ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS ABILITY

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Abstract - Among the related variables of English language classrooms, English teachers have the most considerable function in students' achievement. For high quality teaching, they need to explore elements of effective professional development because teacher education programs do not necessarily give them the abilities they need. One of them is English Language Teachers' Morphological Awareness Ability (ELTMA). The purpose of this study is to look into the concept of Morphological Awareness (MA) in the context of English language teachers' professional development. ELTMA empowers teachers to perform effectively in teaching vocabulary, reading, and writing language skills. This article first considers defining the related concepts of morphology, morphemes and MA, and then presents strategies and tasks for teachers how to teach them in their language skills classrooms. Also, some pedagogical implications are suggested for pre-service English language teacher education programs.

Keywords - English Language Teachers, Morphological Awareness Ability, Morphology, Phoneme, Strategies and Tasks.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research literature shows morphological awareness has received less attention in the classroom practice (Apel, 2014). Also, research in the field of teacher education indicates low levels of metalinguistic knowledge of preservice and in-service language teachers (Carreker, Joshi, & Boulware-Gooden, 2010; Carroll, Gillon, & McNeill, 2012; Moats, 1994, 2014; Stainthorp, 2004; Washburn, Joshi, & Binks, Cantrell, 2011) and that they lack pertinent morphological and pedagogical knowledge (Newton, 2018).

The purpose of the present article is to raise English language teachers' awareness of what morphology is and how they can explicitly teach it in their their reading, writing, and vocabulary classrooms.

II. MA DEFINITION

An overall definition of morphological awareness contains different components such as the ability to:

- parse words and analyze constituent morphemes for the purpose of constructing meaning" (Carlisle, 2000, p. 170);
- build up by combining smaller meaningful units, such as prefixes, roots, and suffixes " Guo, Roehrig, and Williams , 2011, p. 160);
- reflect upon and manipulate morphemes and employ word formation rules in one's language (Kuo and Anderson, 2006, p. 161).

III. ELTMA DEFINITION

ELTMA is English language teachers' ability to:

- understand English language morphology;
- provide morphological awareness raising written and spoken tasks;
- integrate morphological awareness explicit instruction into their classrooms.

IV. MA AND TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Research has found evidence that raising morphological awareness of language learners in the language classrooms has the students develop their language skills. In teaching vocabulary, explicit instruction in Latin and Greek morphology may be an effective means of helping students develop academic vocabulary knowledge (Carlisle, 2010; Kieffer, Lesaux, 2012).

Another fact that justifies using morphological awareness tasks in the classroom is that 76% of high-frequency academic words that students learn in school share morphological roots (Coxhead , 2000). In a similar study, Anglin (1993) reports approximately 60% of new words acquired by school-age children are morphologically complex. In addition, some researches focus on the impact of morphological awareness on inferring meaning in unknown words(e.g., Bauman, Edwards &Kameenui,2003).

Researchers have reported that knowledge of morphology is significantly related to reading and spelling abilities even in the elementary years (e.g., Carlisle, 2004; Carlisle & Nomanbhoy,1993; Nunes, Bryant, & Bindman, 2003).
Kirby,Deacon, Bowers, Izenberg, Wade-Woolley, Parrila (2012) conclude that morphological awareness has important roles in word reading and reading comprehension, and they suggest that it should be included more frequently in assessments and instruction.

Definition of morphological terms

key terms	definitions*
morphology	Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words.
morpheme	A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in the grammar of a language. Example: Unladylike The word unladylike consists of three morphemes and four syllables. Morpheme breaks: un- 'not' lady '(well behaved) female adult human' -like 'having the characteristics of' None of these morphemes can be broken up any more without losing all sense of meaning. Lady cannot be broken up into "la" and "dy," even though "la" and "dy" are separate syllables. Note that each syllable has no meaning on its own.
free morpheme	A free morpheme is a grammatical unit that can occur by itself. However, other morphemes such as affixes can be attached to it. Example: The morpheme dog
bound morpheme	A bound morpheme is a grammatical unit that never occurs by itself, but is always attached to some other morpheme. Example: The plural morpheme -s in dogs
inflectional morpheme	An inflectional affix is an affix that: expresses a grammatical contrast that is obligatory for its stem's word class in some given grammatical context does not change the word class of its stem Example: Here are some examples of grammatical categories that are expressed by inflectional affixes, number, person, tense, voice, etc.
derivational morpheme	A derivational affix is an affix by means of which one word is formed (derived) from another. The derived word is often of a different word class from the original. Example: Joyful, Joyfulness
prefix	A prefix is an affix that is joined before a root or stem. Examples: The prefix un- attaches to the front of the stem selfish to form the word unselfish.
suffix	A suffix is an affix that is attached to the end of a root or stem. Examples: The past tense suffix -ed attaches to the end of the stem walk to form the past tense verb walked.
root	A root is the portion of a word that is common to a set of derived or inflected forms, if any, when all affixes are removed is not further analyzable into meaningful elements, being morphologically simple, and carries the principal portion of meaning of the words in which it functions. Examples: Disestablish, Establishment, Establishments

*https://glossary.sil.org

Teaching morphology: Tasks and Strategies

Sample task 1

Tasks	Teaching strategies	Example words
Finding roots	Provide a list of some long words which have roots with some affixes at their own level of English. Explain what a root is with giving some examples. Ask your students to extract the roots.	words / roots actions unhappiness dangerous hopefully difficulty

Sample task 2

Identifying affixes	Provide two columns of words and their affixes. Explain what affixes are with giving some examples. You may prefer to say a part added to the beginning (instead of prefix) and to the end (instead of suffix). Ask your students to match the root word (from column A) by choosing the correct prefix or suffix (from column B).	

Column A	Column B
1. ( ) state	dis - (prefix)
2. ( ) friend	- ful (suffix)
3. ( ) happy	- ment (suffix)
4. ( ) agree	- ly (suffix)
5. ( ) fear	un - (prefix)

Sample task 3

Grouping similar words	Provide a list of words sharing the same prefixes or suffixes. Explain that similar prefixes and suffixes add the same meaning to the root of words. Ask your students to sort the words based on their shared affixes. Then to guess their similar meanings.	

words	groups of similar meaning
interesting	
wonderful	
disconnect	
plentiful	
exciting	
imperfect	

Sample task 4

Decomposing flashcards	Provide a flash card consisting a table of three columns for prefixes, roots, and suffixes Explain how your students can make flash cards. Ask them to find some long words from their course books, then after identifying their root words and affixes. They should infer a definition of the whole word using their morphemes.	

word / meaning		
Prefix/meaning	Root/meaning	Suffix/meaning

Example:

imperfectly / in a not complete way		
Prefix/meaning	Root/meaning	Suffix/meaning
im- / not	Perfect / complete	-ly / way of doing

Sample task 5

Build the Word, Use the Word	Provide a list of root words plus an affix (a prefix or suffix). Explain the meanings of chosen prefixes and suffixes. Ask your students to add the prefix or suffix to the root word, and then give some examples using these words in meaningful sentences.	

prefix or suffix

roots	affixes	meaning	example

Example

sub-

roots	affixes	meaning	example
way	subway	under way	I use a subway to cross the other side.
ordinate			
conscious			

V. CONCLUSION

The present study has begun to shed light on the concept of English Teachers' Morphological Awareness Ability (ELTMA). Reviewing the literature of teachers' morphological awareness ability, it mentions that there is a need to empower this ability by introducing different tasks and strategies for teaching vocabulary, reading and writing. English teachers are supposed to integrate

explicit instruction of morphological awareness tasks into their classes. To do this, they need to learn what morphology and its related concepts such as morphemes, roots, and affixes are, and how they can provide tasks and use the strategies to raise students' morphological awareness in their classes. Regarding this, sample tasks and strategies were suggested. The policy makers of English language teacher education programs should consider the ways how to integrate morphological awareness tasks in their courses.

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