

The Relationship between Morphological Awareness and English Vocabulary Knowledge of Iranian Senior High School Students

Mohsen Salimian

Email: Mohsen.salimyan@yahoo.com

Islamic Azad University (Iran)

Abstract

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between English morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge in the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL) for senior high school students in Iran. Measurements of learner vocabulary size and morphological awareness are obtained and then correlated to assess the degree to which knowledge of English morphological processes and structures can be systematically related to vocabulary knowledge. Based on the findings, the possible role that morphological awareness can play in second language (L2) vocabulary development is discussed. Implications for vocabulary instruction are also addressed.

The participants were 55 students at a public senior high school in Iran. The data collection tools were Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT), which tested knowledge of words drawn from the 2000 most frequently occurring word families (90 words in total) and two morphological awareness tasks. The first consisted of a Morpheme Identification task (item matching, 5 questions) and the second was Morphological Structure test (short answer, 20 questions). A 10-item questionnaire that elicited the participants' perceptions of the tests and their English vocabulary learning in general was also administered. The results show that there was a significant relationship between the students' performance in the vocabulary level test and the morphological awareness tasks. Finally, the participants gave feedback that suggested their interest in applying the morphological knowledge to their vocabulary learning. Thus, the findings have implications as to the importance of facilitating the students' morphological awareness in English vocabulary learning for EFL senior high students in Iran.