MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

In the past decade there has been a surge of research interest in morphological awareness (MA), which refers to an individual's ability to decode the morphemic structure of words and further analyze them. This review gives conceptual insights into MA from linguistic perspectives and provides some implications for English language teaching based on empirical research findings. Recent research into MA suggests that there is a significant rate of achievement among students who are exposed to strategies for not only understanding the meanings of words but also recognizing different morphological forms of the same word in reading texts, as opposed to students who are not exposed to such strategies. Indeed, a large number of studies conducted have established that MA is a critical factor in enabling comprehension and ensuring that students have a clearer understanding of vocabulary. In addition, it has emerged that for many educators, an emphasis on a clear understanding of such aspects as prefixes, suffixes, and roots determines the success rate in teaching vocabulary. Therefore, language teachers can engage in teaching MA in the classroom as part of explicit language instruction by adopting some instructional strategies that can be adjusted to suit each age group.

Keywords: implications, learning acquisition, foreign languages, development, phraseology, morphological units, variable grammar structures

Абстракт

В последнее десятилетие наблюдается всплеск исследовательского интереса к морфологической осведомленности (MA), которая относится к способности человека расшифровывать морфемную структуру слов и проводить их дальнейший анализ. Этот обзор дает концептуальное представление о магистратуре с лингвистической точки зрения и дает некоторые выводы для преподавания английского языка на основе результатов эмпирических исследований. Недавние исследования в области MA показывают, что среди учащихся, которые знакомятся со стратегиями не только понимания значений слов, но и распознавания различных морфологических форм одного и того же слова при чтении текстов, наблюдается значительный уровень достижений, в отличие от учащихся, которые не подвергались воздействию. к таким стратегиям. Действительно, большое количество проведенных исследований установил, что MA является критическим фактором в обеспечении понимания и обеспечения того, чтобы студенты имели более четкое понимание словарного запаса. Кроме того, выяснилось, что для многих педагогов упор на четкое понимание таких аспектов, как префиксы,

суффиксов и корней определяет успешность обучения словарному запасу. Таким образом, преподаватели иностранных языков могут участвовать в преподавании магистратуры в классе в рамках явного обучения языку, применяя некоторые учебные стратегии, которые можно адаптировать для каждой возрастной группы.

Ключевые слова: импликации, усвоение знаний, иностранные языки, развитие, фразеология, морфологические единицы, вариативные грамматические конструкции.

Izoh

So'nggi o'n yillikda morfologik xabardorlikka (MA) tadqiqotga qiziqish ortdi, bu odamning so'zlarning morfemik tuzilishini dekodlash va ularni keyingi tahlil qilish qobiliyatini anglatadi. Ushbu sharh lingvistik nuqtai nazardan MA bo'yicha kontseptual tushunchalarni beradi va empirik tadqiqot natijalariga asoslangan ingliz tilini o'rgatish uchun ba'zi natijalarni beradi. Magistratura bo'yicha so'nggi tadqiqotlar shuni ko'rsatadiki, nafaqat so'zlarning ma'nosini tushunish, balki matnlarni o'qishda bir xil so'zning turli morfologik shakllarini tanib olish strategiyalariga duchor bo'lgan talabalar orasida muvaffaqiyatga erishishning sezilarli darajasi mavjud. bunday strategiyalarga. Darhaqiqat, ko'plab tadqiqotlar o'tkazildi

Ma'lumotni tushunishni ta'minlash va o'quvchilarning so'z boyligini aniqroq tushunishlarini ta'minlashning muhim omili ekanligini aniqladi. Bundan tashqari, ko'plab o'qituvchilar uchun prefikslar kabi jihatlarni aniq tushunishga urg'u berilganligi ma'lum bo'ldi.

qo'shimchalar va ildizlar lug'atni o'rgatishdagi muvaffaqiyat darajasini belgilaydi. Shu sababli, til o'qituvchilari har bir yosh guruhiga mos ravishda sozlanishi mumkin bo'lgan ba'zi o'qitish strategiyalarini qabul qilish orqali aniq til o'qitishning bir qismi sifatida sinfda MA ni o'qitish bilan shug'ullanishlari mumkin.

Kalit so‘zlar: ta’sir, o‘zlashtirish, chet tillari, rivojlanish, frazeologiya, morfologik birliklar, o‘zgaruvchan grammatika tuzilmalari.

Introduction

Some metalinguistic skills such as phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and morphological awareness (MA) has a significant positive impact on an individual's ability to perform better in learning a new language (Ginsberg, Honda and O'Neil, 2011). Of these three aspects, however, MA has recently been a focus in both first language (L1) and second/foreign language (L2) literacy development and has especially been examined with regard to skills including reading, writing, and spelling development as well as vocabulary acquisition (Karimi, 2012; Kieffer and Di Felice Box, 2013). MA is often used to refer to the ability of a child to decipher the morphemic structure of words and further analyze them (Carlisle, 1995, 2000). Put another way, students with MA are able to identify the smallest meaningful units of language such as free and bound morphemes as well as inflectional and derivational markers. This is especially important when learners often have difficulty in reading and

grasping academic vocabulary (Kieffer & Di Felice Box, 2013), partly due to the fact that there are many phonological and morphological differences between English and many other languages (Comrie, 1989; Birch, 2007). Given the increasing number of English language learners across the world, it is emerging that language teachers can also help these learners recognize and manipulate new words by promoting their MA (Graves, 2006; Kieffer and Lesaux, 2012a, 2012b). Practically, language learners familiar with the formation of new English words through prefixes, suffixes and roots may have more words and comprehend texts better (Kieffer & DiFelice Box, 2013). Thus, the present paper attempts to explain the significant impact of MA on the language performance of English learners and provide language teachers with the relevant information and implications that may help promote them learners' MA. This paper first gives conceptual insights into morphology, morphemes and morphological awareness, and then presents some pedagogical implications for English language teaching. It is expected that language educators will get the relevant information to adequately structure their instructional program in a manner that would suit their students.

2. Morphology, Morphemes, and Morphological Awareness
2.1. Morphology
The word morphology is usually credited to the German poet, novelist, playwright, and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), who invented it at the beginning of the 19th century in a biological context (Aronoff and Fudeman, 2010). It comes from Greek morhpe which means 'form, shape' and logos which means 'science', yielding 'the study of form or forms.' Biologists use this term to mean 'the study of the form and structure of organisms' and geologists use it to refer to 'the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms.' In linguistics, morphology is frequently defined as the study of the internal structure of words and the rules governing the formation of words in a language (Celik, 2007; Yule, 2010). In addition, Aronoff and Fudeman (2010, pp. 1-2) refer to it as "the mental system involved in word formation" as well as a branch of linguistics that investigates words, their internal structure, and how they are created. This implies that morphology is indeed part of a speaker's grammatical knowledge of a language.

2.2. Morphemes
Morphemes are the minimal units of meaning or grammatical function that are used to create new words (Yule, 2010; Lieber, 2009). These units of meaning consist of forms like blend, and the minimal units of grammatical function include markers used to denote plural or present tense. For instance, the word collectors include three morphemes. One minimal unit of meaning is collected, another minimal unit of meaning –or, (marking "person who collects something"), and the other minimal unit of grammatical function -s (indicating plural). Morphemes can be free and bound. A free morpheme can stand on its own as an independent, single word, for example teach and collect. However, a bound morpheme cannot normally exist on its own and must be typically added to another form (Celik, 2007; Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). For example, the plural morpheme -s can only occur when it is attached to nouns. All English affixes are bound morphemes, consisting of prefixes added to the

beginning of another morpheme (such as un- in words like undo, unfair and unable), and suffixes attached to the end of another 100 Huseyin Oz / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 136 (2014) 98 – 103 morphemes (such as -er/-or in words like reader, collector and writer). Exceptionally, some bound morphemes (e.g., cran-) are called "bound base morphemes" and they do not have meaning on their own; they are meaningful when attached to other morphemes. For example, cran- can merely occur with berry (cranberry, huckleberry). Bound morphemes are either derivational or inflectional. Derivational morphemes are used to create new words or "make words of a different grammatical class from the stem" (Yule, 2010, p. 69). For example, the addition of the derivational morpheme -less changes the noun helps to the adjective helpless, whereas adding un- to the adjective happy creates the adjective unhappy, keeping the word class. Inflectional morphemes are used to denote some aspects of the grammatical function of a word. There are only eight inflectional morphemes in English (Table 1).

3. Implications for English language teaching

English morphology includes knowledge of both derivational and inflectional morphemes. While an awareness of inflectional morphology develops grammatical accuracy, an awareness of derivational morphology plays a significant role in promoting students' vocabulary knowledge. Nagy and Anderson (1984) estimate that 60% of the unknown words which English readers encounter in texts have meanings that may be predicted on the basis of their component morphemes. Similarly, Kieffer and Lesaux (2012a) state that students who understand how words are created by joining suffixes, prefixes, and roots have greater breadth of vocabulary. This aspect of MA is linked Huseyin Oz / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 136 (2014) 98 – 103 101 directly to students' ability to build up their vocabulary. This is largely because the large majority of English words have meanings that can be deciphered based on the separate parts of the word (Kieffer & DiFelice Box, 2013). It is also fair to suggest that MA may be particularly useful for acquiring academic vocabulary. Although many researchers find it difficult and complex to define academic vocabulary, they agree that this domain includes words which 1) are used as tools for academic purposes, 2) carry abstract meanings, 3) originated in Latin/Greek, 4) are polysemous, 5) include cross-disciplinary words as well as discipline- or domain-specific words, and 6) are used for grammatical metaphor (Kieffer & Di Felice Box, 2013). Thus, learners with well-developed derivational MA who meet such words as empowerment, productivity, or decentralization may be better able to deduce meaning by understanding their relationship with the more common words power, produce, and center, thereby broadening their vocabulary items. Studies carried out on reading and MA reveal that in many instances students with the ability to break words into their meaningful parts not only build up their vocabulary but also have a better comprehension of reading and therefore build up their skills in writing (Kieffer and Lesaux, 2007; Karimi, 2012). An awareness of derivational morphemes often gives students an indication of word meaning and thus acts as a guide in enabling better comprehension of words and texts (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012b). It has also been argued that morphological awareness shares a link with a student's ability to, not only describe complex words, but also indicate his/her ability with regard to reading comprehension and writing (Ginsberg et al., 2011). A critical awareness of both morphology as well as

phonology has an impact on language learners' ability to both listen and speak efficiently in English. Indeed, there is a relationship between learners' knowledge of the base form of the word and their ability to recognize words efficiently enough to be able to speak in a coherent manner (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2009). Given that morphology pays a critical role in aiding language learners effectively pick up vocabulary, a keen knowledge of derivational morphemes will aid them in significantly improving their listening and speaking skills as well. Indeed, language learners benefit significantly from the use of morphology to critically determine word meanings that are crucial towards ensuring that they improve their listening and speaking skills. Moreover, MA aids the students in detecting semantic irregularities and therefore has a greater understanding of the meaning associated with different words in English. This is significant since it impacts on their pronunciation skills (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2009). Drawing upon previous research reports and studies, some authors propose instructional strategies that can be used to promote students' MA in language classrooms. These can be summed up as follows:

• Teaching morphology explicitly as a separate component of vocabulary instruction.
• Promoting learners' morphological awareness as a cognitive strategy through explicit steps in which learners: 1) recognize that they do not know the word, 2) analyze the word for recognizable morphemes, both in the roots and suffixes, 3) think of a possible meaning based upon the parts of the word, and 4) check the meaning of the word against the context.
• Teaching learners to recognize the use of prefixes, suffixes, and roots, and how words are transformed.
• Teaching learners true cognates – words with similar spelling and meanings in English and the native language – to help their reading comprehension.

Conclusions

Morphological awareness refers to individuals' explicit knowledge and awareness of the internal structure of words and their capacity to reflect upon and manipulate that structure (Carlisle, 1995, p. 194). It includes learners' knowledge of both derivations and inflections in language together. As a recent focus of research in both L1 and L2 literacy development, it has especially been examined with regard to skills including reading, writing, spelling development as well as a student's ability to acquire vocabulary. Language learners who can recognize how English words are formed by joining prefixes, suffixes, and roots are more likely to acquire more words, comprehend texts better, and in turn become more proficient in writing. A number of researchers have argued that the use of derived words is key to ensuring that learners are able to understand and practice vocabulary. Language teachers can take up teaching morphological awareness in the classroom as part of explicit language instruction by adopting some instructional strategies that can be adjusted to suit each age group. One way is to teach learners derivational morphology explicitly and make it a distinct component of normal vocabulary instruction. Second, asking learners to break down words into their morphemes is a "cognitive strategy" that can be used to promote their morphological awareness of English. Third, language teachers could teach their learners how prefixes, affixes and roots are used to form new words form existing ones. Beyond this are a number of cognate words with similar spelling and meanings in English and the native language that may aid learners in reading texts. To sum up, implications for teaching and learning are significant as

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recent research reveals that learners with MA have better language performance as well as larger vocabulary and better comprehension. The contents of L2 vocabulary instruction lessons should include teaching morphological awareness as in L1 literacy development endeavors.

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