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Iraqi EFL University Learners' Use of Adjectival Suffixes

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

(وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا)

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DEDICATION

To my dear parents, who have made sacrifices for the sake of what I have attained

To my brothers who have great merit

And to my friends and to those who helped me

To all teachers in the Department of English , who have great credit, and to everyone who supported during my university period.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

prefix as “A term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added initially to a root or stem.” (Crystal, 1991: 274). Another definition of prefix is like this: “One or two syllable additions at the beginning of a word that changes its meaning but do not change its part of speech.” (Maclin, 1992: 387). Katamba defines prefix similarly: “A prefix is an affix attached before a root or a stem or a base like re- , un- and in-.” (1993: 44). From all these said what is understood is that the term prefix is related to morphology, and it is a kind of affix. It comes before a root, a stem or a base and does not change the part of speech of that word. It is also a kind of bound morpheme, that is to say, it cannot be used in a sentence separately. A prefix is a word part that cannot stand alone. It is placed at the beginning of a word to change its meaning For example, the word “unhappy” consists of the prefix “un-” which means “not” combined with the root word “happy”; the word “unhappy” means “not happy.” . A suffix is a word part that is placed at the end of a word to change its meaning. For example, the suffix '-ly' is added to 'quick' to form 'quickly'. This study attempts to find solutions to the following questions:

1. What is meant by adjectival suffixes ?
2. What are the types of adjectival suffixes?
3. What are the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL Learners regarding the use of adjectival suffixes in English language ?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims at:

1. Showing what is meant by adjectival suffixes in English Language .
2. Surveying the types of adjectival suffixes in English Language
3. Investigating the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL learners in using adjectival suffixes in English language.

1.3 The Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes that :

1. There are many adjectival suffixes in English language.
2. There are many difficulties in the use of adjectival suffixes in a sentence by the learners .
3. Iraqi learners EFL face difficulties in distinguish between adjectival suffixes in English Language.

1.4 The Procedures

1. Presenting a theoretical background about adjectival suffixes in English Language.
2. Testing students from the department of English Language / University of Babylon at fourth grade in the academic year of 2021-2022..
3. Making a conclusion of the study .

1.5 The Limits

This study is limited to the study of adjectival suffixes in English Language and the test will be applied to the fourth year students in the Dept. of English , College of Education for Human Sciences , University of Babylon during the academic year 2022- 2021

1.6 The Value

It is hoped that this study would be of help to those who have interest in English grammar whether they are students or teachers, text book writers , linguists and syllabus designers.

Chapter Two

Adjectival Suffixes

2.1 Affixes

In English grammar and morphology, an affix is a word element that can be attached to a base or root to form a new word or new form of the word, usually occurring as either a prefix or suffix. Put simply, an affix is a group of letters that are generally added to the beginning or the end of a root word that can change the word's meaning. (Michaels, A. 1993).

As their names would entail, prefixes like pre-, re-, and trans- are attached to the beginnings of words such as predict, reactivate, and transaction, while suffixes like -ism, -ate, and -ish are attached to the ends of words such as socialism, eradicate, and childish. In rare cases, an affix may be added to the middle of a word and is therefore called an infix, which occurs in such words as cupsful and passersby, where the additional "-s-" affix pluralizes the words cupful and passerby, thus changing their form. (Ibid)

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2.1.1 Prefixes

A prefix is a letter or group of letters attached to the beginning of a word that partly indicates its meaning, including such as examples as "anti-" to mean against, "co-" to mean with, "mis-" to mean wrong or bad, and "trans-" to mean across.

The most common prefixes in English are those that express negation like "a-" in the word asexual, "in-" in the word incapable, and "un-" in the word unhappy. These negations immediately alter the meaning of the words they are added to, but some prefixes merely change the form.

The word *prefix* itself contains the prefix *pre-*, which means before, and the root word *fix*, which means to fasten or place. Thus, the word itself means "to place before."

Prefixes are bound morphemes, which means they can't stand alone. Generally, if a group of letters is a prefix, it can't also be a word. However, prefixation, or the process of adding a prefix to a word, is a common way of forming new words in English. (Crystal, 1987:78).

2.1.2 Infixes

An *infix* is a word element (a type of affix) that can be inserted within the base form of a word rather than at its beginning or end to create a new word or intensify meaning. The process of inserting an infix is called *infixation*. The most common type of infix in English grammar is the expletive, as in "fan-*bloody*-tastic."

According to (Yule ,2006:54)the term suggests, [an infix] is an affix which is incorporated inside another word. It is possible to see the general principle at work in certain expressions, occasionally used in fortuitous or aggravating circumstances by emotionally aroused English speakers

An infix is an affix inserted inside a word stem (an existing word or the core of a family of words). It contrasts with adfix, a rare term for an affix attached to the outside of a stem such as a prefix or suffix.

2.1.3 Suffixes

According to (Crystal, 1991: 336) a suffix is “a term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added following a root or stem”. (Maclin, 1992: 385), defines for suffix as “a suffix is an ending added to a word, which usually changes the part of speech of the word and may also change the meaning of the word.”

In addition to these explanations, (Katamba ,1993: 44)defines suffix like this: “A suffix is an affix attached after a root or a stem or a base like –ly, –er, –ist, –s, –ing and –ed.”. What is understood from these all is that a suffix is a term related to morphology.

It comes after a root, a stem or a base. It can change the part of speech of the word that it is attached to.

Suffixes are the letter/s which are added at the end of a stem to make new words. The affixes used in the suffixed words are different from the affixes used in the prefixed words, and they make different kinds of words. (Maclin, 1992: 387).

Most of the affixes that are used in the suffixed words have no meaning of their own.

“A suffix (also called ending) is an affix that is placed after the stem of a word.

Example:

Reader = ‘read’ is the stem of the word which has different meaning and different grammatical function in a sentence but the affix ‘er’ changes both the meaning and the grammatical function of the word to make a new word.

- Reading
- Readable
- Creator
- Creation

It is not necessary that a suffix change both meaning and grammatical property of the words. It can perform either of them.(Ibid)

2.2 Adjectival Suffixes

Suffixes are letters attached to the end of a word. These endings can change the class of a word. For example, adding a specific ending to a word can change it from a noun to an adjective. A specific group of suffixes called adjective suffixes turn words into adjectives. An adjective is a word that modifies a noun .

Certain suffixes are typical of adjectives. You can combine these ending with verbs and nouns to create an adjective. Hence, adjective suffixes can change the root word's grammatical function. For instance, adding -able to the verb prevent produces a new adjective. Words with certain endings (like -able suggest that a word is an adjective . (Crystal, 1987:45)

Sometimes when a suffix gets added to a root word the spelling of the root word changes. One common adjective suffix, -ness, when combined with the ending y produces a spelling change. For example, when heavy and -ness join the y turns into an i before producing the new word heaviness. It is important to be aware of whether a suffix transforms the spelling of the root word. Learning these common spelling alterations are critical if you wish to spell well .

Adjective suffixes turn words into adjectives. Several different endings fall into the category of adjective suffixes. The below list shows the common adjective suffixes . (Ibid)

Adjective Suffixes

-able or -ible suffix

Meaning: capable of being, capable or worthy of, tending to

Examples

- acceptable

- discernible

-al suffix (-al, -ial, -ical)

Meaning: pertaining to something, relating to, having the quality of

Examples:

- educational

- historical

social

-ant or -ent suffix

Meaning: performing or being, inclined towards something/ someone

Examples :

- independent

- vacant

-ary suffix

Meaning: relates to something, relating to quality or place

Examples :

- customary

- momentary

-ful suffix (-ful)

Meaning: full of, tending, or liable to

Examples :

- awful

- skillful

-ic suffix

Meaning: pertaining or relating to

Examples :

- athletic

- scenic

-ive suffix

Meaning: performing or tending toward, nature of

Examples :

- cooperative

- sensitive

-ious or -ous suffix

Meaning: full of, relating to, qualities of

Examples :

- dangerous

- mysterious

-less suffix

Meaning: without, lacking, unable to act

Examples :

- powerless

- friendless

-y suffix

Meaning: characterized by, tending to

Examples :

- rainy

- funny

-like suffix

Meaning: like

Examples :

- lifelike

- warlike

- ish suffix

Meaning: origin, nature

Examples :

- selfish

– ile suffix

Meaning: tending to, capable of

- futile

- gentile

-an, -ian suffix

Meaning: one who is or does, related to

Examples :

- agrarian

- simian

Adjectival Suffixes Examples

The list below shows how words created from adjective suffixes operate as adjectives :

The fragile egg broke when it fell .

The childish trick was annoying .

The man had a childlike smile .

The sleepy girl went to bed early .

Her mysterious benefactor attended her art exhibit .

(Crystal, D. 1987)

Chapter Three

Testing and Date Collection

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter a general idea has been given about what a test is and what are the most important features of a good test. In addition to how a test is designed, what material it includes and to what it has been applied.

3.2 Definition of Test

According to **Al-Juboury (1999:1)**, the test includes any means of checking what students can do and what they can't do with a language.

3.3 Features of a Good Test

3.3.1 Validity

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what is supposed to measure or can be used successfully for the intended purpose. **(Ibid:26)**

The valid test should have the following criteria:

3.3.1.1 Content Validity

It is the extent to which a test covers the syllabus to be tested. A valid test must be used upon a careful analysis of the subject or skill we are testing. **(Ibid:27)**

3.3.1.2 Face Validity

It is the way the test looks to the examinees, supervisors or in general to the people concerned with student's education.⁽¹⁾ (**Ibid: 26**)

3.3.2 Reliability

It means the stability of the test scores. If the same test is given twice to the same group of students, under the same conditions, it would give the same results. (**Ibid: 27**)

3.3.3 Practicality

It is also known as usability. A test which is valid and reliable but difficult to administer or score or which is expensive, may fail to gain acceptance. (**Ibid: 27**)

3.4 Test Design

The test is designed in such a way that it consists of two questions intended to measure the student's performance at the recognition and the production levels. Each question has 10 items .

3.5 Test Material

Most items of the questions of the test are taken from grammar books mentioned in chapter two .

3.6 The Subject

The test has been applied to (36) students from the fourth class of Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences University of Babylon during the academic year (2022-2021)

(1)The test has been approved by the following supervisors

1. Prof. Dunya Mohammed Ijam
2. Asst.Prof. Lihadh Abdul-Ameer (Ph.D.)

3.7 Test Analysis

The results of question one is shown in the following table :

Table (1) the performance of the students of the subject at the recognition level. (Question 1)

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage
1	12	33,3%	24	66,7%
2	27	75%	9	25%
3	22	61,1%	14	38,9%
4	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
5	21	58,3%	15	41,7%
6	14	38,9%	22	61,1%
7	15	41,7%	21	58,3%
8	22	61,1%	14	38,9%
9	20	55,6%	16	44,4%
10	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
Total	191	48.3%	169	51.7%

Item (1) has the highest total number and percentage of the incorrect responses (24, 66.7%) while the total number and percentage of the

correct responses are (12, 33.3%) because they are unable to recognize the use of the topic.

Item (2) has the highest total number and percentage of the correct responses (27, 75%) while the total number and percentage of the incorrect responses are (9, 25%) . the students answered incorrectly as they are un familiar with the subject.

Items (3 and 8) have the total number and percentage of the correct responses (22, 61.1%) while the total number and percentage of the incorrect responses are(14, 38.9%) the number of correct responses is equal to the total number and percentage of incorrect responses because students are familiar with item.

Items (4 and 10) have (19) correct responses and the number and percentage is (19, 52.8%) while the incorrect answers are (17, 47. 2%). Student use guessing in their answers

Item (5) has (21) correct answers while the incorrect answers are(15) . the total number and percentage of the correct responses are (21, 58.3%) while the incorrect ones are(15, 41.7%) which means that the learner is not able to notice the suffix .

Items (6) has the highest incorrect answers while (22) has the highest responses of correct answers. It means that students have difficulties concerning the use of suffix to make adjective word.

Item (7) has (15) correct answers while the incorrect answers are(21) . the total number and percentage of the correct responses are (15, 41.7%) while the incorrect ones are(21, 58.3%). which means that more than half of the students have knowledge while the other students have less information.

Item (9) has the highest total number and percentage of the correct responses (20, 55.6%) while the total number and percentage of the incorrect responses are (16, 44.4%) , because they don't have enough information about the topic.

Table (2) shows the performance of the students at the production level. (Question 1)

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage
1	7	33,3%	29	66,7%
2	6	20,8%	30	79,2%
3	9	25%	27	75%
4	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
5	10	66,7%	26	33,3%
6	13	21,2%	23	78,8%
7	14	24,2%	22	75,8%
8	16	74,8%	20	24,2%
9	16	75,8%	20	24,2%
10	17	47,2%	19	52,8%
Total	127	44,1%	233	55,9%

Item (1)The total number correct responses is (7) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (29). Because they don't have enough information

Item (2) has the lowest percentage of the correct responses (20,8%) while the percentage of the incorrect responses are (79,2%) , because they use guessing .

Item (3) have the percentage of the correct responses (25%)while the percentage of the incorrect responses are(75%). Because some of them leave the point without an answer

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (19) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (17%). Because the point is very easy .

Item (5) has correct responses and the percentage is (66,7%)while the incorrect answers are of percentage (33,3%). This item has the highest of correct responses for the same reason

Item (6) The total percentage of the correct responses is(21,2%) while the incorrect ones is(78,8%). Because they don't know the meaning of word so the answer is incorrect .

Item (7)The total number correct answer is (14) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (22%). Because some of them leave the point without an answer

Item (8 and 9), the total number percentage of correct responses is (75,8%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (24.2%). This point is more familiar to students.

Item (10)The total number of correct responses is (17) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (19%). Because they don't have enough information .

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Adjectives are words that describe a noun or a pronoun in more detail, thereby providing more information about the characteristics of a person, an animal or a thing. Regardless of the word they modify, they always keep the same form and are, therefore, unchangeable. Suffixes are letters attached to the end of a word. These endings can change the class of a word. For example, adding a specific ending to a word can change it from a noun to an adjective. A specific group of suffixes called adjective suffixes turn words into adjectives. An adjective is a word that modifies a noun .

The results of Question one show that the percentage of the correct answers is higher than that of the incorrect one which means that the students have enough information about the suffix at the recognition level.

Question two, which measures the student's ability at the production level, shows . that the percentage of the incorrect answers is higher than that of the correct one .

The number and percentage of the incorrect responses for the whole test (402, 53,8%) are more than those of correct responses (318,46,2%) . These results in dictate that the students face difficulty in using adjectival suffixes and this in turn verifies the hypothesis of the study .

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Appendix I

The Test

Q1/ Use the suitable adjectival suffixes to change the following into adjectives :

- 1.fashion
2. terror
3. creation
- 4.beauty
5. history
6. discern
7. skill
8. cooperate
9. prestige
10. effort

Q2/ Choose from the following adjectival suffixes to change the following into adjectives :

(able / ical/ ant/ ent/ ive/ en/ ous/ ful/ ible/ ial/ ious/ less)

1. drink
2. depend
3. celebrate
4. educate
5. accept
6. athletic
7. retire
8. use
9. power
10. rain

Appendix II

The Answers of The Test

Q1/

1. fashion - fashion
2. terror - terrible
3. create – creation
4. beauty - beautiful
5. history - historical
6. discern - discernible
7. skill - skillful
8. cooperate - cooperative
9. prestige - prestigious
10. effort - effortless

Q2/

1. drink- drinkable
2. depend - independent
3. celebrate - celebration
4. educate - educational
5. accept - acceptable
6. athletic – athletically
7. retire- retiree
8. use- useless
9. power- powerful
10. rain- rainy