



مجلة البطانة للعلوم التربوية

ISSN: 1858- 9499

<http://ojs.albutana.edu.sd>

العدد الحادي عشر (خاص)، 2023، ص(17-42)



An Analysis of the Derivational and Inflectional Affixation in Sudanese EFL University Learners' written discourse

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate and analyze the influence of derivational and inflectional affixation in the written discourse of Sudanese EFL university learners. To collect the relevant data, fifty EFL learners from the university of Kassala faculty of education were randomly chosen to be the sample of the study. The sample received explicit morphological instruction in a regular classroom for the full term. They were given a list of words to form different word classes using morphological processes and use each in written discourse. It also aims to examine the correlation between derivational and inflectional awareness and EFL written discourse. The most important findings revealed that EFL learners demonstrated extremely poor performance and a weak understanding of the morphological rules. EFL learners faced difficulties to derive words such as verbs, nouns, adverbs, and adjectives, which can negatively affect their writing. Another important finding is that EFL learners lack awareness of the significant role that morphological rules can have. Based on the findings the study recommends: that university EFL learners should receive an explicit and rich instruction of the morphological rules.

Keywords: Morphological rules, inflection, derivation, awareness, written discourse, word classes

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحليل ومعرفة أثر اشتقاق وتصريف الكلمات واستخدامها في النصوص المكتوبة لدى دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية بالجامعات السودانية. لجمع البيانات، تم اختيار عينة بها

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Abdualnassir Babo Mohammed Boway 'An Analysis of the Derivational and Inflectional Affixation in Sudanese EFL University Learners' written discourse

مجلة البطانة للعلوم التربوية العدد الحادي عشر (خاص)، 2023، ص(17-42)



خمسین طالبا اختیارا عشوائیا بجامعة کسلا – کلیة التریبة – قسم اللغة الإنجلیزیة واللغویات. وقد تلقت العینة ولمدة ثلاثة أشهر وبصورة منتظمة تدریسا واضحا عن کیفیة تصریف الكلمات واشتقاقها مع استخدامها لكتابة النصوص. تم تجهیز قائمة تحتوي على عدد من الكلمات ثم اعطاءها للطلاب لتحویل الكلمات التي بها وتصریفها ثم اشتقاق كلمات أخرى منها لصیافة جمل مختلفة واستخدامها للكتابة؛ كما وتهدف لفحص الارتباط بین الكلمات تصریفاتها واشتقاقها و بین النصوص التي یكتبها طلاب اللغة الإنجلیزیة بالجامعات السودانیة. من اهم ما توصلت الیه هذه الدراسة هو ان الطلاب الدارسین للغة الإنجلیزیة يعانون من قلة وضعف استیعاب للكلمات تصریفاتها، اشتقاقها وتركیبها ترکیبا صحیحا. اذ لم یستطیع معظم هؤلاء الطلاب لصیافة كلمات جدیدة مثل الأفعال، الأسماء، الصفات، والظروف (حال) مما یؤثر سلبا على کتاباتهم. ومن النتائج التي توصلت الیه الدراسة هو عدم اهتمام الطلاب بالدور الكبیر الذي تقوم به قواعد ترکیب واشتقاق وتصریف الكلمات فی الكتابة والتعبیر. وفقا لهذه النتائج، توصی الدراسة بتلقي الطلاب تدریسا واضحا وفعالا لفهم قواعد ترکیب وتصریف الكلمات واشتقاقها ثم استخدامهما لصیافة النصوص المکتوبة.

1.0. Introduction

Knowing the ways words are formed is a key requirement for the mastery of lexical knowledge. This helps to improve EFL learners' written discourse. Learners' ability to create new words provide them with a real innate desire and willingness to write purposefully. Word formation processes seemed to be difficult for EFL learners. their written discourse seems to reflect unawareness of the morphological rules. Therefore, knowledge of word formation comes to be of critical importance for EFL language learners. Such knowledge can give EFL learners the ability to automatically form words to express their ideas through an accurate written performance. Moreover, knowing the morphological aspect of words can increase the quality and lexical density for the achievement of written discourse. Generally, EFL learners' written discourse should display proper application of the morphological rules. In fact, the achievement of quality in a written production is done by the learners' ability to process and create words of different form and classes. Hence, this study intends to investigate Sudanese



university EFL learners' ability to accurately use morphological processes to form new words. This in turn can help produce better-written discourse.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

It was observed that most of the written discourses produced by Sudanese EFL university students are full of repeated words. For these learners, deriving new words is one of the most challenging area of writing skills. In most cases, these learners produce a low quality written discourse because of their poor knowledge of lexical morphology and lack of rich exposure to how words are formed using different morphological rules. .

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out, through experiment, whether effective teaching and comprehensive, rich exposure to derivational and inflectional processes can help learners to develop their lexical knowledge.
2. To explore the impact of lexical morphology in improving Sudanese EFL university students' writing quality.

1.3. Questions of the Study

1. To what extent does rich exposure to derivational and inflectional affixes affect the development of Sudanese EFL university students' knowledge of lexical items?
2. To what extent can explicit and comprehensive teaching of lexical morphology effectively develop Sudanese EFL university students' writing quality?

1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

1. Lack of rich exposure to derivational and inflectional suffixes may lead Sudanese EFL university students to repeated words when they write.
2. Explicit and comprehensive teaching of lexical morphology can improve Sudanese EFL university students' writing quality.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Lexical morphology is one of the most problematic and complex area, which always impede most Sudanese EFL university students to achieve quality in written discourse. Improper lexical morphology lead these learners to produce low-quality texts because of the many repeated words they contain. In language, teaching and learning, developing lexical knowledge receives little attention than it deserves. This study is important as it raises the attention of both teachers and



learners to the leading role that lexical morphology can play in the production of an effective, high quality and expressive written discourse.

1.6. Methodology of the Study

This study adopts the experimental method. Data will be collected through a written test, which is intended to identify Sudanese EFL university student's ability to create words to produce a written discourse. Data will be analyzed manually and statistically and then presented in tables and figures.

1.7. Limits of the Study

This study will only be limited to Sudanese university EFL students enrolled in the department of English language and linguistics at the University of Kassala. The sample of the study was only the second-year students male and female studying English as their major.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes

Singleton (2000: 35) distinguishes lexical derivation and lexical inflection. Lexical derivation is a morphological phenomenon that have to do with words formation whereas lexical inflection is an aspect of morphology, which have rather to do with the grammatical modification of words. Singleton clarifies that lexical derivation is the addition of the bound morpheme –ness to the adjective kind to form abstract noun kindness; lexical inflection would be the addition of the bound morpheme –s to the verb run when the verb is preceded by he, she, or it in its present tense.

Derivation, for its part is applied instances of word –formation in which bound morphemes play a role. For example, the word unwise is a different word with different meaning from the word wise, and its formed simply by the prefixing of the bound morpheme un- to the free morpheme wise. Singleton (2000: 36) focusses that the bound morpheme involved in derivation may or may not change the grammatical class of the free morpheme to which they are attached. Thus, the addition of the bound derivational morpheme –ment to the verb like pay yields the noun payment, on the other hand, the addition of the bound derivational morpheme –ish to the adjective small yields another different adjective smallish. He concludes that inflectional morphemes are not involved in word-formation, and they never



change the actual grammatical category of the free morphemes to which they are attached. Rather, they make small adjustment to words, which have important grammatical consequences. Signaling, for instances, tense, person, and number in verbs, and number and grammatical case in nouns.

Booij (2005: 66) investigates that the basic function of derivational processes is to enable user to make new lexeme. He points out that lexemes belong to lexical categories such as N, V, and A and the derived lexemes may belong to a different category than their bases. He suggests that words are derived into two kinds of lexical classes: open and closed classes. Nouns, adjectives and verbs form the open classes, which can be extended by means of word-formation, whereas function words such as determiners, conjunctions, pronouns, and ad position (pre- and postposition) form closed sets of words that cannot be extended by regular word-formation patterns.

Similarly, Katamba (1994: 41) claims that derivation enables us to add new lexical items to the open word-classes of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. These classes contain the so-called content words. He argues that it is unlikely to create words belonging to classes like pronoun, articles, or prepositions. He refers to such classes as closed classes. Katamba points out that in many cases, and to varying degrees, people can reconstitute words they encounter as the need arises, or even occasionally coin new ones. What makes this possible is their mastery of the rules of word-formation. Confronted with a complex word, people will often be able to deconstruct it using their knowledge of word structure.

Fromkin, et al (2001: 48) suggest that people must have a list of the derivational morphemes in their mental dictionaries as well as the rules that determine how they are added to a root or stem. They point out that the derivational morphemes have clear semantic content. In this sense, they are like content words, except that they are not words. Any addition of a derivational morpheme to a base, it adds meaning. The derived word may also be of a different grammatical class than the original word, as shown by suffixes such as –able and –ly. When a verb is suffixed with –able, the result is an adjective, as in desire + able. When the suffix –en is added to an adjective, a verb is derived, as in dark + en. One may form a noun from an adjective as in sweet + ie. According to them, inflectional morphemes represent



relationship between different parts of a sentence. For example, -s expresses the relationship between the verb and the third person singular subject; -ing expresses the relationship between the time the utterance is spoken (e.g. now) and the time of the event. Inflectional morphology is closely connected to the syntax of the sentence. Yet another distinction between derivational and inflectional morphemes is that inflectional morphemes are productive: they apply freely to nearly every appropriate base. Most nouns takes an –s inflectional suffix to form a plural, but only some nouns take the derivational suffix –ize to form a verb: idolize, but not *picturize. Aarts and McMahon (2006: 517) report that the derivational system is considerably richer and more varied. In addition to compounding processes and 'minor' word formation processes, English has various prefixal and suffixal strategies for forming new lexemes. Derivational system is productive and more numerous and may co-occur within a stem. Yule (2006: 64) derivational morphemes are bound morphemes that are used to make new words or to make words of different grammatical category from the stem. As such the addition of the derivational morpheme –ness changes the adjective good to the noun goodness. The noun care become the adjective careful or careless by the addition of the derivational morphemes –full and –less. Yule provide that the list of derivational morphemes will include suffixes such as –ish in foolish, -ly in quickly, and the –ment in payment. The list will also include prefixes such as re-, pre-, ex-, mis-, co-, un-, and many more.

Lieber (2009: 96) reports that inflection refers to word formation that does not change category and does not create new lexemes, but rather changes the form of the lexemes so that they fit into different grammatical contexts. Grammatical meaning can include information about number (singular Vs. plural), person (first, second, third), tense (past, present, future), and other distinction as well. New lexemes that are formed with prefixes and suffixes on a base are often referred to as derived words, and the process by which they are formed as derivation.

Todd (1987: 22) investigates that derivational morphology is the creation of new words and it involves prefixation and suffixation or affixation. On the other hand, Todd refers to inflectional morphology as the morphological process, which does not change the class of word. Inflectional morphology occurs with nouns,



pronouns, and verbs. Widdowson (1996: 46) argues that morphology is concerned with two quite different phenomena: derivation and inflection. Derivation has to do with the way morphemes get attached as suffixes to existing lexical forms or stem in the process of word formation. He illustrates that some affixes, for example, de-, dis-, un-, and pre-, are attached at the beginning (i.e. are prefixes), and some (for example, -ore, -age, -ing, -ize, -full, and -able) are attached at the end (i.e. are suffixes). Inflectional morphology as suggested by Widdowson is different and does not create new words but adapts existing words so that they operate effectively in sentence.

2.2. Derivational Processes

Katamba (1994: 41) claims that derivation enables us to add new lexical items to the open word-classes of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. These classes contain the so-called content words. He argues that it is unlikely to create words belonging to classes like pronoun, articles, or prepositions. He refers to such classes as closed classes. Many linguists restrict the term derivation to the creation of new lexical items by adding affixes

2.2.1. Class 1 Derivational Suffixation

Vanderweide, O' Grady, Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2002) proposes that this type suffixation normally trigger phonological changes either in the consonant of vowel segments of the base with which they occur. In addition, they usually affect the assignments of stress. As in '-ive' suffixes in the word 'product' as productive shifts the stress to a second syllable or '-ial' in 'part-ial', here, final consonant of the base changes from [t] to [ʃ].

2.2.2. Class 2 Derivational Suffixation

Unlike class 1 suffixation, class 2 suffixes usually do not trigger any phonological change. Naish, Rench and Story (2003) suggest that this kind of suffixation is neutral, having no effect on the segmental make-up of the base or stress assignment such '-en' added to 'dark' resulted in neutral sound 'darken'

2.3. Inflectional Processes

According to Meyer (2009: 153) bound morphemes are of two types, inflectional and derivational. Inflections are one type of grammatical morpheme, a morpheme that indicates some kind of grammatical relationship. For instance, the –



s morpheme on likes marks the tense as present and the subject as singular. The –s on the noun girls marks the noun as plural. While inflectional morphemes form a small class in English, derivational morphemes are a much larger class.

2.3.1. Internal Change

It is a process that replaces one non-morphemic segment for another, as in the pairs of words 'sit-sat' , 'foot-feet', 'goose-geese', etc (Vanderweide, O' Grady, Aronoff and Rees-Miller, 2002). A verb such as 'sit', forms its past by changing the vowel. The term 'ablaut' is often used for vowel alternations that mark grammatical contrasts in this way. Ablaut can be distinguished from umlaut which involves the fronting of a vowel under the influence of a front vowel in the following syllable, for example, 'foot-feet'.

2.3.2. Suppletion

As defined, it is a morphological process whereby morpho-syntactic element of a lexeme is substituted by a phonologically unrelated form in order to indicate a grammatical contrast (Hippisley, Chumkina, Corbett & Brown, 2004). A simple example of Suppletion is the use of 'went' and 'was-were' as the past tense of verbs 'go' and 'be'

3. Methodology

3.1. The Participants

For the current study, the data was collected from only one group, which consists of fifty EFL males and females Sudanese EFL university students. The participant were all enrolled in the department of English language and linguistics, second level, taking English as their majors. Three-month instructional classes in morphological processes were given to the sample. The sample was conscious about words building. Knowing some basic rules of affixation along with some common words and had enough EFL exposure. The sample were almost at the same age, level of learning, experience and linguistic background of Arabic as their native language.

3.2. Instruments

Seven morphological tasks were prepared, which were adopted from Vanderweide, O' Grady, Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2002) and carstairs-McCarthy (2002). In the task one and two, the students were asked to add class 1 and class 2



derivational suffixes into words. In the task three and four, they were asked to add regular and irregular prefixes. In the task five, they were asked to add regular and irregular inflectional suffixes. While in the task six and seven, students were asked to add zero affixation like internal change (only inflectional) and Suppletion (see appendix). In each task, there were four different words. The students were asked to form words on the constructed tasks and use them to write as many sentences as possible. To analyze the data, the study used the following variables: correct and incorrect morphological forms, avoidance, overgeneralization, lexical category incomprehension and morphophonemic unawareness. A manual counting for all the variables was done and then the percentage and mean score were statistically calculated.

4. Analytical Framework

This study has been designed to analyze the morphological awareness (Derivational and inflectional affixation) in Sudanese EFL learners' written discourse. To test the students' morphological errors, the study has adopted three measures; these are intralingual, phonological and grammatical processes. The main focus of this study is to discover how morphological processes (derivational and inflectional) affect EFL written discourse and how it can be used as a tool of learning to improve EFL learners' written discourse. To achieve the objectives of the study, the research tries to answer the following questions:

1. Why do most EFL learners lack the ability to use diverse lexical categories of words when writing?
2. To what extent does their poor morphological knowledge negatively affect their written performance?
3. What techniques do teachers adopt to explicitly teach the morphological rules to improve their EFL learners' word formation processes?

4.1. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section of the study represents an overview of data by means of percentage and mean value of formulated words in the written performance. First, the results of the learners' incorrect and correct use of derivational and inflectional morphology and the avoidance of words due to learners' lack of awareness to morphological processes. Then, the results obtained were calculated and figure out

based on intralingual and grammatical processes, e.g. overgeneralization, lexical category incomprehension, unawareness of morphophonemic rules leading to semantic change and errors in the formation of affixation, which results in the errors in the learners' writing processes.

Table-1, 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate the percentage and mean value of derivational morphology; suffixes (class 1 and class 2), prefixes (regular and irregular), inflectional morphology; suffixes (regular and irregular), zero suffixes (internal change and Suppletion) which are taken from the subjects' reflections on morphological awareness and the reasons of making morphological errors.

Table (1). The Percentage and the Mean Value of Avoided, Incorrect and Correct Forms of Derivational Suffixes and Prefixes

Morphological Processes	Avoidance		Incorrect Forms		Correct Forms	
Class 1 Suffixes	4.5%	9	81 %	162	13.5%	27
Class 2 Suffixes	10%	20	77 %	155	13.5%	27
Regular Prefixes	9.5%	19	54 %	103	38%	76
Irregular Prefixes	14. %	29	42 %	84	43.5%	87

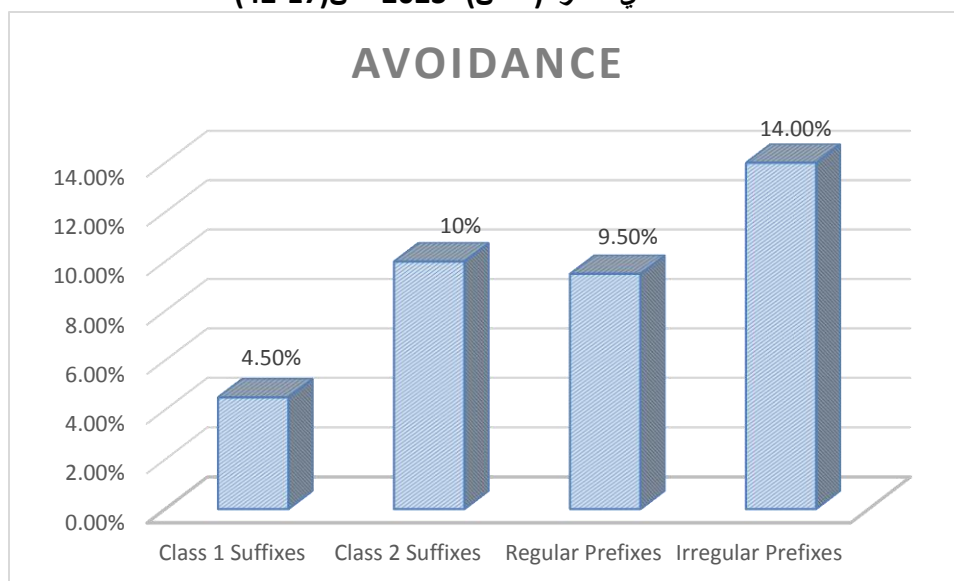


Figure 1. Percentage of the students' response for avoidance

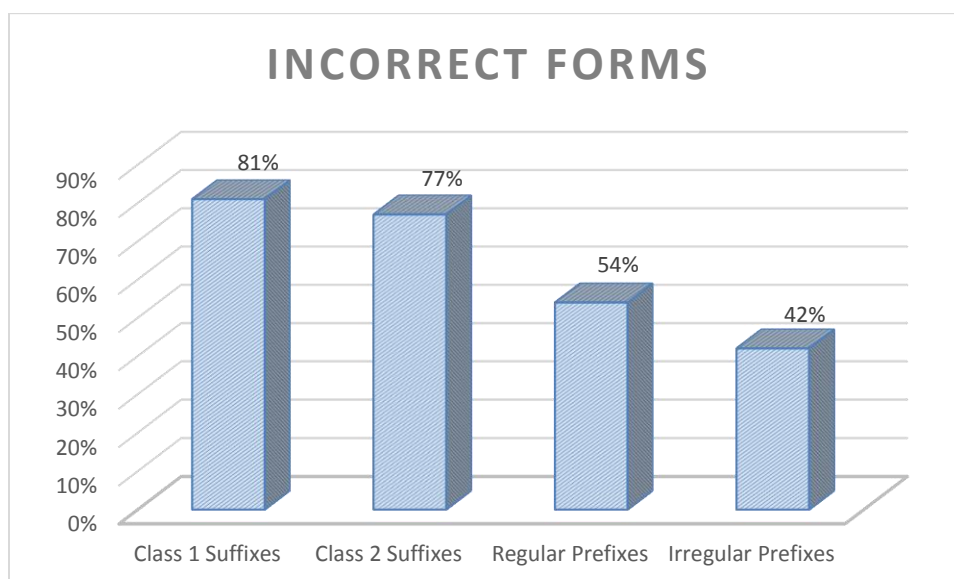


Figure 2. Percentage of the students' response for incorrect forms

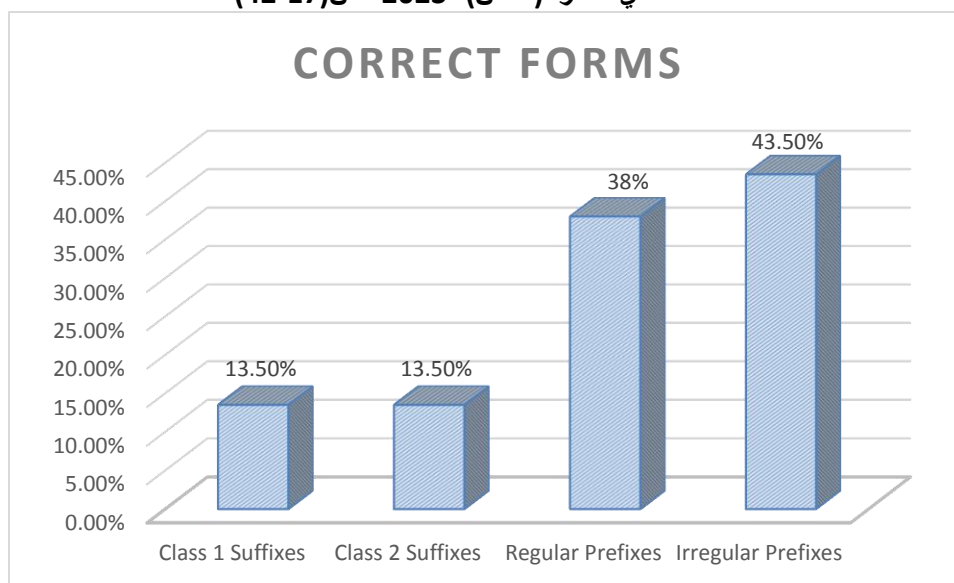


Figure 3. Percentage of the students' response for correct forms

4.2. Derivational Morphology

According to the table-1 and figures 1, 2 and 3, it was observed that when the respondents did not know the morphological rules, most of them produced incorrect forms of words while some of them tended to avoid the processes. The mean score for the avoidance in class 1 suffixation was (9) and (20) in class 2, and the percentage was (4.5%) in class 1 and (10%) in class 2 suffixation. In regular prefixes, the mean score for the avoidance was (19) and (29) in irregular ones with a percentage of (9.5%) in regular prefixes and (14%) in irregular prefixes as that illustrated in figure 1 above. For the same respondents, the mean score for the incorrect forms of words were (162) in class 1 suffixation and (155) in class 2 suffixes, and the percentage was (81%) in class 1, while in class 2 found to be (77%). Comparatively, the mean score for the incorrect form of words in the regular prefixes was (103) and (84) in irregular prefixes, the result was (54%) in regular prefixes and (42%) in irregular ones as given in figure 2 above. The mean score for the correct forms in class 1 suffixation was (27) and in class 2 was (27) too, the results displayed was (13.5%) for class 1 suffixation with the percentage (13.5) in class 2 suffixation. In regular prefixes, the mean score for the correct forms was (76) with a percentage of (38%) while in irregular prefixes the mean

score shown was (87) and the percentage was (43.5%) as observed in figure 3 above.

Table (2). The Percentage and the Mean Value of Overgeneralization, Morphophonemic Unawareness and Lexical Category incomprehension in Derivational Suffixes and Prefixes.

Morphological Processes	Overgeneralization		Morphophonemic Unawareness		Lexical Category incomprehension	
Class 1 Suffixes	17.50 %	35	72 %	144	42 %	85
Class 2 Suffixes	42.50 %	85	0%	00	83 %	166
Regular Prefixes	30.50 %	61	61 %	122	57 %	115
Irregular Prefixes	12%	24	42 %	85	61 %	122

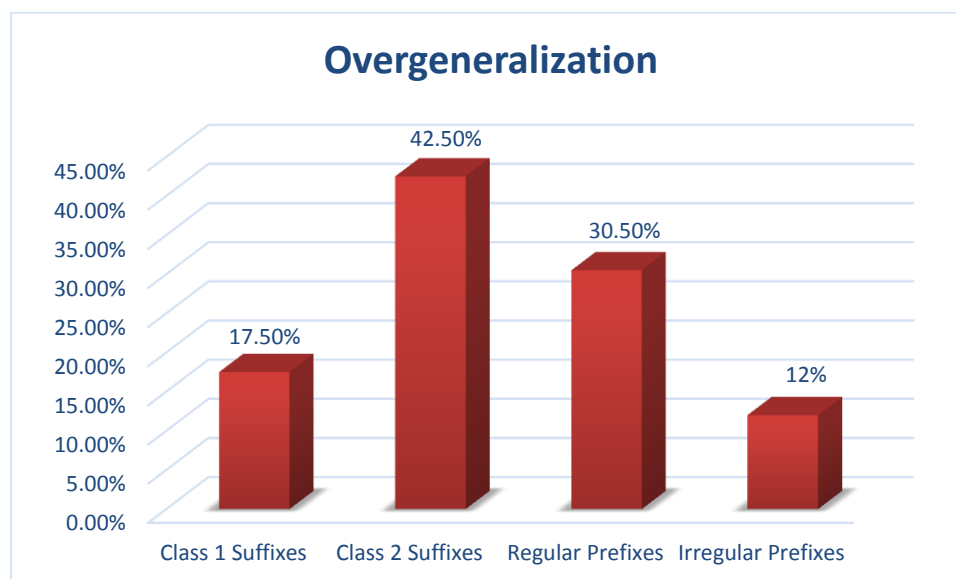


Figure 4. Percentage of the students' response for overgeneralization

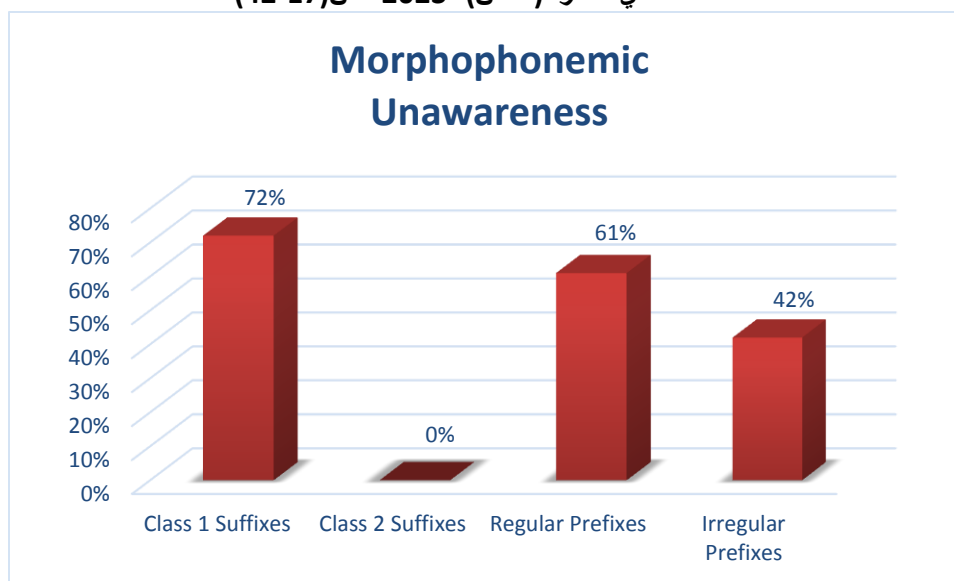


Figure 5. Percentage of the students' response for morphophonemic unawareness

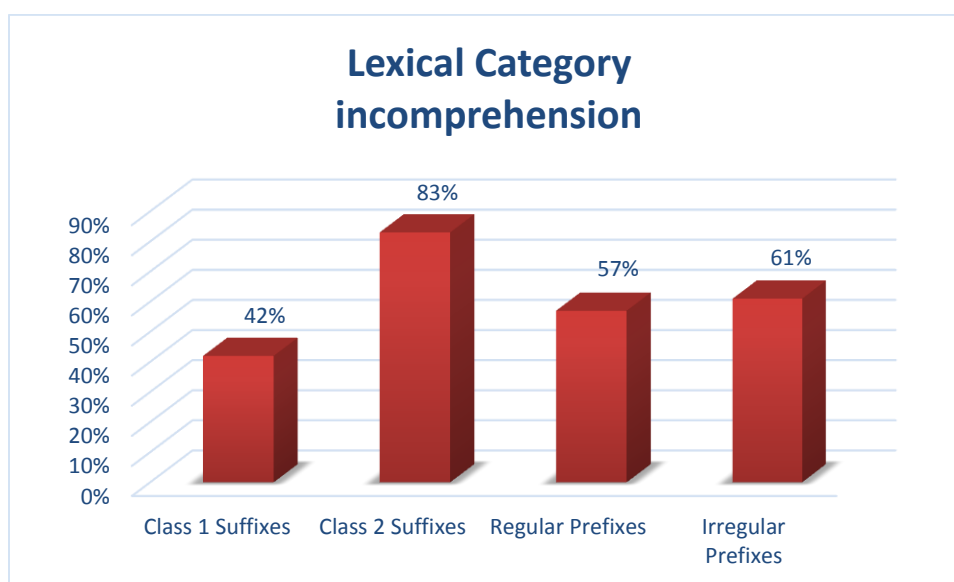


Figure 6. Percentage of the students' response for lexical category incomprehension

4.2.1. Overgeneralization



Table-2 and figure 4 illustrates the mean score of overgeneralization in class 1 derivational morphology among the respondents, the mean was found to be (35) with (17.5%) percentage. In class 2 derivational suffixes, the mean score was (85) while the percentage was (42.5%) as in shown in figure 4 above. In regular prefixes, the mean value of score for overgeneralization shown to (61) and (24) in irregular prefixes, the results (30.5%) in regular prefixes and (12%) in irregular ones (see figure 4 again).

4.2.2. Morphophonemic Unawareness

For the morphophonemic unawareness, the mean score was (144) in class 1 suffixes while in class 2 suffixes was 0, because only class derivational suffixes includes morphophonemic rules, with the percentage of (72%), in class 1 and it was (00%) in class 2. The mean score for morphophonemic unawareness was found to be (122) in regular prefixes with (61%) percent. While the mean in irregular prefixes shown to be (85) with the results of (42%), which indicate that most of the respondents were not aware of the morphophonemic changes that are attached to some words when changing them to another class as demonstrated in figure 5 above.

4.2.3. Lexical Category Incomprehension

Of course, writing an accurate and well-formed sentence structure required a clear morphological as well as syntactic understanding. This measure is used to check whether the learners know the word class of a given words and can form different parts of speech through suffixation or not. The measure also explains how morphological knowledge develops their grammatical knowledge. The results for this measure was (42%) and (85) as the mean score in class 1 derivational suffixation while in class 2 it was (83%) and the mean score was revealed to be (166). The mean score of lexical category incomprehension in regular prefixes was presented to be (115) and (122) in irregular prefixes. The results shows (57%) in regular prefixes while (61%) is revealed in irregular prefixes. The above statistical calculations confirmed that a great number of the respondents faced difficulties to create different classes of words using morphological processes, as proved in figure 6 above.

Table (3). The Percentage and the Mean Value of Avoided, Incorrect and Correct Forms of Inflectional Suffixes, Internal Change and Suppletion

Morphological Processes	Avoidance		Incorrect Forms		Correct Forms	
Regular and Irregular Suffixes	24.50 %	49	44 %	88	18 %	36
Internal Change	17%	34	69 %	138	19 %	38
Suppletion	18%	36	93 %	186	7%	14

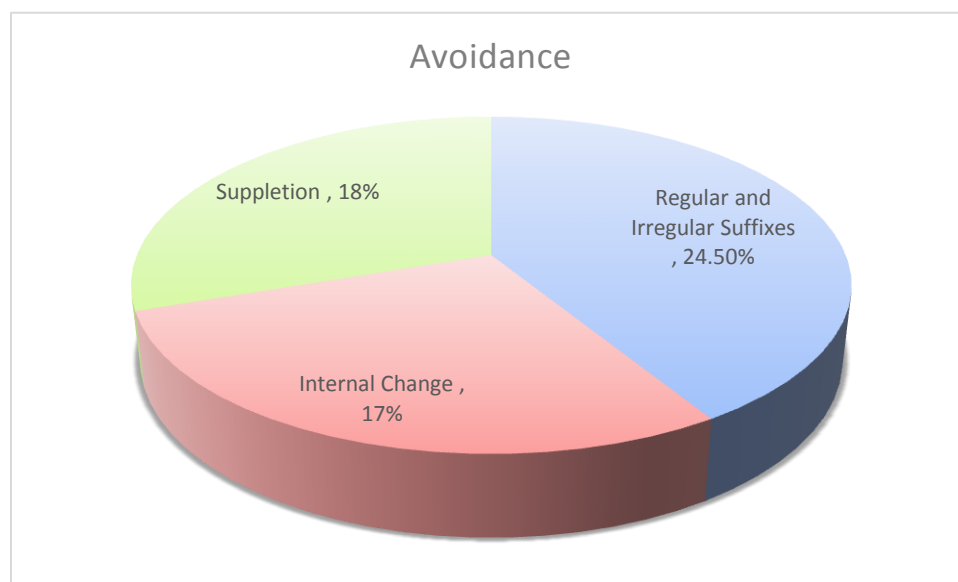


Figure 7. Percentage of the students' response for avoidance

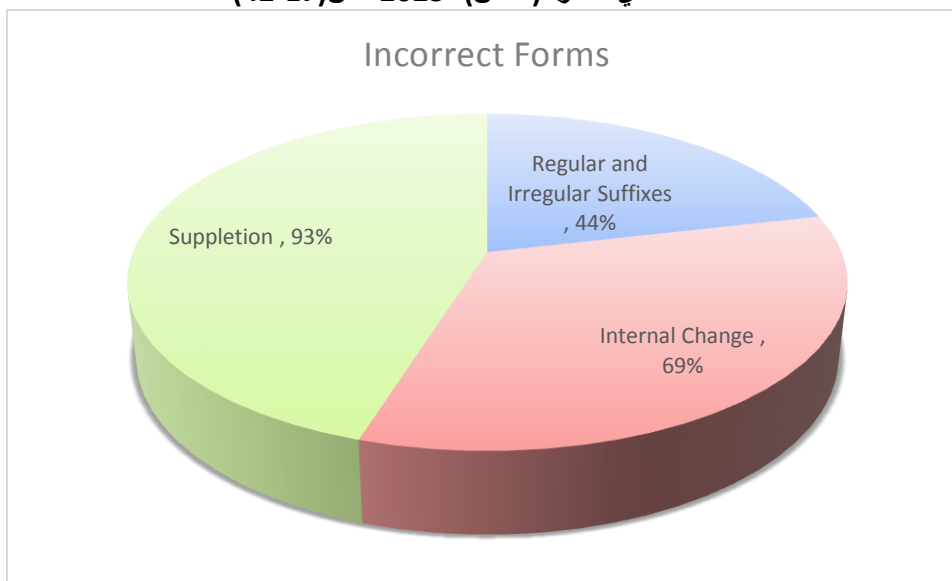


Figure 8. Percentage of the students' response for incorrect forms

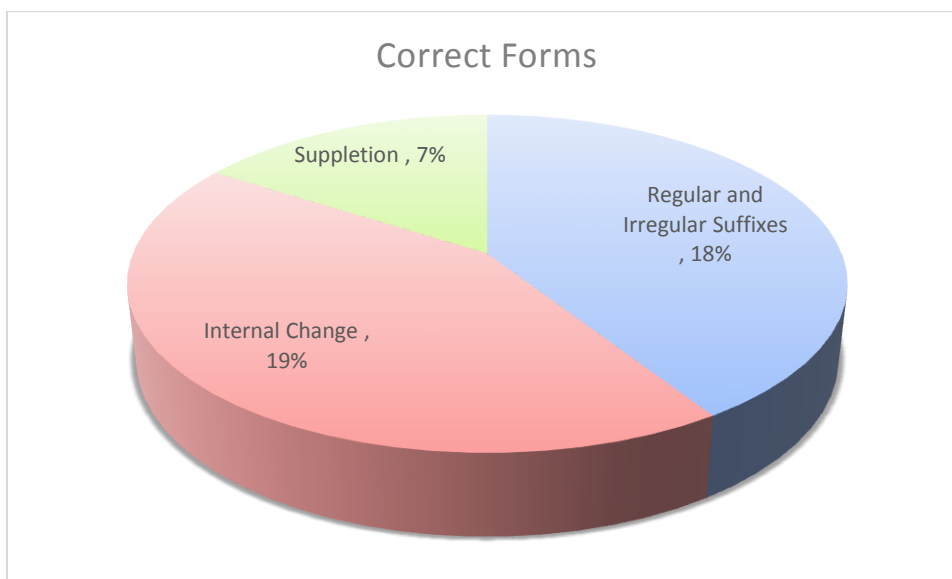


Figure 9. Percentage of the students' response for the correct forms

4.3. Inflectional Morphology

In inflectional suffixation, three different measures were adopted, these are (regular and irregular), internal change and Suppletion. The mean value of avoidance was (49) for regular and irregular suffixation, (34) for internal change while (36) for Suppletion. The results revealed to be (24.5%) for regular and irregular suffixes, (17%) for internal change and (18%) for Suppletion as figure (7) above explained. The mean value for incorrect affixation was (88) with the result of (44%) in regular and irregular suffixes. It was (138), which presented to be the mean score with the result of (69%) in internal change. In Suppletion, the mean was (186) for the inflectional suffixation while the results scored was (93%), as shown in figure (8) above. Respectively, the mean score for the correct forms in regular and irregular prefixes was found to be (36) with the result of (18%) for the inflectional morphology. The mean for the correct forms was 38 with the results of (19%) in the internal change, while in Suppletion, the mean was appeared to have (14) as score and the results shown was (7%) as interpreted in figure (9) above

Table (4). The Percentage and the Mean Value of Overgeneralization, Morphophonemic Unawareness and Lexical Category incomprehension in Inflectional Suffixes and Prefixes, and Internal Change and Suppletion

Morphological Processes	Overgeneralization		Morphophonemic Unawareness		Lexical Category incomprehension	
Regular and Irregular Suffixes	7.50 %	15	42.50 %	85	45 %	90
Internal Change	8%	16	92.50 %	185	65	130
Suppletion	9.50 %	19	83.50 %	167	88 %	176

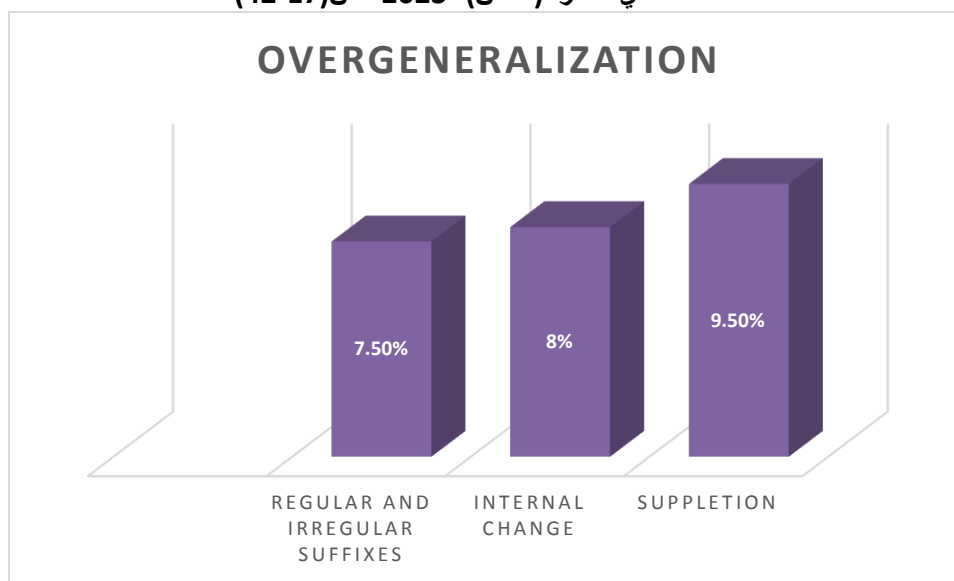


Figure 10. Percentage of the students' response for Overgeneralization

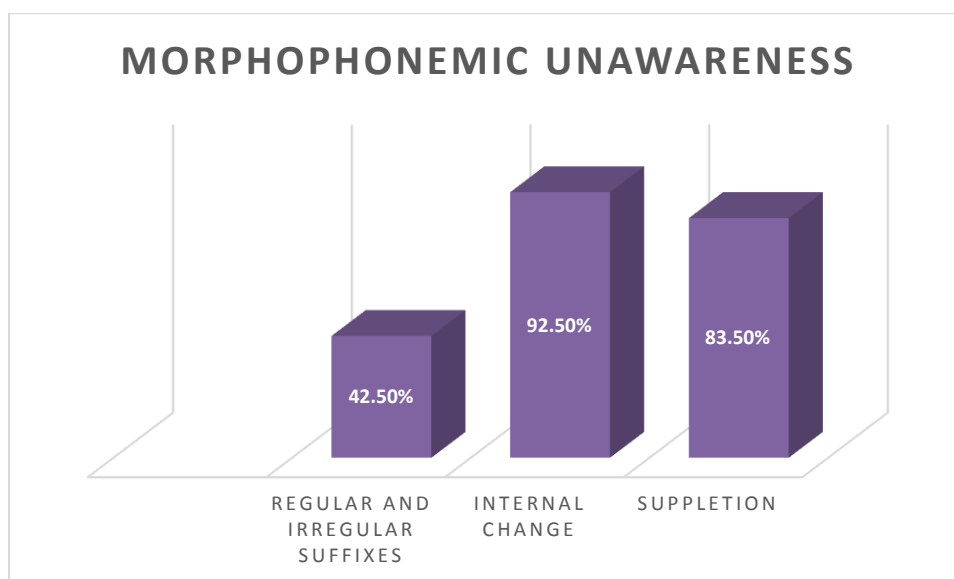


Figure 11. Percentage of the students' response for morphophonemic Unawareness

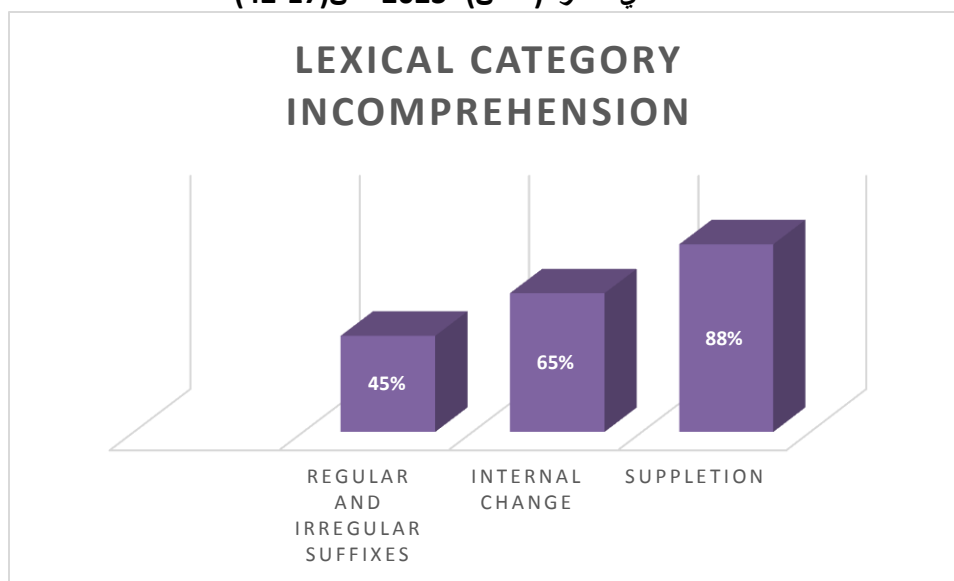


Figure 12. Percentage of the students' response for Lexical Category incomprehension

4.3.1. Overgeneralization

The results of the respondents who overgeneralized morphophonemic rules was (7.5%) and the mean was (15) in regular and irregular suffixes. The mean value of overgeneralization in internal change was (16) and the result was (8%), while the mean score in Suppletion was (19) and result was (9.5%) as figure (10) above displayed.

4.3.2. Morphophonemic Unawareness

In this category, the respondents demonstrated morphophonemic unawareness of (42%) and mean score of (85) in regular and irregular suffixes. In internal change, the mean for the morphophonemic unawareness was (185) and the result was (92%) while in Suppletion the mean shown to be (169) with (83.5%) been the result as stated in the figure (11) above.

4.3.3. Lexical Category Incomprehension

In regular and irregular suffixation, the mean score was (90) and the result was (45%). In internal change, the mean value was shown to be (130), and the result presented was (65%). While in Suppletion, the respondents displayed a mean score



of (176) with the result of (88%) in lexical category incomprehension for more details see figure (12) above.

4.4. Discussion

4.4.1. Correct and Incorrect Forms

In this category, the students produced far more incorrect forms than correct forms in the word list as well as in sentence production. They make errors in words like *submit*, *provide*, *move health*, *hard*, *logical*, *ox*, and *do*..etc. Most of the students supply incorrect spelling as in "*oxide*", "*oxy*, for *oxen* and "*providment*" for the word provision, "*beautifully*", instead of *beautify*. Some of them prefer to avoid the process because they did not know the morphological rules that are used to derive such words. Moreover, the respondents produced the incorrect forms very often in the word lists and when writing sentences. This can be seen in the sentence (*my tooth brush was broken*). Instead of (*my teeth brush was broken*). *I am submittive in term of fate*. Instead of *I am submitted in terms of fate*. *The girl is very luckily in her life, instead of the girl is very lucky in her life*. *Woman are active at home instead of women are active at home*. This poor performance can be attributed to learners' lack adequate knowledge of the morphological rules

4.4.2. Overgeneralization

In this category, the number of overgeneralized words are fewer. This means that the respondents tend to overgeneralize some words as a result of their unawareness of word formation processes. Where a given word class e. g. a noun requires different suffixation when deriving a word class from another class. For example, forming a noun from the verb *provide*. Instead of replacing '*-de*' by '*ion*', to make a noun '*provision*' they wrote '*providement*' they overgeneralized the morphological rule of adding '*ment*' to words ending to produce nouns as in *movement*, *improvement* and *government*. The same was done with words like "*beautytness*", "*grassmate*", instead of *beautify* and *grassy*. In writing, most of the sentences produced by the students contain many overgeneralized form of words, for example, *I teached English yesterday*. In this sentence, the students used the '*-ed*' form, which is used to change the regular verbs into past and applied it to irregular verb as an attempt to change the verb into past tense. This indicates that the students did not understand the process of Suppletion and internal change.



4.4.3. Avoidance

It was found that the number of the students who avoided the morphological processes were few due to their improper knowledge of inflectional and derivational suffixes. The fact that most of them are unaware of the morphological rules that govern the way these words are changed into different classes. As a result, most of them could not produce correct forms of words in all categories.

4.4.4. Lexical Category Incomprehension

In this aspect, most of the students demonstrated lack of knowledge in grammar as a result they could not change the lexical category in class 1 derivational suffixation. That is clear in the derivation of an adjective and a noun from the verb 'move'. However, they produce the words *moved* and *moving* instead of *moveable* and *movement* respectively. Similarly, when making a plural of 'ox', 'oxide' is produced instead of *oxen*. In the same way, they derive the word '*beauting*' in the place of '*beautify*' and so on. It is obvious that the students did not demonstrate sounding understanding of lexical category. In inflectional morphology, most of them added "-ing" in "*run*" when applying the internal mutation. However, the correct form is "*ran*". Here, the learners exhibit incompetence in the production of a new lexical category. This weak performance may attributed to poor exposure proper training on the morphological processes.

4.4.5. Morphophonemic Unawareness

In this category, in class 1 derivational suffixes, most of the respondents seem to lack understanding of the morphological rules. Accordingly, they provide incorrect forms of lexical category. As seen in the words '*submit*', '*move*', '*provide*', and '*receive*'. The students had to change these verbs into adjectives and nouns by adding suffixes '*ed*', '*tion*', '*able*', '*ion*'. But most of them produce these incorrect words as '*submitive*', '*submitily*', '*submital*', '*submitable*', '*moved*', '*moveous*', '*movement*', '*inmove*', '*provider*', '*providement*', '*receivation*', '*receivision*'. Class 1 derivations requires the students to be aware of the morphological change to produce a new part of speech or to apply suffixation. A great number of the students are found to lag behind in morphology. In class 2 suffixation of the derivational morphology some of the participants perform well as it does not require any morphophonemic rule. In irregular prefixes, the students' incompetence



is very high, for instance, they form words like 'intighten', 'retighten', 'rehopeful', 'inpolite', in the place of *entighten, unhopeful, and impolite*.

4.4.6. Semantic Change

This is clear from the respondents' weak performance regarding semantic change. The reason behind such weakness in semantic change is the learners' lack of comprehension of morphological rules. This often stated in class 1 derivational suffixes. When trying to form a new word Sudanese EFL learners often demonstrated a change in the meaning of the lexemes e. g. in the word 'hard', they had to change it to verb by adding '-en', instead, they used the forms 'hardful', 'hardly',. As seen in this sentence; *I hardful both the wood and the steel*. For a successful application of morphological rules in the formation of words, students need to be carefully trained on how these rules work. Sudanese EFL learners should implicitly and explicitly learn the morphological processes for better written performance. Generally the analysis of the results showed that most of the participants revealed poor performance in the process of word formation, specifically in lexical category. The participants ' improper use of the morphological rules results in change in the meanings of words. for instance, in the inflectional process (Suppletion) the word 'bad' was changed to 'badded' instead of 'worse-worst' in most of the students' responses. These learners made more errors particularly in the inflectional morphology. This is obvious in the use of the word 'woman' in the place of 'women' 'tooth' in the place of 'teeth'. Making such errors may lead to other errors types in grammatical, syntactical, lexical .etc. To help learners improve their performance in the process of words formation while writing, so Sudanese EFL learners should receive a clear instruction about these rules so that they become competent to follow the correct word-formation. To enhance EFL learners' morphemic competence and correct production of different words, an effective training on morphophonemic is required. Adequate and effective morphological knowledge does not only improve the word formation process, but it expands, reinforces and empowers the overall linguistic competence (Li & Zhang, 2021).



5.0. Conclusion Findings Recommendations

This study is proposed to be an encouraging contribution to language teaching as well as learning. As has been justified, a careful teaching of the morphological rules will improve the EFL written discourse in terms of word formation. It is the role of teachers to provide effective teaching of morphological and morphophonemic rules together with intensive exercises within the scope of writing. These processes have to be done systematically. Teachers must first teach inflectional suffixes, and then derivational suffixes. After that, they can teach other advanced morphological processes to enable learners produce better written discourse. Again, teachers should encourage their learners to form different lexical categories as far as they can such as verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjective and so on. This study recommended the explicit teaching of words in the early stages of the instructional processes, and it suggests that the text materials have to be well designed in such a way to raise and develop EFL learners' morphological awareness. The study also calls for a separate teaching of morphology as a full course in itself. The current study gives attention only to derivational and inflectional affixation (internal change and Suppletion). It is recommended that further studies are required in other morphological processes such as conversion, blending, acronym, abbreviation and so on.

5.1. Findings

The most important findings revealed that:

1. EFL learners demonstrated extremely poor performance and weak understanding of the morphological rules.
2. EFL learners faced difficulties to derive words such as verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives, which can negatively affect their writings.
3. EFL learners lack the awareness of the significant role that morphological rules can have.



5.2. Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- 1. University EFL learners should receive an explicit and rich instruction of the morphological rules.*
- 2. There should be intensive practices for the application of these rules to enable EFL students to derive new words using different morphemes.*

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