
Iraqi EFL Learners' Recognition and Production of English Derivational Suffixes

Instructor. Mubdir Shihab Ahmed (Ph.D)

*The Open Educational College/ Ministry
of Education*

e-mail: mubdir_alazawi@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aims at testing the Iraqi EFL learners' recognition and production of the derivational suffixes in English and namely, noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. It is hypothesized that the Iraqi EFL learners find difficulty in forming new correct parts of speech from the roots due to their unsureness of the suitable derivational suffixes. Also, they tend to use derivational suffixes with different parts of speech depending on different factors like guessing and generalization. The sample of this study is fourth-year Iraqi students of the Department of English/ College of Education Ibn Rushd/ University of Baghdad of the academic year (2014-2015). To achieve the aim of this study a test, which comprises two questions, has been constructed. A multiple-choice question at the recognition level and a completion question at the production level are constructed. The findings of the test show that Iraqi EFL university learners face difficulty in recognizing and producing the derivational suffixes of different parts of speech. In the light of the results, some conclusions have been drawn and a number of recommendations and suggestions have been presented.

Key words: *EFL learners, recognition , production ,derivational suffixes*

Section One

1. Introduction

Derivational morphology studies the principles governing the construction of new words with no reference to the specific grammatical role a word might play in a sentence. In the formation of “*drinkable*” from “*drink*”, “*careless*” from “*care*”, for example, we see the formation of new words, each with its own grammatical properties (Crystal,2005). Derivation is a term used in Morphology to refer to one of the main processes of word-formation (derivational morphology), the other being inflectional. These terms also apply to the two types of affix involved in word-formation. Basically, the result of a derivational process is a new word (nation → national), whereas the result of an inflectional (or non-derivational) process is a different form of the same word (nation/ → nations). Derivational affixes change the grammatical class of morphemes to which they are

attached (as in suffixation e.g. *-tion* is a noun-forming derivational suffix). They also usually occur closer to the root morpheme than do inflections (e.g. *nation-al-ize + -ing/-s/-d*) (Crystal,2003:132). Derivational suffixes usually change both the meaning and the word class; that is, a suffix is often added to a verb or adjective to form a new noun with a different meaning (e.g. *dark: darkness, agree: agreement, friend: friendship*) (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002).

2. The Problem

Learners of English as a foreign language face a problem resulting from their unsureness about the base word and about which derivational suffix to use to form the needed part of speech. Subsequently, they do not know which suffixes can be attached to which root words. More specifically learners need to know that the choice of a particular derivational suffix determines a particular form of a word. Not knowing how the system works, learners often choose a derivational suffix at random. In other words, problems in word class derivation occur because learners have not sharpened their linguistic intuitions to the point where they can choose the derivational suffix that will allow them to form a new word.

3. Aims of the Study

The study aims at

1. testing the Iraqi EFL learners' recognition and production of the derivational suffixes in English.
2. identifying the differences among learners with regard to the recognition and the production in the four areas of the derivational suffixes namely, noun, verb, adjective, and adverb.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

It is hypothesized that the Iraqi EFL learners:

1. find difficulty in forming new correct parts of speech from the roots due to their unsureness of the suitable derivational suffixes.
2. tend to use derivational suffixes with different parts of speech depending on different factors like guessing and generalization.

5. Limits of the Study

This study is limited to the investigation of the derivational suffixes in English only. The sample of the study will be limited to the fourth year students of the English Department at the College of Education/ Ibn Rushd/ University of Baghdad.

6. Procedures of the Study

In order to achieve the aims of this study:

1. a test of learners' recognition and production of derivational suffixes will be carried out.
2. analysing the results of the test by using statistical measures .

7. Value of the Study

It is hoped that the findings and the results of this study will be of value to teachers who are interested in knowing the difficulties the learners encounter in recognizing and producing derivational suffixes of different parts of speech.

8. Methodology

8.1 Population and Sample Selection

The sample of the study consists of 30 subjects of the fourth academic year (2014-2015) of the Departments of English at the College of Education/ Ibn-Rushd/ University of Baghdad.

8.2 Test Construction

The researcher constructs a test about the nominal suffixes, verbal suffixes, adjectival suffixes, and adverbial suffixes used in the test of the same number. The test consists of two parts, the first is concerned with recognition level and the second is concerned with production level. In both the recognition and production levels, the test is of one question consists of 24 items, i.e. all the items of the test are 44 items. Each item of the test is given one mark if it is correct, and zero if the item is incorrect.

8.3 Test validity

In order to ensure the validity of this test, it was exposed to a jury of experts (See: appendix 2) to provide the researcher with their opinions in verifying the items of the test, checking its validity and suitability. The jurors agreed upon its validity and suitability.

9. Analysis of the Results

To find out the recognition level, one-sample t-test has been used. The computed t-test value, which is (17.209), has been found higher than the tabulated t-test value, which is (2.045). This means that there is a statistical difference between the sample mean score, which is (8.66), and with a standard deviation of (2.758), and that of the total population, which is (7.636), on a level of significance of (0.05) and (29) degree of freedom. (See: Table (1) below)

Sample	mean	SD	DF	t-Test computed/tabulated		Level of significance
30	8.666	2.757	29	17.209	2.045	0.05

Table (1)

As for the production level of the fourth year, Iraqi EFL College learners, one-sample t-test has been used. The statistical analysis by using the SPSS shows that the computed t-test value is (16.349), which is higher than the tabulated t-test value, which is (2.045), on (0,05) level of significance and (29) degree of freedom. This result

signifies that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample mean score, which is (**11.1333**), and a standard deviation, which is (**3.729**), and of the theoretical mean, which is (**9.740**). This means that the students' level in production is good. (See: Table (2))

Sample	Mean	SD	DF	t-Test		Level of significance
				computed	tabulated	
30	11.133	3.729	9.740	2.045	16.349	0.05

Table (2)

To check whether there is a statistical difference between recognition and production of the students' level, two independent sample-t-test has been used. The mean of recognition of the students is (**8.77**) with standard deviation of (**2.777**), while the mean of the production of the students is (**11.034**) with standard deviation of (**3.849**). The computed t-test value, which is (**2.621**) on (**0.05**) level of significance and (**58**) degree of freedom, whereas the tabulated t-test value is (**2.000**). This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the recognition and production of the Iraqi learners in favor of the production test. (See: Table (3) below)

Sample	Mean	SD	DF	t-Test		Level of significance
				computed	tabulated	
30	8.774	2.777	58	2.000	2.621	0.05

Table (3)

To identify the differences among the four areas of the study, which are the derivational suffixes of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, the ANOVA has been used. The statistical analysis shows that the computed F-ratio is (**0.483**), which is lower than the tabulated one, which is (**2.62**). This is clear from the mean score of each area as shown in the Table (4) below.

Areas	No.	Mean	SD
Noun	30	1.9667	1.03335
Verb	30	2.3000	1.17884
Adjective	30	2.2000	1.18613
Adverb	30	2,2333	1.16511
Total	120	2.1750	1.13510

Table (4)

This shows that there is no statistically significant differences among the four areas under study in the recognition level. (See Table (5) below)

Recognition	Means	DF	F-ratio Computed/tabulated		Level of Significance
Between groups	1.892	3	0.483	2.62	0.05
Within groups	151.433	116			
Total	153.325	119			

Table (5)

On the other hand, to identify the differences among the four areas of the study, i.e. the derivational suffixes of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in the production levels, ANOVA has been used. The statistical analysis shows that the computed F-ratio is **(18.940)** is higher than the tabulated one, which is **(2.62)**. This signifies that there are statistical difference among the four areas. To decide the score of difference, the mean scores have been checked as shown in Table (6) below.

Areas	NO.	Mean	SD
Noun	30	4.3667	1.29943
Verb	30	1.8000	1.54026
Adjective	30	2.3000	1.36836
Adverb	30	2.5000	1.43238
Total	120	2.7417	1.70267

Table (6)

Therefore the difference is found statistical in the noun area since its mean score is higher than the other ones. There is a statistical difference among the four areas in favor of noun derivational suffixes. (See Table (7) below)

Production	Means	DF	F-ratio Computed/tabulated		Level of significance
Between groups	113.425	3	18.940	2.62	0.05
Within groups	231.567	116			
Total	344.992	119			

Table (7)

10. Conclusions

In the light of the analysis, the following conclusions have been arrived at:

1. The results find out that there is no statistically significant differences among the four areas under study in the recognition level. This shows that the Iraqi learners recognize all the derivation suffixes at the same level.
2. The results also point out that there is a statistically significant difference between the recognition and production of the Iraqi learners in favor of the production. This means that the Iraqi learners' level in production is better than their level in recognition.
3. There is a statistical difference among the four areas in favor of noun derivational suffixes. This signifies that the Iraqi learners' production of the nominal suffixes is better than the other types of suffixes. This shows that the nominal suffixes are easier to the learners than other suffixes.

11. Recommendations

On the basis of the results of the research stated above, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Intensive practice is needed in mastering the different types of the derivational suffixes in English.
2. EFL instructors are advised to attract EFL learners' attention that derivational suffixes can be identified for the first time by the meaning rather than by position.
3. Attracting learners' attention to morpheme clues in recognizing derivational suffixes, which is an important way for EFL learners to know the part of speech of the word.
4. Practice in an amusing way is the shortest method to make EFL learners master producing derivational suffixes in writing and speaking.
5. EFL instructors should concentrate on the most difficult derivational suffixes to language learners.

12. Suggestions for further Studies

In the light of the results obtained, the following suggestions for further studies can be put forward:

1. A similar study may be conducted in other colleges for both genders (males and females).
2. A similar study may be conducted to compare between the learners' ability to recognize and produce different types of prefixes in English.

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Appendix (1)

The Test

The present test has been designed primarily to investigate Iraqi EFL learners' recognition and production of the derivational suffixes in English. The first question measures the students' responses in recognizing the derivational suffixes, while the second question measures their production of these suffixes.

The items of the test have been chosen from different books on grammar and dictionaries. (See: the references)

Recognition Level

Q.1. Circle the word that best completes the meaning of the sentence:

1. My teeth are very to cold water.
a. sensitive b. sensitivity c. sensitively
2. They the sale of alcoholic drinks.
a.legally b. legalize c. legal
3. I invited her to my party. I sent her an
a. invitation b. invitingly c. inviting
4. They dress with great formality. They dress very.....
a. formal b. formally c. formalism
5. Their behavior a bad impression .
a. create b. creative c. creation
6. Your answer is right.
a. exactly b. exact c. exactness
7. Jill is always very critical. Jill is a severe

- a. critic b. critically c. criticism**
8. He has a lot of courage. He is a fellow.
- a. encourage b. courageous c. courageously**
9. He asked us to forgive him. He asked for
- a. forgiveness b. forgivable c. forgivingly**
10. All the toys in the shop windows the children.
- a. fascinating b. fascination c. fascinate**
11. He was a successful student. He finished his study
- a. success b. successfully c. successive**
12. He has great faith. He is a man .
- a. faithful b. faithfully c. faithfulness**
13. Many of the results were not.....
- a. application b. applicable c. applicant**
14. She is very beautiful. Her is incredible.
- a. beautifully b. beautify c. beauty**
15. He is doingwell.
- a. amazingly b. amaze c. amazement**
16. The results of the meeting were not.....
- a. significant b. significance c. significantly**
17. The patient is getting on
- a. satisfactorily b. satisfaction c. satisfactory**
18. The window is small and does not enough light.
- a. admittedly b. admittance c. admit**
19. The house was decorated with flowers.
- a. tastefulness b. tastefully c. taste**
20. What I have said does notto you.
- a. apply b. applicable c. application**
21. I..... him as a big ,tall man.
- a. imagine b. imagination c. imaginable**
22. They the loss to the police.
- a. notification b. notify c. notifiable**
23. Her parent's morals are veryon her behavior
- a. noticeable b. notice c. noticeably**
24. His is remarkable .
- a. honestly b. honest c. honesty**

Production Level

Q.2. Do as required:

A. Give the NOUN forms of the following words

1. arrive ,
2. Confident ,
3. win ,
4. assess ,
5. happy ,
6. beautiful ,

B. Give the VERB forms of the following words

7. memory ,
8. regular ,
9. humid ,
10. Formulation ,
11. emphasis ,
12. civil ,

C. Give the ADJECTIVE forms of the following words

13. Romance ,
14. Read ,
15. Culture ,
16. Offense ,
17. express ,
18. notice ,

D. Give the ADVERB forms of the following words

19. continue ,
20. poor ,
21. consider ,
22. hope ,
23. nature ,
24. dark ,

Appendix 2***The Jury***

The jury members are arranged according to their academic titles:

1. Prof. Nidham Shiet Hameed (Ph.D) (College of Arts, University of Baghdad)
2. Prof. Fatin Khairi (Ph.D) (College of Education/ Ibn Rushd, University of Baghdad)
3. Assist. Prof. Kareem Fadhil (Ph.D) (College of Education/ Ibn Rushd, University of Baghdad)
4. Inst. Dhiyaa Mizhir (College of Education/ Ibn Rushd, University of Baghdad)

تميز وتحصيل المتعلمين العراقيين للغة الإنجليزية
كلغة أجنبية للواحق الانجليزية المشتقة

م. د. مبدر شهاب احمد ، لغة انكليزية / لغة

الكلية التربوية المفتوحة / وزارة التربية

البريد الالكتروني: mubdir_alazawi@yahoo.com

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار تميز المتعلمين العراقيين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتحصيلهم للواحق المشتقة باللغة الإنجليزية وهي الاسم والفعل والصفة والظرف. تفترض الدراسة ان المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يجدون صعوبة في تكوين أجزاء صحيحة جديدة من الكلام من الجذور بسبب عدم التأكد من اللواحق الاشتقاقية المناسبة. كما أنهم يميلون إلى استخدام اللواحق المشتقة مع أجزاء مختلفة من الكلام اعتمادا على عوامل مختلفة مثل التخمين والتعميم. عينة هذه الدراسة هي طلاب السنة الرابعة العراقيين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/ كلية التربية ابن رشد/ جامعة بغداد للعام الدراسي (٢٠١٤-٢٠١٥). لتحقيق الهدف من هذه الدراسة، تم بناء اختبار يتكون من سؤالين سؤال متعدد الخيارات ضمن مستوى التمييز وسؤال تكملة ضمن مستوى التحصيل. تبين نتائج الاختبار أن متعلمي الجامعة العراقيين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون صعوبة في التعرف على اللواحق المشتقة لأجزاء مختلفة من الكلام وتحصيلها. وفي ضوء نتائج البحث، تم استخلاص بعض الاستنتاجات وتقديم عدد من التوصيات والاقتراحات.