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Morphological Awareness for Vocabulary Acquisition among EFL seventh grade learners at Delfos Elementary School in the period of 2019-2020

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this research project was presented by **César Alberto Villamar Ramírez** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Bachelor Degree in English Language with a Minor in Educational Management.**

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDMENTS

This graduation work is dedicated to my family who encouraged and guided me during this path of commitment to achieve success.

To my loving daughter Megan, for her love and patience, and encouragement she had these years.

Without them this achievement would not have been accomplished.

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ABSTRACT

This research is about Morphological Awareness for Vocabulary Acquisition among EFL learners at an elementary school in the city of Guayaquil. This represents a problem for students when writing and expressing themselves orally. The main objective is to inquire about the poor vocabulary use and to identify the possible reasons that may be causing the problem. This research work is situated in Unidad Educativa Delfos, a private educational institution mainly targeted to middle income household. The target group of the study are the 29 students of seventh grade between 11 and 12 years old. It was chosen a quasi-experiment research design with a quantitative approach. The aspects considered for the quantitative analysis where the surveys and the tests after the methodology used with the students. The objective of the tests is to examine the level of effectiveness of morphological awareness for vocabulary acquisition among the students. Some important findings were that the students who received morphological relatedness intervention could achieve a better understanding of word formation. Also, morphological relatedness can be very helpful for vocabulary acquisition because it enables the students to identify word families from the very beginning. Finally, according to the analysis, morphological awareness plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: Morphological awareness, vocabulary, relatedness, acquisition, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Morphological awareness play a crucial role in English as a foreign language. It enables students to expand their vocabulary, learning new words for enhancing writing and also expressing in a better way. For this reason, many researchers have studied this area to help students develop vocabulary through different strategies to be applied on L2 learners.

Once morphological awareness is presented by the teacher, it could work as an important aid that could give light on how well English learners would able to master input and output skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. Ali, Ali, & Mohd Yasin (2000) argue that by not having this clear understanding about the language, students could encounter difficulties in comprehending the language they are exposed to. Nevertheless, in the morphological awareness environment there are some strategies that can be taught through the process of learning a new language in order to master the language accurately. One of these ways is applying morphological analysis and teaching word formation, sometimes named as ''word consciousness', because it enables learners to enhance new vocabulary effectively in a relatively short time.   In the same book, the authors also report that morphological analysis helps learners to construct and form new vocabulary by themselves which allows them to improve their speaking ability. (Ali, Ali, & Mohd Yasin, 2000)

It is necessary to examine how teachers can help students develop a better understanding in word formation in order to expand their lexicon. It is also significant for teachers who are interested in the mechanics of teaching and learning English so as to enrich their ways of communicating and their comprehension in oral activities.

JUSTIFICATION

This research study focuses on the lack of morphological awareness and examines the low performance of vocabulary in students of seventh grade at Delfos elementary School in the city of Guayaquil. The importance of the development of this research lies on the understanding of why the students are not able to answer questions orally the right way or to answer with complete ideas when they are asked. By conducting this research the reasons causing the problems mentioned can be identified. In addition, solutions could also be formulated once the research is finished and analyzed.

The beneficiaries of this study are the students, teaching staff and the educational institution where the research takes place. By learning new words the students will be very curious and interested in knowing about morphological awareness that deals with word formation, thus, creating an atmosphere of security and confidence in the students when expressing themselves in English

However, students will not be the only ones who benefit from this research. Teachers may also find this project a very advantageous one. It will be easier for them to teach vocabulary by using morphological strategies as well as rewarding when seeing their students' progress.

Finally, conducting this research may bring some benefits to the institution. Having this knowledge about the acquisition and expansion of vocabulary and applying it for the purpose of improving the EFL development might allow the students acquire the English language in an effective way.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Delfos School is an institution located in the city of Guayaquil with approximately 1000 students. The school works on both shifts, morning and afternoon. The following study is going to take place in the seventh grade because of the poor lexicon students present in their English speaking and writing skills.

This problem has been observed during class time when students are asked to take part in any productive activity and simply do not understand the words that are applied. The same problem emerges when carrying out writing exercises, for example when they are asked to structure sentences by using new words they have just learned in class, they start making mistakes.

The poor production skills in English such as writing and speaking may be caused by a lack of instructional vocabulary strategies not established by the teachers or textbook. There are several approaches to develop vocabulary, one well known is through morphological awareness.

Curinga (2014) suggests that "Morphological awareness is the ability to recognize morphological word families like nation, national, nationalize and nationalization." (p.3)

Morphological awareness is a crucial part in building solid bases to learn a new language since this way students get a clear knowledge on how words are formed to create different word meaning such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. By doing so, English learners gain understanding and will be able to master the language along with all its skills that are required to produce it in different situations.

However, learners with little knowledge on morphological awareness could have some gaps in their learning process that eventually will affect in the mastery of a language. Many studies have been conducted on the importance of vocabulary in second language learning. For instance, according to Tschirner (2004), students' academic language skills and proficiency can be determined through their vocabulary size.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent does the application of morphological awareness analysis affect the process of vocabulary learning in EFL learners?

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To examine the level of effectiveness of morphological awareness for English vocabulary acquisition among seventh grade students at Delfos Elementary School.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To diagnose the vocabulary inventory of seventh graders at Delfos Elementary School.

- To apply morphological awareness strategies for acquiring vocabulary in seventh graders.

- To determine the level of morphological awareness of effectiveness achieved in seventh graders at Delfos Elementary School.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vocabulary Acquisition

The main topic of this research is morphological awareness, so some concepts about it will be explained as the following.

Maki & Chow (2015) claim that learning vocabulary is one of the basic tools that a new learner needs to speak any other language. However, it may be also considered as the most difficult field in language learning since a good lexicon must be required for communicative competence.

Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2013) report that "vocabulary plays an important role in people's lives. A rich vocabulary supports learning about the world, encountering new ideas, enjoying the beauty of a language. It is clear that a large and rich vocabulary is the hallmark of an educated person". (p.1) Thus, M. G. McKeown (2014) states that vocabulary learning is connected to primary language learning from the very beginning since great characteristics and people's skills are acquired during schooling. In this context, it can be said that one of the most important tasks at school is to teach as much vocabulary as possible.

In inclusive environment, morphological awareness could be a useful strategy. Wolter & Green (2015) state that "explicit vocabulary instruction based in morphological awareness may be considered especially important for children with language and literacy deficits" (p. 29). In other words, vocabulary is also a fundamental tool to develop a child's ability to interact and read since the vocabulary skills of developing students is likely to expand when they apply morphological awareness while reading and spelling.

Based on the book Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy edited by Schmitt & McCarthy (1997) there is an important question that every learner must ask themselves. How much vocabulary does a second learner need? In the same book these researchers argue that there are three ways of answering this question. First, ask how many words are there in the target language? Second, ask how many words do native speakers know? Third, how many words are needed to do the things that a language user needs to do?

Answering these questions mentioned above; Milton (2009) states that there are 200,000 words any language learner needs to comprehend in order to do the things required in the target language.

Definition of a Word

Alkhuli (2010) states that word is the smallest free meaningful unit in a language and it can be classified into two categories. The first category refers to simple words which mean that have one morpheme only, e,g., go, sit, boy, girl. The second category is complex words that consist of one root plus one affix or more, e,g., writer, boyish, girlhood, entitles, composition. In the same book, the researcher indicates that a word also has five aspects: meaning, phonetic form, written form, phonological rules of the language which it belongs to and grammatical properties.

According to Dugan (2014) "**a root word** has the core meaning of a word, but sometimes it does not stand alone. It also contains a **prefix** that is at the beginning of a word, and a **suffix** that goes at the end of a word. These word parts change the meaning of a word. Like the example shown in the chart below.

Word	PREFIX	ROOT	SUFFIX
1. import	im	port	_____
2. prepay	pre	pay	
3. likeable		Like	able
4. loyalty		loyal	ty
5. autopilot	auto	pilot	
6. telegram	tele	gram	
7. biology		bio	logy
8. nonstop	non	stop	
9. international	inter	nation	al
10. telephone	tele	phone	

Table 1 Taken from the work of Dugan (2014).

In other words, lexical items can be divided into three different parts as in the example mentioned above giving a particular significance, but when words are put together they frequently provide a stronger meaning. (Dugan, 2014)

Morphological Awareness

Onish (2010) points out that morphological awareness is the ability to recognize meaningful parts of words (morphemes), including prefixes, suffixes and rood words. Lexicon can be doubled and even tripled by students who know prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Rachel Berthiaume (2018) reports that morphology is the internal study of word formation in which small meaningful linguistic units are presented and called morphemes. It can be said based on the researcher's idea, that morphological awareness is crucial to literacy development and an advantageous tool for learners who are exposed to unfamiliar words.

Others authors as Forough & Jabbari (2018) define morphological awareness as the conscious awareness of morphemic structure and the need for morphological instruction in language literacy because of its nature, morphological instruction deals with sub-lexical features of a language. By doing this, English students enhance their literacy skills at lexical levels such as spelling, word reading, vocabulary, etc.

Important Notion in Morphology

Rachel Berthiaume (2018) determines that free morphemes and bound morphemes are an important notion in morphology. She defines bound morphemes as linguistic units that are important for the constructions of new words. However, these parts cannot stand by themselves while free morphemes are dependent linguistic units that do not need to be attached to have a real meaning. In other words, bound morphemes are simply those morphemes that cannot stand alone in speech or writing but must be attached to other morphemes.

Free Morpheme

Hamawand (2011) defines free morphemes as independent linguistic units that carry a specific meaning and are often considered to different word classes. For instance, **region** is free morpheme noun, **serve** is a verb and **legal** is an adjective; each one is considered a free morpheme.

Bound Morphemes

According to Bernard (2006) bound morphemes are linguistic segments that require a free or another bound morpheme to create a word. Bound morphemes play an important role in word learning process and they enable the language user to do three distinct things.

- To create new words from pre-existing ones

  [PREFIX)   [BASE/STEM)   [NEW WORD)

   un-   +   happy   =   unhappy

- To move words from one word class to another by adding certain affixes,

   [NOUN)   [SUFFIX)   [ADJECTIVE)

    Man   +   -ly   =   manly

- To extend grammatical meaning

   [VERB)

[1ST/2ND PERSON SINGULAR)   [SUFFIX)   [3RDPERSON SINGULAR)

     sing   +   -s =   sings

It can be said that bound morphemes can occur only in combinations as the example given above in order to create new category words.

Inflectional and Derivational Morphemes

Onish (2010) presents inflectional and derivational morphemes as distinct within the set of morphemes that can be both bound and grammatical. Bound grammatical morphemes refer to those that don't have a sense by themselves and additionally, always occur in combinations and are commonly known as affixes. They can be further divided into inflectional affixes and derivational affixes. On the other hand, inflectional morphemes are also bound units, these are all suffixes that are added to a word to modify the meaning of an item but do not change its parts of speech quality.

Inflectional Morphemes

Inflectional morphemes are regarded as bound linguistic units that change the form of a word without changing either the word category it belongs to or its meaning. There are eight inflectional types of morphemes.

The 8 English Inflectional Morphemes			
Morphemes	**Grammatical Function**	**Attaches to**	**Examples**
-s	plural	nouns	desks, chairs, boxes
-'s	possessive	nouns	the boy's hat
-s	3rd person singular	verb present tense	She drives.
-ed	regular past tense	verb	He talked.
-ed	regular past participle	verb	She has walked.
-ing	present continuous	verb	She is driving.
-er	comparative	adjective/ adverb	taller, faster
-est	superlatives	adjective/ adverb	tallest, fastest

Table 2. Taken from the work of Hamawand (2011)

Derivational Morphology

According to Guzzet (2007) derivational morphemes can be used to alter whole classes of words to another grammatical category. For example, the derivational morpheme -**er** added to the verb **bake** change the verb into a noun **baker**. These derivational morphemes can either go at the beginning or at the end of the base word. Based on the book Words their ways edited by

Templeton & Johnston (2019) estimate that "60% or 80% of English vocabulary is created through these processes of word combination" (p.8).

Constrains On Vocabulary Acquisition

L1 versus L2

Takač (2008) denotes that "L2 vocabulary acquisition is different from L1 acquisition because L2 learners have already developed conceptual and semantic systems linked to L1. This is why L2 acquisition, at least at its initial stage, often involves mapping new lexical form onto an already existing conceptual meaning or translational equivalent in L1" (p. 9).

In other words, in some cases L1 could help the acquisition or use of L2 lexical words. However, in many cases it may not mean the same, it will generate serious errors in the use of the L2. The learner tends to assume that the system of L2 is more or less the same as in his L1 until he discovers that it is the opposite. (Takač, 2008)

Takač reports that "Another factor that may affect the L2 acquisition undoubtedly is the lack of exposure to the language input. The exposure to L2 input is often limited to the classroom context" (p.9).

This input may be developed by receptive skills such as reading and listening activities that will enrich and enhance vocabulary in order to produce the language eventually through productive tasks. That is to say, speaking and writing activities. (Takač, 2008)

Vocabulary Context

According to Isabel L. Beck (2013) the lack of wide reading context could affect vocabulary growth. There are some important aspects to be considered. First, vocabulary development occurs in small increments. It is estimated that 100 unfamiliar words are met in reading and just 5 to 15 of them will be learnt. Secondly, students must do lots of reading and read texts of a major level of difficulty to involve unfamiliar words not already known by the students. And

finally, many students that lack vocabulary do not engage in wide reading, especially with the type of text that contains unfamiliar words.

Phonological Awareness

Gillon (2017) reports "that phonological awareness refers to an individual´s awareness of the sound structure of a spoken word, indicating the understanding of a word's sound structure to decode or sound out a word in print" (p.2). In other words, phonological awareness is about reflecting on the sound of the language, not the meaning of the language. Phonological awareness is what we see in print. Phonological awareness also encompasses any size of sound, including, syllables, onsets and rimes and phonemes. (Gillon, 2017)

a) Syllable Awareness

Gillon (2018) also mentions that syllable awareness is one component of phonological awareness that shows words can be divided into syllables. Comprehending that a word such as **number** can be divided into two syllables **num-ber.** It is an example of syllable awareness.

b) Onset-rime Awareness

According to Fry (2000) the second level of phonological awareness is onset-rime which means the initial phonological unit of any word and the rime refers to the string of letters that follow, usually a vowel and a final consonant. For example, in the word **bat** the **b** is the onset syllable and **at** is the rime of the syllable. For example:

Tell the student, "i' m going to say a word and your task is to break it into parts. For instance, if I say 'cat,' you would say '/k/ /at/.'" More examples are the following.

map	/m/ /ap/
see	/s/ /ee/
not	/n/ /ot/

Table 3. Taken from the work of Fry

Onset and rime enables the person to develop a great deal of word families. Onset helps student to read different graphemes to create new words. In the same example with the word **bat,** the onset can change the sound and the meaning of the word using phonograms (word families or phonic patterns) **like sat**, **cat**, **rat**, **mat**, etc.

The last level of phonological awareness is phoneme. Defined by Gillon (2018) as an abstract concept when words are spoken, that can be broken down into smaller parts using the individual sound or phoneme level. A "phoneme" is the smallest unit of the sound that influences the meaning of a word. For instance, the word **tree** has three phonemes: /t/ /r/ /i/. If one of these phonemes is changed, a new word or a no-word will be created. If the first phoneme is changed from /**t**/ to /**f**/, the word **free** will be heard, etc.

c) Phonological Awareness Development

Based on the book of Early Childhood there is a sequence of development in children's sensitivity to sounds progressing from larger units to smaller units. Hallie Kay Yopp (2010) argues that an awareness of syllables is first improved, next onset and rimes and finally phonemes. For example, the word **pumpkin** has two syllables **pump-kin** not difficult for new learners to master it**.** Secondly, the student´s challenge is to recognize onsets and rimes in a word. For instance, in the word **cat c** is the onset sound that refers to the initial phonological unit of any single-syllable word, often represented as a consonant, and **at** is the rime that means the string of words that follow usually a vowel and a final consonant. Finally, and more challenging for students are phonemes that point out to the he ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words . For example the word frog is separate in the phonemes /f/-/r/-/o/-/g/.

Vocabulary Achievement

Perry & Tyson (2017) define that vocabulary achievement falls into two categories; receptive and expressive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary means to the words which are understood when we listen and read. On the one hand, expressive vocabulary refers to the words which are produced when speaking and writing. Receptive vocabulary is definitely more extensive that

expressive vocabulary. For example, a two-year-child is able to understand when his parent tells him that it´s time to go outside to play, but he will need to put on warmer clothes. The toddler will hurry up to the closet and pull out a pair of mittens, a scarf and a coat even though he may not be able to verbalize any words. In the same way, students are able to understand words when the teacher use them for classroom discussion when speaking and writing.

Morphological Awareness Intervention

A. Word detective

According to Cunningham, Loman, & Arens (2002) word detective testing is used to help students to create new word meaning by adding prefixes and suffixes into root words. For instance,

Find the base word and the suffix in the following words. Underline the base and circle the suffix. Then, read the word and talk about what it means

singer	painter
protective	joyful
hopeful	creative
teacher	careful
wishful	drummer
selective	active

B. Derivational Suffix

Ali Alkhuli (2016) defines that derivational suffix strategy means to examine the suffix (es) or the last derivational suffix of the word. For example

Example**: farm:** My uncle is a farmer.

1. **ill**: Maria worried about her _____.

2. **quick**: Sheila had to work _____.

3. **nerve**: I got _____.

4. **five**: A line formed and Sue was _____.*

5. **swim**: Kim wanted to improve her _____.

6. **victory**: Marco's soccer team was _____.*

C. Meaning Activity: "Mystery Word"

Mystery word activity attributes to guess the meaning of the word from the context previously taught by the teacher. For example:

See if you can use the clues to figure out the mystery words described below.

Who am I? I work at a place where people deposit their money and cash their checks. (banker)

What am I? You could describe me with this word because I always tell things the way they really happened. I don't lie. (truthful)

What am I? You could describe me with this word because I am good at creating things. (creative)

Who am I? I am someone who always loves a really good book. (reader). Green & Wolter (2011)

D. Relational activity "matching up"

Matching up activity refers to the ability to recognize root words that can be attached to bound morphemes "suffixes" to make a new meaning.

Read the base words in the left hand column. Then, draw a line from the base word in the left hand column to an appropriate suffix from the right hand column. Say the words out loud and talk about what they mean."

bank	ive
faith	er
defense	er
paint	ful

E. Spending Activation

Kersten (2010) claims that spreading activation is the association of ideas, items and memories connected to notions that activate stored items related to each other. The strength of association is pictured by the length of connecting lines directly and indirectly. For example the word fire truck is represented by the length of connecting lines. It can be seen that the item, "fire truck", is not only connected to all other terms for vehicles, it is also directly and indirectly connected to those things that have the same color, that occur in the same context (e, g., heat).
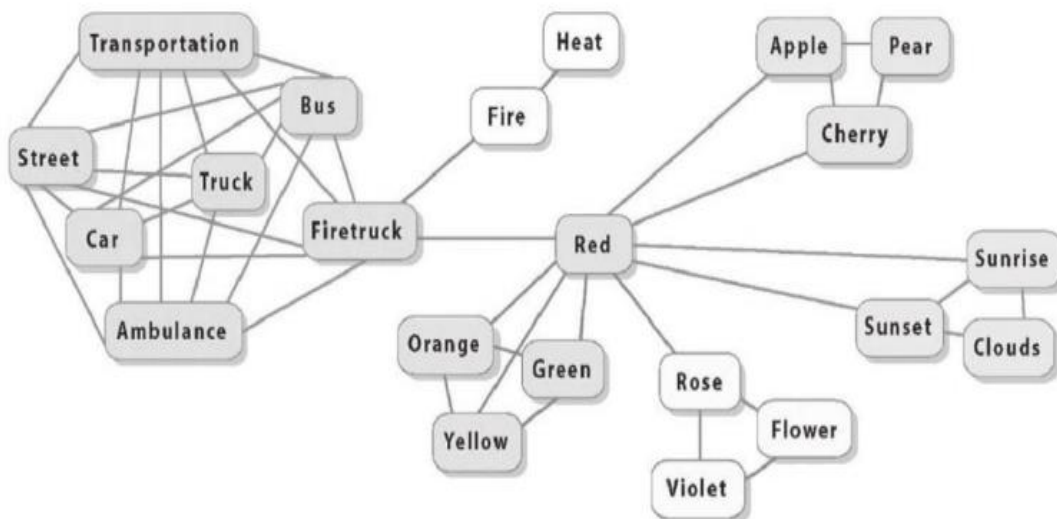
F. Ways to Create New Words

Figure1. Taken from the work of Kersten (2010)

Dixon (2014) claims that there are three large open word classes (occasionally named "parts of speech" –noun, verb, adjective and one smaller adverb. English has approximately 200 derivational affixes (90 prefixes and around 110 suffixes). All of these can produce new words. For example:

Adding –**ness** to an adjective may create an abstract noun; for example, sad-ness.

Adding –**ize** to a noun may create a verb; for example, victim-ize.

Adding –ive to a verb may create and adjective; for example, attract-ive

Adding –inter to a verb may create an adverb; for example, clever-ly

Affix	Affix form a stem of word class			
Applies to word class	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
NOUN	mother-hood orphan-age art- ist	hopistal-ize person-ify en-slave	father-ly fool-ish greed-y	sky-wards clock-wise edge-ways
VERB	happen-ing depend-ence dismiss-al	counter-attack out-bid re-write	harm-less use-ful accept-able	--
ADJECTIVE	honest-y eager-ness similar-ity	light-en solid-ify pupular-ize	ultra-light post-modern old-ish	deep-ly five-fold

Table 4. taken from the work of Dixon (2014)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between vocabulary and writing quality.

According to McKeow, Deane, Scott, Krovetz, & Lawless (2017) writing capacity and linguistic fluency are strongly linked by the student's lexical diversity. It is regarded as a by-product of the student's inventory lexicon. Students with no know-how fluency in producing text may find themselves at a serious shortcoming when asked to deal with rhetorical and conceptual problems correlated to academic writing.

Testing Vocabulary

White & Delaney (2018) report that vocabulary size and learner's level are important elements that should be considered when learning a word. Vocabulary size points out the breadth of lexicon that the student has the learner's level refers to the knowledge of several aspects of a given word, such as "semantic, graphemic, syntactic, collocational, and phraseological properties".

Vocabulary Strategies

Gusti (2016) claims that "language learning strategies are defined as activities used by learners in order to make their learning easier and more effective and can be used or transferred to other situations" (2.p). Nie & Zhou (2017) determine that "learning strategies are defined as various actions and procedures that students take to learn and develop their English effectively" (101.p). In other words, vocabulary learning strategies are measures that students adopt to study more efficiently through their learning process. Following this idea some researchers provide some strategies for learning words.

a) Discrete vocabulary & embedded vocabulary Item

White & Delaney (2018) also state that a discrete vocabulary Item refers to a set of words assessed in an isolated way, whilst embedded assessment shows the vocabulary knowledge and its use as part of a large construct. For example.

Discrete Vocabulary Item	Embedded Vocabulary Item

Choose the word closest in meaning to the underlined expression.
The man is out of mind
  1. Crazy*
  2. Serious
  3. Responsible
  4. Creative
*correct word
	Read the short paragraph below and answer the questions that follow.

	New Year City I the ideal place to meet people from country all over the world. The fact you can interact with people who have your own **background** and those that are from completely different contexts make this city an exciting place to be. *The word **Background** in the line 3 is a synonymous to_____. 1. loss 2. experience* 3. contentment 4 ignorance

Table 5. taken from the work white & Delaney (2018)

b) Selective or comprehensive vocabulary

Selective vocabulary attributes to the selection of words in which students have to demonstrate their understanding of a group of items previously chosen by the teacher. These words can be tested as isolated items or within a text.

Lastly, the third dimension is context-independent or context-dependent in which test takers have to be able to identify the meaning of a word. In context-independent students have to infer the meaning of words with any context in between, whereas in context-dependent words are tested within the context so students need to have some understanding of the text in order to be confident that they have chosen the correct option.

Context-Independent Vocabulary Item	Context-dependent Vocabulary Item
Match the words on the left with their definitions on la right. _____1. deceive a. to oppose _____2. state b. to mislead _____3 contradict c. to choose d. to say	Use the word blank to complete the following sentences. **Deceive, state, contradict, requires** 1. My best friend_____me. She told me she was sick, but actually she was at Monica´s party! 2. My mom hates it when I_____her. She always thinks she is right. 2. The scientists_____that the climate change is a reality.

Figure 2. Taken from the work of White & Delaney (2018)

c) Digital tool that supports vocabulary and world learning

According to Tyson & Peery (2017) digital tools provide a large set of information about words in a richer and broader way that enable students to be engaged in word learning. Digital tools provide many benefits that help the students to do the following.

- Hear pronunciation

- Reinforce word learning through interactive games

- View photos and images related to words (especially important for English learners)

- Collaborate with classmates to create virtual word walls

Thereby, nowadays students can rely on many digital tools on the internet depending on their level, context, goal and purpose. Tyson & Peery (2017) also list several specialized dictionaries from which to choose, like the

following: **Lingro**, **Math words**, **Word hippo**, **Free rice**, **Vocabulary game**, **etc**.

The first digital tool mentioned is Lingro Dictionary (www.lingro.com) that enables the student to translate words into any language, the definition of the words is shown automatically and the meaning of words along with flashcards are also displayed.

The second digital dictionary is Math words that helps the students find meaning of words related with the contexts such as math term, math formulas, diagrams, pictures and tables.

The next digital dictionary mentioned is Word hippo that provides different options related to word learning. These relating terms include synonyms, antonyms, example sentences using words in context, rhyming words, past-tense words, and present tense words.

The forth digital dictionary is Free rice, an online game-like activity. Matching words to the correct definition, these are done to support reading development and at the same time ten grains of rice are donated by The United Nations World Food to any country in need for each correct answer.

The last digital dictionary listed is a Vocabulary game that consists in the construction of words through prefixes, roots and compound words.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the level of effectiveness of morphological awareness for vocabulary acquisition among the students of Delfos Elementary school it is necessary to consider that students have never received morphological awareness practice, or any other vocabulary lessons, since the approach used in the institution is a communicative one and vocabulary is learned in context of each unit of study.

The research design chosen is a quasi-experiment. Sherri L. (2012) indicates that a quasi-experimental research is similar to an experiment study but is not exactly an experiment because the study conducted lacks of any control group or comparison group. In other words, the treatment is applied on just one group and eventually is assessed where the participants are not randomly selected to conditions because they are already part of the group in order to manipulate a variable between the pre-existing groups.

Gravetter & Forzano (2009) state that "a quasi-experiment consists of studies in which a series of observations are made over time. Collectively, such studies are known as pre-post designs. The goal of the pre-post design is to evaluate the influence of the intervening before and after the treatment" (p.283)

This quasi-experiment permits the understanding of how the introduction of a didactic strategy could or could not enhance a particular skill as vocabulary.

A quantitative research approach has been considered as the most appropriate for complementing this study. According to Khalid (2017) cited in Creswell (2003) it is defined "as a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables. In turn, can be measured. Typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures."

Creswell (2002) contributes with some important steps to be considered in the quantitative research:

- Describing a research problem through a description of trends or a need for an explanation of the relationship among variables.

- Collecting numeric data from a large number of people using instruments with preset questions and responses.

- Analyzing trends, comparing groups, or relating variables using statistical analysis, and interpreting results by comparing them with prior predictions and past research. (p.13)

Following this idea Leavy (2017) states that quantitative research leads with proving, disproving, or imparting credit to existing theories. Variables are measured and tested in order to visualize patterns, correlational or causal relationship. Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. Some types of surveys can be taken into considerations such as surveys and face to face interviews.

Context and Participants

The following research project is going to be carried out at Delfos Elementary School in Guayaquil during the period of 2019-2020. The participants of this project were 29 students from seventh grade. These were tested over morphological awareness. The role of the teacher is to be an instructor on morphological awareness mechanics and afterwards as a tester for the evaluation intervention.

Study Instruments

For this study, three instruments were used. The first instrument used was a diagnostic test, this document was prepared upon the reading sections from the American Tiger book in order to measure students' vocabulary inventory. The second instrument was a morphological relatedness test adapted from the work of Curing (2014). Finally a third instrument was adapted from the same author, this was a morphological structure test.

Morphological Structure Test

The second data gathering instruments is going to be a morphological structure test, its main goal is to assess the influence of the application of morphological awareness strategies for acquiring vocabulary in seventh graders. Ali, Ali, & Mohd Yasin (2000) argue that morphological structure test

is a useful tool that measures the students´ ability in using derivational affixes to create new words. As Onish (2010) reports, morphological structure is the capacity to identify meaningful parts of words such as prefixes, suffixes and base words which are called morphemes. These morphemes are crucial since new words can be created.

This Morphological structure test is going to be applied in this research at Delfos Elementary School with seventh graders. A completion exercise is going to be given to the students so they can build a word family according to the context of each sentence (for example, given the word **help**, in the sentence: student should write: My sister is very **helpful**). The test is composed of 20 items concerning derivational suffixes. This test is taken and adapted from the work of Curinga (2014).

Morphological Relatedness Test

Ali, Ali, & Mohd Yasin (2000) affirm that morphological relatedness is the ability in guessing whether the derived word is morphologically related to the base word or not (for example, A: **happy→ happiness** YES NO; B: **bus →business** YES NO).

According to Feldeman & Soltano (1999) "morphological relatedness are words formed from the same base morpheme that tend to have similar meaning and similar form" (p. 33). Laurie (1995) points out that morphological relatedness are strongly linked to the dimension of phonetic and semantic similarity. Phonetic deals with measuring perceived similarly in sound whereas semantic refers to testing the perceived similarly in meaning. In others words, Morphological relatedness is the ability to identify if the derived word come from the base or family word. Curinga (2014) reports that "this test is important because it can measure students' ability in doing morphological analysis" (Ali, Ali, & Mohd Yasin, 2000, p.461).

Protocol

This research study follows the following stages:

QUASI-EXPERIMENT		
1. Diagnostic test	2. Morphological awareness strategies	3. Morphological Structure and Relatedness Test

Table 6. Quasi-experiment protocol created by author

First, according to the first specific objective of this research, a diagnostic test to 29 seventh graders at Delfos Elementary school is going to be administered

Second, in order to apply the Morphological relatedness test, the same group of students will be taking three lessons on morphological relatedness which refers to words similar in sound and meaning derived from a base word; thus, identifying different parts of the words to know how words can be constructed.

Third, a morphological relatedness test will be applied to students in order to verify their ability to recognize linguistic units for vocabulary development in seventh graders.

Fourth, the students are going to take two more lessons about morphological structure to learn about affixes which means to recognize different parts such prefixes and suffixes so that the students can match the correct option according to the sentence.

Finally, a test is going to be taken about morphological structure.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In order to determine the level of effectiveness achieved in seventh graders at Delfos Elementary School the following results of the assessment on morphological awareness is presented. After the diagnostic test there were students who obtained decimals in their grades but in order to arrange the scores from one to ten just whole numbers were established.
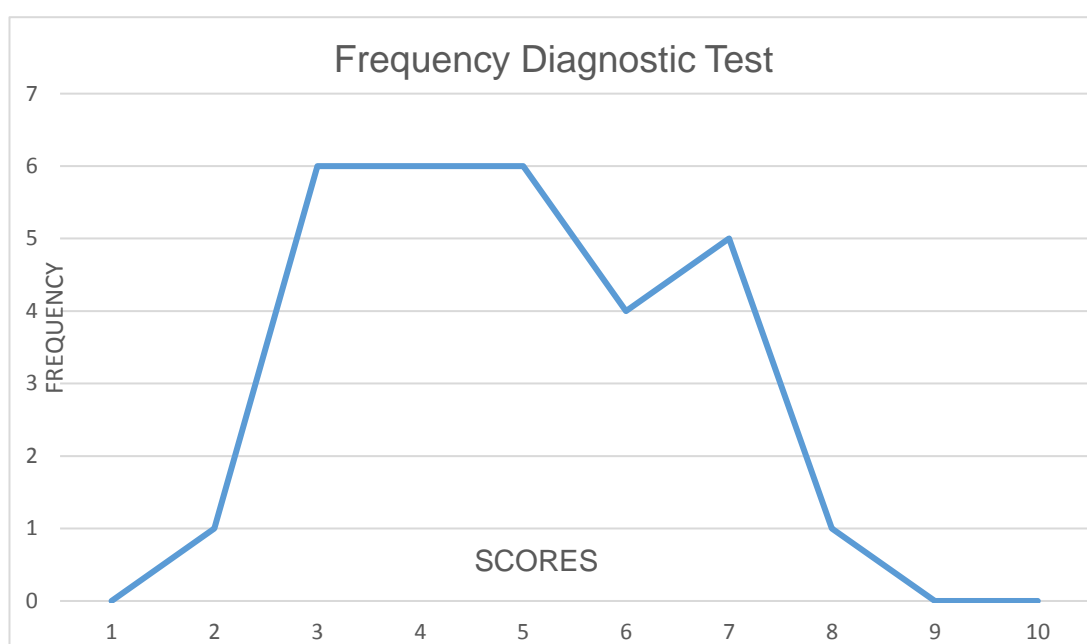

Chart 1. Diagnostic Test on vocabulary. Created by the author.

The statistical chart above shows that students from seventh grade have problems with vocabulary. It must be considered that the grade average of the classroom is 4, 51. The vast majority of students scored a range from to 2 to 4 points out of 10 in the test, while very few got 6, and just 1 got 7, 6 points, which is the top grade. This confirms that there is a low of vocabulary acquisition. For this analysis, the instrument used was a diagnostic test in order to measure the vocabulary inventory.
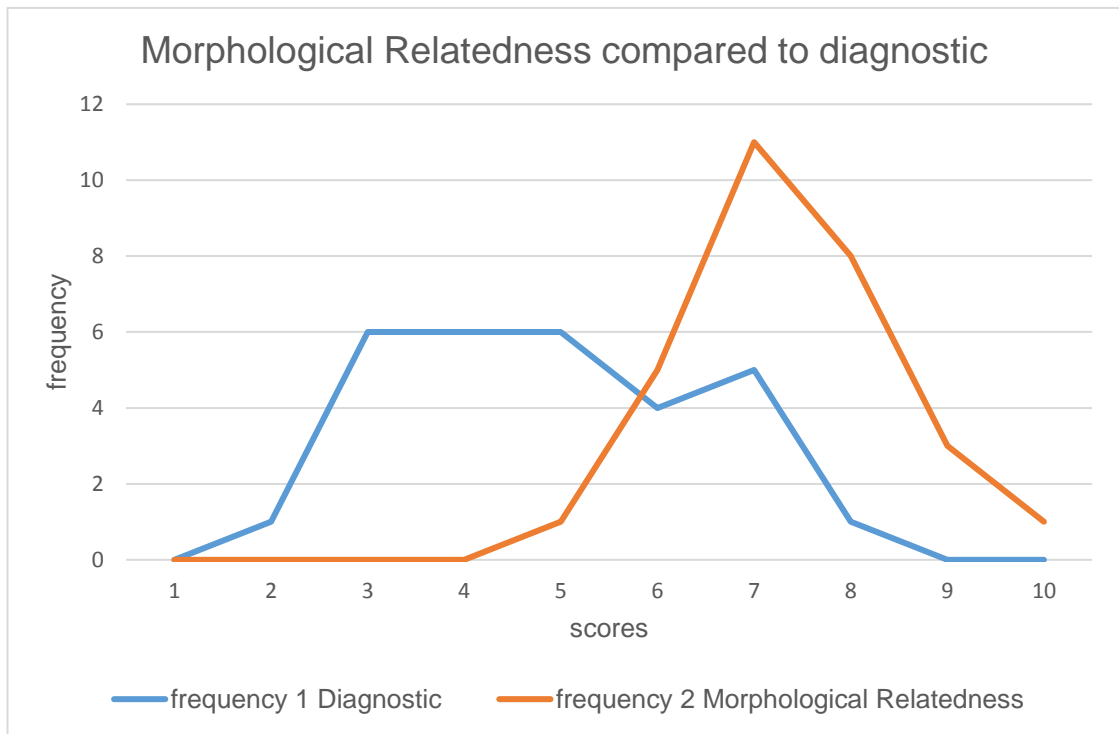
Chart 2. Morphological Relatedness Test on vocabulary. Created by the author

Once students are taught about morphological relatedness strategy that verifies words similar in sound and meaning derived from a base word, they were able to recognize different parts of the words (phonemes) to know how words can be created. In this second test applied to the students of seventh grade a remarkable improvement can be seen. The average of the diagnostic test to measure students' vocabulary inventory is 4,51, whereas in the second test related to morphological relatedness the average is 6, 90. This is an increment of 2,39 points, which indicates that the intervention on teaching how to use morphological relatedness was a helpful one.

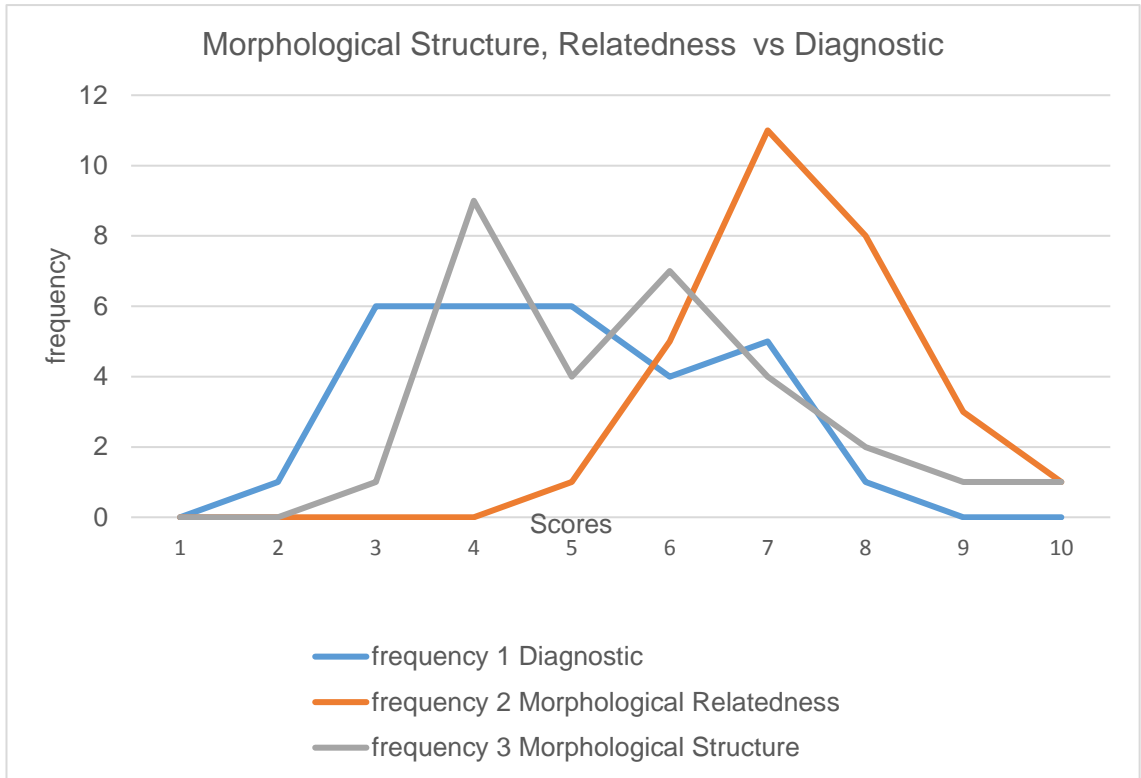**Morphological Structure, Relatedness vs Diagnostic**

Chart 3. Morphological structure Test on Vocabulary. Created by the author

In the third test taken to the same group of students about morphological structure, the evaluation points out the ability to identify morphological affixes. Even though the average achieved in the classroom was 5,31, which is considered a low score, in comparison with the diagnostic test, it is still a higher performance.   It can be said that the results obtained from this final test suggests that the participants will be able to expand their lexicon by using morphological structure strategies in the future with some extra practice.
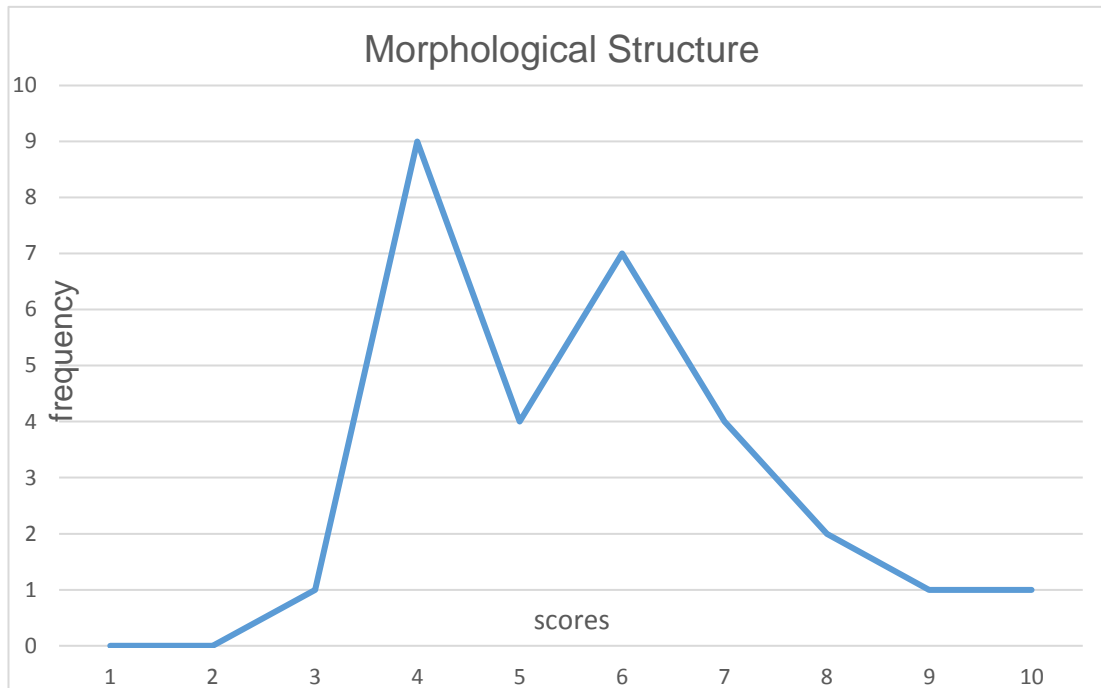
Chart 4. Morphological structure Test on Vocabulary. Created by the author

Chart 4 displayed that students got lower grades in the morphological structure compared to morphological relatedness test in which not just derivational suffixes were tested but also different parts of speech were too, such as verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs were used. It is hard for them to understand words in context so they probably lack of reading comprehension. It can be said that students do not have significantly reading practice in the classroom. The average of this last test is 5,31 and the mode is 4 points.
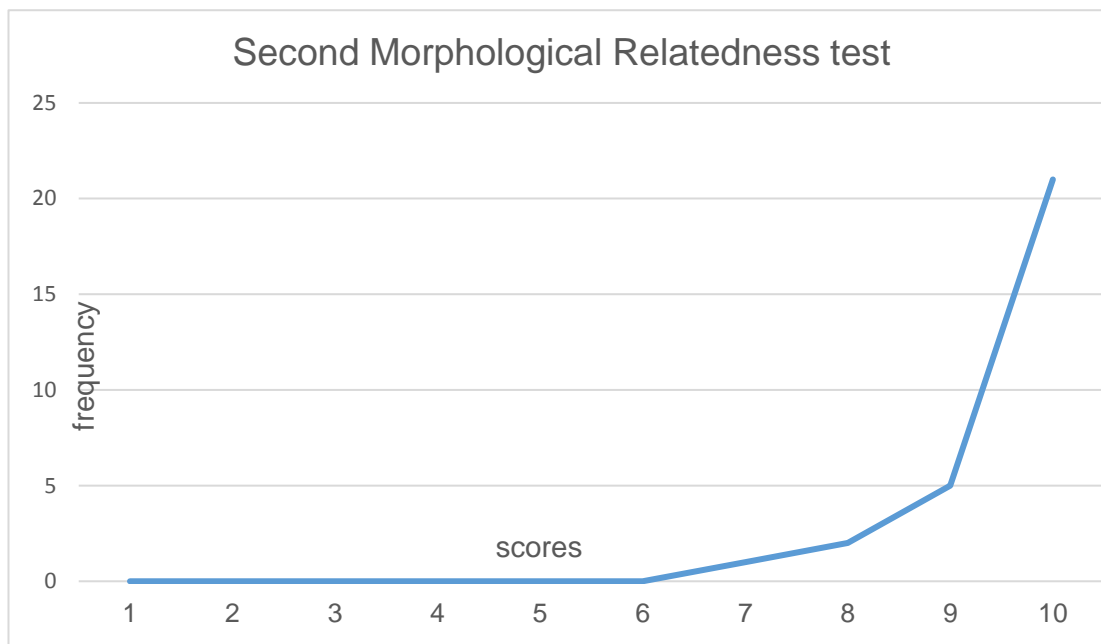
Chart 5. Second Morphological relatedness Test on Vocabulary. Created by the author

Because of the low grades that students got in the morphological structure test in which they had to read some sentences in order to choose the form of the word that best matches the sentence according to the context, the low achievement in the results obtained was notorious. For this reason, it was necessary to evaluate the students again, but this time about morphological relatedness, recognizing word families to see if the strategies applied were useful for them in order to improve their vocabulary through derivational affixes. In this chart, the average was the 9,28. This may demonstrate that the students present problems in reading comprehension and understanding the meaning of words through context. Upon these results, it can be concluded that morphological intervention could be beneficial and crucial in vocabulary learning.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The following paragraphs will answer the question established in the research: To what extent does the application of morphological awareness affect the process of vocabulary learning in EFL learners? Based on the research results it can be concluded that:

- Morphological relatedness and morphological structure are effective vocabulary strategies that contribute to the students' vocabulary size in EFL context.

- Upon the diagnostic test it was proved the majority of students of seventh grade show short lexicon.

- Morphological structure, which was tested in the second exam, proved to be more difficult for students since they got lower grades. It asked students to use the context to convey meaning. For this reason, it was necessary to apply another test.

- Morphological structure seems to need more time for the intervention, so as to help to students identify among the parts of speech that each word represents.

- It can be said that students who receive morphological relatedness intervention could achieve a better understanding of word formation.

- Morphological relatedness can be very helpful for vocabulary acquisition because it enables the students to identify word families from the very beginning of instruction.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations derive from the previous conclusions:

- Teachers should provide the students with activities that include morphological derivational affixes that permit them identify different linguistic units such as roots and bounds morphemes.

- Teachers also should focus on doing more reading context so that the students can encounter new words to learn and to get reading comprehension.

- It is recommendable that teachers get informed about technological tools like digital dictionaries that offer a large set of information about words in a richer and broader way.

- The authorities at the institution should include in the part of the syllabus morphological awareness lessons to teach the students about word formation.

- Finally, it is recommendable to use morphological relatedness and morphological awareness for the development of vocabulary acquisition not only for elementary school, but also for high school.

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Appendix

Diagnostic Test

READ THE SENTENCES CAREFULLY AND CHOOSE THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE.

1. Piece of paper that proves that you have received goods or money.
   a. paper   b. receipt   c. change

2. Sport in which you swim underwater using special equipment for breathing.
   a. sailing   b. kayaking   c. scuba diving

3. The way that you live.
   a. lifestyle   b. life   c. comfort

4. The ability to do an activity or job well, especially because you have done it many times.
   a. punctuality   b. skill   c. discipline

5. A table or temporary structure used as a small shop for selling newspapers and magazines outside in public places.
   a. shopping   b. newsstand   c. store

6. Time that you have arranged to see someone.
   a. hospital   b. discharge   c. appointment

7. A small cupboard in a public area where you can keep things.
   a. locker   b. wardrobe   c. drawer

8. A place in your body where two bones meet.
   a. lung   b. blood   c. joint

9. It has white fur with black spots. It has sharp teeth.
   a. Buffalo   b. hippo   c. snow leopard

10. The season when there is a lot of rain in South Asia.
    a. spring   c. winter   c. monsoon

11. A type of wild animal of the dog family, usually found hunting in packs.
    a. dog   b. fox   c. wolf

12. someone who makes or repairs buildings as a job
    a. Builder   b. politician   c. cook

13. Something that you buy or keep to remember a special time or holiday.
    a. souvenir   b. thing   c. memory

14. Big, thin book that you can buy every week or month that has pictures and writing.
    a. newspaper   b. magazine   c. notebook

15. An area of land that has its own government, army, etc.
    a. city   b. house   c. country

16. The top of a mountain.
    a. summit   b. height   c. hill

17. It's a type of cereal. It's an ingredient of paella.
    a. bean   b. rice   c. spices

18. It adds flavor to food. You have it on the table.
    a. olives   b. citrus fruits   c. salt

19. It's a place where you go to have fun. It has rides and other attractions.
    b. park   b. theme park   c. shopping center

20. A period of 100 years.
    a. century   b. time   c. decade

21. The part of a television or computer that shows images or writing
    a. channel   b. volume   c. screen

22. An official organization that gives money, food, or help to people who need it.
    a. charity   b. company   c. institution

23. Behaving in a way that is not rude and shows that you think about other people.
    a. impolite   b. polite   c. cruel

24. A type of fungus with a short stem and a round top, some types of which can be eaten.
    a. potato   b. onion   c. mushroom

25. someone whose job is to give medical care to animals that are sick

    a. doctor   b. nurse   c. vet

A) Morphological Relatedness Test

Directions:

Read the following word pairs silently as I read them aloud. Try to decide if the second word comes from the first word and has a similar meaning. Circle YES if you think the second word means the same thing or almost the same thing as the first word. Circle NO if you think the second word does not have a similar meaning to the first word.

Example A:	happy happiness	(YES)	(NO)
Example B:	cat category	YES	NO
Example C:	run runner	(YES)	NO

1) ear	earth	YES	NO
2) possible	impossibility	YES	NO
3) perceive	perceptive	YES	NO
4) bus	business	YES	NO
5) strong	strengthen	YES	NO
6) involve	involvement	YES	NO
7) pure	purist	YES	NO
8) care	careful	YES	NO
9) correct	incorrect	YES	NO
10) crumb	crumble	YES	NO
11) press	president	YES	NO
12) bathe	bath	YES	NO
13) profession	professional	YES	NO
14) eight	eighth	YES	NO
15) fill	filter	YES	NO
16) cape	capitalize	YES	NO

17) connect	disconnect	YES	NO
18) humor	humanity	YES	NO
19) pal	palace	YES	NO
20) agree	agreement	YES	NO
21) sense	nonsense	YES	NO
22) sign	signal	YES	NO
23) present	presentable	YES	NO
24) fin	finalize	YES	NO
25) pass	passenger	YES	NO

B) Morphological Structure Test

Directions:

I am going to say a word and read you a sentence. I want you to change the word so that it best matches the sentence. Read the sentence silently as I read it aloud. Fill in the blank with the form of the word that best matches the sentence.

Example A: My sister is very _____

a) help   b) helpful   c) helper

Example B: My uncle is a _____.

a) farming   b) farm   c) farmer

Example C: The clothes need more time to_____.

a) dry   b) dryer   c) dryness

1) It was hard for the boy to _____.

a) decision   b) decide   c) decisive

2) The woman's career was very _____.

a) success   b) succeed   c) successful

3) The man showed great _____.

a) courage   b) encouragement c) Courageous

4) This student is the fourth and the next is the _____.

a) five   b) fifteen   c) fifth

5) The view from the mountain was _____.

a) marvelous   b) marvelously   c) marvel

6) Good grades are difficult to _____.

a) achieve   b) achievement   c) achiever

7) Her argument was _____.

a) reason   b) reasonable   c) reasonably

8) This painting is the _____.

a) origin   b) originality   c) original

9) The girl has a lot of _____.

a) strengthen   b) strength   c) strengthing

10) The ski trip seemed _____.

a) adventurer   b) adventurous   c) adventure

11) The actor gained a lot of _____.

a) fame   b) famously   c) famous

12) She is the woman he wants to _____.

a) marriage   b) married   c) marry

13) The professor had a lot of _____.

a) knowledge   b) know   c) knowledgeable

14) The man was a very good _____.

a) teach   b) teaching   c) teacher

15) The kind man was known for his _____.

a) human   b) humanity   c) humanly

16) She put the bread in the oven to _____.

a) baker   b) bake   c) bakery

17) The little girl jumped up and down _____.

a) unhappy   b) happy   c) happily

18) The girl wants to be _____.

a) popular   b) popularity   c) popularize

19) 'OK' is a common _____.

a) expression   b) express   c) expressive

20) The enemies have a lot to _____.

a) discuss   b) discussion   c) Courageous

21) My teacher wants my spelling to _____.

a) improvement   b) improved   c) improve

22) Her father refused to give _____.

a) permit   b) permissive   c) permission

23) He cared about his _____.

a) appeared   b) appear   c) appearance

24) The children are not in any _____

a) dangerous   b) dangerously   c) danger

25)   My team was about to _____.

a) win   b) winner   c) winning

C) MORPHOLOGICAL RELATEDNESS TEST

Directions:

Read the following word pairs silently as I read them aloud. Try to decide if the second word comes from the first word and has a similar meaning. Circle YES if you think the second word means the same thing or almost the same thing as the first word. Circle NO if you think the second word does not have a similar meaning to the first word.

Example A:	happy happiness	(YES)	NO
Example B:	cat category	YES	(NO)
Example C:	run runner	(YES)	NO

1) help	helpful	YES	NO
2) dry	dryer	YES	NO
3) courage	achievement	YES	NO
4) origin	appearance	YES	NO
5) improve	improvement	YES	NO
6) permit	permission	YES	NO
7) win	marry	YES	NO
8) teach	teacher	YES	NO
9) happy	unhappily	YES	NO
10) bake	farmer	YES	NO
11) discuss	dangerous	YES	NO
12) human	humanity	YES	NO
13) popular	permission	YES	NO
14) fame	famous	YES	NO

15) know	knowledge	YES	NO
16) reason	reasonable	YES	NO
17) marvel	marriage	YES	NO
18) farm	farmer	YES	NO
19) five	fifteen	YES	NO
20) appear	adventurous	YES	NO

MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENES

UN   HAPP**i**   LY

prefix   Root Word   suffix
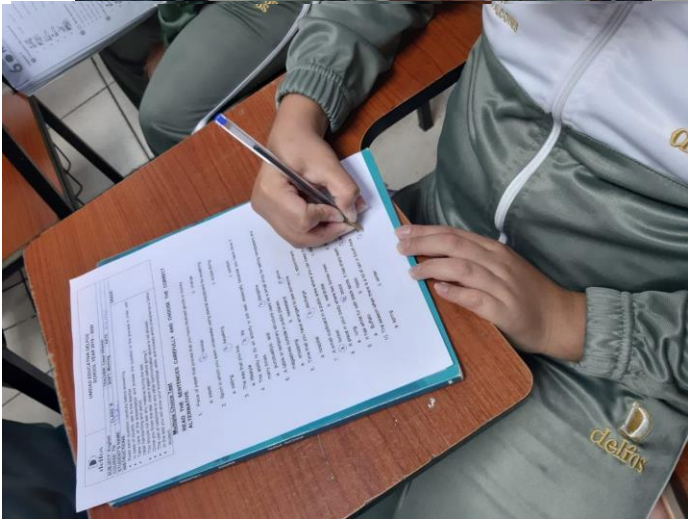
DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, **César Alberto Villamar Ramírez** con C.C: # (**0925302481**) autor/a del trabajo de titulación: **Morphological Awareness for Vocabulary Acquisition among EFL seventh grade learners at Elementary School in the period of 2019-2020** previo a la obtención del título de **Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa con mención en Educación Bilingüe** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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C.C: **0925302481**

FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN:	28 de Febrero de 2020	No. DE PÁGINAS:	50

RESUMEN/ABSTRACT (150-250 palabras):

This research is about Morphological Awareness for Vocabulary Acquisition among EFL learners at an elementary school in the city of Guayaquil. This represents a problem for students when writing and expressing themselves orally. The main objective is to inquire about the poor vocabulary use and to identify the possible reasons that may be causing the problem. This research work is situated in Unidad Educativa Delfos, a private educational institution mainly targeted to middle income household. The target group of the study are the 29 students of seventh grade between 11 and 12 years old. It was chosen a quasi-experiment research design with a quantitative approach. The aspects considered for the quantitative analysis where the surveys and the tests after the methodology used with the students. The objective of the tests is to examine the level of effectiveness of morphological awareness for vocabulary acquisition among the students. Some important findings were that the students who received morphological relatedness intervention could achieve a better understanding of word formation. Also, morphological relatedness can be very helpful for vocabulary acquisition because it enables the students to identify word families from the very beginning. Finally, according to the analysis, morphological awareness plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition.