

## USEFUL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: INCREASING THE LEVEL OF MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS

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### ABSTRACT

There are many logical possibilities for marking morphological features. In SLA, it has assumed that the effect of teachers' strategies is very strong in the acquisition of grammatical morphemes. However, such an assumption has not been systematically examined in the literature. This paper proposes an explanation for this asymmetry in terms of acquisition complexity between Iranian EFL learners. The result indicates that learners can acquire a grammatical morpheme through communication strategy in order to use of repetition strategy by teachers. The results may be accounted for considering that effect of these strategies on better understanding of text books is positively related to the acquisition of the different developmental sequences in English. To reach the teachers points of view an inter-rated interview form which validated by 8 EFL faculty member was used to find out which strategy is more useful in this part than the others.

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers' Strategies, Grammatical Morphemes, Acquisition, SLA

What is meant by morphological competence? I don't mean performance issues, like problems with lexical retrieval, automaticity, or online performance pressure due to something like 'cognitive overload', although I do think these may well contribute to morphological error in production. Morphological competence includes, most obviously, the knowledge of which forms 'go with' which features. But consider what additional kinds of knowledge are required: What are the conditioning factors and are these phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic or discourse-linked? Hence morphological research is only the first step, if we want to understand the process of second language acquisition in this term, then we will be able to apply the findings to a variety of practical aspects of language teaching. In this study the researcher have been guided mainly by the approach that focuses on the study of developmental patterns by investigating the acquisition of morphology (both the correct supply of morphemes as well as the errors produced). This article focuses upon formulating a good strategy for teaching morphology in order to reach a good result by EFL learners' production. It should be borne in mind that this paper is not written for professional linguists but for teachers of English as a second language.

### METHODOLOGY

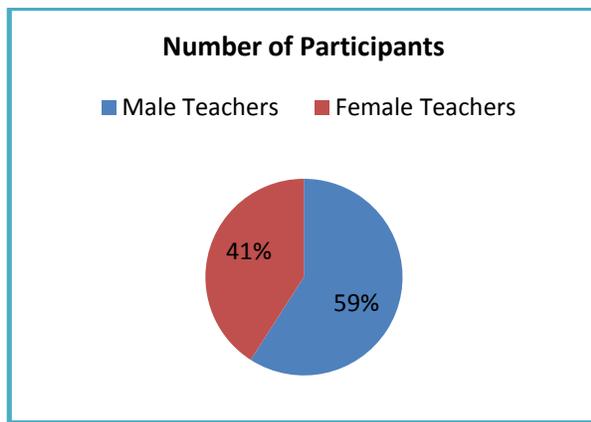
The importance of morphological competence has been successfully recognized as a goal of language teaching and learning in the field of second language acquisition. Previous researches statistics show that the level of performance of secondary and post-secondary school students in English has been deteriorating over the years. The decline in their performance in English is attested to by the alarming rate at which students fail English language in public examinations. Moreover, the quality of English, which many of our students speak and write is so substandard that one begins to doubt the fact that they ever sat for and passed the English language in the Senior School examinations by themselves. This poor performance is not a recent trend. The poor performance of students in English calls for urgent attention especially when we consider the crucial roles English plays in the country. The fact that "English Language is arguably the most significant, but most controversial subject taught in Nigerian secondary schools" (Nwogu 1988: 95) need not be over-stressed. This study aims to answer the following question: Is cognitive strategies influence on better understanding of grammar among EFL learners in their morphological awareness? As data collection takes place in rather normal conversations at a place familiar to the informants, it is possible to

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elicit rather natural data, without or with only few disturbing effects that may occur with (laboratory) experiments or standardized testing situations. The data obtained from testing the hypothesis of the study analyzed via calculating all tests and in the descriptive form.

### SUBJECT AND PARTICIPANTS

An interview form for collecting EFL teachers opinions in whole Mazandaran and Guilan with participation of 159 teachers considered to find the easiest method of teaching morphological competences and on the other hand to chose the helpful and effective strategies of teaching.



### INSTRUMENTATION

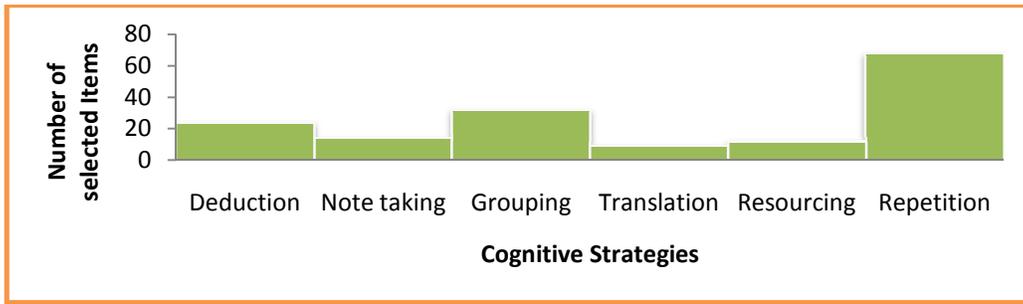
An interview form which consisted of 7 different types of questions (multiple-choice, fill in the blanks and etc.) considered for data collection. EFL teachers weren't requested to write their names on their papers. Questionnaires were administered to all the participants of the study by the researcher and they were informed of the following points before beginning to complete them: 1: The questionnaire was not a test or measurement of their teaching capability and did not affect their evaluation. 2: The participants were informed that there was no time limit for completing the questionnaire; however, it took about 15 to 20 minutes for them to complete the form. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated by 5 faculty member of IAU found to be 0.71 suggesting that the questionnaire enjoyed a satisfactory reliability index.

### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

To conduct the research and to verify the hypothesis of the research, already put forward the following steps were taken to tackle the procedure of group assignment. The feedback from the teachers' points resulted that their students can recognize the usage of morphological competences but they are disabling to produce a sentence correctly in order to have accurate competences. The study started with the aim to act of recognizing and producing of inflectional morphemes to the importance of acquisition of grammatical morphemes. Next it was aimed to find the influence of teachers' methods and use of teaching strategies in the EFL classrooms tried out. In the questionnaire which was included from 6 questions 3 questions specifically considered about method and strategies of teaching. Teachers were allowed to take as much time as they wanted or needed for filling the forms. The test lasted an average of 20 minutes. The teacher did not have to answer the question in any particular order and they did not have to write anything on the blank line if they did not know the answer.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

After collection and review of the questionnaire and tabulating the different choices numbers, for each subjects the data of the study analyzed through descriptive statistics. As it is mentioned above I used an interview form and as it is seen below most of Iranian teachers believe that repetition strategy is the most effective strategy in order to apply this strategy by mix of contextualization features of teaching strategies among cognitive strategies. As it is showed based on the main topic and as it is exhibited below most of the teachers agree with the higher effect of repetition strategy among the other. About other factors which influence on morphological awareness the teachers mentioned of external factors such as formal instruction and learning setting is restricted to the rate and the ultimate attainment of the L2 development. The acquisition sequence does not alter, and the developmental stages cannot be skipped. At a particular developmental point, the interlanguage grammar is stable, if assessed through the 'emergence criterion'.



Further observations of teacher in their classroom show that the students' use of the inflectional morpheme indicated that some mistakes were made if they were required to create the phrase rather than fill in the blanks. In order to solve this problem they used repetition strategy in order to use functional planning. Although significant research exists in the branch of learning strategies, researches have only recently begun to examine best strategy of teaching in particular. Both ESL and EFL classes demand a sufficient focus on method of teaching and effective strategies which teachers can use based on each section of lesson.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Morphological skills are important for sentence comprehension too. Inflections are parts of words that cannot stand alone (e.g. -ed, -ing) but when combined with a stem they serve a grammatical function. Verb inflections are particularly important to comprehension: they denote contrast between, for example, past and present tense and singular and plural forms. In order to use context, learners must be able to use grammatical clues in sentences. Learners also use clues from grammatical construction to learn the meanings of new words. Coates (1999, p. 45) states that morphemes are further categorized into lexical morphemes (e.g. -full, -ness, etc.) or grammatical morphemes (e.g. -er, -s). Grammatical morphemes are part of inflectional morphology that underlies the processes involved in building grammatical word forms. Words that contain inflection are called inflected words (e.g. bigger, designing, etc.). Lexical morphemes are part of derivational morphology that is concerned with the processes involved in building lexical word forms. So, morphology is concerned with word forms and

word formation rules. The ability to use the knowledge of word formation rules and the pairing between sounds and meanings is called morphological awareness (MA) (Kuo and Anderson, 2006). Carlisle (1995, p. 94) defines morphological awareness as "... Children's conscious awareness of morphemic structure of words and their ability to reflect on and manipulate that structure". With morphological awareness, learners are able to learn morphemes and morphemic boundaries by disassembling complex words into meaningful parts (e.g. adulthood= adult + -hood+ -s), learning the meanings of roots, affixes (adult= not child, -hood= the state of being, -s= to indicate plural nouns), and reassembling the meaningful parts into new meanings (childhood, motherhood, fatherhood, and brotherhood). It is of importance to note that the concepts of morphological awareness and morphological acquisition are different. The concept of morphological awareness implies the learners' use of metacognitive strategies of reflecting and manipulating word formation rules to drive the meaning of new words in the absence of communicative context. But the concept of morphology acquisition means the cognitive abilities to use and comprehend morphological structure in natural speech and does not necessarily entail metacognitive strategies. Morphological awareness helps learners in many respects. As Kuo and Anderson (2006) argue morphological awareness makes the learner more aware of the writing system. Learners can also perceive spelling and phonological irregularities with the morphological knowledge (e.g. body bodily; mouse- mice). There is increasing interest in morphological awareness as a main aspect of vocabulary knowledge, especially in reading. First of all, Singson et al. (2000) state that morphemes

have semantic, phonological and syntactic features that express the role of a given word in the reading context (e.g. -s in the verb walks shows that the action doer is the only one person who does the action in the present time). In addition, Sandra (1994) is of the opinion that words are organized in the mental lexicon according to their phonological properties with morphological knowledge as a framework for storing words. The relationship between morphological awareness and reading may be reciprocal or directional (Chung and Hu, 2007; Kuo and Anderson, 2006). During the research it was found that all previous researchers had a common opinion about the effect of L1 on second language acquisition mainly in term of inflectional morphemes As a matter of fact this opinion failed by the results of this study. Because not only by teachers opinions on interview forms with high percent of mention in their cause of L1 as a key for simplification of teaching L2, but also by scoring students tests result and their own opinion , the effect of L1 on learning English as a second language is undeniable. A good point that there is expectation on the result of this study through previous one in term of effect of L1 on learning L2 is that there is some similarities in Persian language and this essential affect on students knowledge for considering and choosing the correct answer in addressing a related subject. It is undeniable through seeking corpus- picture test and it's result. Teachers' common points about the priority of learning plural form and affect of L1 available below:

-Using countable and sensible in the class through using some sentences in L1 for comparison in low level classes and enormous example has more affect in this subjects.

-Existence of many kinds of classic and Modern materials (Exam: Flash cards, PPT, Slides) is the other power for better teaching quality enrichment.

The achieved result about the range of learning inflectional morphemes which enrich from this study has been designed in the following diagram. As you can see in the figure1 repetition is on the highest range of choices and most of teachers have common opinion that repetition is the best strategy for teaching morphology in the term of acquisition. However contextualization have the

second range and as we know this strategy is one of the best way for effective teaching, But in this point it could not sit in a prior range.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we reviewed in detail cognitive strategies for increasing morphological awareness among EFL learners with the participation of Guilan and Mazandaran province. We have shown that the acquisition order of grammatical morphemes is highly affected by the learner's related to the teachers' strategy of teaching. As a matter of fact the students products and recognition mainly relates to the strategy which is use by teachers in the class, to some extent, teachers believed that what is difficult and what is easy for language learners is based on their L1s and their practice. This study clearly shows that there is indeed an effective teaching is available when learning morphological competences happening through using influential strategy by teachers. Returning to the original research questions, this study also provides evidence that shows the . These findings should be interpreted the light of several limitations. First, the number of questions was limited; therefore the relative ineffectiveness of reacts in explaining the strategies of teaching could be a function of this limited number of questions. Although they were still large enough to run statistical analyses, the results of these analyses should be interpreted with caution. To confirm or disconfirm the findings of this study, future research measuring these abilities with other measurement tools is needed. Despite these short-coming, the results of this study suggest that other effective strategy which should be use for influential teaching in order to have good products by learners to make learners be aware of morphological sections and competences.

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