

## A Linguistic Analysis of the Inconsistencies in the Meaning of Some -er Suffix Morphemes

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**Abstract :** English like any other language is rich by means of arbitrary, conventional, symbols which lend it to lot of inconsistencies in spelling, phonology, syntax, and morphology. The research examines the irregularities prevalent in the structure and meaning of some 'er' lexical items in English and its implication to vocabulary acquisition. It centers its investigation on the derivational suffix 'er', which changes the grammatical category of word. English language poses many challenges to Second Language Learners because of its irregularities, exceptions, and rules. One of the meaning of 'er' derivational suffix is someone or somebody who does something. This rule often confuses the learners when they meet with the exceptions in normal discourse. The need to investigate instances of such inconsistencies in the formation of 'er' words and the meanings given to such words by the students motivated this study. For this purpose, some senior secondary two (SS2) students in six randomly selected schools in the metropolis were provided a large number of alphabetically selected 'er' suffix ending words, The researcher opts for a test technique, which requires them to provide the meaning of the selected words with- er. The marking of the test was scored on the scale of 1-0, where correct formation of 'er' word and meaning is scored one while wrong formation and meaning is scored zero. The number of wrong and correct formations of 'er' words meaning were calculated using percentage. The result of this research shows that a large number of students made wrong generalization of the meaning of the selected -er ending words. This shows how enormous the inconsistencies are in English language and how are affect the learning of English. Findings from the study revealed that though students mastered the basic morphological rules but the errors are generally committed on those vocabulary items that are not frequently in use. The study arrives at this conclusion from the survey of their textbook and their spoken activities. Therefore, the researcher recommends that there should be effective reappraisal of language teaching through implementation of the designed curriculum to reflect on modern strategies of teaching language, identification, and incorporation of the exceptions in rigorous communicative activities in language teaching, language course books and tutorials, training and retraining of teachers on the strategies that conform to the new pedagogy.

**Keywords :** ESL(English as a second language), derivational morpheme, inflectional morpheme, suffixes

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