

EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS INSTRUCTION FOR VOCABULARY LEARNING

Nahdawati¹

¹STKIP Abdul Mujib Laewang Dampal Selatan
nahdazulkiflimappidalle@gmail.com

Rahmatul Ummu Arifin^{2*}

²STKIP Abdul Mujib Laewang Dampal Selatan
rahmatulummu@gmail.com

Sitti Hawaena³

³STKIP Abdul Mujib Laewang Damapal Selatan
Wenaw154@gmail.com

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract:

Morphological awareness has been recognized as an important factor in supporting vocabulary learning among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Understanding the internal structure of words, including prefixes, suffixes, and root words, may help learners infer the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary and improve their vocabulary learning strategies. However, limited studies have explored students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction, particularly in small-scale EFL learning contexts. Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction for vocabulary learning. This research employs a qualitative case study design involving four EFL students selected through purposive sampling. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews conducted after participants receive morphological awareness instruction. The interview data will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to students' learning experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges. It is expected that the findings will provide insights into how students perceive morphological awareness instruction and its role in supporting vocabulary learning. The study is also expected to contribute practical implications for English teachers in designing effective vocabulary instruction for EFL classrooms.

Keywords: morphological awareness, vocabulary learning, EFL students, students' perceptions, qualitative study.

Abstrak:

Kesadaran morfologis (morphological awareness) telah diakui sebagai salah satu faktor penting dalam mendukung pembelajaran kosakata pada siswa Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Pemahaman terhadap struktur internal kata, termasuk prefiks, sufiks, dan kata dasar (root words), dapat membantu siswa menafsirkan makna kosakata yang belum dikenal serta meningkatkan strategi mereka dalam mempelajari kosakata. Namun, penelitian yang mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran berbasis kesadaran morfologis, khususnya dalam konteks pembelajaran EFL berskala kecil, masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa EFL terhadap pembelajaran berbasis kesadaran morfologis dalam pembelajaran kosakata. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang melibatkan empat siswa EFL yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data akan dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur yang dilakukan setelah peserta memperoleh pembelajaran mengenai kesadaran morfologis. Data hasil wawancara akan ditranskripsikan dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema yang berkaitan dengan pengalaman belajar siswa, manfaat yang mereka rasakan, serta tantangan yang mereka hadapi. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan mengenai persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran berbasis kesadaran morfologis dan perannya dalam mendukung pembelajaran kosakata. Selain itu, hasil penelitian ini juga diharapkan dapat memberikan implikasi praktis bagi guru bahasa Inggris dalam merancang pembelajaran kosakata yang lebih efektif melalui pendekatan berbasis morfologi.

Kata Kunci: Kesadaran morfologis, pembelajaran kosakata, siswa EFL, persepsi siswa, penelitian kualitatif.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is generally defined as the knowledge and ability that an individual possesses in understanding and using the words of a language. Hornby describes vocabulary mastery as having complete knowledge or a high level of skill in a particular subject, which implies that vocabulary mastery involves learners' ability to understand and use words effectively. Furthermore, Hatch and Brown classify vocabulary into two types: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that learners recognize and understand in context but may not yet be able to produce, whereas productive vocabulary consists of words that learners understand, pronounce correctly, and actively use in speaking and writing.

In language learning, the acquisition of both receptive and productive vocabulary is essential, whether learners are acquiring a first, second, or foreign language. Adequate vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Sufficient vocabulary enables learners to construct meaningful sentences and express their ideas clearly because they have a wider range of words from which to choose. Conversely, limited vocabulary can hinder learners' ability to understand others and express their thoughts effectively. Even when learners have adequate grammatical knowledge, communication remains difficult without sufficient vocabulary because grammar primarily organizes linguistic information, whereas vocabulary carries much of the meaning being communicated. In this regard, Susanto (2017) explains that vocabulary mastery is strongly influenced by learners' interest and motivation. He further emphasizes that vocabulary learning is not merely a matter of memorizing the spelling or pronunciation of individual words but also involves understanding their meanings and the ways in which words are formed.

However, developing comprehensive vocabulary mastery is often challenging for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. University students, in particular, may encounter difficulties with several parts of speech, including prepositions, verbs, and pronouns. Among these, prepositions are frequently considered particularly difficult because their use depends heavily on context and cannot always be directly translated from learners' first language into

English. Consequently, mastering prepositions requires extensive contextual exposure and practice. In comparison, lexical categories such as nouns and conjunctions may be relatively easier for learners to acquire and use appropriately.

In addition to grammatical difficulties, EFL learners also experience structural and cognitive challenges in vocabulary learning. Nisrina Lutfiyah, Nuraeningsih, and Rusiana (2023) reported that learners frequently experience difficulties with English pronunciation and spelling. These difficulties are partly caused by the inconsistency between English orthography and pronunciation, which can make it challenging for learners to remember and retrieve newly learned words. Learners may also struggle to understand word meanings, particularly when dealing with synonyms, antonyms, and words with complex connotations. Because the meaning or emotional association of a word may vary according to its social and contextual use, learners may tend to rely on familiar and repetitive vocabulary rather than risk using unfamiliar words incorrectly. These challenges demonstrate that vocabulary mastery involves multiple dimensions, including grammatical use, spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and contextual appropriateness.

One promising approach to addressing these vocabulary learning challenges is morphological awareness. Morphological awareness refers to learners' ability to recognize, analyze, and manipulate the meaningful components of words, such as roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other morphemes. By understanding how words are constructed, learners can infer the meanings of unfamiliar words, recognize relationships among related words, and expand their vocabulary more efficiently. Instead of memorizing each new word individually, learners can use their knowledge of word structure to analyze unfamiliar vocabulary and develop more independent vocabulary-learning strategies.

To understand morphological awareness more clearly, it is first necessary to consider the concept of morphology. According to Dr. P. Mangayarkarasi (2025), morphology is a branch of linguistics that examines how words are structured and formed. Morphology focuses on how words are constructed from smaller meaningful units known as morphemes. Similarly, Eusabinus Bunau (2022) defines morphology as the study of word formation and the various morphological processes through

which words are created and modified. Bunau explains that morphological analysis involves both simplex words, which consist of a single free morpheme, and complex words, which contain combinations of free and bound morphemes. These perspectives indicate that an understanding of morphology enables learners to recognize how words are structured, how words are related to one another, and how morphological changes contribute to grammatical and lexical meaning.

Since morphology examines the internal structure of words, understanding the concept of morphemes is fundamental. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of language that carries semantic or grammatical information. Morphemes are generally classified into free morphemes and bound morphemes. Free morphemes can stand independently as words, such as *book* and *happy*, whereas bound morphemes cannot occur independently and must be attached to another morpheme. Examples of bound morphemes include the prefix *un-* and the suffix *-ness*. Understanding these basic units enables learners to analyze word structures and identify meaningful patterns within unfamiliar vocabulary.

More broadly, a morpheme can be understood as an abstract linguistic unit that is identified through the decomposition or segmentation of words. It represents a particular meaning or grammatical function and may have different phonological realizations. This distinction emphasizes that morphological analysis requires learners to consider form and meaning simultaneously. Therefore, understanding morphemes provides an important foundation for morphological awareness because learners need to recognize both the form of a word component and the meaning or grammatical function associated with it.

Free morphemes can be further distinguished into lexical and grammatical morphemes. Lexical morphemes include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that primarily carry lexical meaning, whereas grammatical morphemes include forms such as articles, pronouns, and conjunctions that primarily perform grammatical functions. In contrast, bound morphemes cannot stand independently and must be attached to other morphemes. They commonly occur as prefixes and suffixes, although some bound roots also require additional morphological elements to form complete words. This distinction provides learners with a

foundation for understanding how English words are structured and how meaning is constructed from different morphological components.

Bound morphemes can also be classified into derivational and inflectional morphemes. Derivational morphemes create new lexical items or change the grammatical category of a word, whereas inflectional morphemes express grammatical information without changing the lexical category of the base word. Inflectional information may include tense, number, comparison, or possession. Understanding this distinction enables learners to recognize how words are formed and how grammatical information is expressed through morphological changes.

The study of morphology is also closely related to word formation processes, which refer to the ways in which new words are created from existing linguistic elements or introduced as entirely new lexical items. The development of science and technology has accelerated lexical expansion by introducing new terms into the English language. Several important word formation processes include derivation, which creates new words by attaching affixes to existing roots or bases; compounding, which combines two or more independent words; and blending, which combines parts of two or more words to create a new lexical item. Other processes include conversion, which changes a word's grammatical category without overt morphological modification; clipping, which shortens an existing word; back-formation, which creates a new word by removing a perceived affix; and coinage, which involves creating entirely new terms. Understanding these processes allows learners to move beyond analyzing individual morphemes and recognize the broader mechanisms through which English vocabulary develops.

To understand word formation more comprehensively, it is also important to distinguish among the concepts of root, base, and stem. A root is the core element of a word that carries its primary lexical meaning and cannot be further analyzed into smaller meaningful units. A base refers to any form to which an affix can be attached, including a root or an already derived word. A stem, meanwhile, is the form to which an inflectional morpheme is added to express grammatical information. Although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably in general discussions, they represent different morphological units and functions. Understanding

these distinctions helps learners analyze word structures more accurately and recognize how English vocabulary is systematically formed and modified.

Roots, bases, and stems interact closely with affixation, one of the most productive morphological processes in English. According to Lieber (2016), affixation is the process of attaching an affix to a base or root to create a new word or express a grammatical relationship. Affixes are generally divided into prefixes, which occur before the base, and suffixes, which occur after the base. Through affixation, words can acquire new meanings, change grammatical categories, or express grammatical information. For example, the suffix *-ness* changes the adjective *happy* into the noun *happiness*, while the prefix *dis-* changes *agree* into *disagree*. Understanding affixation therefore enables learners to recognize recurring patterns in English word formation and infer the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Based on their functions, affixes can be associated with either derivational or inflectional morphology. Derivational morphemes create new lexical items by changing the meaning or grammatical category of a base, whereas inflectional morphemes express grammatical information without creating a new lexical item. For example, the derivational suffix *-ness* changes *happy* into *happiness*, while inflectional suffixes such as *-s* or *-ed* indicate grammatical information such as plurality or past tense. Recognizing the distinction between these two types of morphology helps learners understand how English words are systematically formed and modified and provides an important foundation for developing morphological awareness.

A comprehensive understanding of morphemes, word formation processes, roots, bases, stems, and affixation provides the theoretical foundation for developing morphological awareness. Rather than viewing words as isolated units, learners can gradually understand how words are systematically constructed and how their meanings and grammatical functions are influenced by different morphological elements. This knowledge allows learners to analyze unfamiliar vocabulary more effectively and apply morphological patterns when learning new words.

Morphological awareness refers to learners' conscious ability to recognize, analyze, and manipulate the internal structure of words by

identifying meaningful units such as roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other morphemes. This ability enables learners to recognize relationships among words, infer the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary, and apply their morphological knowledge to support vocabulary learning. In other words, morphological awareness allows learners to move beyond viewing words as arbitrary combinations of letters and instead understand the meaningful relationships that exist among their constituent parts.

Morphological awareness plays an important role in vocabulary development and broader language mastery because it functions as a metalinguistic tool that enables learners to consciously reflect on word structure. Learners with strong morphological awareness can decompose complex words into their constituent parts and use the meanings of those parts to understand unfamiliar vocabulary. This ability can reduce reliance on rote memorization and encourage learners to develop systematic and generative strategies for vocabulary learning. In classroom contexts, morphological awareness can help learners decode unfamiliar words when reading texts, understand complex lexical items, and express more precise ideas in productive language use. Consequently, morphological awareness may contribute to greater learner autonomy and confidence in using English.

A growing body of research has demonstrated the important relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary development, particularly among EFL and second language learners. Learners who are able to identify and analyze meaningful word parts are more likely to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words, establish relationships among lexical items, and acquire vocabulary more efficiently. Morphological awareness has also been suggested as a mediator between morphological knowledge and second-language vocabulary knowledge, indicating that conscious awareness of word structure facilitates vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, the benefits of morphological awareness extend beyond vocabulary size. A meta-analysis by Lee, Wolters, and Kim (2023) found that morphological awareness was positively associated with vocabulary knowledge, word reading, spelling, reading fluency, and reading comprehension across different languages and educational contexts. Their findings also indicated that productive morphological awareness had a particularly strong relationship

with vocabulary development. These findings demonstrate that morphological awareness contributes not only to lexical knowledge but also to broader literacy development.

More recent studies have reinforced these findings. Giazitzidou, Mouzaki, and Padeliadu (2024) reported that morphological awareness contributes to vocabulary growth and supports reading fluency by strengthening learners' ability to recognize and interpret morphologically complex words. Similarly, Lee and Kim (2024) found that students with stronger morphological awareness demonstrated higher levels of vocabulary knowledge, more accurate word reading, and better reading comprehension. In addition, Grande et al. (2024) reported a reciprocal relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary development. As learners become more aware of morphological structures, their vocabulary may expand, while increased vocabulary knowledge may subsequently strengthen their ability to recognize and analyze morphological patterns. Collectively, these findings suggest that morphological awareness is an important linguistic and cognitive resource for vocabulary learning, lexical inferencing, word recognition, vocabulary retention, and literacy development.

Given the substantial evidence supporting the role of morphological awareness in vocabulary development, an important consideration is how this awareness can be effectively cultivated in classroom settings. One pedagogical approach that has received increasing attention is morphological awareness instruction. Rather than expecting learners to develop morphological awareness incidentally, this approach provides explicit guidance in recognizing, analyzing, and manipulating the internal structure of words. Through systematic instruction, learners can be taught to identify roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other meaningful morphemic units and apply this knowledge when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Explicit morphological awareness instruction can therefore support vocabulary development and reading comprehension by encouraging learners to analyze word structures rather than relying exclusively on memorization.

Morphological awareness instruction can involve a variety of activities designed to help learners understand the relationship between word structure and meaning. These activities may include identifying root words, distinguishing

prefixes and suffixes, decomposing morphologically complex words, grouping words into morphological families, and inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words based on their constituent morphemes. Such activities encourage active vocabulary learning and help learners develop greater independence in interpreting new lexical items. Previous research has indicated that explicit instruction in morphology and word formation processes can improve EFL learners' morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge, suggesting that systematic morphology-based instruction can be integrated into English language classrooms.

The effectiveness of morphological awareness instruction, however, depends not only on the instructional strategies employed by teachers but also on how learners perceive and experience the learning process. Students' perceptions can influence their engagement, motivation, and willingness to apply newly acquired strategies when learning vocabulary. Positive perceptions may encourage learners to participate actively in morphological analysis and recognize its usefulness, whereas negative perceptions may reduce participation and the willingness to use morphological strategies. In this regard, Aniuranti et al. (2022) found that students generally had positive perceptions of explicit morphological instruction and reported that it helped them improve vocabulary learning and understand unfamiliar English words.

Perception can be understood as a psychological process through which individuals receive, select, interpret, and respond to information obtained from their environment. In the educational context, students do not merely receive instructional stimuli but actively interpret their learning experiences based on their expectations, previous experiences, and environmental conditions. These interpretations may result in positive or negative responses toward an instructional approach. Positive perceptions can encourage active participation and acceptance, whereas negative perceptions may lead to passivity or rejection. Therefore, students' perceptions provide important information about how an instructional approach is experienced in actual classroom settings.

In the context of morphological awareness instruction, students' perceptions are particularly important because the approach requires learners to actively analyze word structures and apply morphological knowledge to infer the meanings

of unfamiliar vocabulary. Learners who perceive morphological instruction as useful and manageable may be more willing to apply morphological analysis when encountering new words. Conversely, learners who perceive the approach as difficult or confusing may be less likely to use it consistently. Exploring students' perceptions can therefore reveal not only their attitudes toward morphological awareness instruction but also the benefits, difficulties, and learning experiences they encounter during its implementation.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive contribution of morphological awareness instruction to vocabulary learning among EFL and ESL learners. Research on explicit morphological instruction has shown that systematic instruction can improve students' vocabulary development, morphological awareness, and reading comprehension. In addition, learners have reported positive responses toward morphology-based instruction, indicating that learning vocabulary through morphological analysis can be both useful and engaging. These findings suggest that instruction focusing on word structure can provide learners with practical strategies for understanding and acquiring unfamiliar vocabulary.

Recent research has further strengthened the evidence regarding the relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary learning. Morphological awareness has been identified as an important factor in second-language vocabulary knowledge, while the meta-analysis conducted by Lee, Wolters, and Kim (2023) demonstrated its positive relationship with vocabulary knowledge, word reading, spelling, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Aniuranti et al. (2022) also reported that learners generally perceived explicit morphological instruction positively because it helped them understand unfamiliar vocabulary and improve their vocabulary-learning strategies. Furthermore, Grande et al. (2024) identified a reciprocal relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary development, suggesting that growth in one area can reinforce development in the other.

Although previous studies have provided substantial evidence regarding the effectiveness of morphological awareness instruction and its contribution to vocabulary learning, most studies have primarily employed quantitative or

experimental research designs to investigate learning outcomes. Comparatively, fewer studies have explored EFL students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction through qualitative inquiry, particularly in higher education contexts. This creates a need for research that focuses not only on whether morphological awareness instruction improves vocabulary learning but also on how students experience, interpret, and respond to the instructional process. Exploring these perceptions can provide a deeper understanding of the practical benefits and challenges of implementing morphology-based vocabulary instruction.

Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction for vocabulary learning. Specifically, the study investigates how EFL students perceive the implementation of morphological awareness instruction, the benefits and challenges they experience, and how these experiences influence their vocabulary learning. By employing a qualitative case study involving four EFL students, this research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of learners' perspectives on morphological awareness instruction. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on vocabulary instruction and provide practical implications for English language teachers in designing meaningful and effective morphology-based vocabulary learning activities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore EFL students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction for vocabulary learning. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, opinions, and interpretations regarding a particular phenomenon. Specifically, a case study design was adopted to examine students' perceptions within a specific educational context after they had received morphological awareness instruction.

The participants of this study consisted of four EFL students enrolled in the English Education Study Program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they had experienced morphological awareness instruction and were able to provide rich and relevant information regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Their participation was

voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before the interviews were conducted.

Before the data collection process, all participants attended a morphological awareness instruction session designed by the researcher. The instructional session introduced fundamental concepts of English morphology, including morphology, morphemes, types of morphemes, roots, bases, stems, affixation, derivational and inflectional morphemes, and common word formation processes. Throughout the session, participants engaged in explicit learning activities such as identifying roots, prefixes, and suffixes, analyzing morphologically complex words, grouping words into morphological families, and inferring the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary based on their morphological structures. The instruction was delivered through explanations, guided practice, and interactive exercises to ensure that all participants shared a similar learning experience before participating in the interviews.

Following the instructional session, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. This interview format enabled the researcher to prepare guiding questions while allowing flexibility to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and was conducted individually in a quiet and comfortable environment. With the participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed based on the objectives of the study and relevant literature on morphological awareness instruction and students' perceptions. The interview questions explored participants' understanding of morphological awareness, their experiences during the instructional session, their perceived benefits and challenges, and their views on how morphological awareness instruction influenced their vocabulary learning.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis followed six stages: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This method enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns and themes related to students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction for vocabulary learning.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study,

member checking was conducted by allowing participants to review the interview transcripts and verify the accuracy of their responses. Peer debriefing was also employed through discussions with fellow researchers to ensure consistency in coding and theme development. In addition, the researcher maintained detailed documentation throughout the research process to support transparency and dependability.

Based on the results of the Morphological Awareness Instruction and the interviews with the four EFL participants, the main findings reveal a significant paradigm shift from rote memorization to a more meaningful, structural analysis of words. The students demonstrated enhanced autonomy and a reduced reliance on standard dictionaries, as they became capable of breaking down new vocabulary or modern social media terms into their core components to guess meanings independently. This analytical capability directly boosted their self-efficacy, making them feel calmer and far less intimidated when reading or communicating in English, even if their initial semantic guesses were not always perfectly accurate. While elements like prefixes, suffixes, and transparent compounding patterns were highly favored due to their clear visual structures, the students also noted initial cognitive challenges, including short-term retention difficulties and confusion when encountering irregular structural modifications.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study indicates that morphological awareness instruction encouraged participants to shift from rote memorization to a more analytical approach to vocabulary learning. Instead of memorizing isolated words, the participants reported analyzing roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other meaningful word parts to infer the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary. This finding suggests that explicit instruction enabled learners to understand the structural organization of English words and apply this knowledge in vocabulary learning. A similar finding was reported by Apisak Sukying (2020), who concluded that explicit instruction on English affixes significantly improved learners' understanding of morphologically complex words and promoted more effective vocabulary learning strategies.

The second finding demonstrates that morphological awareness instruction fostered greater learner autonomy. After the instructional

sessions, participants reported relying less on dictionaries because they could independently analyze unfamiliar vocabulary by identifying meaningful morphological components. This ability reflects the development of independent vocabulary learning strategies, allowing learners to construct meaning without immediate external assistance. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Long Chen (2022), which showed that explicit morphological instruction significantly contributed to vocabulary growth by enabling learners to recognize derivation, inflection, compounding, and other word-formation processes independently.

Another important finding is the improvement of learners' confidence when encountering unfamiliar English words, particularly while reading academic texts or interpreting contemporary vocabulary commonly found on social media platforms. Even when participants were uncertain about the exact meaning of a word, they reported feeling more confident in making logical inferences based on morphological clues. This suggests that morphological awareness instruction supports not only vocabulary knowledge but also learners' confidence in applying analytical strategies during authentic language use. Similar evidence was presented by Xin Yuan and Xuan Tang (2023), who found that morphological intervention significantly improved college EFL learners' receptive academic vocabulary knowledge and strengthened their ability to process unfamiliar words through morphological analysis.

The participants also identified several aspects of morphological awareness instruction that they considered particularly helpful, especially learning about prefixes, suffixes, and transparent compound words because these components were relatively easy to recognize and apply. Nevertheless, they experienced initial challenges in remembering newly introduced morphological terminology and analyzing words with irregular morphological structures. These findings indicate that although morphology-based instruction is beneficial, learners require continuous exposure and sufficient opportunities for practice before they become proficient in applying morphological knowledge. This interpretation supports the recommendations of Paul Nation and Laurie Bauer (2023), who emphasized that developing morphological awareness requires systematic instruction,

repeated practice, and frequent exposure to common word parts in meaningful learning contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that participants perceived morphological awareness instruction as a valuable instructional approach for vocabulary learning. Beyond improving vocabulary knowledge, the instruction encouraged learners to become more analytical, autonomous, and confident when learning unfamiliar English words. These findings also reinforce the argument that integrating explicit morphology instruction into EFL classrooms can strengthen vocabulary development while promoting independent learning. This conclusion is supported by I Ketut Wardana (2023), who reported that morphological awareness has a significant positive effect on vocabulary enrichment among EFL learners and recommended that morphology-based instruction be integrated into English language teaching to enhance learners' lexical development.

CONCLUSION

This study explored EFL students' perceptions of morphological awareness instruction for vocabulary learning through a qualitative case study involving four participants. The findings revealed that the participants generally perceived morphological awareness instruction positively. The instruction encouraged them to move beyond rote memorization by developing a more analytical approach to learning vocabulary through the identification of roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other meaningful morphemic components. As a result, the participants became more capable of inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words, relying less on dictionaries, and applying morphological analysis to understand new vocabulary encountered in academic texts and everyday contexts.

The findings also showed that morphological awareness instruction contributed to greater learner autonomy and increased confidence in vocabulary learning. Although participants experienced initial challenges in understanding morphological terminology and analyzing irregular word forms, they considered these difficulties manageable through repeated practice and continuous exposure. Overall, the study suggests that explicit morphological awareness instruction can serve as an effective pedagogical approach for supporting vocabulary development and fostering independent learning among EFL

students.

Based on these findings, English teachers are encouraged to integrate morphological awareness instruction into vocabulary teaching by incorporating activities that promote word analysis and meaningful exploration of word structure. Future studies are recommended to involve a larger number of participants, different educational levels, and longer instructional periods to gain a broader understanding of students' perceptions and the long-term impact of morphological awareness instruction on vocabulary learning.

Based on the findings of this study, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate morphological awareness instruction into vocabulary learning to help students develop analytical strategies for understanding unfamiliar words. Students are also encouraged to apply morphological analysis independently when learning new vocabulary. Finally, future researchers are recommended to conduct similar studies with larger samples, different educational settings, or longer instructional periods to obtain more comprehensive findings.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, English teachers are encouraged to integrate morphological awareness instruction into vocabulary learning by providing activities that help students identify and analyze roots, prefixes, suffixes, and other meaningful word components. Students are also encouraged to apply morphological analysis independently when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary to improve their understanding, vocabulary retention, and learning autonomy.

For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct similar studies with larger numbers of participants, different educational levels, and longer instructional periods. Future studies may also explore the long-term effects of morphological awareness instruction on vocabulary development and other English language skills.

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