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6. MORPHOLOGY IN HUMAN EXPRESSION

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&

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Abstract

This paper entitled "Morphology in human expression" was design to show the importance of using the right word and observing morphological rules in human expression. Various views of scholars on the importance of the word and its formation in human expression are presented and appraised. The paper reveals among others that words are the ingredients of sentence formation and speech-making; a knowledge of the internal structure of words and the rules governing their formation (morphology) is key to good expressions as there exist a perfect word for every thought, idea and situation; to increase one's word power and building up a good vocabulary requires various methods namely: the lexicon method, reading method, listening method, content clue method and affixation method. It was recommended that teachers of languages and other concerned authorities see the word and the rules/processes of their formation as the crux of good written and spoken expression.

Introduction

To rightly appreciate why a language learner must necessarily have a knowledge of the internal structure of words, the rules governing their formation, appropriate choice of word (or set of words) in any form of expression, an adequate definition of the term 'word' need be made. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics view a 'word' as any sound or combination of sounds creating meaningful elements of speech, carrying an idea and capable of functioning as a member of the sentence or a substitute for a sentence.

Simply, words serve as ingredients of sentence formation. That is, a lack of the knowledge of the internal structure of words and the rules governing their formation is, no doubt, a huge impairment to sentence formation and speech making. According to Christopherson (1980) every word in a language conveys a particular meaning to its user. This demands that learners of languages must have a good grasp of the words of the target language in terms of their content (structure), necessary affixes and meaning. A student who is willing to learn the English Language and be perfect in speech making, for instance, must be ready to learn the words that make up the language; use these words appropriately, making sure that the pronunciation of the words chosen is accurate and the right affixes, if necessary, are applied.

Dineen (1978) holds that there exists a perfect word for every thought, idea, situation, a word that will allow the reader! listener understand more completely than any other word. This observation reveals that every idea that must be expressed, has the most appropriate ingredients (or words) for its expression. This answers why most students often express distress at choosing words. Most times, while making speeches, some will squeeze their faces with frustration and would sometimes say; "I have lost the right word", or "I am at a loss for words." The word, therefore, is the most vital! aspect of language learning. Since speech, according to Leons (2006), "...is man's greatest asset, allowing communication of complicated and fresh ideas in all aspects of human endeavour, ...helping in the analysis of man's feelings and thoughts and for easy understanding, 'the word' therefore must be taken seriously as there cannot be a good speech without the right choice and use of words.

Criteria for choosing the right word for good expression

The best way of expressing what one intends to express is by ensuring that words are used in a very precise and concise sense, so as to have clear, simple and unambiguous sentences that can easily be grasp by the audience. According to Leons (2007) one's thought expression, need be unique and capable of inspiring the target audience to listen or read as the case may be. This is done simply through the right choice of words, choice of affixes, a good knowledge of compounding, coinages, borrowing, blending, clipping, backformation, acronymy (as word formation

processes). The words must not necessarily be long and high sounding, unwieldy and boring, but suitable words, intelligently chosen to represent the writer/speaker's idea and thought.

Research shows that verbosity is not a mark of grasp of a language. Attempting to impress an audience by using terms words, and appendages that are incorrect and irrelevant to facts and issues is a mark of imperfection. Where words tend to drag a discussion, or lose its coherence and therefore adds nothing to its meaning, they should be thrown away. This is part in consonance with the view of Warner (2006) who says; "good clean language (spoken or written) should be like a tight rope pulling the meaning tight. There need be no unnecessary slack, no loops or wrinkles that are doing no work of pulling the meaning". This is correct.

In the same vein, Boulton (2008) while recounting his experience with some of his students who tended to be rather slovenly in their expressions warns: "Don't use words that mean nothing? Don't waffle and pad! Words are supposed to mean something! And be careful how you use words; say what you mean and not something rather like it, *or you may end up saying the opposite of what you intend to say.*"

Like Boulton's students, most students of English language and use of English classes prefer the use of circumlocution rather than simple words. 'Circumlocution' is expressing a thing in a round-about way. For instance, "place of abode" for *homes*; 'general increase of prices of commodities and a fall in purchasing value of money" for *inflation*" The examples below distinguish between circumlocution and brevity. Consider which is more appropriate and why.

a. "I really love you"

b. "Oh my heart, my angel, my entire being is in a furnace of love for you! Shall I be brought to ashes?"

These two examples are supposed to convey the speaker's feeling of love. You will agree that (b) is rather too long, and each segment of the sentence bears the same meaning, each connoting great love. Example (a) is straight forward and simple, meant to convey the same meaning as example (b). The student who uses example (b) could have save himself some time and space and make himself clearer to his audience by simply using the term "love" or "affection" to address his case, without rambling

around words.

A. A. Ekpa quoted William Strunk in Ubot and Orisawayi (1999) as having said that:

Vigorous writing is concise and precise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words. A paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that drawing should have no unnecessary lines and machines no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer/speaker avoid all detail and treat his subject only in outline but that every word should tell and serve a purpose.

They state further that words are like the clothes we put on. "A poorly fitting dress does not tell well of its designer or user. So too do badly constructed words tell poorly of our language command." Words in English are associated with different professions. These may rightly be called 'jargons.' They could be associated with law, religion, advertising, economics sociology, psychology, medicine, and others. The jargons are used when discussing and associated with each discipline. It would be wrong to use law registers when treating a topic associated with psychology, except the latter is used referentially.

Categorization of word

Bisong (1995) states that in English language words are generally divided into learned, familiar and slang. It is the writer or speaker's knowledge, and good command of the language that enables him make a choice of which category of words to use, and what appendages are appropriate for the expression. According to him, a writer or speaker is at liberty to choose from monosyllables, polysyllables, rare words, technical and scientific words, highly connotative words, slang, colloquialisms, vivid imagery, abstractions, dialect words, figurative expressions, archaic words, obsolete words; illusions onomatopoeic words, metaphors or other words with appropriate intent. The learner, in this regard, must first consider his audience. Is it a group of professionals? Then jargons typical to that profession will be appropriate. Is it a group of local farmers or traders? Then not very erudite language need be use. An address to college dons will require a polished language and elegant words. A

mistake of one category for the other would render the essence of the address valueless. Hence, slang words are illiterate, breezy and tend towards being colloquial. This suggests that students should be discouraged from using them and encouraged to use learned words which are rather literate, formal and fanciful, particularly in formal expressions. Familiar words are literate, informal or plain, tending towards semi-formal and are somewhat elegant. This, also, is the language of the educated, devoid of high-sounding and pompous words. It is mere painting of the simple words with fragrance and is easily appreciated and comprehended by any good English language speaker.

The chart below shows the different word categorization.

Learned	Familiar	Lang
Valour	Courage	Guts
Minor	Child	Kid
Psychotic	Crazy	Batty/funky
Stipend	Salary	Box
Donate	Give	Shell out
Intoxicated	Drunk	Plastered
Deceased	Dead	Quench
Comestibles	Food	Chop/grub
Ameliorate	Improve	Beef off
Erudition	Learning	Sarvy
Liquidate	Kill	Bumb off

Students are here advised to keep in touch with the dictionary words that are of general purpose, technical, slang and so on.

As stated earlier, every English word is supposed to serve a purpose, and to create coherence in communication. But what transpires amongst many students/learners of English, as shown in Bisong (1995), is that not just the error of using the wrong version of a word like "expect" for "expert", but the usage of an entirely wrong word, due to confusion about the exact meaning needed by the speaker. This is predicated on the fact that many English words do share the same meaning, similar sounds and sometimes same spellings with minor difference in alphabets. A word like *break* (noun) may have the same sound with *break* (verb) but the meanings are different from each other. Also, an action can be "humane" witho...

being "human."

Bisong (1995) maintains further that MALAPROPISM (misuse of words) needs be avoided by students. A student who knows a word, but knows not its correct spelling and usage is bound to *malaprop*. It is wrong for a student to use 'it's' for 'its', 'alter' for 'altar' 'plane' for 'plain' 'this' for 'these' etc. Errors such as these are common with homophones (words of similar sound but different meaning and spelling) and homonyms (words that have the same spelling but different meaning).

Poor language construction is characteristic of the present-day students. A student once misuses the word "anxiety" for 'eager', do you imagine the effect it would have on listeners? Let's look at the example below:

I am not afraid to take the examination, in fact, I am looking forward to the day with *anxiety*

This is poor. *Eager* should be better in this situation. The word *anxiety* connotes fear and worries and will not serve as synonym for *eagerness* in this circumstance. Below are some examples of Homophones (or words with similar sounds but different meaning and spelling).

Bale	bail	compliment	complement
Ate	eight	full	fool
Meat	meet	hail	hale
Course	cause	knew	new
Hens	hence	sun	son
See	sea	sail	sale
Sins	since	prays	praise

Vocabulary building

Research shows that choice of vocabulary is the most interesting and challenging aspect of communication in English (Adams 2007, Bisong 1995). According to them, there are basically three aspects of vocabulary-namely:

1. Expressive or conversation vocabulary
2. Writing vocabulary
3. Receptive or recognition vocabulary

Expressive or conversation vocabulary: As the name implies, these are the words we use in everyday conversation to express ourselves and communicate with people.

Writing vocabulary: The writing vocabulary is usually more than the conversation vocabulary. Since one spends more time, care and effort in composing and constructing sentences in written pieces, the tendency is for the written vocabulary to be more. It is with the written vocabulary that most essays, novels are built.

Recognition vocabulary: This forms the largest in our store of vocabulary. They comprise words that we recognize when we read or converse. The recognition vocabulary are easily understood and appreciated by the reader or listener. Students/learners of English as a second language are here advised to improve their vocabulary at both the conversation, writing and recognition levels. The more words a student has in his linguistic repertoire or store of words, the better equipped he is to express himself effectively and intelligently. Words are the tools in the game of communication. They are not just for fun. Words say a lot about the user. They either give an impression of intelligence or ignorance and illiteracy. They are like the clothes we put on. We design them to fit our social/status. Like clothes, words need be chosen for occasion, depending on the audience, in order to enhance beauty and class.

The most important question an intelligent student should ask himself is; how can I acquire a wide vocabulary and increase my word power. According to Adams (2007) and Bisong (1995). There are diverse methods of learning and acquiring new words namely

- a. The lexicon method
- b. Reading method
- c. Listening method
- d. Content clue method
- e. Roots and affixes method

i The lexicon method

This demands that a student/learner look up the meanings, derivations and pronunciations of a new word he comes across. Every student should possess a standard dictionary for references and should learn at least five new words every day.

ii The reading method

Reading is another way of picking up new words, and seeing how they are used. A student/learner who reads is at an advantage of meeting new words in his process of reading.

A student's store of vocabulary grows at the same space with his reading level. Buzan (1999) enunciates this point when he says that:

The extent of one's vocabulary is an indication of the extent of one's knowledge, which in turn is an indication of the amount of material one has been able to read. Students are here advised not to read only their text books, but journals, magazines, newspapers and good novels, if they must improve their word power.

iii Listening method

Listening is considered the easiest and best way of increasing one's word power. We listen to conversations, seminars and above all the radio and television broadcasting. By this method a student/learner adds not only to the number of words he can recognize, but also to the number he can use correctly.

iv Word slip method

Here a student/learner is expected to cut out small slips of paper of any size that would suit him. As he encounters new words in his reading or listening, bring out one of the slips and write down the newly acquired word, its pronunciation, synonyms and finally its content or how it should be used in sentences.

v Content clue method

In this method, the student is expected to guess the meaning of a difficult word by searching the words around the unknown word. Below are examples of using the words.

1. The sugarcane field was harvested yesterday.
2. The OPEC nations hope to find more oil fields.
3. The Nigerian students were sent to America to study the aviation field.
4. Maradona is a real star. He can field the ball.
5. The Green Eagles of Nigeria hopes to field her professional footballer for the match.

vi Affixes and roots method:

Root words are, simply put, the origin or source of other words in English

language. They are the base words, from which other words are derived. We have the Greek, Latin and French roots from which many words in English are coined, i.e. from Angel (Latin) we have archangel.

Affixes on the other hand, are attachments or appendages made to roots. English has two types of affixes, namely, prefixes and suffices. Prefixes are attached before (re) the main word (root) e.g. expert, express expand etc. The following are examples of root words and affixes:

Latin Root	Words	Meaning
ann-year	Annual	Yealy
culp-guilt	Culpable	guilty
doc-teach	Doctor	one who teaches
gress-march	Progress	a marching toward
loqu-talk	Eloquent	talking well
Greek Root	Words	Meaning
bibl- book	Bibliography	list of books
path-feel	Sympathy	feeling for or with
phil-friend	Philosopher	friend of wisdom
thermo-heat	Thermometer	measures heat

Classification of words

In English, words are basically classified into three classes namely: simple, complex and compound words. Simple words include words like come, sit, eat, etc. while complex and compound words are non-simple words, which include words formed by inflection (e.g. going, worked, books); words formed by derivation (e.g. development, acceptable, gracefully); and words formed by compound (e.g. mother-hood, feedback, bloodthirsty). Figure 5 (below) adapted from Allerton (1998) shows the formation of non-simple words.

Inflectional morphology is concerned with the addition of inflectional morpheme to the ending of roots. According to Crystal (1994, p.343) “inflection morphology examines the way in which words vary (or inflect) in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences, such as singular/plural or past/present tense...”. Stump (2001, p.245) sees inflection morphology as:

A branch of morphology concerned with the manner in which lexical items are combined with grammatical markers like plurality and tense. The class of the stem determines the grammatical marker to combine, for example, the English noun class cannot be combined with tense markers – e.g. 'petered' from peter, 'yaming' from yam etc.

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that in inflectional process of word formation the word class of the root, to which an inflectional morpheme is added, is never altered. Rather, it modifies the form of the word to enable it fit into a particular grammatical category. For instance, the '-s' morpheme of nouns as in 'books' merely carries the information regarding the number of books in question. It may be for this reason that Katamba (1993, P.89) describe inflection morpheme as those which “do not change the referential or cognitive meaning”.

By the rules of word formation in English, no other morpheme can be added after an inflection morpheme. It is also not possible to have two inflectional at a time. In the word 'Illumination', for instance, the root of word is 'illuminate'. The derivation morpheme is '-ation', while the inflection morpheme '-s'. No other morpheme can be added to 'Illuminations' after the addition of the inflectional morpheme '-s'. Words that are often inflected in English include nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. As earlier mentioned in section, when a word up of only one morpheme, we can refer to it, in morphological terms, as the root. Affixes (bound morphemes) can then be added to the root which now serves as a foundation for word building.

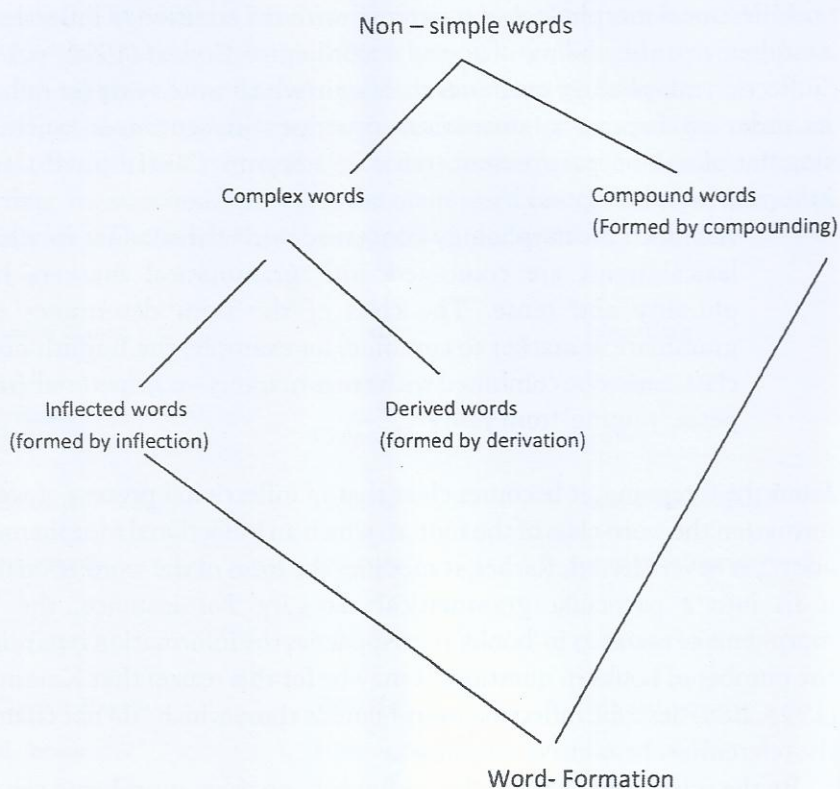


FIG. 1: The formation of non-simple words
Source: Allerton (1998, p.156)

The addition of affixes to the root would naturally result in one of the two main categories or processes of word formation (derivational or inflectional morphology). Basically, while the result of a derivation process is a new word (e.g. nation → national), the result of an inflectional process is a different form of the same word (e.g. nation, nationals).

Derivational morphology, according to Udofot (2005, p.28) is “a word formation process whereby affixes are added to the root or base of words to produce other words of similar or different classes”. In other words, derivational process of word formation forms new words by:

- (i) Changing the meaning of the base to which they are added as for instance in the examples clean/unclean (all adjectives), but one having meaning which is opposite to the other.
- (ii) Changing the grammatical class of the base as for instance the addition of '-ly' to 'slow' forms another word 'slowly', therefore changing the word 'slow' from an adjective to adverb. It is a rule in English that adverbs be formed by adding '-ly' morpheme to the base of an adjective.
- (iii) Maintaining grammatical class of the base, e.g. Boy-boyhood, king -kingship

Derivation affixes are useful in the formation of open class items. Udofot (above) lists the following as examples of such open class items.

Quick (adjectives)	-	quickly (adverb)
Beautiful (adjective)	-	beautifully (adverb)
Break (verb)	-	breakage (noun)
Joy (noun)	-	joyful (adverb)
Electric (noun)	-	electrify (verb)
Fat (adjective)	-	fatten (verb)
Slave (noun)	-	enslave (verb)
Father (noun)	-	fatherly (adverb)
Nation (noun)	-	national (adjective)

A derivative does not close word boundary; hence it can further derive or inflect as can be seen in the following examples:

Natural → naturalise → naturalization

Power → powerless → powerlessness

Beauty → beautiful → beautifully

From the above it can be seen that a derivational affix can cause a major grammatical change from one word class to another as in *slave/enslave*, *power/powerless* where a noun becomes a verb in the first case and an adjective in the second. In some cases, the addition of a derivational affix may cause just a minor change, as when the bases changes as in pig → piglet both nouns but one is a diminutive form of the other (Udimka, 2005).

There are other cases where a derivative may result not by the addition of any orthographic morpheme (affix) but by mere phonological manipulation, say a shift of stress or voicing of some consonant endings. Generally, derivation as a word formation process operates in various forms, namely, affixation (prefixation, suffixation, infixation), conversion, compounding, blending, clipping, syncopation, backformation, coinage, borrowing, acronym, Alphasism, Antonomesia, reduplication. While some of the above are rule governed (following the word formation rules) others are rule –bending (not following the word formation rules). They are specifically examined in the preceding sections.

Derivational prefixation is a process of forming words by adding a prefix to the root or base with or without a change of the word class of the base or root. These affixes, according to Bauer (1994, p.207) “can be added to the root of a noun, adjectives or verb to derive other words of similar or different classes.

Young (1990, p.13) in explicating the notion of grammatical units and boundaries states as follows:

The notion '(grammatical) unit' implies segmentability. In other words, it is normally the clause can be segmented into a sequence of groups which is then segmented into words, which are made up of morphemes being the smallest units in the rank- scale.

We can, with more or less precision, associate grammatical boundaries with places in the sequence of orthographical letters and space, or with places in the stretch of phonological structure. In other words, each grammatical unit is principle realizable by a separate chunk of phonological (or graphological) material. In the examples in (a) below the symbol + stands for the boundary of such a chunk, and not for syllable boundary (syllables are purely phonological units, and are established without reference to grammatical structure; for instance, while the word 'fees' is monosyllabic, it consists of two morphemes {fee+s}):

- (i) reader: read+er /rɪd+ə/
stolen: stol+en
/stəʊl+ən/
musical: music+cal
/mju:zɪk+ɪ/

sending	send + ing
/send + iŋ/	
outspokenness	out + spoke + ness
/aut + spəʊk / ðn + nðs/	
translation	trans + late + ion
/trænz + leɪʃ + ðn/	

The above examples according to Young (1980, p. 13).

...are all of words segmented into two or more morphemes. The segmentability is not seriously affected by the fact that here and there is some mistiness or overlap at the borders of graphological or phonological chunks. It should be stressed that we are not saying that the grammatical unit actually is a stretch of spelling or sound, but that it is represented (or realized) by a stretch of spelling sound.

Connectives or signal words

These are words that connect ideas together. If two friends Mr. A and Mr. Z are discussing, and Mr. A tells his friends Mr. Z that he is warming up for the council election coming up in a month's time, Mr. Z is likely to tell Mr. A "be sure you do much consultation and campaign" Mr. A took his friend advice, but, however, despite, in spite of much consultation and campaign he lost the election.

The underlined words are the connectives that signal to us the outcome of the election. We have basically five types of connectives in English language:

- i. Go connectives/signal
- ii. Caution connectives/signal
- iii. Turn connective/signal
- iv. Stop connectives/signal
- v. Relationship signals

i. Go connectives

Connectives, in themselves, have little or no meanings. They are rather used to signal or convey certain messages. Most times connectives overlap. Go signals are coordinating signals which informs the reader or

listener that you are about to make an equivalent statement that connects the line of thought you have started speaking or writing. For example: if you said to your friend; last semester we were taught psychology and philosophy. The word 'and' connects the two courses. These go connectives are also called sequence signals, since they join coordinate ideas. The following are examples of Go signals/ connectives: and, also, first, second, third, etc, next, furthermore, likewise, similarly, in addition, moreover, at the same time, in the same way.

ii Caution connectives

This kind of signals are mainly employed as summary and conclusion signals they include: thus, hence, therefore, in brief, as a result, for this reason, consequently, accordingly, in retrospect, in summation, in conclusion, finally.

iii Turn connectives

These connectives warn the reader that there are about to read a different opinion, a contrary or opposing idea or view from is earlier stated. The most regularly used turn connective is the word 'but' others include" despite, yet, otherwise, however, although, in spite of, on the contrary, nevertheless, notwithstanding, meanwhile, conversely.

iv Stop signals

These indicate to the reader/listener that he should stop and pay particular attention to what follows because of its special importance. These reflect a quality or certainty and authority. For example: "There is absolutely no reason for us to embark on a strike action". Other stop connectives are: absolutely, hereafter, whenever, without doubt, without question, significantly.

v Relationship signals

These are words or phrases that point to relationships. These signals either points to the relationship of time, space, degree, condition or cause-effect. Example:

- a. **Time:** soon, when, while, finally.
- b. **Space:** beside, there, here.
- c. **Degree:** less, many, all, above
- d. **Condition:** if, unless, though
- e. **Cause-effect:** so, since, because, that, therefore.

Conclusion

All of the above arguments, explication, exemplifications and illustrations point to the fact that a knowledge and good understanding of the structure of the words of a language is key to good expression. In fact, the importance of using the right word and observing morphological rules in human expression cannot be over emphasized. This is proven by the various views of scholars on the importance of the word and its formation in human expression which are presented and appraised in this study. The paper reveals among others that words are the ingredients of sentence formation and speech making; a knowledge of the internal structure words and the rules governing their formation (morphology) is key to good expressions as there exist a perfect word for every thought, idea and situation; to increase one's word power and building up a good vocabulary requires various methods namely: the lexicon method, reading method, listening method, content clue method and affixation method. It is therefore recommended that teachers of languages and other concerned authorities see the word and the rules/processes of their formation as the crux of good written and spoken expression.

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