
THE INFLUENCE OF MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS TO COLLEGE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

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ABSTRACT: Vocabulary is an element of language that has function to support the use of other elements of language (grammar, pronunciation, and spelling) and also to facilitate the use of four language skills. Morphological awareness is system that expected can help students to improve their vocabulary mastery. Objective of this study was to find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery. Correlation study was used as research design. Sample of this study was fifty-six of 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th semester undergraduate EFL students of Tridinanti University Palembang. Morphological awareness and vocabulary test were used as instruments. Morphological awareness test had 3 parts consisting of 45 items. Correlation analysis was used to examine correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery. Regression analysis was used to find out whether or not morphological awareness gave contribution to students' vocabulary mastery. Then, vocabulary test consisted of 50 items. The result showed that there was a significant correlation between students' morphological awareness and their vocabulary mastery but it was fair correlation. Moreover, morphological awareness contributed as much 21.9% toward students' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, cultivating morphological awareness could be applied as a right strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: *morphological awareness, vocabulary mastery.*

PENGARUH KESADARAN MORFOLOGI TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN KOSA KATA MAHASISWA

ABSTRAK: Kosakata adalah elemen bahasa yang memiliki fungsi untuk mendukung penggunaan elemen bahasa lainnya (tata bahasa, pengucapan, dan ejaan) dan juga untuk memfasilitasi penggunaan 4 keterampilan bahasa. Kesadaran morfologis adalah sistem yang diharapkan dapat membantu mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata mereka. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah ada hubungan yang signifikan antara kesadaran morfologis dan penguasaan kosakata. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 56 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris semester 4, 6, 8, dan 10 dari Universitas Tridinanti Palembang. Tes kesadaran dan kosakata morfologis digunakan sebagai instrumen. Tes kesadaran morfologis memiliki 3 bagian yang terdiri dari 45 soal. Analisis korelasi digunakan untuk menguji korelasi antara kesadaran morfologis dan penguasaan kosakata. Regresi digunakan untuk mengetahui apakah kesadaran morfologis memberikan kontribusi terhadap penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa. Kemudian tes kosakata terdiri dari 50 soal. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa ada korelasi yang signifikan antara kesadaran morfologis siswa dan penguasaan kosakata mereka. Kesadaran morfologis berkontribusi sebanyak 21,9% terhadap penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa. Kesadaran morfologis dapat diterapkan sebagai strategi yang tepat untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: *kesadaran morfologi, kemampuan kosakata –kata*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of communication and it is used to express emotions, ideas and everything in our mind to help our activities of life. English has been the most important language in international communication. English has many functions. In the curriculum 2013 stated that English is means for the students to develop science, technology, culture and art (Permendikbud, 2016).

There are four basic skills in English: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those skills cannot be separated with vocabulary. Alqahtani (2015) states that vocabulary is list of words with the meaning that used to express ideas for communication to each other's (p. 25). It is the fundamental and essential component in communication because without sufficient vocabulary we cannot express everything in our mind (Lessard-Clouston, 2013). In conclusion, vocabulary is element of language which functions not only to support the use of other elements of language (grammar, pronunciation, and spelling) but also to facilitate the use of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

The development of vocabulary knowledge is crucially important. Morin (2003), Chang *et al* (2005), and Schiff and Celif (2007) have suggested that use of morphological cues for supposing meaning can help English language learning, their findings suggested that various aspects of morphological awareness may be particularly helpful for vocabulary building. This is because morphological awareness is closely related to words. When students find an unfamiliar word, they can break it apart and use their knowledge (morphological awareness) of the root, prefixes, and suffixes to infer the meaning of the whole word.

Umam and Mubarak (2014) in their research about the relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge found that there was positive correlation between students' morphological awareness and their vocabulary knowledge. In addition, from the writer's experience when she studied on 2016 and did observation on 2017-2018 she found several obstacles that made students felt difficult to express their opinions and feelings in English, they felt that they lacked vocabulary stucks and had not yet gotten the right system to improve their vocabulary and also sometimes students got struggle when they found a new word.

By having some basic knowledge of morphology, students can develop their vocabulary. Without looked up the new word in dictionary students can make generalization of a morpheme of one word to other word in order to form or recognize a new word they encounter (Akbulut, 2017). Based on the background above the writers were interested in conducting the research which discussed about the influence of morphological awareness to students' vocabulary mastery.

1. Morphological Awareness

Morphology is "the area of grammar concerned with the structure of words and with relationships between words that involved the morphemes that compose them" (Carstairs – McCarthy, 2002, p. 16). From morphology students learn about parts of word and analyse words structure, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes (Fortin, 2011). As conclusion that morphology can help anybody to infer the meaning and learn new words easier at the same time. In morphology there are two morphological process; affixation and non-affixation.

1.1. Affixation

Affixation refers to the morphological process in by which bound morphemes are attached to a root or stem to mark changes in meaning, part of speech, or grammatical relationship (Lieber, 2009). Affixes are classified into prefixes and suffixes. If an affix is attached to the beginning of a word, it is called a prefix. If an affix is attached to the end of a word, it is called a suffix.

1. Prefix

According to Carstairs – McCarthy (2002) prefix is “bound morpheme that precedes the root”. A prefix goes before a word. For example: the prefix pre- (before) in the sentence; *the outcome was predetermined (the outcome was determined before)* and the prefix miss- (wrong) in the sentence; *that word is misspelled (the word is spelled wrong)*.

2. Suffix

According to Carstairs – McCarthy (2002) Suffix is “a bound morpheme that follows the root”. A suffix goes after a word. For example: the suffix –able (able to) in the sentence; *the part is adaptable (the part is able to adapt)* and the suffix –ful (full of) in the sentence; *I am respectful to that guy (I am full of respect to that guy)*.

In addition, there is infix. “Infixes are affixes that are inserted right into a root or base” (Lieber, 2009, p. 76). The example of infix is *miss-ing-ssippi*.

1.2. Non-affixation

Non-affixation or derivation refers to “the type of word formation involving modification of the internal structure of the word, not though addition of affixes” (Issa, 2012). Plag (2002) classified non-affixation processes which have many subcategories such as coinage, eponyms, borrowing, and so on under derivation process. Thus, this kind of process in generating new words is not though affixes, whether prefixes nor suffixes.

In this study, the writers would focus on affixation which will be used as a reference to measure students’ morphological awareness.

2. Morphemes and the Basis of Word

Based on the theory, morpheme is divided into two kinds, they are

a. Morphemes

According to Lieber, a morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning (2009, p. 3). There are two types of morphemes; free morphemes and bound morphemes. ‘Free morphemes’ can stand alone with a specific meaning, for example, *eat, date, strong*. ‘Bound morphemes’ cannot stand alone with meaning, for example, ‘-ment’ as in *management* or ‘-un’ as in *unhappy*.

b. The basis of word (Root, Base and Stem)

Afriani (2013, p. 3) state that a root is “the irreducible core of a word with absolutely nothing else to it. A root word means the most basic form of a word. It is a word that does not have a prefix in front of the word or suffix at the end of the word. For example: *sad* (adjective); *rapidly* (adverb); *girl* (nouns).

According to Carstairs – McCarthy (2002, p. 45) base is a word or part of word viewed as an input to a derivational or inflectional process, in particular affixion. For example, the word *running* is form from the base of the English word *run* and the words *instruction*, *instructor*, and *reinstruct* are the base new words that forming from the word *instruct*.

“Stem is part of a word that in existence before any inflection affixes” (Afriani, 2013, p. 4) The term stem can used in various senses; root or base in general or it can defined as a base for the word forms of a lexeme. Stem occurs after affixes have been added to the root, for example: *re-act* and *re-act-ion*. Hence a stem is a form to which affixes have added.

3. The Importance of Morphological Awareness

Morphological awareness is the knowledge and the skill of words structure (Wolter and Green, 2013). Furthermore, Apel (2014) assumed that morphological awareness is the consciousness of spoken and written morphemes, including an understanding of the rule how affixes attach to base words and how the new words form. In other word, it can conclude that morphological awareness means the awareness of words construction and the capability to identify, understand, and use that word in a sentence.

Morphological awareness help students to be more aware of word structure to help them in analyzing and understanding a new word that seems weird to them or a new word that they never know before and also help them to interpret the meaning of the word.

4. Measuring English Morphological Awareness

Studies of morphological awareness developments and its contributions to vocabulary mastery have employed a variety task to assess this skill. Most commonly are morpheme identification awareness were the task tests the students knowledge of root words, morphological awareness through processes of analysis (i.e., decomposition) by requiring students to separate a derived word into its morphemic constituents, and morphological awareness through processes of synthesis (i.e., derivation) by requiring students to produce a derived form from its base (Quiroga, 2013).

5. Vocabulary Mastery

In linguistic, vocabulary plays as an important role to improve students' language skills. As Richard and Renandya assumed that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well students speak, listen, writing, and read (2002). It means that without an extensive vocabulary students may be discouraged from making use of language learning opportunities around them such as discussion, reading English novel, reading their English book materials, etc.

Vocabulary help student to show what they think and feel in their mind to others, and also with a huge knowledge of vocabulary students will easily to success in learning language. vocabulary means one of important aspect in learning language. It is the basis for someone who wants to improve or develop their language skills. Without

mastering vocabulary students will get some difficulties to express their opinion and communication with others.

6. Kinds of Vocabulary

There are two kind of vocabulary according to the basis frequency; first is low frequency vocabulary and the second is high frequency vocabulary (Nation, 2001).

a. Low frequency vocabulary

Low frequency vocabulary covers only small proportion of the running words of a continuous text. It means that low frequency vocabulary is rarely used in a common activity of English language.

b. High frequency vocabulary

High frequency vocabulary consists of words that are used very often in normal language use in all four skills and across the full range of situation of use. It consists of most of the function words of English and the most of content words.

In this study, the writer will be used the combination between low and high frequency vocabulary for measuring students' vocabulary mastery.

7. The Importance of Vocabulary

As we know that vocabulary is an importance part in learning a foreign language. Vocabulary can helps student to mastery another part of language. It basis for improves all areas of communication – speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Miller, n.d).

METHODOLOGY

This research conducted through a quantitative approach. According to Ilma (2013, p. 37), “quantitative research is a research which communicate the finding through numbers, statistics, aggregated data, formal voice and scientific style.” The design for this research was correlation research design. The purpose of correlation research may be to find out the relationship between variables or to use relationship in making predictions (Wallen & Fraenkel, 1991). Here, the writers wanted to find whether or not there was a significant correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery by describing and interpreting the data.

In this research, the population was all students of undergraduate EFL students of Tridinanti University. The writer chose a sample by using a purposive sampling technique. The writer took fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth semester undergraduate EFL students as the sample because those students had of already taken morphology course. The total numbers of the sample were 56 students.

The writer would give two kinds of tests namely morphological awareness test and vocabulary test to get the data or information.

The tests were adapted from Quiroga (2013) for morphological awareness test and vocabulary test adapted from Maag (2007). By this method, the writers obtained the results of students' morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery, that these data would be processed to determine the correlation between morphological awareness and

vocabulary mastery. The data was taken in Tridianti University Palembang. The test consisted of two sets namely morphology test and vocabulary test which were held at the same time with time allocation 30 minutes for each test.

The morphological awareness test would have 3 parts consisting of 45 items. Part 1 consisted of 15 items of multiple choices. In this part, students were asked to select the letter of the word which was the basis word or the root word. Part 2 consisted of 15 items, this part students were asked to being able to break down words into their constituent morphemes, students were going to separate the following words. Part 3 consisted of 15 items of sentence completion; in this part students were asked to being capable of correctly putting morphemes together to form new words.

Then, the vocabulary test consisted of 50 items. The test would be multiple choice; 16 items about selecting the definition of the word, 16 items about the synonym of the word, and 18 items about the opposite word. In conclusion, all items of the test there were 95 items, 45 items for morphological awareness test and also 50 items for vocabulary test.

There are three technique for analyses data in this study. First, descriptive analysis to perform information that helps a researcher to describe the basic features of the data in a research. Second, normality test to know about the data that had been gotten has normal distribution. Third, correlation analysis to find out or examine the correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery and the last, regression analysis to find out whether or not morphological awareness gives contribution to students' vocabulary mastery of undergraduate EFL students of Tridianti University Palembang.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Findings

Based on the result of descriptive analysis in Table 1. It was found that in *morphological awareness*; the mean score was 35.91, minimum score was 27, maximum score was 45, and the standard deviation was 4.722. There were three categories of morphological awareness; high, medium, and low. There were 86% students classified in high category, 14% students were classified in medium category and there was none students classified in low category. In other words, it was assumed that the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th semester undergraduate EFL students of Tridianti University had high level of morphological awareness.

Then, in vocabulary mastery; the mean was 39.64, minimum score was 22, maximum score was 49, and the standard deviation was 6.389. There were three categories of vocabulary mastery; high, medium, and low. There were 84% students classified in high category, 16% students were classified in medium category and there was none students classified in low category.

In other words, it was assumed that the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th semester undergraduate EFL students of Tridianti University had high level of vocabulary mastery. Based on the normality test with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the value of Asymp.Sig. of morphological awareness was 0.821 and the value of vocabulary mastery was 0.324. Since the value of Asymp. Sig > 0.05 for each variable, it could be summarized that the distribution of scores indicated normally. The statistical output is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Test of Normality

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Morphological Awareness	0.631	56	0.821
Vocabulary Mastery	0.953	56	0.324

To find out whether or not there was significant correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery the writer used Pearson Product Moment Correlation then calculated by using SPSS 20.

From Table 2, it was found that correlation coefficient between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery was 0.468 at the significance sig.(2-tailed) was 0.000. It means morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery was significant correlated since the p-value (0.000) was lower than 0.05 both variables were correlated with each other in a fair level.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Morphological Awareness	0.468	0.000
Vocabulary Mastery		

To find out in what extent the morphological awareness contributes toward students' vocabulary mastery of undergraduate EFL students of Tridianti University Palembang, the writer used regression then calculated by using SPSS 20. From Table 3, it was found that p-value $0.000 < \alpha$ -value 0.05. It means that morphological awareness gave positive contribution to vocabulary mastery. The coefficient determination (*R Square*) was 0.219. It means that morphological awareness influenced as much 21.9% toward students' vocabulary mastery.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Aspects	R Square	Change Statistics	
		R Square Change	Sig. F. Change
Morphological Awareness	.219	.219	.000

2. Discussion

There were some points that could be discussed in this study. First, the correlation between morphological awareness and students' vocabulary mastery. Based on the result of correlation analysis found that there was a significant correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery although the correlation coefficient was categorized in fair level. It was in line with Umam and Mubarak (2014), they stated that morphological awareness had significant correlation to vocabulary mastery.

It also indicated that most of Undergraduate EFL students had high level of morphological awareness. It means that morphological awareness took in role to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Morphological awareness could help students in understanding new words and also help them to infer the meaning at the same time.

Secondly, for the contribution of morphological awareness to vocabulary mastery. Based on the result of simple regression it was found that morphological awareness had an effect to vocabulary mastery.

In addition, the result also showed that morphological awareness influenced 21.9% toward students' vocabulary mastery. It indicated that 78% other factors would contribute. It was in line with Adam (2018) who found that morphological awareness influenced 51.5% toward students' vocabulary mastery and 48.5% influenced by other factors. Since there was contribution of morphological awareness to vocabulary mastery, it could be used to help students for finding the meaning of newly encountered words and of course they were able to recognize the meaning without looking up a dictionary to improve their vocabulary stock.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and conclusion of the study, the writer drew some conclusions as follow:

- 1) There was significant correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery of undergraduate EFL students of Tridianti University Palembang with significant value (p) 0.000 was lower than alpha value (α) 0.05 at the significant level 0.468.
- 2) There was a positive contribution of morphological awareness to vocabulary mastery and the result of regression analysis implied that morphological awareness contributes 21.9% to students' vocabulary mastery.

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