forming nouns and adjectives. Moreover, students should be given homework, assignments and exercises regularly to enhance their level. Finally, the researcher has suggested that, syllabus designers should provide the present syllabus with sufficient exercises and activities that can help students practise and develop their standard in using English derivational morphemes.

2. Methods and materials

The sample of the study was EFL university students of the fourth year majoring in English at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages, English Department. Academic year 2018-2019. They were from both genders and their ages were between 22-24 years. The tool for this study is a diagnostic test. Twenty of the students were absent so eighty of them have given the test. A diagnostic test is used as a tool for data collection. For testing reliability and validity of the tool, the test was shown to some teachers of English; they checked it and confirmed that it was valid and reliable. Alpha's

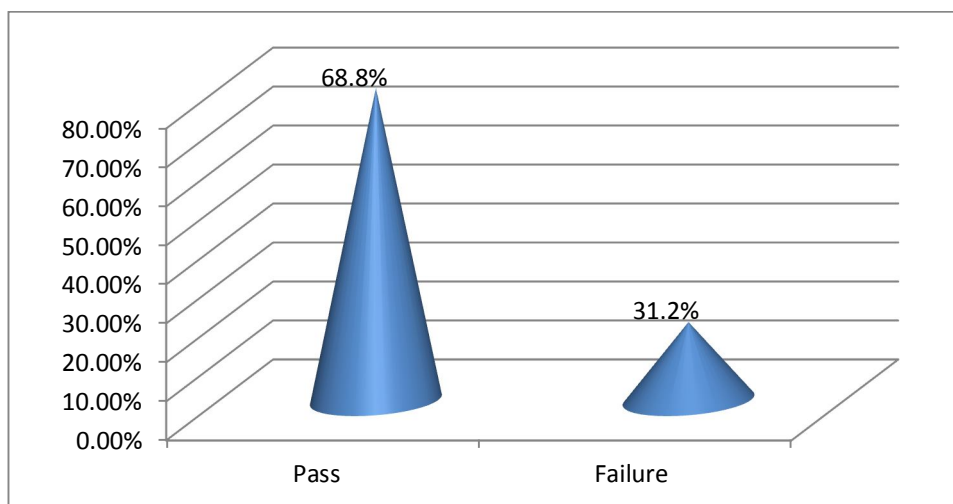
method for measuring reliability and validity of the tools was used and confirmed that the test was highly reliable and valid. The test consists of two questions for testing students' ability in using class changing and class maintaining affixes. It is also meant to test which is more problematic area for EFL university students, whether class changing or class maintaining prefixes. Then a number of eighty students were given the test because twenty of them were absent. Then the data collected were statistically analyzed by using (SPSS) program and the results are as follows:

Statistical analysis of the students' test

Table (1): below shows the results statement of: (By using class maintaining prefixes change the following adjectives into opposite.)

Participants	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	55	68.8%
Failure	25	31.2%
Total	80	100.0%

Table shows the students' answers to the statement above. Fifty-five of the students have passed and their percentage is (68.8%). Twenty five of the students have failed and their percentage is (31.2%). The total number of the students is eighty.



Figure(2) above illustrates the views of the distribution of the sample by Pass (68.8) and failure by (31.2%).

Table (3) shows the results of the statement (By using class-changing prefixes, change the following verbs into nouns.)

Participants	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	42	52.5%
Failure	38	47.5%
Total	80	100%

Table (3) above shows the students' answers to the statement above.

Forty two of the students have passed and their percentage is (52.5%)

Thirty eight of the students have failed and their percentage is (47.5%).

The total number of the students is forty.

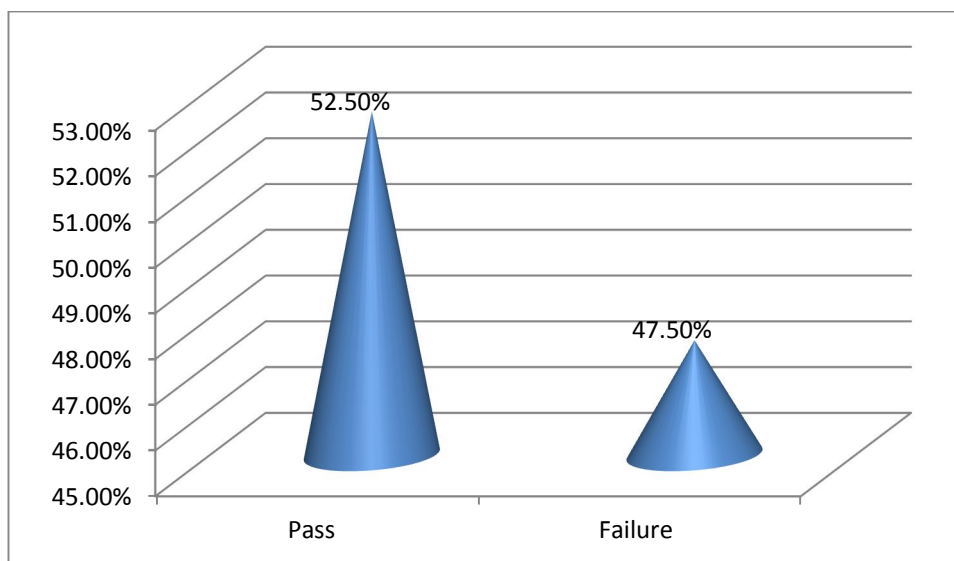


Figure (4) above illustrates the views of the distribution sample by pass (52.5%) and failure by (47.5%).

Results and discussion

Based on the results of the students' test, table (1) and figure (2) above that there were fifty-five of the students have passed and their percentage was (68.8%). And twenty five of the students have failed and their percentage was (31.2%). Table (3) and figure (4) above illustrated that, there were forty two of the students have passed and their percentage was (52.5%) and thirty eight of them have failed and their

percentage was (47.5%). The statistical analysis of the test on the tables and figures above shown that the number of the students who have passed the test was greater than those who have failed. But it is also shown in tables and figures above that almost half the students have failed. It has been observed from the statistical results of the test that, class changing and class changing affixes were problematic and extended among EFL university students



On the basis the results obtained from the statistical analysis, the following are the results:

1. Class changing prefixes were more problematic than class maintaining prefixes.
2. EFL university students who have passed, they have passed only with minor success.

Findings

1. Most difficulties faced EFL university students were in forming irregular nouns, irregular verbs, irregular adjectives and polysyllabic adjectives.
2. There were misapplications and overgeneralization in forming irregular adjectives and verbs.
3. Class-changing and class-maintaining prefixes are problematic areas for EFL university students.
4. The results also explored that the EFL university students were unable to use class-changing and class-maintaining prefixes properly according to the fact they lack morphological awareness.
5. The students made these mistakes because they do not know which prefix goes with a given adjective or verb to change the meaning of these adjectives into opposite.

All of these problems have led the researcher to recommend and suggest the following:

Recommendations

1. In order to solve these problems both class changing and class maintaining prefixes should be taught for EFL university students.

2. EFL university students need more concentration and practice on class changing prefixes since they are more problematic.

3. Remedial lessons on morphological awareness should be taught for EFL university students to understand how words can be broken down into smaller meaning of units of words.

Suggestions for further studies

1. More researches on morphology should be carried in future researches and more concentration should be on class changing and class maintaining affixes.

REFERENCE S

- Katamba, F. (1994) *English Words*. Routledge, London.
- Wikipedia Dictionary* available at: <https://www.Wikipedia.en.m> (accessed: 20 January 2018).
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015) 9th- ed. Oxford University Press. India.
- Lieber, R (2009) *Introducing Morphology* Cambridge University Press, New York.
- EdinDupanovic (2019) *Class-changing Prefixes in the English Language*. Available at <https://www.ecademia.edu>.
- Ramadan,S.(2015) *Morphological Errors Made by Jordanian University Students*. Available at: <https://www.rjes>. (Accessed 6 June 2017)
- Khidir ,M. (2017) *Investigating Difficulties Encountered by EFL Undergraduates in Using Morphemes*. Unpublished.