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**Researcher (inst.) Ibrahim
Khalaf Salih**

 Department of English/ College of Education
for Humanities/ Tikrit University

 * Corresponding author: E-mail :
ibraheemkhalaf540@gmail.com
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E-mail

journal.of.tikrit.university.of.humanities@tu.edu.iqE-mail : adxxxx@tu.edu.iq

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Difficulties Faced by EFL First Year University Students in Using Noun Derivational Affixes

A B S T R A C T

This study is conducted to measure the difficulties faced by EFL first year university students in using noun derivational affixes. The sample of this study consists of forty males and female EFL first year students. An Achievement test has been conducted to be the tool of the study. The results showed that the gender does not have a big difference in the results and that the mean of the results of students' scores is 50.60, which shows that students face difficulties in using Noun Derivational Affixes and they should be trained more and more to have mastery on using the derivational affixes.

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الصعوبات التي تواجه متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية في المرحلة الاولى عند استخدام الاضافات
الاشتقاقية للأسماء

م. ابراهيم خلف صالح/ جامعة تكريت /كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة الصعوبات التي تواجه طلبة المرحلة الاولى في قسم اللغة الانجليزية من متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية عند استخدام الاضافات الاشتقاقية للأسماء . تكونت عينة الدراسة من ٤٠ طالبا وطالبة من طلبة المرحلة الاولى. استخدم الاختبار التحصيلي كأداة لقياس اداء الطلبة في هذه الدراسة. بينت النتائج بان ليس هناك تأثير لمتغير الجنس في مواجهة الصعوبات حيث ان المتوسط الحسابي بلغ ٥٠.٦٠ مما يبين ان الطلبة على حد سواء يواجهوا صعوبة في استخدام الاضافات الاشتقاقية للأسماء مما يتوجب توجيههم اكثر لتفادي الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلبة عند الاستخدام.

1. Introduction

The study aims at investigating the difficulties faced by first year English foreign language (EFL, henceforth) in using noun derivational affixes. Some students do not differentiate among an affix, a prefix, suffix...etc. others are not familiar with which morpheme is free and which one is bound, others do not know where and which suffix or prefix he/she can add to change a derivational noun into a verb, and vice versa, other difficulties when changing these words.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study is formulated as follows:

1. Students of first year of English as a foreign language are unable to recognize the best strategy to derive and find good inflections.
2. They do not recognize which words are derived and which are inflected.
3. They even do not recognize which words demand prefixes and which require suffixes.
4. They do not know even when to add (-ful, -ity, -ness, en-, -ment, etc.) because there is no distinctive rule that govern these additions.

1.2 The Aims

The aim of the study is to identify the students' difficulties in deriving the noun derivational affixes.

1.3 The Limits

The study is limited to the first year EFL students at the College of Education for Humanities/ Tikrit University in the Academic Year 2018-2019.

1. A theoretical background of noun derivational affixes.
2. The sample of the test is in the English department at the College of Education for humanities and particularly the first stage.
3. A test is conducted to measure the students' abilities and the difficulties they face.

2. Affixes, Meaning, Types

Yule (1990: 69) mentions that a derivation is a process of forming new words. This can be done by using small units or bits which have no dictionary

meanings. They are called affixes, examples of them are un- in unhappy, dis- in disagree, -ful in joyful. He (ibid: 25) adds that "all affixes in English bound morphemes i.e. they cannot normally stand alone unless they are attached to another form e.g. re-, -ist, -ed, -s"

On the other hand, Haspelmath (2002: 18) states that an affix occurs with the word forms in which a longer morpheme with a concrete meaning. The writers are differentiated by having other shorter morphemes with an abstract meaning. Such a short morpheme with an abstract meaning is called a morpheme.

It can be concluded that affixes are syllables that are added to the beginning, ends of the words, and within the words to change their functions as far as they are derivational ones, e.g. the word 'teach' is a verb. It accepts 'er' to become a noun. This affix which is added to the verb 'teach' changed the verb into a noun. The same with the word 'beauty' which is a noun. It can be changed into a verb by adding '-ify' to become 'beautify', then, it can be changed into an adjective by adding the syllable 'ful' to become beautiful and '-ly' to beautiful and '-ly' too beautiful to become 'beautifully' which is an adverb of manner and so on. These suffixes have no meanings if they occur alone, but if they are added to some stems, they will have their own meanings and functions.

1.2 Types of Affixes

Yule (1996: 69, and Haspelmath (2002:19) state that affixes are of different types. Some of them come at the beginning and some come finally, e.g. large, it will be enlarging which changes the function of the word from an adjective to be a verb. Such affixes are called prefixes.

On the other hand, Babikar (2017: 7) states that affixes are "words elements attached to the stems which may either precede as prefixes do-and – way subway or follow as suffixes do."

Here there is a classification suggested by Ibrahim (2018: 15), it is as follows:

1.2.1 Affixation

Affixation refers to word formation by adding affixes (root or stem) to another morpheme. Affixes in a language are limited in number. In relation to the root or the stem, their location is more important. Those that come initially are known as prefixes as in **un** in **untidy**

He (ibid) adds that adding an affix to an existing word is an affixation. In the morphological structure of a word other than a root, it refers to any aspect. The term **unlawful**, for example, consists of the root law plus the 'un and ful' affixes.

Dehham and Majeed (2018: 131) describe affixation as adding a prefix or suffix, e.g. 'happiness' from 'happy' as the creation of a new word from an already existing word. Fon (2003: 22) notes that affixes are of the bound type morphemes which the function of the meanings of roots.

1.2.2 Prefixation

Prefixes come before a stem as attached morphemes. These bound morphemes often do not occur alone or immediately before suffixes or as free morphemes. Affixes, as in (un and in), can come in sequences. The 'prefix' definition comes from the word 'prefixum' in Latin, which means something fixed in front.

A prefix is efficient in a word formation as it adds and extend the meaning of a certain word (the un- in **unfamiliar** with the meaning '**not**') may be openly added to other related terms such as untidy, ambiguous, etc. (Yule, 1996: 69: 80, and Eastwood, 2000: 369).

Mathews (1997: 292) says that a prefixation means adding a prefix. A prefix is the one that is added in 'unkind' before the form to which it is added, e.g. un-. In morphology, this term is used to refer to an affix at the beginning of a root or stem that is a typical English process (Crystal, 2008: 304).

Quirk et al (1985: 1546-47) suggest that in English there are several prefixes, e.g. re- 'in reconsider, dis-in despise, non-existent. Generally, they do not change the word-class to which they are attached.

1.2.3 Suffixation

This term refers to adding suffixes, as bound morphemes, after a base. Hartman and Stork (1976) cited in Dehham and Majeed (2018: 134) give a definition to a suffix as: an affix attached finally to a word, i.e. it refers a group of letters attached finally to a word and this suffix is either inflectional one such as the case ending suffix in Latin or the plural ending '-s' in **toys** or derivational such as '-ly in **lonely**.

On the other hand, Strang (1968: 230) notes that there we can differentiate between suffixes that have lexical value e.g. **-hood** as in girlhood, -

ment in **development**, and inflections that have grammatical value, e.g. in boys, -er, as in **smaller** etc.

It is obvious that suffixes as morphemes are of two main kinds as far as their functions are concerned: derivational and inflectional. To clarify this, this table is used:

Table (1) Classification of Suffixes

The	Boy	s	had	a	wonder	Ful	cook	er
F	F	B	F	F	F	B	F	B
base	Base	inf. suffix	base	base	base	der. suffix.	base	der. suffix.

1.3 Derivational versus Inflectional Morphemes

Yule (1996: 77) notes that it is worth mentioning to differentiate between derivational and inflectional morphemes. An inflectional one does not change the grammatical category of a word to which it is added., for example both cold and colder are adjectives, (But a new form of the adjective is formed), whereas a derivative changes the grammatical type of a word, e.g. the verb wipe becomes a noun if the derivative morpheme (er) is added. According to Stageberg (1981: 92) inflectional morphemes mark the grammatical subclass of a word's form to which it belongs. There are eight inflectional affixes, as illustrated below:

Table (2) Types of Inflectional Affixes and Their Names

Affix	Examples	Name
S ₁	Rivers	Noun plural
S ₂	Soldier's	singular possessive Noun
S ₃	Wipes	Third person present singular
Ing _v	drinking	Pres. Participle
d ₁	Typed	Simple Past
d ₂	printed	Past Participle
Er	Colder	Comparative

Est	coldest	Superlative
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A derivation, on the other hand, refers to forming new words from an existing base word (Crystal, 2008: 11). According to Dehham and Majeed (2008: 135) it refers to a group of letters come at the end of roots, words, to serve a grammatical function (N, V, adj, and adv) the word belongs to. Moreover, derivational affixes change and expand the word meaning, 'beautiful is both past and past participle, beauty is a noun, beautiful is an adjective, beautifully is an adverb of manner.

1.4. Previous Studies

1.4.1 Naggy and Diakidoy (1993)

Nagy and Diakidoy (1993: 155) studied the students ' awareness of 10 English suffixes in respect to their meanings in the same area. The test was carried out to estimate the awareness of students on how suffixes are related to derivatives meanings. The Students had been asked to select which of the different sentences correctly used word which has suffixes. New combinations of common stems and suffixes, such as **butterless**, were included in the words. Students were also tested using familiar words with no suffixes on parallel terms. 630 students from fourth up to seventh grade of high school were involved in the exam.

Between fourth grade up to high school, it was found that awareness of meanings of commonly used suffixes underwent great growth. There were several students who, also in high school, displayed no understanding of the meanings of those suffixes. Those who have particular problems with suffixes have been identified, and as a diagnostic tool, the test has potential.

The goal of the research is to obtain a clear picture of the knowledge of students in the acquisition of some common derivative suffixes that contribute to the meanings of derivatives. It also concentrated on derivative ones, because

these derivative suffixes are considered to be the most abstract and challenging part of morphology that students have to understand.

The research sample consisted of 630 students, 204 of whom were from four elementary schools in the 4th grade. One hundred and seventeen students from two junior high schools were in seventh grade. Ninety (High School A) were 10th graders from one high school. Another Mideastern high school (High School B) had 219 students. The number is 70 students in grade 9, 81 in grade 10, 39 in grade 11, and 29 in grade 12.

The materials are used in this study to test the awareness of students about the common English suffixes that contribute to the meanings of derivatives. This contribution lies primarily in their impact on the part of speech of a word and thus on how to use the word that has suffixes in sentences. This research is based on the test of rarely occurring derivatives of common stems, a word class of familiar words may be defined as a stem and suffix. The goal of this approach was to solve problems associated with the use of nonsense stems.

Applicant stems that were deemed to be familiar readers were chosen at the fourth grade level or above. Those in the final materials ranged in frequency from 8.8 up to 37.2 occurrences per million words of text.

The approach adopted is that students were evaluated in intact classroom groups, excluding students from high school A, who were evaluated in a single category on school standards. The test which is related to suffix was conducted as the second of two paper-and - pencil assignments, all given time of 45-50 minutes. (The first assignment was a yes / no vocabulary test; the results of that test are not written here.)

The other adopted procedures are: instructions were read loudly, students were required to pick one of the four sentences used a given word most correctly, and circle the corresponding letter in the test booklet, a sample item was obtained briefly, before making a choice, students were urged to read all four sentences and guess if possible. On the stem items, the students did better than on the derivative items, the findings showed. Fourth graders not only ranked lower on both stem and stem, but also, but also, in fourth grade, the gap between stems and scores of derivative was greater.

1.4.2 Naseeb and Ibrahim (2017)

The study aims to examine the challenges faced by students in public schools in Amman / Jordan. In this analysis, some questions were posed, such as: What are the problems that students could face concerned derivations? What are the causes of barriers like these?

In order to achieve the objectives of this report, the researcher followed two methods: a quantitative approach in which students from public secondary schools are tested and pre-tested to achieve the reliability and validity of the findings, and a qualitative approach through interviews with teachers from the same secondary schools and one Amman Third Educational Director supervisor. The obtained results were as follows: not only in derivations and derivative suffixes but also in other linguistic subjects, students were too poor, i.e. obviously considered to be an accumulative problem arising from other problems faced by students in relation to, for example, sections of speech, word order or phrase patterns. In early levels, such as 8th or 9th grade, derivations and derivative suffixes should be taught instead of in the last 11th or 12th grade.

The study sample consisted of 60 students (18 male students and 34 female students) randomly selected from two public secondary schools for boys and girls. In addition, in the second semester of the academic year 2017 at the 12th grade, in Amman Third Educational Directorate (Al-Qwesmeh), three male teachers and three female teachers (holding a B.A. degree) as well as one supervisor (holding a Ph.D.) were chosen to participate in an interview.

1.4.4 Alotaibi and Alotaibi (2017)

This research aimed to test 90 learners from Kuwait to see if they were aware of the proper use of English derivational suffixes. It also listed the key causes of the errors they committed. Besides, it examined whether the proficiency level the participants played a role in their answers on this exam. In this analysis, the test was carried out twice: a multiple choice test was used to assess their comprehension abilities, and a fill in the blanks test was used to measure their ability to generate the right English derivative suffixes.

The results showed that the EFL students in Kuwait were conscious to a certain degree of the proper use of derivative suffixes in English. On the two measures, the overall average was (comprehension= 70 percent and output= 56 percent). Which showed that the degree of English proficiency of the participants played a great role in their understanding and development of these suffixes. The performance of advanced learners (ALS) was: understanding = 77

percent and production = 62 percent, which was better than the understanding of immediate learners (ILS) = 65 percent and production = 48 percent on the tests.

1.4.5 Ibrahim (2018)

This study aimed to investigate problems faced by EFL learners in using derivational and inflectional verb affixes in English. For data collection, a test was used as a tool, which was applied to second year students' at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The sample of this study consisted of forty students who were chosen randomly. The findings showed that second year students have crucial problems in deriving verbs from verb to other word classes in respect to prefixes and suffixes. They also face problems in using inflectional verb morphemes. The study showed that derivational verb morphemes are more difficult than inflectional ones.

1.4.6 Dehham and Majeed (2018)

In this paper, an attempt was made in identifying Iraqi learners' errors in using of verbal affixes in the Department of English/ College of Basic Education/ University of Babylon.

The study concluded that:

1. As seen in their low performance test, fourth stage learners had trouble understanding and generating verbal affixes. The percentage of their correct answers was (190, 38 percent) lower than that of the incorrect answers (310, 62 percent).
2. With regard to recognizing verbal suffixes, the performance of the learners was better than that with the verbal prefixes. This was expressed by their answers in verbal suffixes.
3. The performance of subjects in the whole test showed also that EFL learners had difficulties more in the use of verbal affixes at the production level than at the recognition one.

1.4.6 Babiker (2017)

The study aimed to investigate difficulties EFL encountered undergraduates in their use of derivational affixes. It depended on the description and lyrical method in designing the task. The data were collected by using a test. The sample of the study consisted of 30 students at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages Department of English 2nd level. The data were analyzed by using the (SPSS) programme. The results of the study showed a difficulty in using the derivational morphemes by the students.

This study came up with some conclusions:

1. Students have little knowledge of derivational morphemes.
2. Mastering the derivational morphemes helps the students of English foreign language get more vocabulary.
3. Most of the EFL students do not differentiate between different types of morphemes.

2. Methodology (Population and Sample)

The study population consisted of forty students from the first stage at the Department of English at the College of Education for Humanities for the academic year 2018-2019. The study sample consisted of forty students from the first stage in English Department in the College of Education for Humanities at Tikrit University. The students have been chosen randomly. They were (20) males and other (20) female students.

3. Results, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Study

The results of achievement test are illustrated in the following table which shows the scores of students on each question clearly. The test showed a mean of (50, 60%), the mean is 50%, a standard deviation 10,68, T value is 0.308, the level is accepted, there is no statistical significance. The results can be seen clearly in tables (3) and (4):

Table (3) The Results Related to each question

Q.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Standard Deviation	T. Value	Level	significance
1	7.8667	10	3.74841	3.12	Weak	With Statistical significance
2	5.8000		3.29472	6.96	Weak	=
3	14.7333		3.87684	6.69	Good	=
4	7.8000		4.46752	2.70	Weak	=
5	14.4000		3.56400	6.660	Good	=

Table (4) The whole results of all questions:

Mean Scores	Hypothetical mean scores	Std. Deviation	T. Value	Level	Level of significance
50.6	50	10.	0.308	accepted	With no statistical significance

T. Value = 2.04

3.2 Conclusion of the Study

In conclusion, this study examines the ability of EFL learners to acquire English noun derivational affixes through testing their ability to produce the right word on the fill-in-blank test i.e. (adding-er, -hood, -ness, -ship, -tion, etc.) to other words to change them into nouns. The overall parentage of the correct answers of the 40 students is 50, 60% which indicates that the EFL learners are aware of the complex nature of English noun derivational affixes, to a certain degree but they need more effort to get better results.

3.3 Recommendations of the Study

According to the conclusions listed above, there are some recommendations that should be taken into consideration:

1. Educational leaders, English teachers, and curriculum designers should develop and design the appropriate materials and activities to acquaint EFL learners with the appropriate use of noun derivational affixes.

2. Students should be aware how to differentiate between the noun the derivational affixes, when to add them.
3. Students should practice the noun derivational in speech i.e. in real communicative situations because they are not governed by a rule. This will facilitate memorizing them more and more.
4. Teaching of noun derivational affixes should begin from the early stages of EFL students.
5. Teachers should intensify their courses and teach their students about when e.g. teach is used, when 'teacher' is used, and when to use the other derivations related to the same word.

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