

# Influence of Morphological Awareness on the Reading Comprehension of Students at the Tertiary Education Level in Ebonyi State

**Ngozi O. Obeka Ph.D.**

Department of Arts & Social Science Education  
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol12n43346>

Published April 14, 2024

**Citation:** Obeka N.O. (2024) Influence of Morphological Awareness on the Reading Comprehension of Students at the Tertiary Education Level in Ebonyi State, *British Journal of Education*, Vol.12, Issue 4, 33-46

**ABSTRACT:** *This paper examined the influence of morphological awareness on the reading comprehension of students at the tertiary education level in Ebonyi State. The study utilized the descriptive survey research design. Three objectives and three research questions were posed to guide the study. The target population comprised 22000 undergraduates from the south east part of Nigeria. A sample size of 220 respondents was selected using the simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using the statistical tools of mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that morphological awareness had a positive impact on student' reading comprehension. Result of the study also revealed that students' knowledge of inflectional morphemes improved their reading comprehension. Result also showed that awareness of the differences between inflectional and derivational morphemes enhanced students' reading comprehension. Based on these findings, one of the recommendations was that curriculum planners should make Morphology a compulsory course to be taught at all levels of education in the university to enhance morphological awareness among undergraduate students and improve their ability to spell words, read words and understand sentences.*

**KEYWORDS:** morphology, morphological awareness, reading comprehension, undergraduates

## INTRODUCTION

Morphology is defined as the study of the internal structures of words and word formation processes. Words are made up of smaller recognizable units called morphemes. Morphological awareness refers to the capacity to reflect on and manipulate morphemes and the morphological structure of words, (Kuo & Anderson, 2006). According to Xie, Zhang, Wu & Nguyem (2019) morphological awareness has been shown to be a unique contribution to reading comprehension across languages beyond substantive controls. Qiao, Yeung, Shen & Chu (2022) states that morphological awareness involves recognizing and manipulating a word's smallest linguistic unit. They observe that more successful word learners use morphological analysis to understand and learn new words and to predict literacy development. This means

that morpheme identification and word relationships are also crucial for vocabulary development. Morphemes are the smallest unit of meaning in language. For example the word assessment is made up of two morphemes: the base, ' assess' and the affix '-ment'; adding the prefix 're-' to make the word 'reassessment' changes the meaning into, 'to assess something again'. Morphological awareness is the conscious awareness of the morphemic structure of words and someone's ability to reflect on and manipulate the structure.( Carlisle, 1995). Morphological awareness provides students with different types of analytical skills. The ability to break down complex words into smaller meanings is called morphological discrimination, (Aydin & Yildirim, 2017).

There are two types morphemes, free and bound morpheme. Bound morphemes are either derivational or inflectional. Derivational morphemes are used to create new words or to make words of a different grammatical class from the stem. All affixes are bound morphemes. Prefixes are added at the beginning of another morpheme while suffixes are added at the end of another morpheme. Inflectional morphemes are used to denote grammatical function of a word. Manolitsis, Grigorakis & Georgiou (2017) observe that inflectional morphemes may help comprehension of sentences because they mark the syntactic relations between the words. They also found a strong relationship between inflectional morphology and concurrent reading comprehension. For example, when the 's' is added to a free morpheme like girl, it changes to the plural girls. It remains a noun and does not change the word category. These are contradicted because of the job their affixes play, which have various functions. The first is syntactic; when it permits to decide gender orientation, number and verbs tense. Inflectional morphology, in this way, fits in with the varieties of words as indicated by their syntactic context. Hence, Liu (2023) states that inflectional morphemes may help comprehension of sentences because they mark the syntactic relations between the words. Derivational affixes, on the other hand, have a semantic job. The field of derivational morphology identified with word development and the word structure they can have among each other; for example; (shoe-shoes-shoeless). Morphological awareness of words can affect proficiency at lexical level (spelling and vocabulary) and levels beyond word level (reading comprehension). According to Apel (2014) morphological awareness includes awareness of the spoken and printed types of morphemes; the meaning which affixes bring to base words ( e.g how -ed causes a verb to refer to the past or re- means (something occurred again); the manner in which printed affixes connect to base words( e.g., some suffixes require a consonant to be doubled or dropped when attached to a base word in written form); and the relation between base words and their inflected or derived types ( e.g, knowing that a variety of words are related because they share the same base, such as act, action, react or activity. Inflection involves adding affixes to mark grammatical information without changing the grammatical category of the base (e.g walk - walked). Derivation involves the addition of affixes, which results in a change of meaning, as well as grammatical category, (Liu, Groen & Cain, 2024)

Reading comprehension ability is one of the language skills that focuses on decoding ability and literal understanding of the text, (Hiebert & Daniel; Kotzer, Kirby & Heggie 2021). It involves the process of meaning-making, and morphemes are perceived and manipulated during semantic information acquisition, (Li & Wu, 2015). Reading comprehension is the

ability to process a text, understand its meaning and so integrated with what one already knows. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing meaning of words, ability to understand meaning of a word from discourse context, ability to follow the organization of a passage and identify antecedents and references in it, ability to recognize the literacy device or propositional structures used in a passage and determine its tone, to understand the situational mood (agents, objects, temporal and spatial reference points, casual and intentional infections, etc). Reading comprehension refers to the textual mental image construction generated by the interaction between the text content and the readers cognitive process through the interaction of vocabulary knowledge, reasoning ability, word reading, work memory, background knowledge and so on,( Cheng, 2021). Students knowledge of words and vocabulary, particularly, their comprehension of words that contain multiple morphemes can be determined by their level of morphological awareness, (Yullanawati, Prawiro & Anggrarini 2023). Students awareness of morphology and word structure is beneficial in vocabulary learning since it allows them to identify unknown words and figure out what they mean,( Quy, Xuan, Thao & Thuy, 2022).

Research has consistently shown that morphological awareness can not only promote decoding of words, but also promote vocabulary development, and have a direct or indirect effect on reading comprehension, ( Cheng, Li, & Wu (2015, 2017, Xie, Zang, Wu & Nguyem 2019). According to Kyle, Michael & Deacon (2017) morphological decoding may play a prominent role in facilitating reading comprehension because it represents an online process of decoding unfamiliar morphological complex words encountered during reading. They also define morphological analysis as inferring the meaning of an unfamiliar morphologically complex word based on its morpheme constituents. It must be noted that morphological analysis is likely to be essential for reading comprehension given that half of the uncommon words encountered in print by students have meanings decipherable from their smaller morphemic units. Hence, morphological awareness may significantly contribute to reading comprehension. Students equipped with morphological awareness can break down complex words into smaller, manageable units which facilitate their understanding of the text. They can deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words by recognizing familiar prefixes, suffixes or roots within them.

According to Yadav & Yadav (2021) inflectional morphology improves learners grammar and derivational morphology improves their vocabulary in writing. They also observe that the ability to decode complex words enhances their overall comprehension of the material. Morphological awareness enhances students ability to analyze texts, deepens their critical reading skills and allows them to engage more thoughtfully with literature and other written works. Developing morphological awareness fosters metacognition which is the ability to think about one's thinking. Students who are conscious of their approach to word recognition, spelling and vocabulary acquisition can adapt and improve their strategies. Morphological awareness is not only applicable for vocabulary development but also helpful for improving reading skill (reading ability and reading comprehension), writing development and understanding speech production, (Akbulut, 2017). Individuals with strong morphological awareness can identify and understand morphemes: They can recognize prefixes (e.g 'un-' in undo), suffixes ('-ed' in walked), and roots (play in playful) within words. They can manipulate

morphemes add, remove or change morphemes to create new words or alter the meaning of words ( e.g. changing 'happy' to 'unhappy' by adding the prefix 'un-').. Recognize the relationship between words: They can understand how words are related to one another through shared morphemes, which can aid vocabulary development and comprehension. Thus, if a student can break down long, unfamiliar word into its constituent morphemes, they may be better equipped to decode and understand the meaning of the word. Morphological awareness promotes effective reading skills by increasing students comprehension ability. Washburn & Mulchay (2019) observe that learners with an awareness of morphology can improve their reading skills. When students understand the meaning of morphemes they are better able to decode and understand complex words, leading to improved comprehension of texts. Morphological awareness also helps students identify words with similar meanings which makes it easier for them to synthesize information with multiple texts.

Vocabulary knowledge (knowledge of word meanings) and morphological awareness are the two language skills hypothesized to be essential in reading comprehension. According to Zhang and Koda (2012), morphological awareness contributes to vocabulary knowledge directly and indirectly through the mediation of student's lexical inference ability. The indirect effect of morphological awareness on reading comprehension is significant, both through the mediation of lexical inference ability and vocabulary knowledge.

### **Theoretical framework**

Theoretically, this work is based on the theoretical framework of Lexical Quality Hypothesis explained by Perfetti (2007) in which representations of words are stored in a mental lexicon. These stored representations develop over time and include specific information about a words meaning , pronunciation and spelling. The lexical quality hypothesis claims that the quality of a reader's representation of a word is dependent on the precision of that word's phonological representation, orthographic representation and semantics and morphosyntax. Perfetti's hypothesis suggest that individuals with strong underlying linguistic awareness may have higher quality lexical representations due to strong and accurate integration of these underlying linguistic processes and more encounters with multi-morphemic words. Stronger representations might help readers to learn or spell unfamiliar multi-morphemic words by activating knowledge of more familiar morphemes. Conversely, individuals with weaker lexical quality may have partial or inaccurate representations of multi-morpheme words and/or weaker awareness of anyone or combination of the underlying linguistic processes, (Wilson-Fowler & Kenn Apel, 2015 ). The lexical quality hypothesis, the general lexicon of skilled readers contains more high quality representations than that of the less skilled readers, (Perfetti & Hart, 2002). Relational awareness of morphologically complex words can lead to both breadth and depth in vocabulary knowledge. For example; one aspect of depth of vocabulary knowledge is the ability to identify all morphemes in the word. Both nation and national have a higher frequency in English than nationalize and nationalization, whereas, the latter two examples would most likely be found in text, rather than in oral language. Therefore, the ability to break down the word nationalization into its individual morphemes, including the base noun nation+ the adjectival suffix-al \_ the verbal suffix-ize + the nominal suffix-tion, and assigning meaning to the smaller parts, could help to bring forth comprehension of the whole word.

Breadth of vocabulary can also be extended in the same process. According to Perfetti & Hart (2007), although text comprehension requires skills beyond lexical knowledge, a strong lexical representation system provides the scaffolding upon which to build a representation of the text. They observe that skilled readers show more coherent representations of more words than do less skilled readers. According to them, skill in reading rests to a considerable extent on knowledge of words.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Similarly, Kyle, Michael & Deacon(2017) carried out a study on morphological awareness and reading comprehension: Examining mediating factors. Multivariate path analyses revealed evidence of two indirect relations and one direct relation between morphological awareness and reading comprehension. In the first indirect path, morphological awareness contributed to morphological decoding, which then influenced word reading and finally reading comprehension. In a second indirect path, morphological awareness contributed to morphological analysis which contributed to reading comprehension. Finally, in a direct path, morphological awareness contributed to reading comprehension beyond all other variables. Yullanawati, Prawiro & Anggrarini (2023) in a study on undergraduate students' morphological awareness and difficulties in EFL class. The morpheme identification test was used to measure how well first year college students can analyze and break down complicated words into their smaller meanings. Meanwhile, the word relation test was administered to measure undergraduate students awareness of relations among base or root words and their inflected or derived forms.

The result showed that the students performed better in breaking down inflected forms than those in derived forms. As in the word relation test, it was discovered that the students had done better in identifying morphologically related word pairs. Quy, Xuan An, Thao Vy, Chau, & Tian (2022) carried out a study on morphological awareness of students majoring in English studies towards vocabulary learning in a university in the south of Vietnam. The result of the study showed that students' awareness level were average, and they were knowledgeable enough to employ this strategy for acquiring vocabulary. Additionally, it also enables students to comprehend morphology's benefits and drawbacks during their learning vocabulary process to variance in word reading beyond that accounted for by phonological awareness and orthographic processing. Furthermore, of the reading-related skills, only morphological made a unique contribution to reading comprehension beyond variance accounted for by word reading. Taken together, these results demonstrate that morphological awareness makes unique contributions to university students' reading achievement and is an additional difficulty for students with a self-reported history of reading difficulties. Metsala, Parrila, Conrad & Deacon (2019) in a study on morphological awareness and reading achievement in university students found that students with a self-reported history of reading difficulties showed moderate to large gaps in each area of reading achievement and timed reading comprehension appeared more severely impaired than word reading efficiency. These students had a deficit in morphological awareness that persisted even when (a) phonological awareness and orthographic processing skills or (b) word-reading accuracy were statistically controlled. Kotzer, Kirby & Heggie(2021)

investigated the contribution of morphological awareness to university students reading comprehension ability. Result showed that (a) morphological awareness was a significant predictor of both reading speed and reading comprehension. (b) morphological awareness continued to predict reading comprehension after also controlling text reading speed. They found that morphological awareness is important to reading comprehension for skilled adults learners. Al-Haydan (2020) in a study on the impact of morphological awareness on EFL secondary school students reading comprehension skills found that a strong positive correlation between the students' morphological awareness and the improvement of their reading comprehension skills in the post-test. The study confirms that the direct instruction of prefixes, suffixes and base words is useful and should be emphasized when teaching because it significantly increases students morphological awareness. A study conducted by Brinchmann, Hjetland & Lyster (2015) the result support the hypothesis that comprehensive word knowledge instruction is effective in improving language abilities underpinning reading comprehension.

Levesque, Kieffer and Deacon (2018) investigated how core skills surrounding morphemes support the development of reading comprehension among English speaking students. The findings showed that students use of morphemes to infer the meaning of unfamiliar complex words supported the enhancement of reading comprehension. A related study carried out by Yulianawati, Prawiro & Anggrarini (2022) on undergraduate students morphological awareness and difficulties in EFL class found that students performed better in breaking down inflected forms than those in derived forms. Result of the word relation test showed that the students had done better in identifying morphologically related word pairs

Dodur (2021) in a study inflectional morphological awareness, word reading and reading comprehension of Turkish students with reading disabilities found that possessive inflectional morphology contributed significantly to reading comprehension for students with reading disability while two inflectional morphology task had a significant contribution to reading comprehension for all students. A study on the developmental relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension among Chinese-speaking students in Grades 1,3 and 5 respectively was conducted by Xie, Zhang, Wu & Nguyem (2019). The structural equation modeling results indicated that children's compounding awareness made a significant direct contribution to reading comprehension only from grade 5 to 6.

Xie (2023) carried out a study titled, 'specifying the contributions of morphological awareness to decoding, syntactic awareness and reading comprehension in Chinese children learning English as a second language'. The study aimed to explore the specific contributions of derivational, inflectional and compounding morphological awareness to reading comprehension through decoding and syntactic awareness. Among others, findings showed that derivational and inflectional morphological had unique direct effects on reading comprehension beyond decoding and syntactic awareness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most students in Nigerian universities find it difficult to extract meaning from texts. This is observed in the number of students that fail their courses woefully at the end of each semester. Many of them find themselves carrying over these courses due to repeated failure. This problem is not just limited to students in the language department but also those in other course option. Providing students with explicit knowledge of morphological structure is essential for two reasons. Firstly, it helps learners read and spell any kind of text. Secondly, it plays a primary role in students' vocabulary growth, enhances their knowledge of morphemes and aids reading comprehension.

There are many factors that could lead to poor reading comprehension and inability to decode words and think critically among undergraduate students. The use of English derivational morphemes, prefix and suffix is a potential problem among students. When producing derivative forms and morphemes, they make mistakes in choosing a suitable morpheme (affix) to form a word, which helps learners to study the sentence structure correctly. English derivational morphemes, suffixes and affixes cause problem for students. Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine the impact of morphological awareness on students reading comprehension.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of morphological awareness on secondary school students reading comprehension. Specifically, this study sought to find out:

1. Identify the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension.
2. Examine how the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improves reading comprehension.
3. Find out how the awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes enhance students reading comprehension.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension?
2. How does the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improve reading comprehension?
3. How does the awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes enhance students reading comprehension?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research study utilized the descriptive survey research design. This study was carried out among undergraduate students in Ebonyi state. The population of this study comprised 22000 undergraduates. A sample size of 220 students was selected for the study through the simple random sampling technique. The main instrument used for collection of data was a structured questionnaire. The face-to-face method was used in administering the questionnaires. The questionnaire was specifically structured to answer the questions intended to investigate the

impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension. The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts from the department of Arts and Social Science Education & one from Measurement and Evaluation department to ensure the appropriateness of the questionnaire items.

Test-retest method was applied to determine the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to twenty (20) students. Each of the respondents were given a copy of this questionnaire in the first instance to respond to. Their responses were received. Two weeks later, the researcher re-administered the questionnaire to the very first 50 respondents which they again responded to, and returned copies of the questionnaire. Based on the rating from the two different occasions by the same group of respondents, the test-retest reliability co-efficient was computed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The instrument yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.85 which was adjudged to be highly reliable. A total of two hundred twenty (220) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants. After their response to the questionnaire, the researcher assembled the returned questionnaire for analysis. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A cut-off-point of 2.5 was used as the decision rule. A mean score up to 2.5 and above was regarded as positive while the mean score below 2.5 was considered negative.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What are the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension?

**Table 1: Responses on the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension.**

| S/N | ITEMS  | SA  | A  | D  | SD | X    | Decision Rule |
|-----|--|-----|----|----|----|------|---------------|
| 1.  | Morphological awareness facilitates the comprehension of textual materials.              | 102 | 40 | 28 | 30 | 3.10 | Accepted      |
| 2.  | Morphological awareness directly enhances reading comprehension.                         | 76  | 88 | 26 | 10 | 3.20 | Accepted      |
| 3.  | It promotes recognition of words during reading comprehension                            | 85  | 45 | 50 | 20 | 3.10 | Accepted      |
| 4.  | It helps me to break down complex words into smaller morphemes for easier comprehension. | 80  | 70 | 32 | 18 | 3.10 | Accepted      |
| 5.  | It helps me to identify unknown words and figure out what they mean.                     | 60  | 70 | 40 | 30 | 2.80 | Accepted      |

Table 1 A grand mean of 3.06 showed that the respondents accepted that morphological awareness has a positive influence on students' reading comprehension. Since the grand mean was more than 2.50 it is accepted that morphological awareness influenced students' reading comprehension positively.

**Research Question 2:** How does the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improve students' reading comprehension.

**Table 2: Responses on how the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improve reading comprehension.**

| S/N | ITEMS  | SA  | A  | D  | SD | X    | Decision Rule |
|-----|--|-----|----|----|----|------|---------------|
| 6.  | It promotes correct pronunciation of words   | 75  | 80 | 25 | 20 | 3.10 | Accepted      |
| 7.  | Morphological awareness facilitates reading, spelling and recognition of English words.          | 60  | 70 | 29 | 41 | 2.70 | Accepted      |
| 8.  | It improves fluency and smoother understanding while reading.                                    | 55  | 80 | 20 | 45 | 2.70 | Accepted      |
| 9.  | It promotes vocalization of English word   | 80  | 50 | 30 | 40 | 2.90 | Accepted      |
| 10. | The knowledge of the eight inflectional morphemes makes for clearer understanding while reading. | 100 | 50 | 30 | 20 | 3.20 | Accepted      |

In table 2, a grand mean of 2.92 showed that the respondents accepted that the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English had a positive impact on reading comprehension. Since the grand mean was up to 2.50 it is accepted

**Research Question 3:** How does the awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes enhance students reading comprehension.

**Table 3: Responses on how the awareness of the differences between Lexical and Derivational Morphemes enhance students reading comprehension.**

| S/N | ITEMS  | SA  | A  | D  | SD | X    | Decision Rule |
|-----|--|-----|----|----|----|------|---------------|
| 11. | It determines the recognition of English words, expands vocabulary(lexical) comprehension and reading comprehension. | 80  | 70 | 30 | 20 | 3.10 | Accepted      |
| 12. | It helps me to differentiate between roots and their affixes.  | 95  | 82 | 5  | 18 | 3.30 | Accepted      |
| 13. | A good knowledge of prefixes, suffixes and base words increases students morphological awareness.                    | 50  | 70 | 35 | 45 | 2.60 | Accepted      |
| 14. | It helps me to analyze and understand English words while reading.   | 110 | 50 | 25 | 15 | 3.30 | Accepted      |
| 15. | It helps me to differentiate between lexical and derivational morphemes for easier reading comprehension.            | 80  | 40 | 45 | 35 | 2.80 | Accepted      |

Items 11 – 15 showed that with a grand mean of 3.02 the respondents accepted that the awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes enhances students reading comprehension. Since the grand mean was up to 2.50 it is accepted

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### **Research Question 1: What are the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension**

The result of items 1 – 4 showed that with a mean of 2.92, the respondents accepted that morphological awareness facilitates the comprehension of textual materials. This is corroborated by the findings of Al Haydan (2020) who observed a strong positive correlation between the students' morphological awareness and the improvement of their reading comprehension skills in the post-test. The result of questionnaire item 2 also agrees with the findings of Levesque, Kieffer & Deacon (2018) that students use of morphemes to infer the meaning of unfamiliar complex words supported the enhancement of reading comprehension, promotes formation of words among the students, it promotes recognition of words during reading comprehension. The findings of this study also agrees with that of Yadav & Yadav, (2021) who observe that the ability of students to break down complex words into smaller morphemes makes for easier comprehension; The result of this study also agreed with the findings of Quy, Xuan, Thao & Thuy (2022) that morphological awareness helps students to identify unknown words and figure out what they mean. This is also in line with the views of Kotzer, Kirby & Heggie (2021) who found that morphological awareness was a significant predictor of both reading speed and students' comprehension.

### **Research Question 2: How does the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improve reading comprehension?**

A grand mean of 3.02 showed that the respondents agreed that the knowledge of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English improve their reading comprehension. The findings of this study is corroborated by the findings of Wilson-Fowler & Kenn Apel (2015) that stronger representations might help readers to learn or spell unfamiliar multi-morphemic words by activating knowledge of more familiar morphemes. Conversely, individuals with weaker lexical quality may have partial or inaccurate representations of multi-morpheme words and/or weaker awareness of anyone or combination of the underlying linguistic processes. The findings of this study are also corroborated with the findings of Dodur (2021) which revealed that possessive inflectional morphology contributed significantly to reading comprehension for students with reading disability while two inflectional morphology task had a significant contribution to reading comprehension for all students. The findings of this study also agrees with the findings of Yadav & Yadav (2021) who observes that inflectional morphology improves learners ability to decode complex words and enhances their overall comprehension of the reading materials.

### **Research Question 3: How does the awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes enhance students reading comprehension?**

In Table 3, a grand mean of 3.06 showed that the respondents agreed that their awareness of the differences between lexical and derivational morphemes improved students reading comprehension. This is corroborated by the findings of Yullenawati, Prawiro & Anggrarini (2023) whose result showed that the students performed better in breaking down inflected

forms than those in derived forms. The result of this study is also corroborated by the findings of Xie (2023) that derivational and inflectional morphological awareness had unique direction effect on reading comprehension beyond decoding and syntactic awareness. This also agrees with the findings of Levesque, Kieffer & Deacon (2018) who found that students use of morphemes to infer meaning of unfamiliar complex words supported the enhancement of reading comprehension.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that morphological awareness among students promotes formation of words among the students, it facilitates correct pronunciation during reading comprehension, it promotes recognition of words during reading comprehension, it improves articulation of English words and that it facilitates identification of English auxiliaries. Similarly, a good knowledge of inflectional suffixes promotes correct pronunciation of words and facilitates proper articulation of English words among students. It improves fluency in pronouncing English words, vocalization of English words and facilitates audibility while reading English sentences. Finally, if students have a good knowledge of the differences between lexical and derivation morphemes it enhances their comprehension of English texts and other textual materials. It helps students to recognize English words and enhances reading comprehension. From the analysis of the data and findings of the study, the researcher concludes that the impact of morphological awareness on students' reading comprehension include: morphological awareness promotes formation of words among the students. It facilitates correct pronunciation during reading comprehension, it promotes recognition of words during reading comprehension, it improves articulation of English words and that it facilitates identification of English auxiliaries. The impact of the correct use of inflectional suffixes in English on reading comprehension include: that it promotes pronunciation of words, it facilitates articulation of English word, it improves fluency in pronouncing English word, it promotes vocalization of English word and that it facilitates audibility while reading English sentence.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Curriculum planners should make Morphology a compulsory course to be taught at all levels of education in the university to enhance morphological awareness among undergraduate students and improve their ability to spell words, read words and understand sentences.
2. There should be training and re-training of not only language instructors but lecturers in other departments in form of workshops, seminars and conferences to increase their knowledge of Morphology so as to create morphological awareness among students to enhance reading comprehension in the content area across the curriculum.
3. The school management should regularly organize competitions among the students in reading comprehension in tertiary in order to improve their writing skills.

4. School management should adequately provide the required instructional materials for teaching reading comprehension in tertiary which will help to develop high level of proficiency, positive attitude and positive effects on students writing.

## REFERENCES

- .Akbulut, D.F. (2017). Effects of morphological awareness on second language vocabulary knowledge. *Journal Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(1), 10-26
- Apel, K. (2014). A comprehension definition of morphological awareness: Implications for assessment. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 34, (3), 197-209
- Al-Haydan, D.Y.A. (2020). The effect of morphological awareness on EFL secondary school students' reading comprehension skills. *International Journal of Education Literacy Studies*, 8(3), 49-58
- Aydin, F. & Yildirim, O (2017). A study on the morphological awareness of intermediate level adult Turkish EFL learners. <https://www.semanticscholar.org>
- Brinchmann, E.I., Hjeland, H.N. & Lyster, S.H. (2015) Lexical quality matters: Effects of word knowledge instruction on the language and literacy skills of third and fourth grade poor readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 51(2), 165-180
- Carlsisle, J.F. (1995). Morphological awareness and early reading achievement. L.B. Feldman (Ed), *Morphological aspects of language processing*. Erlbaum: Hilldale
- Cheng, Y.(2021) The role of morphological awareness in reading comprehension in Chinese EFL adult learners. Proceedings of the 2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS). *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. <https://www.atlantis-press.com>
- Cheng, Y.U., Zhang, J., Li, H., Wu, X., Liu, H., Dong, Q., Li, L., Nguyem, T.P., Zheng, M., Zhao, Y. & Sun, P. (2017). Growth of compounding awareness predicts reading comprehension in young Chinese students: A longitudinal study from grade 1 to 2. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 52, (1), 91-104
- Cheng, Y.U, Li & Wu, X.(2015). The reciprocal relationship between compounding awareness and vocabulary knowledge in Chinese: a latent growth model study. *Frontier Psychology* 6, 440
- Kuo, L. & Anderson, R.C. (2006). Morphological awareness and learning to read: A cross-language perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 41,(3), 161-180
- Liu, Y. (2023). The association between morphological awareness and reading comprehension <http://www.sciencedirect.com>
- Liu, Y., Groen, M.A, & Cain, K. (2024). The association between morphological awareness and reading comprehension in children: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Education Research Review*, 42 <https://www.sciencedirect.com>
- Deacon, S.H & Kirby, J.R.(2004). Morphological awareness : 'Just more phonological'? The roles of morphological and phonological awareness in reading development. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 25(2), 223-238
- Dodur, H.M.S (2021). Inflectional morphology, word reading and reading comprehension of Turkish students with learning disabilities. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching( IOJET)*, 8(3), 1543-1559.

- Kotzer, M., Kirby, J. R. & Heggie, L. (2021). Morphological awareness predicts reading comprehensive in adults. *Reading Psychology*, 42(3) 1-21
- Kyle, C.L., Michael, J.K., & Deacon, S.H.(2017). Morphological awareness and reading comprehension: Examining mediating factors. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 160, 1-20. <http://www.ngdc.cncb.ac.cn>
- Levesque, K.C., Kleffer, M.J., & Deacon, S.H.(2018). Inferring meaning from meaningful parts: The contributions of morphological skills to the development of children's reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*
- Levesque, K.C., Kieffer, M.J., & Deacon, S.H. (2017). Morphological awareness and reading comprehension: Examining mediating factors. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 160, 1-20 <https://www.sciencedirect.com>
- Li, L. & Wu, X.(2015). Effects of metalinguistic awareness on reading comprehension and the mediator role of reading fluency from grades 2 to 4. *PLOS ONE*, 10(3) <https://journals.plos.org>
- Manolitsis, G., Grigorakis, I. & Georgiou, G.K. (2017). The longitudinal contribution of early morphological awareness to reading fluency and comprehension in Greek. *Frontiers in Psychology*, <http://www.frontiersin.org>
- Metsala, J., Parrila, R., Conrad, N. & Deacon, H. (2019). Morphological awareness and reading achievement in university students. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 40(3), 743-763
- .Perfetti, C.A. (2007). Reading ability: Lexical quality to comprehension. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 11, 357-383
- Perfetti, C.A. & Hart, L.(2002). The lexical quality hypothesis. in Verhoeven, L., Elbro, C. & Reitsma, P.(eds) Precursors of functional literacy. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 11, 189- 213 <http://sites.pitt.edu>
- Qiao, S., Yeung, S.S.S., Shen, X. & Chu, S.K.W.(2022).The effects of gamified morphological awareness intervention on students' cognitive, motivational and effective
- Quy, V.O., Xuan An, Thao Vy & Thuy, Tien (2022). Morphological awareness of students' majoring in English studies towards vocabulary learning, 9(11), 210-228
- Washburn, E.K. & Mulchay, C.A.(2018). Morphological matters, but what do teacher candidates know about it? *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 42(3), 246-262
- Wilson-Fowler, E.B. & Apel, K.(2015). Influence of morphological awareness on college students' literacy skills: A path analytic approach. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 47(3)
- Yadav, M.K. & Yadav, M.S. (2021). An overview on the impacts and strategies of morphology in English language teaching to the L2 learners. *International Journal of Language and Literacy Studies* 3(1), 262-270 <https://www.academia.edu>
- Yullianawati, I., Prawiro, I.Y. & Anggrarini, N.(2023). Undergraduate students morphological awareness and difficulties in EFL class. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 7(1), 17-28 <http://journal.iancurup.ac.id>
- Xie, Q. & Yeung, S.S. (2023). Specifying the contributions of morphological awareness to decoding, syntactic awareness, and reading comprehension in Chinese children learning English as a second language. *Reading & Writing*.
- Xie, R., Zhang, J., Wu, X. & Nguyen, T.P (2019). The relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension among Chinese children. *Frontier Psychological*, 10, 54 <https://www.frontiersin.org>

British Journal of Education

Vol.12, Issue 4, 33-46, 2024

Online ISSN: 2054-636X (Online)

Print ISSN: 2054-6351(Print)

Website: <https://www.eajournals.org/>

---

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

Zhang, D. & Khoda, K. (2012). Contributions of morphological awareness and lexical inferencing ability to L2 vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension among advanced EFL learners: Testing direct and indirect effects. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 25(5), 1195-1216