MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS: STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WORD FORMATION ANALYSIS OF READING TEXT

ANDI RIZKI FAUZI
University of Pasir Pengaraian
Andi_gundoel@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research was aimed to know the students' ability in word formation analysis of reading text and to find out what their difficulties were. The research was conducted using mix method: quantitative followed by qualitative whose data taken from test and interview.The purposive sampling was chosen to select the sample consisting of 24 students. Based on the research finding, the students' ability were quite good in three aspects of analyses: number of morpheme, content word, and function word. However, in other aspects: derivation and inflection, their abilities were so poor because the lack of knolwledge in both of aspects .

Keywords: *morphologycal awareness, morpheme, word formation*

INTRODUCTION

Word is a unit of language which cannot be separated from the use of language itself. According to Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2014), word is an important part of linguistic knowledge and constitute a component of our mental grammar, but one can learn thousands of words in a language and still not know the language. In other word, word is primary component of a language and someone who uses a certain language does not mean he/she knows all of the words used in that language. In other definition, word is essentially a unit of meaning: every word must give a sense prompted by general/conventional or specific/contextual determinism (Adedimeji, 2005) . Based on the definition, to communicate with others, the single word is unlikely to be used by the people every time. The use of single words such as 'read', 'go', and 'come' independently outside of context will be confusing.

Instead of using a single word, the larger combinations of words becoming phrase, clause, and sentence can be used so that the communication process run well. The word which is used in communication is not only a simple word. The more complex words such as 'happiness', 'unforgetable', or 'boyishness' are often used. Those words can be decomposed into the smallest language unit which has the meaning or it is more familiar with term 'morpheme'. Knowing the forming process of the word is certainly useful and helpful. Therefore, the word knowledge is required for those who are learning a language, especially English.

How a certain word formed by the morpheme is closely related with English morphology. It is one of independent courses learnt by the English Department students of University of Pasir Pengaraian in third semester although it is previously learnt as one of the material in introduction to linguistics course. The students who were learning English morphology are hopefully able to form and analyse the interchange process of the word then

use it appropriately. Those abilities are extremely useful for the students who are learning English. Without good ability of word formation, they will face problems in learning the essential English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Based on the researcher's experiences in teaching reading at English Department of University of Pasir Pengaraian. Reading a text is challenging activity; it needs hard effort to comprehend what the text is about. The lack knowledge of word is one of the problems because when the students do not know what the word means, they are really strugling in comprhending the text . Generally, the students do not know the meaning of word especially the word which has affixes. In addition, they cannot differentiate the syntactic class of word whether it is adjective, noun, verb, or adverb. Therefore, the research about the students' ability in word analysis of reading text is very potential to be conducted. The purpose of this research is to know the students' ability in analysing the word of reading text and what their difficulties. Then, further researches expectedly can be conducted to develop how English language is learnt and what appropriate strategy can be used.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

English Morpholgy and Morphologycal Awarness

English morphology concerns with how English word is formed. It describes the rules of how a morpheme is combined into a word. To know the description of word formation, morphological analysis must be done. According to Bellomo (2009), morphological, or structural, analysis is the process of breaking down morphologically complex words into their constituent morphemes (word meaning parts). For example, the word *player* consists of two meaning unit: *play* as the base and *–er* which conveys the meaning of an agent.

The ability of analysing the word as can be seen above is called morphological awareness. According to Oz, (2013), morphological awareness (MA) refers to an individual's ability to decode the morphemic structure of words and further analyze them.

Word and Word Formation

Languages make an important distinction between two kinds of words - content words and function words (Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams, 2014).

Content word is commonly called open class word because it can be added by morpheme and it has clear lexical meaning such *as bag, walk*,and *beautiful* whereas function word does not have clear lexical meaning; it is associated with grmmatical function such as preposition, conjunction, and pronoun. The word *the, and, she, it, of* can be classified as function word.

Based on the explanation above, new word formation likely happens in content words or open class words. The word formation process can be done through several ways. One of them is combining morpheme into those words.

Morpheme

Morpheme is different with syllable. However, some students are still confused to differentiate them. The word *meditation* consists of four syllables but two morphemes. Morpheme can be defined as the smallest unit of speech that has semantic or grammatical meaning. It is the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical analysis (Dewi, 2013). There are two kinds of morpheme which are commonly known. They are

free morpheme and bound morpheme. Free morpheme is morphemes which can stand alone as a word by themselves. The word *table, run, see, clever* are the examples of free morpheme whereas bound morpheme is morpheme which cannot stand alone; they must be attached in other morpheme such as *-ly, -ness, -en*.

Bound morpheme can be derivational or inflectional morpheme. Derivational morphemes are one of the devices to generate so many new words in English and they can change the grammatical category, or part of speech

of a word while inflectional morphemes serve as grammar markers that show tense, number, possession, or comparison (Dian, 2014).

There are some derivational morphemes in English. One of the examples is a morpheme *–ful* in the word *'beautiful'* . Adding marpheme *–ful* from the root beauty makes new word and it changes part of speech from noun to adjective. In other side, there are some inflectional morphemes. Dian (2014) devided inflectional morphemes into seven catagories which can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. English inflectional morpheme

Inflectional morpheme	Funcion
-s or *es*	indicates noun plurals added to nouns or third person singular in present tense added to verbs
's or *s'*	's indicates possessive for singular or uncountable nouns s indicates possessive for plural nouns
–ed	indicates the regular of past tense or past participle added to verbs
–en	shows some plurals added to noun, some past participles added to verb, derivation from noun added to verb or adjective.
–er	indicates comparative form of adjectives and adverbs added to adjective or adverb.
–est	indicates superlative form of adjectives and adverbs added to adjective and adverbs.
-ing	indicates derivation from verb added to noun (gerund) and present continuous added to verb

Root, Prefix and Suffix

A word commonly begins with a root which is likely complete word or a part of complete word. A root can be added by a prefix (a part of word which appears in front of a root) or a suffix (part of word which appears in the end of a root). Adding prefix or suffix in a root can create a new word formation and sometimes it changes the meaning

and part of speech. For instance, a root 'hope' can be added by suffix *–ful* to create new word *hopeful*. In this process, there is also a changing part of speech from noun to adjective.

According to Milis (1998), there are some common English prefix and suffix which can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. English prefix

Prefix	Meaning
ad-	to, toward
circum-	around, about
com-	with, together
de-	away from, off
dis-	away. apart
ex-	from, out
in-	not
in-	in, into
inter-	between
mis-	wrong
post-	after
re-	back, again
sub-	beneath, under
trans-	across

un-	not

Table 3. English suffixes

Suffixes	Meaning
-able (-ible)	capable of meaning
-ance (ence)	the act of
-ate	making or applying
-ful	full of
-ity	the state of being
-less	without
-ly	in a certain way
-ment	the result of being
-ness	the state of being
-tion (-ion, -sion)	the act or the state of being

Inflection and Derivation

According to Dewi (2013), derivation is the word formation process in which a derivational affix is attached to the base form of a word to create a new word. There are four types of derivational process, they are: noun, verb, adjective and adverb (Hartiningsih,2013). Derivational suffixes change the bases part of speech to which they are attached, but inflectional suffixes do not change the part of speech to which they are attached. The difference between inflection and derivation can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. The Differences between Inflection and Derivation

Inflection	Derivation
Does not change meaning or part of speech of stem.	Changes meaning or part of speech of the stem.
Typically indicates syntactic or semantic relations between different words in a sentence.	Typically indicates semantic relation between the words.
Typically occurs with all members of some large class of morphemes.	Typically occurs with only some members of a class of morphemes
Typically occurs at margins of words.	Typically occurs before any inflectional suffixes are added.

Language files (Ohio State University, 1982:50-52 in Thahirah, Jismulatif &Novitri, 2015)

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research used mix method design with sequential explanatory approach. According to Sugiyono (2013), sequential explanatory approach is a kind of mix method research combaining qualitative and quantitative resesearch sequentially: quantitative method followed by qualitative method. The quantitative data was taken from the test and the qualitative data was taken from interview to make the deeper analysis. As stated by Hatch (2002) that in the qualitative research, data is collected as many detailed specifics from the research setting as possible, then set about the process of looking for patterns of relationship among the specifics.

Participant

The participant of this reasearch was taken from third semester students of English Department in University of Pasir Pengaraian. The population of the research was 42 students divided into two classess: III A and III B. Purposive sampling was used to determine the sample. The difference of schedule in both of the classess makes taking sample randomly was difficult. The students from III A consisted of 24 students were chosen as the samples.

Reserch Procedure

There were some procedures followed by the researcher in conducting this research:

1. The researcher told that he would conduct a research by giving written test as the instrument followed by interview to the samples;
2. A reading text taken from www.bbc.com was chosen because the credibility of writting
3. The resercher gave a direction how to do the test. The students were asked to analyse the words of reading text based on this following figure:

4. The quantitative data was collected from the result of the test.
5. Quantitative data were analysed. The students' scores from the test were computed using the formula which was adapted from Harris (1974:79).
6. To take the qualitative data, interview was done. The interview questions were generated using set of guideline such as thematizing, designing, piloting, and revising. They were open-ended questions. The interview was recorded and transcribed. Because of the using Indonesian language, it was transleted into English.
7. Qualitative data were analysed
8. Research finding was elaborated
9. Writing report of the research as a whole

$$M = \frac{X}{N} \; X \; 100$$

M = individual score
X = the number of correct answer
N = the number of item

(-*n*) English Morpheme

Bound   Free

Affix   Content word   Function word
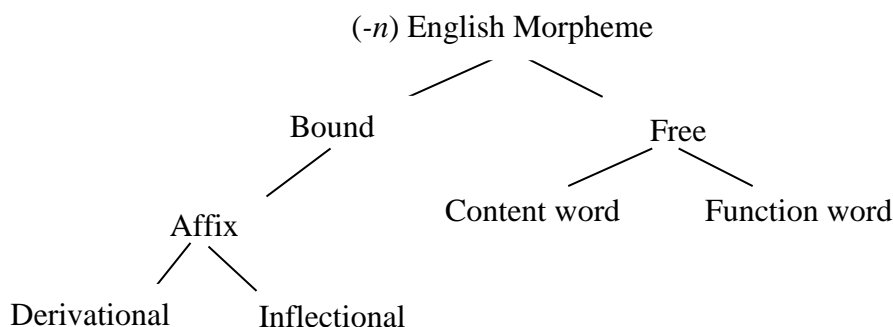
Derivational   Inflectional

Fig.1 The component of analysing the test

Then, to know the ability of the students, the score was classified into the determination of ability level. The classification was as follows:

Table 5. Level of Ability

Test Score	Level of Ability
80-100	Excellent
60-79	Good
50-59	Average
0-49	Poor

Adapted from Haris (1974)

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the the test result which was analysed, the number of students based on the level of ability and its percentage could be seen as follows:

Table 6. The number of students based on level of ability

Test Score	Level of Ability	n-Morpheme	Derivation	Inflection	Content word	Function word
80-100	Excellent	7	0	0	0	20
60-79	Good	15	0	0	22	4
50-59	Average	2	0	0	1	0
0-49	Poor	0	24	24	1	0

If the table above was presented in a percentage of chart, it would be as follows:
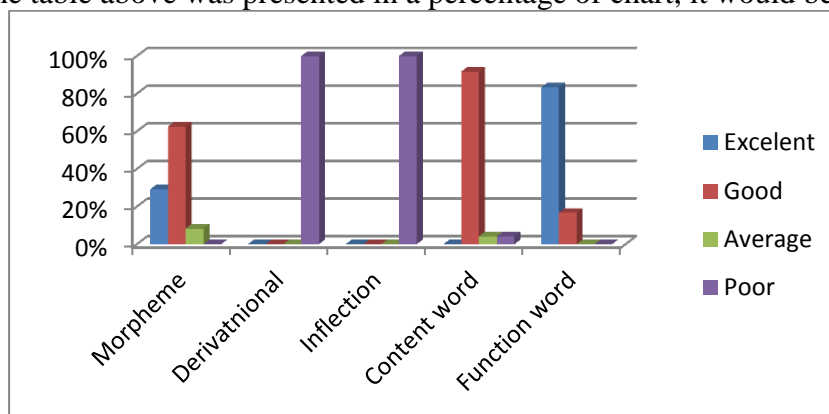

Fig. 3: Students' precentage score in word analysis

As can be seen at the table above, there were only 7 students or 29 % as a whole classified in the excelent level in analysing morpheme. It was lower than the number of excelent students in analysing function word which gained 20 students or 83 %. The contrary results happened in other aspects of analyses: derivation, inflection, and content words where no one could get excelent score. In good level of ability, the biggest number of the students were in analysing content word which showed 22 students or 92 %, then followed by analysing morpheme 15 students or 63 % and function word which showed 4 students or 17 %.

A surprising results happened in annalysing derivation and inflection where all of the students were in poor level. It indicated that no one had good morphologycal awareness in both of aspects. They could not differentiate inflection and derivation, even some of them were still confused so that they could not identify which was inflection or derivation.

For showing the comparison of the average scores of word analysis in all aspects, a figure was presented as follows:
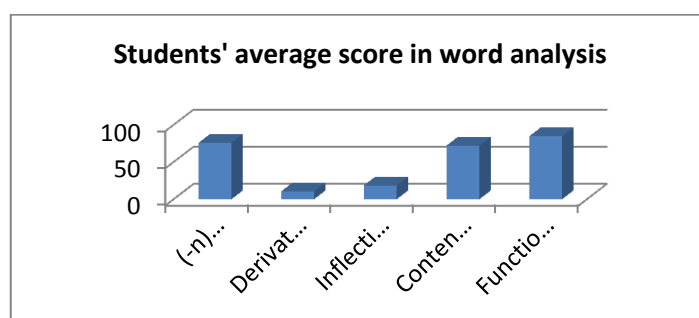

Fig. 2: Students' average score in word analysis

The figure above informed that derivation was the most difficult aspect. The average score showed that the students could not analysed it correctly. In addition, analysing inflection became the second difficult aspect which needed big attention because the students faced serious problems in identifying process. In other side, analysing morpheme, content word, and function word were better. The students tended to analyse them

correctly. The average scores showed that the most of them were in good level of ability even most of students who were in excelent level of analysing function word.

The results above could not be separated from some difficulties faced by the students. Based on the result analysis of qualitative data, most of the students considered that morphology was a difficult course and it had some branches which were confusing. Those were confirmed by the most of interviewee such as:

- S1: ... English morphology is difficult, the material is difficult to understand.....many branches of the materials, such as bound morpheme is divided into inflection and derivation morpheme....

In addition, the greater problem faced by the students was lacking knowledge of affixes. They were able to differentiate between prefix and suffix. Unfortunately, they did not know how to determine suffix, wheter it was inflection or derivation. This statement was confirmed by the most of interviewee, such as:

- S4: .....yes, prefix is a part of word attached before root whereas

suffix is a part of word attached after root ....
- L: What do you have problems in determining inflectional and derivational suffix?
- S4: yes, still confused.....I do not know which one is inflection or derivation...I do not know the meaning.

Based on the transcipt above, the lack of understanding inflection and derivation was affected by the lack of knowledge in the meaning of the word. Futhermore, it could bring them in the terrible situation where they could not identify the change of the word after getting derivational suffixes. It confirmed by statement below:

- L: Can you identify the change of word class after getting affix?
- S4: .....No, it is the most difficult thing ....

Some of the difficulties above showed that the students' ability in word analysis of reading text were so poor in determining inflection and derivation morphemes and quite good in determining the number of English morpheme, function word, and content word.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

There were 24 students participated in this research which focused on five aspects must be analysed: number of morpheme, derivation, inflection, content word, and function word. Based on the research finding above, the students had good ability in three of those analysis aspects: number of morpheme, content word and function word. However, they had poor

morphologycal awareness especially in analysing derivational and inflectional morpheme. They did not know because lacking of knowledge in derivation and inflection, and they considered that English morphology was a complicated course.

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions to do. The students should increase their

morphologycal awareness concerning with derivational and inflectional morphemes. Intensive practice in analysing and using derivational and inflectional English morphemes in communication: reading, speaking, and writing would be worthwhile activities. In addition, it indicates that an effective strategy is needed to increase the students' morphologycal awarness. Therefore, the lecturer should be more creative to make the teaching learning process focusing on both of aspects, especially in English morphology course.

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