

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Morphological awareness, one of linguistic awareness skills, which refers to a conscious awareness of or the ability to use the smallest units of meaning in a language, may be important in learning to read English (Carlisle, 1995, 2000 as cited in Muse, 2005). In other words, it means the explicit awareness of the smallest meaningful units of language, including derivational (e.g., *-er/-or*, *-tion*, *un-*, *re-*) morphemes (i.e., suffixes and prefixes) and inflectional (e.g., *-ed*, *-s*, *-ing*, *-est*) markers (i.e., suffixes). In addition as cited in Coggins (2016) it is also part of the top down process by which word parts are recognized in larger words and are retrieved from the lexicon. The awareness of individual morphemes within a word offers many benefits to the reader, including pronunciation, and information about word origin, spelling, meaning and usage. Due to the benefits of morphological awareness offered, Wolter & Green (2013) also assume that morphological awareness is as a valuable linguistic tool to facilitate language and literacy success for school age children with and without language and literacy deficits.

Morphological awareness has recently been a focus in both first language (L1) and second/foreign language (L2) literacy development and has especially been examined with regard to skills including reading, writing, and spelling development as well as vocabulary acquisition (Karimi, 2012; Kieffer & DiFelice Box, 2013 cited in Oz, H., 2014). Thus, students with morphological awareness are able to identify the smallest meaningful units of language such as free and

bound morphemes as well as inflectional and derivational markers. This is especially when learners often have difficulty in reading and grasping academic vocabulary.

To achieve the purpose of morphological awareness, it is necessary administering morphological awareness to the students in task completion way. Based on Ramirez (1995 as cited in Powers, D. 2008) task completion can be defined as a range of tasks that need to be solved or completed by the students. Completing these tasks means that learning the target language will be the means to an end rather than goal itself. In other words, tasks are activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome. The children or students will learn the language structures through morphological awareness as they focus on task completion and meaning. Students' interaction during the tasks facilitates transfer information they have previously learned and incorporates it with new information they receive as they perform the tasks. Thus, the use of tasks completion is to increase the awareness of morphemic structure of words.

Apel,et al. (2013) explain a variety of tasks to measure morphological awareness. Judgment tasks (e.g., “Does moth come from mother?”), production tasks (e.g., “Sing. Gracia is a ____.”) and analogy tasks (e.g., “Anger:Angry:: Strength: ____.”) are among the major types, each with several subvarieties. It was expected the students are aware of the morphological components of words, as well as their meaning and grammatical roles. The results provide guidance about tasks that are suitable for young children when assessing their morphological awareness.

Nagy and Anderson (1984 cited in Oz, H. 2014) estimate that 60% of the unfamiliar words which English readers encounter in texts, have meanings that can be predicted on the basis of their component morphemes. In other words, when students find words with complex morphological structure in textbooks, reading material, and academic classroom discourse, through the processes of compounding, prefixation, or suffixation will help them to be more aware and get the meaning of the words easily. For, instance, the word “*incorrect*” can be recognized and comprised of two meaning units, the base “*correct* means *true*”, and the prefix “*in-*” which convey the meaning of “*not* or *opposite from*”. Thus, word “*incorrect*” means “*not true*”. With a better grasp of all the processes, students will be better to infer the meanings of those words and will therefore learn more of them, as well as understand the text better (Nagy, Berninger, Abbott, & Vaughan, 2003). Thus, morphological awareness is used to help the students recognize and manipulate new words they found in the textbooks or reading passage.

Another way to help the students when they have difficulty in reading and grasping academic vocabulary is by promoting morphological awareness in text processing. Text processing, in this case is in sentence processing can be defined as two or more words of an utterance are combined to yield the interpretation of a sentence. It is a task which all people can do well: quickly, efficiently, effortlessly, and accurately (Crocker, M, 1998). Besides, sentence processing is the study of the representations people form as they understand a sentence or utterance and the mechanisms underlying the component processes. These include recognizing the words in a sentence, determining the syntactic and semantic relationships among these words, and interpreting the sentence with

respect to the relevant linguistic and non-linguistic context (Tanenhaus, K., 2006). Related to the morphological awareness in text processing, the students will be asked to find the morphological aspects within a sentence. For example is “*We must enlarge these halls*”. From this sentence, the students are expected to be aware of morphological aspects, namely first, **prefix en + large (adjective) = enlarge (verb)** this is called as derivational morpheme which creates new words and changes the word class from adjective to verb. The second is **hall (noun) + Suffix (s)** this called as inflectional morpheme which does not create a new word, but shows the word is plural.

What is striking about the morphological awareness tasks used in the literature base is the diversity in the types of tasks used. No consistent measure has been administered across investigations. Task completion is considered not natural because the result of the measurement is not similar to morphological identification in text processing (sentence processing). Students had problems in completing morphological awareness. Task completion did not measure the student’s awareness but their ability to answer those tasks. Apel et al (2013) lay out tasks that attempt to tap into students’ explicit awareness of those aspects of morphological awareness are warranted. Thus in this research, the researcher want to analyze which one is more appropriate to measure the students’ awareness of morphological complex words and whether both ways have correlation in certain skills. That is the reason, why the researcher decided to conduct this research. There will be two types of tasks that will be applied in finding the awareness of morphological aspects namely by task completion and text (sentence) processing.

The researcher is eager for finding the relation among them and which one is the most appropriate way to achieve the awareness of morphological aspect.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are formulated as follow:

- a. How does the morphological awareness tasks completion relate to morphological awareness in text processing?
- b. Why does the relation occur the way it does?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems of the study, the researcher has some purposes which stated as follows:

- a. To find out the relation between morphological awareness task completion and morphological awareness in text processing.
- b. To find out the reason of the relation the way it does.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This research only focuses on the relation between morphological awareness task completion and morphological awareness in text processing of grade 8 in SMP Swasta Budi Murni 3. The problems are limited to the relation and the reason of the way it does.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give some contributions in:

- a. Theoretically

This research is expected to be used as the references to conduct another research about morphological awareness.

b. Practically

1. This research is expected to give a valuable contribution especially for English teachers that can be applied by teacher in facilitating morphological awareness to the students.
2. This research is expected the students can be more aware of morphemes and easily manipulate morphological complex words.

