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Linguista

Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya

ISSN 2579-8944 (Print) 2579-9037 (Online)

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Morphological Awareness: Students' Proficiency in Analyzing Derivational Affixes in English

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Abstract

This paper examines students' proficiency in analyzing derivational affixes in English. The objective of this research is, then to discover how far the students' capability in analyzing the errors of prefixes and suffixes in English sentences. The researchers limit the study to focus only on derivational affixes. To obtain the data, the students were tested. The participants of this research were undergraduate students of the English Education Department at STKIP Pamane Talino, West Kalimantan. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The results show the average of students' proficiency in analyzing prefixes and suffixes in sentences is 68.57%. More specifically, seven students (33.33%) belong to the "excellent" category, seven students (33.33%) belong to the "very good" category, four students (19.04%) are categorized as a "good" category, two students (9.52%) are classified as a "fair" category, and one student (4.76%) belongs to the "poor" category.

Keywords: derivational affix; students' proficiency; word-formation.

Introduction

Vocabulary is a fundamental part that should be learned by students to master a language. According to Alqahtani (2015); Asyiah (2017); Hernawati (2015); Kacani & Cyfeku, (2015); Viera (2017) stated vocabulary can be defined as an essential element of a language which encourages and helps a learner communicate well. It indicates if a learner has a limited vocabulary, he will not be able to communicate fluently. Thornbury (2002) argued vocabulary can be divided into several aspects namely parts of speech, polysemes, word formation, collocations, and homonyms, for example. In this regard, the researchers will discuss word-formation.

In word-formation, there is a term called affixation. Affixation is a morphological process which consists of the attachment of affixes to the bases to generate new words (Alhasibunur, 2016; Herman, 2015; Subandowo, 2017; Tambusai, Nasution, Widayati, & Jufrizal, 2016). Zainuddin (2016) stated affixation has an important function in word formation because it can change the meaning of a word. For instance, affix -ness will change an adjective like "kind" into the noun "kindness". Furthermore, affixes are related to bound morphemes and free morphemes (Bunau & Yusof, 2018; Genon-Sieras, 2020; Najjari & Mohammadi, 2016; Rizki & Zakrimal, 2020; Tariq et al., 2020; Turjoman, 2016; Yastanti & Warlina, 2018). A free morpheme refers to a morpheme which can stand alone for example sit, drink, date. While bound morpheme is a morpheme which cannot stand alone independently (Genon-Sieras, 2020; Kazemian & HAshemi, 2014; Luthfiyati, Kholiq, & Zahroh, 2017; Martini, 2016; Maulidina, Indriyani, & Mardewi, 2019; Nurjanah, Ramdhaniah, & Efransyah, 2018; Ramadan, 2015; Rugaiyah, 2018). A bound morpheme is usually called affixes which consist of prefixes, infixes, and suffixes but in English, there are only two types of bound morphemes,

namely prefixes and suffixes. Bound morphemes are also categorized into two types, namely derivational and inflectional morphemes (Nandito, 2016).

This study focuses on the analysis of derivational affixes of sentences that include prefix and suffix. The researchers interviewed one of the lecturers at STKIP Pamane Talino university regarding the teaching and learning process in his class. He said not all students have good abilities especially in mastering vocabulary and differentiating parts of speech. This situation makes it difficult for them to use the prefix and suffix forms. Therefore, the researchers want to investigate the extent to which undergraduate students' proficient in analyzing the error of suffixes and prefixes in sentences.

This study is supported by several relevant research. Panjaitan, Tagorop, & Damani (2020) "*the analysis of finding suffix and prefix in the narrative text*". This study was implemented to investigate students' ability in finding prefix and suffix in narrative text. The result showed that students were able to analyze prefix and suffix in narrative text. It can be seen from the average score was 77,61. Sukmacahyadi (2018) "*an analysis of inflectional affixes on English department students' undergraduate thesis abstracts*". The purpose of this study was to explore the types of inflectional affixes found and which types of affixes are predominantly used in students writing. The finding revealed the most frequently used were nouns (plural), adjectives (comparative and superlative), and possessives (singular and plural). Suharni (2017) "*students' ability in using the prefix*". This study aimed to explore students' ability in using a prefix. The result showed the ability of students to use prefix was fair. It can be seen from the percentage of students' ability in good criteria 25%, fair 41.7%, poor 16.7%**.**

Method

This study was conducted to investigate students' proficiency in analyzing the error of suffixes and prefixes in sentences. The researchers applied descriptive qualitative as a method to analyze the data. Nassaji (2015) argued the goal of descriptive qualitative research is to delineate a phenomenon and its characteristic descriptive qualitative research focuses on how or why something happened. The researchers implemented this study at STKIP Pamane Talino University. The researchers decided to choose this university because previous researchers have never researched on the same topic. In connection with this research topic, the researchers provided a test as an instrument to collect information about students analyzing suffixes and prefixes in sentences. To collect the data, the researchers applied the following steps. First, the researchers observed the class. Second, the researchers prepared the test. Third, the researchers gave an overview to students about the subject matter and directions/steps on how to answer the test. The fourth, the researchers gave the test to students, to analyze suffix and prefix in sentences. The fifth, the researchers collected the answer sheets. The last, the researchers checked and analyzed the answers by using a formula from Arikunto (1993:249) and the following is the description of the classification of students' proficiency according to Arikunto.

Table 1. Students' proficiency

Range of Ability in Number	Score
80 – 100	Excellent
70 – 79	Very Good
60 – 69	Good
50 – 59	Fair
Less than 50	Poor

Results and Discussion

The researchers used an essay test as the instrument to collect the data. There were 21 students as the participants of this research which were taken from the fifth semester in STKIP Pamane Talino. They were asked to analyze prefixes and suffixes in sentences. The researchers then calculated the students' correct answers which can be seen from the table below.

Table 2. Students' score and criteria of ability

No.	Students' Name	Correct Answer	Score	Criteria of Ability
1	Student A	8	80	Excellent
2	Student B	7	70	Very Good
3	Student C	7	70	Very Good
4	Student D	8	80	Excellent
5	Student E	7	70	Very Good
6	Student F	6	60	Good
7	Student G	5	50	Fair
8	Student H	7	70	Very Good
9	Student I	7	70	Very Good
10	Student J	8	80	Excellent
11	Student K	6	60	Good
12	Student L	9	90	Excellent
13	Student M	5	50	Fair
14	Student N	4	40	Poor
15	Student O	8	80	Excellent
16	Student P	8	80	Excellent
17	Student Q	6	60	Good
18	Student R	7	70	Very Good
19	Student S	9	90	Very Good
20	Student T	6	60	Excellent
21	Student U	7	70	Good

Based on the table above, the highest score is 90 and the lowest score is 40. There are two students who get 90, five students get 80, seven students get 70, four students get 60, two students get 50, and one student get 40. Furthermore, the following is the description of the students' proficiency based on the scores they get. Furthermore, to calculate the percentage of students' criteria of proficiency, the researchers use the following formula:

$$S = \frac{R}{N}\ 100\%$$

R: The total number of all categories of proficiency
N: The total number of participants

From the calculation, the researchers get the percentage of the proficiency of 21 students. Seven students are included in the "excellent" category (33.33%), seven students are in the "very good" category (33.33%), four students are in the "good" category (19.04%), two students are in the "fair" category (09.52%), and one student is in the "poor" category (04.76%). Moreover, to get the mean of the student's proficiency category in analyzing suffixes and prefixes in sentences, the researchers count all the total scores of students in answering the test.

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M: Mean
$\sum X$: Total Score
N: The total number of participants
The mean or average of student's proficiency in this research is shown as follows:

$$M = \frac{1440}{21}$$
$$M = 68.57$$

So, it can be concluded that the average proficiency of students is categorized as "good". It indicates that 21 students of STKIP Pamane Talino representing the sample can analyze prefixes and suffixes in sentences.

Furthermore, the researchers compare the results of this study with other relevant studies, namely studies conducted by Panjaitan et al (2020) and by Suharni (2017). In this section, the researchers discuss the similarities and differences between this research and the two relevant studies above in various contexts. First, the researchers find there are similarities in the issue and method section. The issue of these studies focuses on the students' ability to analyze affixations and the research methods are descriptive qualitative. Second, the differences between the two relevant studies and this study are as follows. Firstly, this study focuses on sentence analysis while the first and second relevant studies focus on narrative texts and vocabulary. Secondly, the sample of this research is the fifth-semester students of STKIP Pamane Talino, consisting of 21 students while the first relevant study sample is the seventh-grade students of SMP Sw. Puteri Sion Medan, consisting of 21 students and the second relevant study sample is the third-semester students of STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat, consisting of 40 students. Thirdly, the two relevant studies, namely Panjaitan et al (2020) and Suharni (2017), collect the data directly from the participants while this study collect the data virtually through the WhatsApp group. Fourthly, the results of this study show the average proficiency of students in analyzing sentences is categorized as "good" while the results of the first and second relevant studies show that students' ability in identifying and using affixation is "very good" and "quite good", respectively.

Conclusion

The results of the data analysis reveal students' proficiency in analyzing prefix and suffix was "good". It can be proven by the average score obtained by the students was 68.57. Furthermore, the students' proficiency criteria are found the percentage of 7 students with "excellent" criteria is 33.33%, the percentage of 7 students with "very good" criteria is 33.33%, the percentage of 4 students with "good" criteria is 19.04%, the percentage of 2 students with "fair" criteria is 09.52, and the percentage of 1 student with "poor" criteria is 04.76%. Based on the above conclusions, the researchers suggest that teachers should apply more attractive learning media to increase students' enthusiasm in learning. Teachers are also expected to give more exercises and pay attention to the difficulties faced by students when analyzing sentences.

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