

Strategies for Guessing Meaning of English Words among Secondary Schools in Gasabo District, Rwanda

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Abstract: This study focused on morphological strategies that may alleviate the students' learning of new English words in Gasabo, Rwanda. The study used the descriptive research design. A systematic sampling technique determined three representative schools to participate. The total population in the three schools was 126 students and three teachers from language combinations. The sample of 56 students and three teachers participated through questionnaire and an interview guide. Data analysis took place through descriptive statistics and the thematic approach. Based on the findings, the study concluded that morphology is a vital tool for guessing the meaning of unknown words in English. Therefore, the awareness of morphology is necessary to improve learners' attention when they predict the meaning of an unknown word. The study recommends that secondary school teachers need to encourage their learners to grasp the meaning of unknown words by identifying their morphemes and context. Teachers of English language should avoid defective educational practices, like teacher-centered activities that attract memorization instead of linguistic skills development strategies. Therefore, this study remains an eye-opening contribution to the linguistic development of teachers.

Keywords: Morphology; words; strategies; guessing; meaning.

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Introduction

Understanding unknown words and their meaning in a language has not been an easy intellectual exercise to learners of all cultures. This poses three levels of difficulty: the form of the word (spelling), its pronunciation and meaning in a given context. This challenge can be in English language, just like in any other languages.

Givón (2014) qualifies language as one feature of Homo sapiens by arguing that language has its adaptive contexts such as social interaction, cultural transmission, education, literature, theatre, music, humor and play, love and war that are all embedded. From this set, there emerge two core adaptive functions of language: mental representation and communication of information. Mental representation figures out an individual

mind that strives for a code to make sense of a reality be it external, mental or social whereas communication is the business of two minds exchanging information represented mentally. From this view, two dichotomies spring up to the mind. On the one hand, the human brain can store and represent information without necessarily communicating it and on the other hand, human beings cannot communicate information that is not first represented in the mind (p. 27).

This thoughtful argument makes language form and meaning play a paramount role in understanding any written communication, which is the focus of this study. If the language form is not clearly represented in the mind, the meaning will be misunderstood. Like other linguists, Booij (2015) reiterated that morphemes are the minimal meaning-bearing units of a language. This concept generates two fundamentals of morphological operations: word formation and inflection. Word formation processes create new words, expanding the vocabulary. On the contrary, inflection is the grammatical subsystem that produces proper form of words in specific syntactic contexts. Word formation can generate a verb from a noun and a noun can become a verb, subject, adjective, adverb and the like that build up a meaningful sentence if the writer observes the correct order of words in a language.

In writing, the sender is the author of the message and the receiver is its reader, the recipient. Both the sender and receiver should unanimously master the code of the language, which is their medium of communication; otherwise, there will not be mutual intelligibility that credits understanding between them because the feedback will be negative: one understands one thing and the other understands something else; thus, no communication of the intended message or idea. Users of one language show its importance to their societies. This is why English has become a vital world language since more than a hundred countries use it for business, education, science, technology, tourism, diplomacy and politics, aviation, space travel, maritime security and any other enterprise that needs it as a medium to ease communication between groups of people, international organizations with their partners and nations Rao, (2019).

Like in many countries, English has become one of Rwanda's official languages of communication beside Kinyarwanda, the mother tongue. For this

reason, the language is taught as a subject and is a medium of instruction for other subjects (Niyibizi et al., 2021) to ensure that Rwanda is regionally and internationally part of English language communicators. This regulation has engaged learners into the struggle for the knowledge of English. Thus, teachers apply many strategies in teaching English vocabulary such as memorization of words and their meaning. Specifically, they translate English words into Kinyarwanda and ask learners to check unfamiliar words meaning in dictionaries as Al-Seghayer (2014) equally emphasized the application of this method of teaching vocabulary.

On the other hand, Booij (2015) argued that getting familiar with words stems, prefixes and suffixes makes learners acquire many words and recognize their meanings. Fundamentally, one root or affix can provide learners with an inkling to the meaning of heaps of words. Reflecting on this idea, analyzing word structure and composition is one efficient and accurate way to infer the sense of an unfamiliar word in a text (Paribakht & Wesche, 2016).

For example, the complex word *mudguard* can be segmented into its smaller components (*mud* + *guard*). The existence of such patterns demonstrates that words may have internal component structure and one can discover that *mud* is the noun and *guard* may be a verb and a noun as well. Morphologically, the process of adding *mud* to the verb *guard* to form new complex word (*mudguard*) deals with how a word is formed, and how it breaks down into smaller words. Similarly, *guesstimate* is a portmanteau word: a word or morpheme whose form and meaning came from a blending of two or more distinct forms such as, *guess* and *estimate* as Merriam-Webster dictionary states. Thus, morphology deals with how morpheme can influence learners and teachers to guess the sense of complex unfamiliar words. English language contains a large number of such words that are hard to learn. Surely, it is not easy to learn and master all words in a language (Nation, 2016).

Connors and Lunsford (1988) argued that, despite the complaint against the diversities of English spelling or word form, modern linguists have discovered that it is much more regular than is commonly thought to be. As Booij (2015) states, this regularity concerns not only sound-letters connections, but also the storage of visual memory of related words. This is because phonology and morphology are closely related. For example, word

stress depends on the suffix to accurately stress polysyllabic words and, thus, correctly spell out the word. In English, one can observe twelve different ways of representing the palatal and fricative sound /ʃ/ which is graphemically represented by “sh” in these words: shoe, shugar, shoean, shssue, shation, shchist, shpshaw, shsuspicion, shconscious, shnauseous, shmansjon, and shfuchsia as Lunsford and Connors (2003) have equally pointed out these problem words.

However, how can a learner write these words if they do not refer to memorization where the sound “sh” is spelled out differently twelve times? This question calls for an investigation to seek a lasting solution for any learner of English language to master the morphology of words. Language learning requires the mastery of its words to communicate effectively and efficiently. In other words, communication is established via accurate feedback from the receiver of the message that processed it employing words function to derive meaning.

In Rwanda, English is a second language, and it is used in a limited environment, the school. Teachers need to adopt hands-on strategies to successfully teach it, especially ways of guessing unknown English words. Many teaching strategies have been adopted to teach unfamiliar words like incidental learning where learners guess from context, and it was considered the most important source of words learning. Additionally, learners in Rwandan secondary schools usually have several learning methods like memorization and repetition with learners' experiences of some words (Sibomana, 2014).

Developing morphological consciousness will be necessary for learners in secondary schools if morphological strategies are well exploited. This can have a positive impact on the learners' capacity to predict the meaning of unknown terminologies. Various literature theories extensively discussed how to understand the meaning of new words, though not enough studies have been conducted locally, especially in secondary schools. For instance, in Gasabo District at Gihogwe Secondary School, G.S Gisozi and G.S Kimironko I, learners of English consult dictionaries, ask their classmates or teachers instead of using other word learning approaches in reading activities (Sibomana, 2014). The same author vowed that, learners in this District fail in predicting the sense of new terminologies because they are not aware of guessing strategies power.

Similarly, learners of English are unconscious of how English morphemes stimulate decoding. Therefore, there is a need to assess how morphology can work as a strategy to stimulate the guessing power of learners in predicting the meaning of unknown words in English.

Furthermore, previous investigations concerning the use of English morphology to infer meaning echo this research study. However, there is virtually no empirical study of learners using English morphology as a source of knowledge in implying the meaning of unfamiliar words in written context. Therefore, this study is a grey area to the literature on strategies to improve learners' understanding of a comprehension text and a conversation.

Literature Review

This section reviews written works about the role of English morphology as a strategy to guess the meaning of new words.

Morphology

Etymologically, the term “morphology” has a Greek origin “*morph*” with the meaning of shape or form, and “*logos*” means study. Therefore, morphology is precisely described as the study of word structure or form. Linguists state that the term *morphology* is known as the science, which analyses the core components of words. Indeed, in linguistics, morphology deals with words, their structures, and relationships with other words in a language. Thus, morphology studies the structure and word parts such as roots, stems, suffixes, and prefixes (Alsaeedi, 2017). For sure, students and teachers would rely on words internal structure to guess the meaning of unknown words instead of rushing to dictionaries. This would speed up their reading strategies momentum.

Morphology and Morphemes

A morpheme is described as the basic element of a word with constant meaning and unbroken form. Coates (2002) noted that, morphemes have a function or meaning that repeats with other words that have similar or related meanings (such as re-in *reread* and *redo*). A morpheme can be a root, a base, or a stem. A root refers to a part of a word that cannot be broken down into other morphemes—the most basic part of a word. In other words, the root can stand alone when all inflectional and derivational affixes are removed (such as *touch* in *untouchables*). A base, on the other hand, is the part of a word that accepts an affix. For instance, in

untouchable, the morpheme -un- has been attached to the base *touchable*, as -s has been attached to the base *untouchables*. Put differently, a base can be a root or a root with affixes as long as more affixes have been added.

On the other hand, the stem is a base unit to which another morphological piece, the last morpheme, is attached. Hence, *untouchable* is the stem for the word *untouchables*. A stem can be simple, made up of only one part or complex, i.e., itself made up of more than one piece (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2005). *Un-* and *-able* morphemes in *untouchables* are called affixes.

In addition, morphemes are mainly classified into four categories namely: free morphemes, bound morphemes, derivational morphemes, and inflectional morphemes. Free morpheme refers to a morpheme that can be a word by itself. It can be a word like “touch” in “touchable” or grammatical like *and*. Bound morpheme refers to the one that can be added to another part; it cannot be used on its own, it is sub-element of a word. These morphemes can be lexical as *possible* in *impossible* or grammatical such as -s in *notebooks*. The derivational ones deal with forming a word in changing its respective part of speech or its meaning like for *polite* as an adjective and “*politeness*” as a noun or “*kind*” and “*unkind*” as opposite adjectives.

Alsaedi (2017) described morphology as “the field of grammar dealing with the analysis of word structure and the relationships among words with respect to the morphemes that make up words” (p. 144). Linguistically, it helps to identify, analyze, and describe the components of words; the way of creating a word, its internal structure and involved mental processes (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2005).

Other researchers distinguished two corresponding methods to morphology specifically analytic and synthetic, which are necessary for linguists (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2005). Analytic approaches are concerned with identifying morphemes or subdividing words into expressive parts (for example, *teabag* is a grouping of *tea-bag*). Synthesis approaches also deal with the procedure of creating original words from various morphemes. Consequently, analytical approaches must somehow prevail over synthetic approaches. This study determines the influence of morphological teaching to the students’ capacity to know word morphemes and their ability to generate a list of words based on various morphemes. With reference to the above

descriptions, knowing a word analysis may influence and motivate learners’ ability to predict the meaning of a given morphological word.

Morphological Awareness

According to Amirjalili and Jabbari (2018), learners’ capacity to reproduce, explore and manipulate the morphological components can be viewed as a method of improving a learner’s linguistic consciousness. As learners comprehend the complex relationships between form and meaning, morphological awareness grows gradually. Understanding the meaning of a new term is based on the capacity to analyze the interior parts of that word. In this study, researchers use a tool that helps assess learners’ morphological awareness, enabling them to guess the sense of new words. Generally, learners’ ability to analyze and manipulate internal parts of words enhances their vocabulary mastery and improves their skills in second language learning.

Moreover, morphological awareness refers to the study of word creation procedures, including derivations, compounds, and inflections. Of the areas of linguistic consciousness, phonological consciousness is taken as the most vital to literacy acquisition. On the other hand, successful knowledge about morphology is also very important in English acquisition since English is a morpho-phonemic language (Carlisle, 2010). Therefore, a learner can form a word basing on the root by adding a suffix, a prefix or an infix or they can guess the meaning basing on the stress. For instance, the word *record* can be a noun or a verb, but they differ based on stress and vowel quality.

There is a difference between morphological awareness and morphological knowledge. Morphological awareness refers to the conscious reflection and manipulation of morphemes while morphological knowledge refers to the decomposing of complex words into meaningful parts, roots and affixes and transformation of meaningful parts into new ability to make sense (Yucel-Koc, 2015). In the words, “*careful*” and “*careless*”, “*care*” is the root whereas “*full*” and “*less*” are suffixes. With morphological knowledge and awareness, a learner can modify, for example, the noun to become an adjective. In this regard, English morphology deals with the constituents of a word and their formation. Furthermore, it studies word’s root, prefixes, suffixes, bases, inflections, and phonemes, which are the core components of

meaning. Therefore, teachers and learners can base themselves on words analysis to guess the meaning.

Guessing the Meaning of Unknown Words

Guessing the meaning of unknown words refers to the ability to infer the meaning of an expression or a word using contextual clues. These clues may be purely linguistic or situational, linguistic context, i.e., the linguistic environment in which a word is used within a text. Nassaji (2003) classified the guessing techniques that students commonly apply to predict the sense of unknown words into six categories: repetition, verification, self-inquiry, analysis, observation, and analogy. Repetition refers to recurring of one part of written passage, with words, phrases or sentences in which words occur. Verification examines the plausibility of an understood sense by comparing it to the broader context. Self-inquiry is questioning oneself about sentences, vocabularies, or already derived meanings. Analysis involves trying to comprehend the sense of a word by breaking it down into its different parts or constituents. Trying to understand stems can also be combined with suffixes or endings in this context. Suffixes can modify the sense or the form of the root like the noun "type", which becomes the verb "typing" by adding the suffix -ing. Many long technical terms such as "prototyping" consist of both prefixes and suffixes. By assigning meanings and sounds to these letter clusters, word identification is made faster and more efficient. Monitoring deals with demonstrating a conscious awareness of the ease or difficulty of a problem or task while analogy means determining the sense of a word from its sound or similarity to other words.

Factors that Influence Guessing Behavior

Many factors influence the success of inference. According to Rott (1999), four main factors that influence inference have been identified: the learner's approach to infer meaning basing on word property, context property where unfamiliar vocabulary appears, the strategies used by learners to understand the sense of a new word, and the mental processes that influence the reader's perception and attention to unfamiliar words.

A major difficult way in inferring meaning of a new vocabulary from context is the shape of the inferred word. Nation (2016) revealed that word characteristics play a significant role while trying to predict the sense of unfamiliar words. For example, it is more difficult to infer the meaning of idioms and ambiguous terms basing on the context in

which they appear than words with their central meaning. Paribakht and Wasche (2016) again argue that the number of occurrences of unfamiliar words, the role of unfamiliar words and the density of unfamiliar words play important roles in successful guessing. Therefore, this review shows that several factors in reading comprehension contribute significantly to vocabulary acquisition. Repetition, explanation, and L1 translation support vocabulary guessing efficiently. The use of dictionaries and glossaries, despite their overuse, make learners better understand the meaning of words. Furthermore, morphological awareness ensures learners analyze words' internal structure and come up with their real meaning for a better understanding of written communication.

Words Formation Process in English

Linguistically, words formation refers to the process through which new words are created in a particular language (Crystal, 2011). This process involves morphological processes by combining roots or stems with derivational elements (affixes) to form new words. There are some processes of creating new words such as derivation, compounding, abbreviation, acronyms, conversion, clipping, blending and back-formation. Derivation refers to a process in which affixes are combined with a base to form a new word with meaning or category different from the base like *begin-er* = *beginner* where the suffix changes the category of the verb base to noun with meaning with independent lexical items. Derivation involves attachment of an affix to its appropriate base.

Compounding is another common way of building words, whereby; a lexeme, which consists of two stems, is juxtaposed in a single word-form like in *grandfather*; compounds are invariably nouns, verbs or adjectives. As far as abbreviation is concerned, abbreviation refers to short form of the word to represent the whole like Dr, Dept, vs., and such similar cases. While acronyms refer to initial alphabets of the separate words put together to form a new word like VIP, AU, CEO etc., clipping is defined as shortening polysyllabic words into one syllable word like *advertisement* which is clipped down to *advert* or *examination* to *exam*. Conversion is another way of creating a new word by changing its class without a physical change in its form simply by the shift of the stress like *impor,t* which is a noun to *import* which is a verb. Lastly, Back-formation is a little bit the same as clipping. However, back-formation technique can change the part of speech,

while clipping does not change the part of speech (Spencer, 2011).

Vocabulary Learning

In languages, meaning is primarily carried by words. Vermeer (2001) and Zimmerman (2005) claimed that, the learner's language ability is basically determined by vocabulary knowledge and size. In this regard, several researchers examined the role of words mastery in language instruction. For example, Tschirner (2004) revealed that, learners' vocabulary size determines their language proficiency and their academic language skills. In addition, learners' inadequate vocabulary knowledge can impede the understanding of the text. Various studies reveal a relationship between learners' words meaning awareness and related L2 writing capacity (Laufer & Nation, 1995; Laufer, 1998; Zimmerman, 2005). Acquiring new words is basically a difficult process since vocabulary awareness requires being fully aware of their connotations, semantic features or meanings, syntactic structures, derived forms, synonyms and antonyms (Nagy & Scott, 1990).

Furthermore, Carlo et al. (2004) evaluated interventions aimed at increasing learners' vocabulary knowledge and their comprehension level of a written text. The study was piloted with "254 bilingual and monolingual children from nine fifth-grade classrooms in four schools in California, Virginia, and Massachusetts" (August et al., 2005, p. 54). Learners got 15 weeks of instruction on making sense of words in a given context and using roots, prefixes, suffixes, cognates and morphological relationships. Results showed that their comprehension levels increased after the instruction time (August et al., 2005).

Since vocabulary improvement requires a more rigorous approach, scholars have established a systematic method to learn. For example, Nurhemida (2007) states that, L1 students typically have multiple studying methods like repetition, learner experience towards writing and reading words and memorization. Second language learners study words' meaning by means of the above techniques and other means like teaching in schools, word setting and application of morphological awareness to guess word sense. Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) offered approaches to facilitate the progress of L2 lexical awareness, including social strategies (SOC), memory strategies (MEM), metacognitive strategies (MET), cognitive strategies (COG) and determination strategies. From

these approaches, it is clear that many have been adopted to teach second language vocabularies. Alsaedi (2017) revealed that when the vocabulary was learned through concrete representation and morphological cues than conventional teaching methods, a learner increased the L2 vocabulary awareness and size more.

Other researchers suggested the usage of morphological cues for guessing and understanding the sense to facilitate L2 terminology studying (Morin, 2003; Chang et al., 2005; Schiff & Calif, 2007). The emphasis of this study is mostly on the influence of morphology in L2 words' meaning guessing in the English language by learners. With regard to the above definitions, learners can perfectly develop their vocabulary size when they are aware of the internal structure of words since they contain meanings and that meaning is applicable in other words. Therefore, knowledge about morphology can stimulate learner's attention in getting the sense of new terminologies based on their internal structure.

Words Learning Strategies

Learning approaches facilitate the learning process and make it relaxed, quicker, more entertaining, active, and more transferable to new situations (Stevenson, (2010). O'Malley & Chamot (1990) divided learning techniques into two classes, namely, direct and indirect learning techniques. The direct learning technique comprises memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. It involves the use of a new language. The second learning technique consists of metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

Normally, common words learning approaches are simply memorization, repetition, and taking notes (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). On the other hand, more complex words learning approaches, such as the keyword method have been revealed to improve retaining better than rote memorization (Hulstijn, 2011). However, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) argued that regular repetition may be effective if learners are familiar with it. Other techniques, such as words memorization, can be more effective for those who begin learning a language while those with advanced level profit a lot when they are taught strategies, which are more complex, like understanding the sense of unfamiliar vocabulary in the context.

Nation (2016) revealed that discovering the meaning of a terminology based on its etymology or

elements of it is another technique to improve vocabularies. Learners must have the ability to obtain information regarding unfamiliar words for dealing with them as they arise. Normally, several words in English have French, Latin or Greek origins and some of them are decomposable into roots, prefixes and suffixes so that learners can analyze word parts to determine their meaning. Familiarity with parts of words gives learners a valuable foundation for understanding the link among related words. Contextual meaning analysis is also a useful resource for students. Because of background knowledge and language clues, students can study unfamiliar vocabulary while reading a text. These can make it possible to look up the sense of a new term in dictionaries, ask instructors, inborn users or other students for understanding.

Nation (2016) equally added that, related words (cognates words) can make learners guess the sense of unfamiliar words. Another strategy includes the means of retention of words to regularly use them. Actually, the subgroups highlighted here are *notice*, *retrieve* and *generate*. Notice means seeing words as things to learn. Examples of highlighted method include writing the terminology in a vocabulary book or list of verbs, writing it on card of words or retelling it verbally. Fetching includes retrieving earlier success items. Retrieval reinforces the link among clues and recovered understanding.

Generally, several kinds of retrieval have been identified such as: receptive/productive, verbal/visual, overt/covert, contextual/non-contextual. For retrieval, knowledge is retrieved the same way as when it was initially stored. Generative approaches involve adding new features of knowledge to the existing ones by visualizing illustrations. It also involves making contexts, collocations and sentences with words as (Nation, 2016) puts it.

Methodology

Design

The study used the descriptive research design. The researchers analyzed the data descriptively, using mean scores to rate the views of respondents, as it appears in table 1 and table 2. A four-point Likert scale scores were used to enable participants to air their views. Mean scores were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.49=strongly disagree, 1.50-2.49=agree; 2.50-3.49=agree and 3.50-4.00=strongly agree.

Population and Sampling

This study took place at Gasabo District in Kigali City. The district comprised of 64 secondary schools. From the total number of schools in the district, a systematic sampling technique was used to select three representative schools for inclusion in the study. The total population in the three schools was 126 students and three teachers from language combinations. The sample of 56 students was chosen from the population. Teachers were universally sampled as it is recommended that when the population is homogenous and small, there is no need to resort to computing the sample (Kothari, 2017). Therefore, the three English language teachers participated.

Research Tools

This study used a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaires was given to both learners and teachers while interview guide was given to teachers only. For quantitative data, descriptive analysis was used. The data was presented using tables. Qualitative data was put in categories and then analyzed accordingly.

Ethical Considerations

The following research ethical considerations were taken into account. Respondents voluntarily participated after explaining to them the purpose of the study. Additionally, respondents did not reveal their names. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality of the data was ensured.

Findings and Discussion

This paper sought to establish strategies learners use to guess meanings of unknown complex English words. Findings are presented and analyzed in tables 1 and 2, guided by two research questions.

Research Question 1: What are morphological techniques used by learners to guess the meaning of complex words?

Results in Table 1 indicate that respondents agreed with all statements in the table through the questionnaire. This suggests that all possible methods/ techniques in the questionnaire were useful to learners in the process of guessing the meaning of complex words. The items in the table are arranged according to intensity of agreement from the highly to the lowly scored items. Respondents totally agreed to have been paying particular attention to linking words as a strategy for guessing the meaning of complex words in English vocabulary. This strategy enhances learners'

contextual understanding. It builds associations, develops decoding skills, fosters predictive abilities and deepens overall understanding of the language.

By leveraging morphological clues, learners can more effectively navigate unfamiliar vocabulary and expand their linguistic proficiency.

Table 1: Morphological Techniques in Guessing the Meaning of English Complex Words

SN	Techniques Used	Mean	Interpretation
1	Pay particular attention to linking words	4.00	Strongly agree
2	Considering grammatical features of sentences	3.62	Strongly agree
3	Examining the immediate context of the word	3.58	Strongly agree
4	Examine the wider context of the word	3.43	Agree
5	Look at the structure of the word (i.e. prefix, suffix, root)	3.44	Agree

Interpretation: 1.00-1.49=strongly disagree, 1.50-2.49=agree; 2.50-3.49=agree and 3.50-4.00=strongly agree

Furthermore, they strongly agreed that they consider grammatical features of sentences as a mechanism for grasping meaning of complex words. This strategy provides learners with valuable insights into their syntactic context, part of speech, sentence structure, dependency relations and semantic role assignment. By analyzing these grammatical features, learners can interpret the meaning of complex vocabulary more effectively and accurately within the broader context of the sentence or discourse. They also examined immediate contexts of the words as mechanism for guessing complex words. This approach provides learners with valuable semantic, functional, and relational clues that facilitate comprehension and interpretation. By analyzing the words surrounding the complex word, learners can infer meanings based on semantic associations, grammatical function and coherence within the broader context of the text or discourse. This strategy empowers learners to effectively navigate unfamiliar vocabulary and deepen their understanding of complex texts.

Another techniques used by learners to guess the meaning of complex words in English was examining the wider context of words. This approach is a complex strategy that provides learners with valuable insights into their meaning, usage and significance. By considering the thematic relevance, discourse structure, authorial intent and interdisciplinary connections surrounding the word, learners can construct comprehensive

interpretations that enhance their understanding of complex vocabularies within the broader context of the text or discourse. This strategy fosters critical thinking, analytical skills and deeper engagement with complex texts. Furthermore, looking into the structure of word e.g. prefix, suffix and roots helped the learners to guess words' meanings. Looking into the structure of words, including prefixes, suffixes, and roots, equips learners with valuable tools for guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words. By decoding familiar elements, building vocabulary, inferring word meanings, identifying word families, fostering cognitive flexibility and enhancing word recognition, learners can develop effective strategies for deciphering complex vocabulary and expanding their linguistic proficiency.

Therefore, all the five items in the questionnaire were useful strategies in guessing the meaning of complex words in English. Guessing the meaning of words is a valuable language learning strategy that enhances vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, critical thinking, active learning, confidence, autonomy, and communication skills. By encouraging learners to engage actively with language and text, educators foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of language, empowering learners to become more proficient and effective communicators.

Research Question 2: Which techniques do teachers use to make learners grasp the meaning of new words in English?

Table 2: Morphological techniques used by teachers to help learners

SN	Morphological Techniques Encouraged by Teachers	Mean	Interpretation
1	I help learners to look for similar words in other language	4.00	Strongly agree
2	I encourage learners to use suffixes	3.66	Strongly agree
3	I encourage learners to identify words' roots	3.66	Strongly agree
4	I encourage learners to use prefixes	3.33	Agree

Interpretation: 1.00-1.49=strongly disagree, 1.50-2.49=agree; 2.50-3.49=agree and 3.50-4.00=strongly agree

This research question sought to establish techniques used by teachers in making learners grasp the meaning of new words in English. The items in table 2 appear according to intensity of agreement from the highly to the lowly scored items.

Teachers totally agreed to have been helping learners to look into similar words in other language as a strategy of guessing the meaning of complex words. By recognizing cognates, exploring etymological connections, identifying semantic associations, analyzing cross-linguistic patterns and contextualizing words within cultural contexts, learners can enhance their understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary and deepen their proficiency in the target language. They also strongly agreed to have been encouraging learners to use suffixes as a strategy and identify words' roots. By recognizing common suffixes, analyzing word derivations, understanding semantic cues, identifying word roots, building word familiarity and engaging in contextual analysis, learners can effectively interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Finally, they agreed that they encourage learners to use prefixes as a strategy. Incorporating prefixes as a learning strategy empowers learners to interpret unfamiliar words, expand their vocabulary, make educated guesses about word meanings, build word families and enhance their overall language skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that morphology is a vital tool for guessing the meaning of unknown words. For this reason, the awareness of morphology is necessary to improve learners' attention when they predict the meaning of an unknown word. Students can guess the meaning by looking at affixes or basing on similar words from other language and they can pay attention to the context. This study has instilled awareness into English learners and teachers to infer meaning based on any word's internal structure. The study recommends that secondary school teachers need to encourage their learners to grasp the meaning of unknown words by identifying their morphemes and context. This way, it will be easy to read and understand comprehension texts and any writing that communicates information. Teachers of English language should avoid defective educational practices, like teacher-centered activities that attract memorization instead of linguistic skills development strategies. Therefore, this study

remains an eye-opening contribution to the linguistic development of teachers.

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