

## **EFL STUDENTS' MASTERY OF ENGLISH SUFFIXES**

**Nuralizah<sup>1</sup>, Ardiana<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>University of Muhammadiyah Makassar

Author corresponding email<sup>\*</sup>: nrlzh05@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This study aimed to assess students' proficiency in using derivational suffixes, focusing on their ability to apply four types of suffixes through the online platform Google Forms. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed, with a sample of 38 fifth-semester English education students from Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. Data were collected using multiple-choice tests and analyzed by calculating total scores, percentages, and average proficiency levels. The findings revealed that 10.53% of students achieved 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' proficiency, while 23.68% were classified as 'Good'. Additionally, 7.89% fell into the 'Fairly Good' and 'Fair' categories. However, 28.95% of students were in the 'Poor' category, and 10.53% were classified as 'Very Poor'. Further analysis showed that students demonstrated the highest competence in verb suffixes, with an average score of 66.45%, followed by adverbial suffixes at 55%, adjective suffixes at 26%, verb suffixes at 10%, and noun suffixes at 9%. These results indicate that overall proficiency in suffix usage among fifth-semester students remains relatively low, highlighting the need for targeted instructional strategies to improve their understanding and application of derivational suffixes.

**Keywords:** Students' Mastery, English Suffixes, Derivations

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's era of globalization, English is used in various parts of the world, which affects many people in communication. Gunantar (2016) argues that English is used not only for international purposes but also for local purposes (Puspitasari & Prastha, 2022). Language is a communication tool that has an important role in conveying messages to many people (Nurliana, 2023). The significance of learning a foreign language was highlighted by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a German philosopher, in Handayani's (2016) writing: "Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own language." This statement emphasizes the importance of mastering a foreign language in addition to one's mother tongue or national language. According to Tamrin and Yanti (2019), English is the most critical foreign language to learn, as it serves as a lingua franca and has the largest number of speakers (Sari et al., 2023). As an international language, English requires more attention in various fields and becomes an object of interest to people, especially in many countries where it is not their first language. Mastering English not only involves understanding vocabulary and grammar but also learning about word formation. The use of suffixes is an important aspect in playing a fundamental role in changing the meaning and function of grammar.

Understanding the aspects of language will help us learn and understand English well. Language aspects are divided into four linguistic levels, one of which is the suffix. A suffix is a type of affix that is often found at the end of a root word where its presence cannot stand alone. The suffix is categorized as a base form in the smallest word in the sense that it cannot be described anymore. A suffix is also known as an "ending" which usually consists of one or more letters and has the function of presenting a new meaning from a root word. A suffix is not included in the type of word, therefore its writing must begin with the root word if not a hyphen must be added in front of it.

Khusna and Fadilah (2021) argue that suffixes are morphemes that must attach to a root word or other affixes, typically located to the right or at the end of the root word (Nandito,

2016). There are two main types of suffixes: inflectional suffixes and derivational suffixes. According to Josiah and Udoudom (2012), inflectional suffixes do not change the essential meaning of the root word; instead, they modify its grammatical function. Narasuari and Rahayuni (2020) further categorize derivational suffixes into four types: nominal, verbal, adjective, and adverbial suffixes (Alam, 2023).

Suffixes can affect students' understanding of word formation and can improve their skills in reading, writing, and speaking English. Mastery of English suffixes can measure the extent to which students understand and can use English endings correctly. To hone students' English language skills, a deep understanding of suffix formation is needed.

In the context of language learning, understanding the structure of words is crucial for students to effectively communicate in English. One of the most important elements of this structure is the use of suffixes. Suffixes, as part of word formation, play a fundamental role in enhancing learners' vocabulary and grammar skills. Morphology, the study of word structure, is an essential area of linguistic research because it helps us understand how words are built and modified. It is through the application of suffixes that learners can expand their language proficiency, as suffixes help in the creation of new words, thus enriching the learners' lexicon and improving their ability to comprehend and produce various forms of speech and writing.

Language learners, especially those learning English as a second language, often face challenges in mastering the use of suffixes. These challenges arise because suffixes are often used to change the grammatical function or meaning of a word, and students may struggle to fully grasp the rules governing their usage. For example, derivational suffixes can change a verb into a noun or an adjective, while inflectional suffixes modify the form of a word to express grammatical features such as tense, number, or case (Parker, 2022). This transformation is crucial for understanding the nuances of English, as it enables learners to distinguish between related but distinct concepts, such as "active" versus "passive," or "happy" versus "happiness."

As English continues to dominate global communication, both in the academic and professional arenas, mastering its intricacies, including the application of suffixes, becomes even more vital. For students, being able to comprehend and apply suffixes correctly not only improves their written and spoken communication skills but also boosts their academic performance. It is especially important in academic settings where precise language use is necessary for expressing complex ideas (Anderson, 2018). Suffixes play a significant role in academic writing, where they help create specific word forms that allow for greater clarity and sophistication in communication.

The study of suffixes can also be linked to cognitive theories of language acquisition, which suggest that learners' understanding of language structures is closely tied to their ability to process and manipulate linguistic units like affixes (DeKeyser, 2007). By investigating how students learn and apply suffixes, researchers can gain valuable insights into the cognitive processes underlying language acquisition and improve instructional methods to support more effective language learning strategies.

Furthermore, research in second language acquisition (SLA) has shown that explicit instruction in affixation, including the use of suffixes, significantly improves learners' ability to generate and use words in context. Studies by VanPatten and Lee (2003) highlight the importance of explicit teaching techniques in SLA, suggesting that students benefit from structured, focused instruction on word formation, especially when learning complex morphological structures like suffixes. Without such targeted instruction, learners may struggle to recognize the subtleties of suffix usage and, as a result, may experience difficulties in writing and speaking fluently in English.

In addition to its linguistic importance, the mastery of suffixes has broader implications for students' academic and professional success. As international communication increasingly

depends on the ability to write and speak English effectively, proficiency in the use of suffixes can enhance students' employability in global job markets. For instance, employers often require candidates to have strong communication skills, which are heavily influenced by one's command of grammatical structures such as suffixes (Bhatia, 2019). Therefore, students who are proficient in using suffixes correctly are likely to stand out in job applications and interviews, particularly in roles that require advanced communication abilities, such as marketing, teaching, or management.

In educational contexts, it is essential to assess students' knowledge and use of suffixes as part of their overall language proficiency. The inclusion of suffix mastery as part of language assessments allows educators to evaluate students' ability to manipulate words effectively, which is a critical skill for academic writing, reading comprehension, and verbal expression. Through the assessment of suffix usage, educators can identify areas where students may need additional practice or support, thus enabling them to tailor their teaching strategies to meet students' individual learning needs (Nassaji, 2015).

The role of suffixes in language acquisition is particularly evident in English language learners (ELLs) from diverse linguistic backgrounds. While many ELLs may have a strong foundation in vocabulary, they often face difficulties in adapting to the complexities of English morphology, including the use of suffixes. Research by (Wright-Maley & Green, 2015) suggests that ELLs who receive focused instruction on suffix usage demonstrate improved language skills across multiple domains, including reading comprehension, writing fluency, and speaking proficiency. This indicates that mastering suffixes is not only a linguistic skill but also a key predictor of academic success for ELLs.

In conclusion, understanding and mastering English suffixes is a critical aspect of language proficiency that has far-reaching implications for students' academic, cognitive, and professional development. By exploring students' mastery of suffixes and their impact on language learning, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on English language acquisition. Through the assessment of students' ability to apply suffixes correctly, educators can better support learners in mastering the complexities of English and preparing them for success in an increasingly globalized world.

This study aims to assess students' understanding of how to use suffixes correctly and to investigate their ability to recognize changes in the meaning and function of words that arise from the addition of suffixes. The researchers are particularly interested in exploring the topic of "Students' Mastery of English Suffixes."

## **METHODS**

This research utilizes a quantitative method. According to Kasiram (2008), Quantitative research is the process of discovering knowledge using numerical data to analyze information about the subject in question. (Ph.D. Ummul Aiman et al., 2022). Researchers collected data using Google Forms, Eko Setia Budi et al., explained that Google Forms is a media that can help researchers in creating questionnaires, surveys and forms whose types of questions can be multiple choice, Likert scale and open questions and in essay form. The results of filling out the Google Forms can be processed and analyzed directly and in real-time (Pramadjaya et al., 2021). Researchers used Google Forms and distributed them directly to fifth-semester English Education students at the Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. The study's sample included 38 students who participated in the survey titled "Students' Mastery of English Suffixes."

The researcher focused on analyzing students' proficiency in using suffixes, particularly four types: (1) verb suffixes: -ate, -ify, -ize, (2) Adverb suffixes: -ly, -wise, -ward, (3) Noun

suffixes: -ion, -ment, -ship, (4) Adjective suffixes: -ful, -less, -ous using Google Form media. This research was conducted on fifth-semester students majoring in English education at Muhammadiyah University, Makassar. Gay (2001) argues that in research, the population is defined as a group that is the object of study and the target of generalization of its results (Dwirati et al., 2023). The researcher establishes the population as all research participants, while the sample is a subset that represents this population. In this study, the samples are 38 fifth-semester students majoring in English education at Muhammadiyah University, Makassar.

Arikunto (2017) The research indicated that instruments are important tools for collecting data. In this study, researchers used various choices of suffix questions as instruments (Dwirati et al., 2023). Research instruments aim to solve problems and test a hypothesis. Research instruments are also defined as tools that are used and can support data collection (Nasution, 2015). The test was conducted on the Google Form site and then given to fifth-semester students to determine their ability to use suffixes where the number of questions on the test was 20. Researchers used a test that referred to the types of suffixes (Verb, Adverb, Noun, and Adjective). Then, researchers shared the Google Form link with fifth-semester students. This was done to check students' understanding of suffix types.

After collecting the data, the researcher uses descriptive analysis to identify scores and percentage criteria that reflect the level of ability. The researcher then calculates the average score of the student's test results to determine their overall abilities using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where :

M : Mean Score

$\sum X$  : Total Score

N : Total number of students

After the researcher collects the scores of all students, they will refer to the following criteria for categorization:

- Scores between 0-35 indicate very poor ability.
- Scores between 36-55 indicate poor ability.
- Scores between 56-65 indicate fair ability.
- Scores between 66-75 indicate fairly good ability.
- Scores between 76-85 indicate good ability.
- Scores between 86-95 indicate very good ability.
- Scores between 96-100 indicate excellent ability.

Arikunto (2021) stated that to find out the distribution of scores, the scores must be classified (Dwirati et al., 2023). Therefore, researchers use the following formula to get the percentage of each type of suffix:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of the students' error

N = Total Respondents

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

After analyzing the collected results, the researcher found the ability of fifth-semester English language education students at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar to use suffixes using Google Form media. The following table describes the test results and scores achieved by each student.

**Table 1.** Description of Students' Score in Test

NO	RESPONDENTS	SCORE	CRITERIA OF ABILITY
1	A	40	Poor
2	B	70	Fairly Good
3	C	80	Good
4	D	85	Good
5	E	40	Poor
6	F	95	Very Good
7	G	50	Poor
8	H	95	Very Good
9	I	85	Good
10	J	60	Fairly
11	K	30	Very Poor
12	L	100	Excellent
13	M	55	Poor
14	N	25	Very Poor
15	O	55	Poor
16	P	75	Fairly Good
17	Q	85	Good
18	R	100	Excellent
19	S	50	Poor
20	T	50	Poor
21	U	95	Very Good

22	V	65	Fairly
23	W	45	Poor
24	X	75	Fairly Good
25	Y	65	Fairly
26	Z	80	Good
27	AB	80	Good
28	BC	80	Good
29	CD	55	Poor
30	DE	100	Excellent
31	EF	35	Very Poor
32	FG	80	Good
33	GH	55	Poor
34	HI	95	Very Good
35	IJ	100	Excellent
36	JK	20	Very Poor
37	KL	80	Good
38	LM	55	Poor

According to the table above, the highest score achieved by the students was 100, while the lowest score was 20. After processing the data from the research, the following results were obtained:

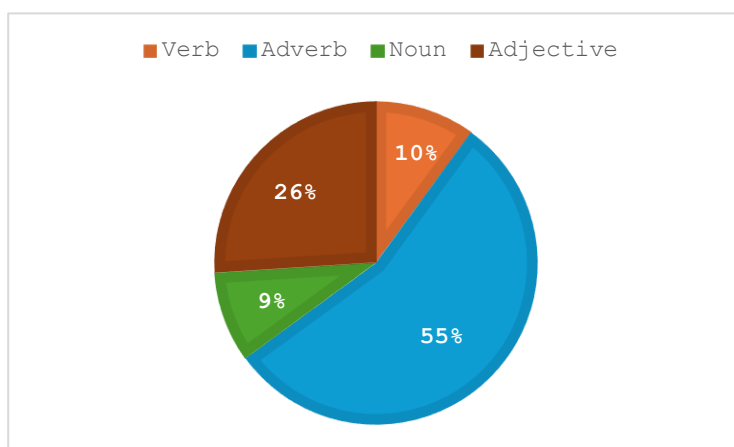
**Table 2.** Scoring Criteria and the Percentage of Students' Scores

NO	SCORE	CLASSIFYING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	96-100	Excellent	4	10,53%
2	86-95	Very Good	4	10,53%
3	76-85	Good	9	23,68%
4	66-75	Fairly Good	3	7,89%
5	56-65	Fairly	3	7,89%
6	36-55	Poor	11	28,95%
7	00-35	Very Poor	4	10,53%
<b>TOTAL</b>			38	100%

The table shows the percentage distribution of 38 samples across different proficiency categories. The "Excellent" category includes 4 respondents (10.53%), while the "Very Good" category also comprises 4 respondents (10.53%). In the "Good" category, there are 9 respondents (23.68%). The "Fairly Good" and "Fairly" categories each include 3 respondents

(7.89%). The "Poor" category has the highest number, with 11 respondents (28.95%), followed by the "Very Poor" category, which includes 4 respondents (10.53%).

The table below illustrates how students' abilities are classified based on their use of different types of suffixes.



**Figure 1.** The percentage of students' scores.

The image above displays the results of an analysis of English suffixes, including verbs, adverbs, nouns, and adjectives. The findings indicate a variety of outcomes, with most errors occurring in using adverbs (55%). This was followed by adjectives (26%), verbs (10%), and nouns (9%). The data above shows that respondents still need to improve their understanding and use of proper suffixes, especially when changing words into adverbs and adjectives. Lack of knowledge about sentence context, limited vocabulary, and inappropriate use of similar words cause these errors. Improving vocabulary and understanding of sentence context can help respondents improve this ability.

## Discussion

Language is a tool and form of communication carried out by humans in interacting both orally and in writing. Richards and Renandya (2002) explained that language is a human communication system in which there is a structural arrangement of sounds (in written form) into a unity such as morphemes, words, sentences, utterances, and so on (Mena & Saputri, 2018). Language is a communication system that enables people from a particular society to speak and write. Every human language represents a body of knowledge and skills that allows speakers to share ideas, hypotheses, emotions, desires, and other thoughts that need to be expressed. Language serves not only as a tool for conveying information but also plays a crucial role in creating and maintaining relationships with others (Kartika Tenda, 2015). The language used in communicating requires a person's understanding and ability to process language, especially in the use of English. According to Sze and Nasri (2022), Students' English understanding and competence depend on their ability to master vocabulary (Dwirati et al., 2023). Vocabulary is a critical aspect for those learning English as a foreign language. Students have numerous opportunities to expand their vocabulary and enhance their English skills. One way to do this is by understanding the rules and processes of affixation. We do not need to memorize every new word if we know and apply these rules. New words are created simply by adding affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to the root words that are already known. Once students understand certain prefixes and suffixes, they can identify, recognize, and remember the meaning of words, making it easier for them to learn new words.

The researcher analyzed the ability of students to use suffixes based on 38 samples. The findings were as follows: 4 respondents (10.53%) were categorized as "Excellent," while another 4 respondents (10.53%) fell under "Very Good." A total of 9 respondents (23.68%) were categorized as "Good." Additionally, 3 respondents (7.89%) were classified as "Quite Good," and another 3 respondents (7.89%) were marked as "Quite." Furthermore, 11 respondents (28.95%) were categorized as "Less Good," and 4 respondents (10.53%) were classified as "Very Less Good."

From the test results, the researcher also found that the average ability of students in using each type of suffix showed the results of the analysis of the use of English suffixes (Verb, Adverb, Noun, and Adjective) which obtained varying results. Where the most errors occur in the use of adverbs 55%, followed by adjectives 26%, verbs 10%, and nouns 9%. So that researchers can categorize the ability of semester V students of the Muhammadiyah University of Makassar in the Use of Suffixes Using Google Forms Media as being included in the ability that is still low.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results of the study revealed that fifth-semester English Education students at the Muhammadiyah University of Makassar have a relatively low ability to master suffixes. Of the 38 respondents who took the test via Google Forms, only 10.53% achieved the "Excellent" and "Very Good" categories, while 28.95% were in the "Poor" category and 10.53% were in the "Very Poor" category. And the most common errors were in adverb suffixes (55%), followed by adjective suffixes (26%), verbs (10%) and nouns (9%). This shows that students still have difficulty understanding and using suffixes correctly, especially when forming adverbs and adjectives. Where the main factors that cause these errors are a lack of understanding of the context of the sentence, limited vocabulary, and the use of words that are similar in form but have different meanings.

Improving the learning of English suffixes can be achieved through several effective strategies. Teachers should provide additional resources and conduct intensive practice sessions. Combining interactive learning methods, such as word games and technology-based quizzes, can also be beneficial. Students can be encouraged to expand their vocabulary by engaging in reading and using applications. In addition, practicing writing and speaking involving suffixes, as well as utilizing digital learning tools such as Google Forms and educational videos, is very important. Therefore, by implementing this strategy, students can improve their understanding of suffixes and minimize errors in their use.

## REFERENCES

- Alam, S. P. (2023). Morphological Analysis of the Derivational Suffixes Found in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer 'S Stone By J.K. Rowling. *LEKSIKON: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra, & Budaya*, 1(2), 18–28.
- Anderson, J. (2018). Reimagining English language learners from a translingual perspective. *ELT Journal*, 72(1), 26–37.
- Arikunto, S. (2021). *Penelitian tindakan kelas: Edisi revisi*. Bumi Aksara.
- Bhatia, T. K. (2019). Emotions and language in advertising. *World Englishes*, 38(3), 435–449.

- DeKeyser, R. (2007). *Practice in a second language: Perspectives from applied linguistics and cognitive psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dwirati, E., Ihsan, R., & Ningsih, D. S. (2023). AN An Analysis of Students' Ability in using Suffixes by using Online Media Quizlet at Grade X of SMAN 2 Sungai Penuh. *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal*, 4(3), 1890–1904.
- Gunantar, D. A. (2016). The impact of English as an international language on English language teaching in Indonesia. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 10(2), 141–151.
- Handayani, F. (2016). Instagram as a teaching tool? Really. *Proceedings of the Fourth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT-4)*, 4(1), 320–327.
- Josiah, U. E., & Udoudom, J. C. (2012). Morphophonemic Analysis of Inflectional Morphemes in English and Ibibio Nouns: Implications for Linguistic Studies. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 1(2), 72–81.
- Kartika Tenda, T. (2015). Sufiks Bahasa Inggris Dan Bahasa Tontemboan ( Suatu Analisis Kontrastif ). *Universitas Sam Ratulangi Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Manado*, 1–16.
- Khusna, F. A., & Fadilah, D. N. (2021). The The Word Formation Process of Suffixes in æLeave Beautifulæ Song Album by Astrid S. *IALLTEACH (Issues In Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching)*, 3(1), 15–21.
- Mena, V. V., & Saputri, K. (2018). a Contrastive Analysis Between English and Indonesian Prefixes and Suffixes in the Descriptive Texts of Student'S Textbooks. *English Community Journal*, 2(1), 175. <https://doi.org/10.32502/ecj.v2i1.1007>
- Nandito, I. K. (2016). Derivational and inflectional morphemes. *International Research Journal of Engineering, IT and Scientific Research*, 2(1), 22–29.
- Narasuari, N. P. D., & Rahayuni, N. K. S. (2020). Derivational suffixes in Crazy Rich Asians novel: A morphological analysis. *Jurnal Humanis*, 24(4), 364–371.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). *The interactional feedback dimension in instructed second language learning*.
- Nasution, H. F. (2015). *INSTRUMEN PENELITIAN DAN URGENSINYA DALAM PENELITIAN KUANTITATIF*. 6.
- Nurliana, N. (2023). Derivational Suffixes in Reading Texts of Higher Educational English Textbook. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 83–99. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.v8i1.16979>
- Parker, N. V. (2022). *Optimizing cognitive processing in the L2 classroom: new integrated grammar teaching framework, tested on unprepared oral production of Russian case inflection*. University of Leeds.
- Ph.D. Ummul Aiman, S. P. D. K. A. S. H. M. A. Ciq. M. J. M. P., Suryadin Hasda, M. P. Z. F., M.Kes. Masita, M. P. I. N. T. S. K., & M.Pd. Meilida Eka Sari, M. P. M. K. N. A. (2022). Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif. In *Yayasan Penerbit Muhammad Zaini*.
- Pramadjaya, Septiani, A., Syahida, S., Ramadhan, A., & Sony, I. (2021). *PEMANFAATAN GOOGLE FORM SEBAGAI MEDIA PENGUMPULAN DATA DAN EVALUASI PEMBELAJARAN DI MAN 2 KABUPATEN SERANG*. 5(September), 565–573.

- Puspitasari, D. P., & Prastha, A. P. (2022). *SUFFIX ANALYSIS ON THE EFL STUDENTS ' WRITING*. 5(1), 1–5.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge university press.
- Sari, B. K., Rahmati, R., & Rahmi, R. (2023). Urgensi Kemampuan Berbahasa Inggris Era Globalisasi. *Jurnal Malikussaleh Mengabdi*, 2(2), 475. <https://doi.org/10.29103/jmm.v2i2.14770>
- Sze, C. A., & Nasri, N. M. (2022). The role of the flipped learning in the English Language learning and students' motivation: A systematic review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 1122–1154.
- Tamrin, A. F., & Yanti, Y. (2019). Peningkatan keterampilan bahasa Inggris masyarakat pegunungan di Desa Betao Kabupaten Sidrap. *Transformasi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 15(2), 61–72.
- VanPatten, B., & Lee, J. F. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Wright-Maley, C., & Green, J. D. (2015). Experiencing the needs and challenges of ELLs: Improving knowledge and efficacy of pre-service teachers through the use of a language immersion simulation. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 1030176.