

Morphological Awareness Among Pre-Service Teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University

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Abstract

This study looked into the morphological awareness among pre-service teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University. Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives: to determine the level of morphological awareness among pre-service at the College of Education of Kalinga State University; to identify the extent of the factors that affect the difficulties on building morphological awareness of pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University; to identify the benefits of morphological awareness to pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University; and, to identify teaching strategies in morphology as applied by the teachers of pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University. This study used the mixed method research design. The tools used were weighted mean, frequency and weighted mean. Based from the data gathered, and from the discussions of the research objectives, it was found out that 52.54% or 62 of the 118 respondents who are pre-service teachers in the College of Education have “Excellent” as their level of morphological awareness; the respondents are in agreeable stance that the factors affecting the building of their morphological awareness have wide range as it falls in the descriptive equivalent of “Much Affect”. Furthermore, the results shows that basic education, vocabulary and cultural background have the most effect on the development of the morphological awareness as these received the highest means. However, difficulty recognizing morphological items and derivational awareness have less impact as these received the lowest means.

The respondents perceived that there are benefits of having morphological awareness in the everyday communication.

Keywords: morphology; awareness; benefits; strategies

Introduction

Background of the Study

As a branch of linguistics, morphology plays an important role in learning English and morphological awareness is a vital ingredient in order for us to build our knowledge on vocabularies. Having knowledge on the morphemic structures of words and manipulate such structures with ease can help readers to break certain words for better understanding and building new words by adding other morphemes to a root word. It relies on knowledge of morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning in a language and can be either freestanding words or linguistic units attached to these words (Carlisle, 2010). As stated by Qiao et al. (2022), morphological awareness involves recognizing and manipulating a word's smallest linguistic unit. Deacon et al (2017) also claims that morphological awareness may contribute indirectly to reading comprehension by specifically influencing children's ability to read morphologically

complex words. Furthermore, morphological awareness is an important predictor of reading comprehension for adults with declining literacy skills since it helps them understand a reading material by simply decoding first the words they encountered (Tighe & Binder, 2014). Thus, this only means that morphological awareness has a direct and indirect influence on how learners learn and use the second language, which is English.

By the help of having morphological awareness, second language vocabulary knowledge, which is very significant in academic improvement and is very fundamental in second language acquisition, can increase with an easiness in every learner. The importance of having knowledge in vocabulary in learning another language is really that great and not an overstatement. Conversely, research has shown that postgraduate students studying English as a second language lack vocabulary and require improving it (Asaad et al. 2022). Having knowledge on many vocabularies will help an individual to have a good command of the English language he/she is trying to learn. As Nurhemida (2007) stated that findings of many studies that have investigated the role of morphological awareness in the second language vocabulary development showed that morphological awareness might be beneficial for building students' vocabulary and increasing their knowledge of words. The recognition process, which is morphological awareness, impacts vocabulary directly and also aids in overall comprehension by limiting the number of words students cannot understand and define (Proctor et al. 2009). A good receptive in terms of the English language will help students to access different kinds of studies and research related to their own area of expertise and is very vital for developing not only language skills but also their communication skills that will help them face this evolving technological world that we are in. Furthermore, Biemiller & Slonim (2001) claims that the stronger oral vocabulary size means more successful readers because it affects reading and understanding ability. Thus, inadequacy of vocabulary knowledge can lead to students' poor academic performance due to their declining linguistic awareness, especially on their morphological awareness. As stated by Angelin et al. (1993), students' language production and language comprehension would not be possible if they do not have strong foundation of their morphological awareness.

In the same way that it helps vocabulary knowledge, morphological awareness is also essential in reading comprehension as it will help the readers to decode easily what is being read for better understanding. The indirect way of how morphological awareness affect reading comprehension is really significant, both in the lexical part and vocabulary (Zhang & Coda, 2012). The faster one recognizes the words, the faster he/she can understood what was being written and the more fluent reader he/she becomes (Yucel-Koc, 2015). Even without explicit instruction, researchers have observed that students naturally solve unknown words by relying on morphological awareness strategies (Anglin, 1993). As stated by Xie et al. (2019), morphological awareness has been shown to have an important contribution to reading comprehension across language.

However, due to the declining attention being given to the linguistic side of second language learning, morphological awareness of students is declining as times goes by. Deterioration that is the reason on why vocabulary knowledge of students of today's society is very limited that can cause reading comprehension to also deteriorate, why second language learning is very difficult for them and one of the reason why oral communication is very hard to do. Despite the many suggestions and recommendations of past researches on the importance of morphological awareness among students especially in enhancing vocabulary knowledge, it is still doesn't received much attention (Amirjalli & Jabbari, 2018).

In the Philippines, the relationship of morphological awareness to that of other factors is explored. Statistical analysis showed that there is a significant positive moderate correlation between morphological awareness and reading comprehension stressing the possibilities for improving comprehension abilities through a deeper comprehension of word combinations (Villarin & Patlunag, 2023). Not only in reading comprehension where morphological awareness has a significant positive moderate correlation but also in oral communication. This is seen in the study of Almonte (2019), where it reveals that the participants, who are pre-service teachers, committed the greatest frequency of error in the pronunciation of vowel sounds, stress and intonation where it affect their use of proper words in their oral communication abilities.

Furthermore, in the study of Fesway-Malao & Lumines (2016), showed that the respondents, who are college freshmen of then

Kalinga-Apayao State College now, Kalinga State University, performed poorly in the morphological aspect of their literacy skills in English as was seen in their college diaries, recommending the development of instructional materials promoting the improvement of morphological awareness. Same is true in the study of Agbayani (2021), whose result showed that the participants, who are Grade 7 students from the Laboratory High School in Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology-Gabalbon Campus, displayed amicable result on the efficacy of direct morphological instruction administered. This only shows that awareness on morphology has a great impact on how students will enhance their literacy abilities.

In the local scenario, especially in Kalinga State University, some Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers are having slight problems in expressing their ideas during the teaching and learning process. Through observation and interview from their instructors, it was concluded that their limited vocabularies, which connects to morphological awareness, is the main culprit. Thus, continuous studies are being done to continue knowing the problems on learning morphological awareness especially those evidences concerning adult readers, such as the pre-service teachers.

The key purpose of this research is to find out the level of awareness on morphology and the extent of the factors affecting students on their difficulty in learning morphology. In addition to that, this study will also focus on the benefits of morphological awareness and the different morphological teaching strategies practiced by teachers of the pre-service teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University. This will benefit pre-service teachers in terms of knowing their awareness on the importance of morphology, together with its benefits. Moreover, it will also give teachers remarkable information on how they will enhance their teaching strategies in helping to develop the awareness of students on morphology that will help them in their vocabulary learning and second language acquisition as these are very important in enhancing the five macro skills of education.

Conceptual Framework

This study was anchored on the concept that learners, whether they are aware or not, display knowledge about morphological awareness. Having knowledge on morphological awareness has so many advantages especially on the skills of students on how they understand, compose and use words and phrases in their daily lives.

In the findings of James et al. (2021), they found out that morphological awareness plays a crucial part in reading comprehension among all levels of learners. Furthermore, Students' long-term growth of reading comprehension is supported by their usage of morphemes to deduce the meanings of unknown words (Levesque et al, 2019). However, in the study of Fowler & Apel (2015) about the influence of morphological awareness on college students' literacy skills, it concluded that morphological awareness is a stringer predictor for spelling than for word reading and sentence comprehension. Thus, morphological awareness clearly is a great factor in may descriptors when it comes to language understanding.

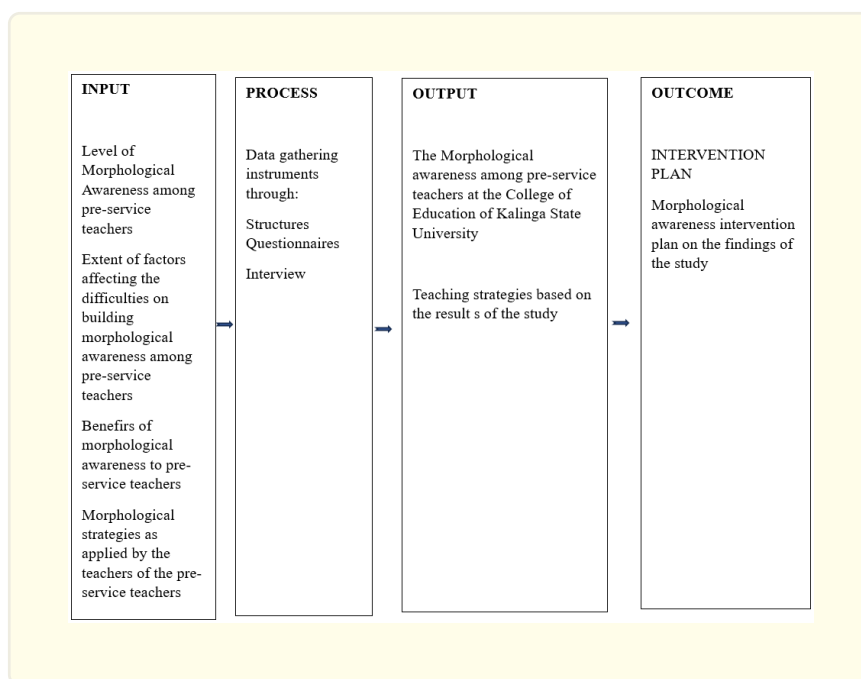
Aside from being one of the most seen factor on developing vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, morphological awareness is also said to help cross-linguistic learners to easily gain better understanding and skills of their second language abilities. In the study being conducted by Wu & Juffs (2022), it highlighted the effect of L1 experience on the acquisition of L2 morphological knowledge. Therefore, there is a typical effect of how L1 morphological awareness on the performance of a learner on its L2 counterpart.

Finally, Kotzer et al (2021), in their study of investigating about the connection of morphology to that of the fluency of adults in their reading capabilities, they concluded that for proficient adult readers, morphological awareness remains a significant individual difference factor, and they talked about the implications of this for assessment and university instruction. Thus, learners who are children have problems in their morphology but also adults, especially those in the college level.

In connection to this, in the article of Yadav & Yadav (2021), they instructed students to be aware of how word theories and various word formations and processes can be improved for effective reading performances, draft writing, figurative expressions, and critical

thinking vocabulary. This implies that it depends on how students practice and developed their knowledge about morphology on how they will formulate their different skills when it comes to the language they focused on.

In conclusion, morphological awareness is being extensively studied all through these years but still there are gaps that needed to be filled. As aspiring teachers, the need for integration in the teaching-learning process about morphological concepts should be intensified.



Statement of Objectives

This study looked into the morphological awareness among pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of morphological awareness among pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University;
2. To identify the extent of the factors that affect the difficulties on building morphological awareness of the pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University;
3. To identify the benefits of morphological awareness to the pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University; and,
4. To identify teaching strategies in morphology as applied by the teachers of the pre-service teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

Importance of the Study

This study is deemed beneficial to the following:

Curriculum Planners

The findings of the study will be deemed beneficial to curriculum planners in Cordillera Administrative Region as it will become a guide in developing and improving all learning areas in the curriculum especially the areas that has a direct contact on morphological awareness.

Administrators and Supervisors

The findings of the study will help them to innovate the approach they will be doing to accommodate the needs of every learner in their respective areas. Moreover, it will give them tools on how to approach the development plan in connection to morphological awareness.

Teachers

The findings of this study will deem beneficial to instructors and teachers as it will help them in planning their teaching strategies together with that of their instructional materials.

Parents

The result of this study will be a great help for parents to know what are the difficulties their children are facing when it comes to their morphology and their vocabulary knowledge of the second language.

Pre-service Teachers (Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education)

This study will become a guide for them to enhance and improve their morphological awareness and second language vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, this study will be a good help and a good tool for them as they will have awareness on the difficulties, they faced in the morphological aspect of their vocabulary knowledge and the teaching strategies they could use in their future careers.

Future Researchers

The findings of the study will serve as a basis for a more in-depth study and for further research. It will also help them to determine the gaps that are needed to research more regarding the topic.

Researchers

The result of the study will be the gathering information tools. They will be guided on the choice or strategies, activities and methods. In the end, it will be able to be of better service and a model to other students and universities.

Students

The study will be a guide and source of additional information concerning this subject. It could be a guide to the future researchers and a related literature along this particular topic.

Review of Related Literature

Filipinos of today's society are very fond of sharing their feelings and ideas using the second language, which is English. Same is true in every offices and colleges where English is mostly the medium of instruction. In order to use properly the second language, morphological awareness is much needed. In an interview in Tabuk City, Cabay (2020) stated that the presence of non-readers and

struggling readers due to poor morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge slows down the learning progress. The main focus and target population of this research is the pre-service teachers among the private higher education institutions of Kalinga.

Level of Morphological Awareness

Researches have showed us that morphological awareness plays a vital role in enhancing students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. As early as primary grades, children start to develop their knowledge in morphology as they learn to decode words into sounds and encode words into visual symbols (Carisle 2000; Manolitsis et al. 2019). Soifer (2015) pointed out that morphological awareness is a reliable predictor of high-quality vocabulary and has a beneficial impact on reading comprehension. The higher the awareness on morphology, the higher the positive impact on reading comprehension. In the study of Fesway-Malao & Lumines (2020), it was concluded that errors in terms of second language learning is indicative of the interlanguage status of students. With this, morphological awareness errors can be overcome if the sources of the errors can be determined and the factors affecting these errors can be determined to minimize their effects on the educational status of the learners. Such was the case in the study of Memis (2019) among middle school students, where the result showed that 5th to 6th grades were at low level in terms of morphological awareness while 7th to 8th grades were moderate. In here, a high-level link between morphological awareness and reading comprehension was recognized. With this result, it was found out that students with higher level of success in morphological awareness also had higher rates of success in reading comprehension, and that students with lower levels of morphological awareness scored lower on reading comprehension tests. Furthermore, in the study of Ramos (2021), it was found out that morphological awareness of the respondents, who are English Majors, must be emphasized since they will require it for both their future careers as English teachers and their academic success as students. Better learning enrichment techniques and resources are also being recommended and given due consideration.

To support reading achievement, it is important to emphasize the role that morphological awareness plays in facilitating vocabulary knowledge during reading (Goodwin et al, 2017). This outcome corroborates with the study of Alyatri (2017) who considers that students' poor vocabulary knowledge is reflected in their poor linguistic performance in English. Furthermore, his findings reveal that students and participants employed inefficient vocabulary strategies, such as depending primarily on a bilingual dictionary and asking people to explain words, among other things. The study strongly recommends an incremental process of teaching vocabulary.

Also, Wilson-Fowler & Apel (2015) suggest efforts to improve college students' morphological awareness as the result of their study showed that being aware of morphology helps students in many aspects of learning and using the English language and other literacy skills. Also, in the study of Badawi (2019) which used a pre-posttest experimental and control group design, the result revealed that the experimental group participants' mean scores on the post morphological awareness and reading comprehension test surpassed to that of the control group. Lastly, in the study of Fesway-Malao & Lumines (2016), awareness of students on morphology can be seen on their diaries which pushed the researchers to recommend the establishment of teaching interventions regarding this aspect of the English language.

Factors Affecting Difficulties in Morphological Awareness

As suggested by Yucel-Koc (2015), morphological awareness is a crucial contributor to vocabulary knowledge of every learner. Furthermore, morphological awareness is essential for the skillful use of a language, and teaching and sharing knowledge about morphology can facilitate comprehending and acquiring new words (Sukying, 2020). Thus, knowing the different difficulties involving morphological awareness is utmost priority since it really have a certain effect on the learning capabilities of students especially on the part of reading comprehension and public speaking abilities. However, despite many research conducted by linguists in morphological awareness and its importance, there is less focus on the difficulties faced by learners on the morphological aspect of language. There should be more attention given on these difficulties for us to understand their hardships in understanding what they are reading. This corroborates with the study of Goodwin, et al. (2017) which highlighted the complexity of morphological knowledge and empha-

sized the significance of understanding morphology in study design and interpretation. In the study of Bagolong (2021), she stated that even if some learners learn to read, they are having trouble understanding what they are reading, and they are having trouble reading smoothly. Moreover, the researcher suggests that in order to maintain the participants' reading performance, particularly their comprehension of the assigned profound texts, an intervention, innovation, and strategy must be proposed. To support reading achievement, it is important to emphasize the role that morphological awareness plays in facilitating vocabulary knowledge during reading (Goodwin et al, 2017). Similarly, in the study of Acheron (2015), college students who are taking AGC course, which is composed of phonology, morphology and syntax, lack in motivation and readiness when it comes to these areas. Ramirez et al. (2014) also shows how morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge are interrelated. This can be seen in the results of their study wherein both morphological awareness and vocabulary skills increase over a period of four (4) months, thus, suggesting a combination of intervention accommodating the two. Therefore, setting a conducive teaching-learning environment with appropriate instruction to cater the needs of the learners should be given due attention.

Chang (2019) shows how the different backgrounds of the respondents affect both their phonological and morphological abilities as evident on the results of the different test being conducted. Furthermore, with the given many interventions, the learners show improvement across the different knowledge on English literacy. This shows that positive effects could be seen with the use of appropriate interventions. Same is true in the study of Law & Ghesquiere (2017) which made use of longitudinal design to see the development of morphological awareness in a group of pre-reading children with a family risk of dyslexia. The study findings centered on the consistent presence of morphological awareness difficulties within the entire group, while emphasizing the significant influence of phonological awareness in shaping morphological awareness development that is crucial on the initial stages of formal reading instruction. Moreover, in the study of Stahl & Nagy (2017), less attention given to morphological instructions has great impact on the construction of meaning among learners. This can be challenging in terms of learning the second language which is English. Thus, many factors affecting the building of morphological awareness are evident on many researches.

Benefits of Morphological Awareness

Morphological awareness is a big help in vocabulary knowledge building for every student out there. Being able to learn and comprehend new vocabulary terms may depend in part of your ability to comprehend the construction of words. Kraut's study (2015) converses about the relationship between morphological awareness and morphological deconstruction, as well as how it helps English language learners learn and acquire new information. Moreover, Qiao et al. (2021) showed the direct effect of morphological awareness on both English and Chinese reading comprehension. The study specified the importance of morphology on reading comprehension and how incorporating morphology on the instruction will help Chinese ESL learners. Such was also the case on the study of Levesque et al. (2017), which used multivariate path analyses that revealed evidence of two indirect relations and one direct relation between morphological awareness and reading comprehension. Therefore, morphological awareness is a great tool on the improvement of learners' knowledge on comprehending what they read. With comprehension development, increased vocabulary will follow which will help students to gain more insights about the second language morphological structures that are prevalent to that language they are trying to use. Same is true with the study of Akbulut (2017) who examined the significant positive connection between morphological awareness and lexical knowledge of 52 Turkish University students attending ESL introductory classes. Therefore, the relationship between morphological awareness and second language vocabulary knowledge goes beyond what we could imagine since even from the correct use of affixes is a great help for us to know the words we encountered. As stated in the study of Sukying (2020), affix characteristics, such as transparency in language and meaning, enhanced participants' abilities to receive and produce affixes. Furthermore, his findings claim that the clear teaching of affixes can help English language learners comprehend words and build their vocabulary. Even in the study of Marks et al. (2023), the results showed how derivational morphology and compound morphology affects the early word reading of learners, especially English. Their research also showed the differences of the roles of morphology in different languages.

Anwar & Rosa (2020) carried out a descriptive study on the significance of morphological awareness and instruction in teaching English to junior high school students in Indonesia as a foreign language. The study's findings demonstrate the important role that morphological awareness and instructions play in helping students learn English more quickly and successfully. Therefore, students with better morphological awareness have better understanding on how to easily learn the English language. In the study of Jiang et al. (2015) showed that morphological knowledge and vocabulary improvement during reading comprehension are related, but there are less inferences made about vocabulary learning based on morphological awareness. Another finding indicates that students with higher MA were better able to recognize the relationship between roots and affixes than students with lower MA.

In the study of Farris et al. (2021) suggest that morphological awareness and vocabulary skills are vital factors to reading comprehension and resilience. Moreover, from the different tests being conducted, vocabulary mediated the impact of morphological awareness on comprehension after controlling phonological decoding ability. Even in the study of Chung & Kim (2020), it examined how derivational morphological awareness progresses across grade levels and compared the differences among various levels of vocabulary. The results of this study suggest that awareness in morphology has a vital role in improving vocabulary skills, together with different English literacies. Lastly, Cabe & Isla (2024) found out the great impact of morphological awareness on the development of lexical knowledge among Grade 7 learners. The results shows that the group who received treatment showed higher level of knowledge on lexical compared to those who didn't. Thus, awareness in morphology has more benefits than what we really know.

Teaching Strategies in Morphology

In the study of Ramirez et al. (2014), they suggested that it may be important for kindergarten teachers to develop instructions that could enhance the vocabulary and morphological awareness of the learners as this will benefit them as they go on the ladder of education as this two made an important contribution to growth in the other. Similarly, Tighe & Binder (2015) found out that adults have difficulty reading passages including morphologically complicated words and recognizing terms that are presented alone. As a result, adult literacy programs ought to investigate an integrated teaching strategy that incorporates phonological, morphological, and orthographic expertise.

Accordingly, explicit morphological instruction was effective in developing morphological awareness and reading comprehension. It was supported in the study of Obeka (2024), which revealed that students' knowledge on inflectional morphemes has a great impact on the development of their reading habits. The study recommends that curriculum planners should make Morphology as a compulsory course to be taught at all levels of education in the university where the study was conducted. Therefore, teaching English morphology should be an integral part of every school curriculum.

Such was the case in the study of Alsaedi's (2017) who showed in his study that morphological analyses, as opposed to conventional vocabulary teaching approaches, could help ESL/EFL students increase their lexical knowledge. Morphological teaching strategies are much needed in order for students to enhance their learning capabilities in learning unfamiliar words. Same is true with Wang & Zhang (2023) who studied the impact of game-based morphological awareness intervention (involving authentic texts) on Chinese EFL learners and in the study of Lee & Kim (2020), it examined the efficacy of a practical morphological awareness intervention for Korean EFL learners through the use of authentic texts and captivating exercises centered on the identification of morphemes and their definitions. The outcome demonstrated a noteworthy increase in vocabulary through the application of the hands-on intervention.

Previous studies, such as Al-Haydan (2020), confirms that teaching prefixes, suffixes, and base words directly to pupils is beneficial and should be prioritized because it greatly raises their morphological knowledge. This support the study of Giazitzidou et al. (2024) which showed how morphological skills were employed as activators to preexisting phonological and semantic skills in lower primary grades with transparent orthography and a rich morphological system to assist reading fluency processes. Even in the study of Chen & Nation (2021), which gives emphasis on the importance of authentic texts on the improvement of vocabulary acquisition of learners. Consequently, teaching strategies that students preferred and connects with their individual needs which focuses on the development of morphological awareness should be given much attention.

In the study of Davidson & O'Connor (2019), it shared how 10-session of morphology training has a positive effect on the vocabulary knowledge and morphological analysis skills of Grade 4 and 5 learners. In connection to this, the application of morphology as a strategy can help students acquire new vocabulary and comprehend unfamiliar words more readily as stated by Adam (2018). Oz (2014) also stated that by implementing certain instructional strategies that can be modified to fit the needs of different age groups, teachers can incorporate the teaching of morphological awareness into explicit language instruction in the classroom. Same is true with the findings of the study of Wardana (2023), which shows that direct teaching instructions about morphology has a good impact on EFL learners in terms of their vocabulary literacy. Lastly, Chang (2019) suggested that there should be integrated phonological and morphological interventions for elementary learners to help on the improvement of their knowledge about the different English literacy skills.

As part of the countries who speak English as a second language, it is our responsibility to continuously develop our knowledge both in the morphological aspect of linguistic and its counterpart, the second language vocabulary knowledge. We all know that students nowadays merely glance at a book rather than trying to decode what it means. Same is true with words they newly encountered. They will just look at it without trying to decode it because of limited knowledge on morphological awareness and vocabulary. Hence, this research will focus mainly on learners' morphological awareness and the morphological teaching strategies to be used in order to increase morphological awareness.

Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, locale and population of the study, data gathering procedures, data gathering instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, treatment of data, and statistical tools that were used in the analyses of data.

Research Design

This study made use of the mixed method research design. The final validated morphological measure was adopted from Wilson-Fowler & Abel (2015). This method is designed to gather information about the present situation as it exists at the conduct of the study and explored the causes of particular phenomenon. This gave descriptive information regarding the morphological awareness among pre-service teachers in the private higher education institutions of Kalinga.

Locale and Population of the Study

This study was conducted in the College of Education of Kalinga State University. The respondents of the study were the pre-service teachers of the College of Education of KSU.

The structured questionnaire was administered and retrieved among the respondents using total enumeration for both objectives number 1 and 2 and convenience sampling for both objectives 3 and 4.

Table 1 presents the population of the study.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED)	36	30.51	2
Bachelor Secondary Education (BSED) major in English	52	44.08	1
Bachelor Secondary Education (BSED) major in Mathematics	10	8.47	3
Bachelor Secondary Education (BSED) major in Social Studies	10	8.47	3
Bachelor Secondary Education (BSED) major in Science	10	8.47	3
Total	118	100	

Table 1: Population of the Study.

Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher used the structured questionnaire and interview guide as the main tools for gathering the data needed for the study. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents. Ten (10) percent of the population was interviewed per minute to have their responses for the objective number 3 and 4. The outcomes helped draw the pertinent implications of this research.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In determining the level of knowledge on morphological awareness of the pre-service teachers, the questionnaire, which is a final validated morphological measure, for objective number one was adopted from the research of Wilson-Fowler & Abel (2015) entitled *Influence of Morphological Awareness of College Students' Literacy Skills: A Path Analytic Approach*. In the objective number two, the structured questionnaire that the researcher used was administered as pre-test to test its validity and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Dean of the College of Education and from the program chairpersons for the conduct of the study.

- a. Structured questionnaire (For objective 1 & 2). The supervising instructor for BSED program and the program chairperson for BEED administered the questionnaires and explained how it was answered.
- b. Interview (For objective 3 & 4). The researcher interviewed the respondents. Therefore, all individual information coming from the respondents were protected.

Treatment of Data

The Five-point Scale was used to quantify the data gathered. The following descriptive equivalent helped in the interpretation of the data gathered about the responses on the morphological awareness of pre-service teachers, this scale was used:

<i>Scores</i>	<i>Descriptive Equivalent</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
20-24	Excellent	E
15-19	Above Average	AA
10-14	Average	A
5-9	Below Average	BA
0-4	Extremely Poor	EP

With regards to the extent of factors affecting the difficulties on building morphological awareness of pre-service teachers, the scale below was utilized:

<i>Arbitrary values</i>	<i>Statistical limit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Symbols</i>
5	4.21 - 5.00	Very Much Affect	VMA
4	3.41 - 4.20	Much Affect	MA
3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderately Affect	MoA
2	1.81 - 2.60	Less Affect	LA
1	1.00 - 1.80	No Affect	NA

Statistical Tools

The data gathered in determining the morphological awareness of pre-service teachers were treated accordingly with the following statistical tools:

Frequency

This was used in quantifying the responses of the students to the indicators on each problem of the study.

Percentage

This was used to quantify the number of respondents. This formula is:

$$P = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

Where:

P = Percentage.

F = Frequency.

N = Total number of respondents.

Weighted Mean

This was used in quantifying the responses of the students to the indicators on each problem of the study. The formula is:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

Where:

\bar{X} = Weighted mean.

$\sum fx$ = Sum of the products of f and x where f is the frequency of each weight and x is the weight.

$\sum f$ = sum of weights.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study. It also discusses the interpretation and analyses of the findings corroborated with related studies on the morphological awareness among the pre-service teachers in the private higher education institutions of Kalinga.

Level of Morphological Awareness among Pre-service Teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
20-24 (Excellent)	62	52.54	1
15-19 (Above Average)	29	24.58	2
10-14 (Average)	19	16.10	3
5-9 (Below Average)	8	6.78	4
0-4 (Extremely Poor)			
T O T A L	118		

Table 2: Level of Morphological Awareness among Pre-Service Teachers in the College of Education of KSU (n = 118).

As seen in the table, 52.54% (62 out of 118) of the participants scored between 20 and 24, categorized as Excellent. This group holds the top rank (1st), indicating that more than half of the population performed at the highest level. This result is similar to a study on university students in Ethiopia found that approximately 66% of students achieved good academic grades, indicating a significant proportion of high-performing students in that context. Another research on junior high school students in the Philippines revealed that only 6.67% of students scored in the “Excellent” range (95–100) in English, suggesting that while a smaller percentage achieved top scores, a notable portion performed at a high level.

In various international grading systems, such as those in Belgium and Portugal, the “Excellent” category typically represents the top 10–20% of students. For instance, in Belgium’s French Community, a grade of 18–20 out of 20 is considered “Excellent,” and in Portugal, a grade of 17.5–20 is classified as “Excellent.”

This could reflect a particularly high-performing cohort, possibly due to factors such as effective teaching methods, motivated students, or favorable learning environments. However, it’s essential to consider the context and specific conditions of your study when interpreting these results.

However, $62 + 29 = 91$ participants, which is 77.12% of the total. This means over three-quarters performed above the average level, suggesting a generally strong performance across the board. Moderate Segment of “Average” Performers: 16.10% (19 participants) fall in the Average category (score 10–14). These individuals performed acceptably but not outstandingly, representing a small but notable part of the group.

Low Incidence of Poor Performance. Only 8 participants (6.78%) scored in the “Below Average” range (5–9). The low rate (6.78%) of poor performance highlights a positive academic trend—indicating that most learners are keeping pace with expectations, and only a small fraction may require additional academic support. This reflects well on both the learners and the educational framework they are operating within.

Zero participants scored in the “Extremely Poor” range (0–4), indicating no critical underperformance.

Extent of the Factors that Affect the Difficulties on Building Morphological Awareness of Pre-service Teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University

Table 3 presents the extent of the factors that affect the difficulties on building morphological awareness of the pre-service teachers.

Factors	(Very Much Affect) 5	(Much Affect) 4	(Moderately Affect) 3	(Less Affect) 2	(Not Affect) 1	Average Mean
1. Basic Education	73 (365)	24 (96)	14 (42)	5 (10)	2 (2)	4.36
2. Non Verbal Cues	28 (14)	58 (232)	18 (54)	10 (20)	4 (4)	3.81
3. Phonological Awareness	50 (250)	48 (192)	13 (39)	7 (14)	0	4.19
4. Difficulty recognizing morphological items	40 (200)	39 (156)	26 (78)	11 (22)	2 (2)	3.88
5. Cultural background	39 (195)	54 (216)	20 (60)	3 (6)	2 (2)	4.06

6. Vocabulary	62 (310)	38 (152)	16 (48)	0	2 (2)	4.34
7. Interest about the subject/ topic at hand	20 (100)	46 (184)	18 (54)	34 (68)	0	3.44
8. Derivational Awareness	60 (300)	37 (148)	20 (60)	0	1 (1)	4.31
TAWM						4.05

Table 3: Extent of the Factors that affect the Difficulties on Building Morphological Awareness of Pre-service Teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University (n = 118).

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) is 4.05, indicating that, overall, the factors “much affect” the outcome.

The average mean score ranges from 3.44 to 4.36, suggesting that all listed factors are perceived to affect the outcome to a moderate to very high extent. None of the factors fall below a 3.0 mean, which would suggest a low impact.

As gleaned from the table, Basic education and vocabulary are critical foundations, suggesting that efforts to improve outcomes should start with strengthening core literacy and language skills in early education.

Morphological and derivational awareness are recognized as vital skills. These metalinguistic skills help learners decode and comprehend complex words, especially in academic settings.

Cultural background matters, highlighting the need for inclusive and relatable content in learning or communication settings.

Interest in the subject ranked lowest. This might suggest that even if students are not highly interested, they can still perform well if they have the necessary skills and support.

The relatively lower importance of non-verbal cues could reflect a context focused more on written or academic language (e.g., in formal education), where body language and tone are less influential.

Benefits of Morphological Awareness to Pre-service Teachers at the College of Education Of Kalinga State University

<i>Benefits of Morphological Awareness</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Enhances Vocabulary	23	1
Breakdown unfamiliar words	13	2
Develop critical thinking skills	11	3
Improves reading comprehension skills	10	4
Decode unfamiliar words and boost confidence	10	4
Breakdown complex words into simpler parts	6	6
Assist students with language difficulties, struggling readers	5	7
More affective teaching practices and improved communication	5	7
Improves language skills	5	7
Enhances literary skills	5	7
Can easily decode unfamiliar words more efficiently	5	7
Enhances the ability in teaching	5	7
Understands how words are formed	5	7

Comprehend any digital or printed material	4	14
Less confusing	2	15
Helps understands new words	2	15
Explains words clearly to students	2	15
Total	118	

Table 4: Extent of the Factors that affect the Difficulties on Building Morphological Awareness of Pre-service Teachers at the College of Education of Kalinga State University (n = 118).

The data presents the perceived benefits of morphological awareness, ranked by frequency of mentions or support. The total frequency count is 118, and the benefits are ranked from most commonly recognized to least mentioned.

Enhances Vocabulary is seen as the most important benefit as perceived by 23 respondents. With this benefit, it helps the respondents understand word roots, prefixes, and suffixes expands vocabulary rapidly. Next benefit is it breakdown unfamiliar words. With this, it recognizes that morphemes help learners deconstruct and understand new words.

Develop critical thinking skills is the next benefit identified by the respondents in which, it helps them analyze word parts and meanings foster deeper cognitive processing.

Another benefit is, it improves reading comprehension skills that When students understand the structure of words, they better understand the texts they read. They also identified decode unfamiliar words and boost confidence as one benefit that Gaining decoding strategies makes students feel more capable and confident in their reading.

The first five benefits focus on language comprehension, word analysis, and building vocabulary, which are essential for both reading and general communication. These are core academic skills, hence their prominence.

Breakdown Complex Words into Simpler Parts. Similar to #2 but emphasizes “complexity”—shows value in academic or advanced texts.

Assist Students with Language Difficulties, Struggling Readers. Morphological awareness can be a remedial tool for those facing reading/language issues.

More effective teaching practices and improved communication. Teachers benefit too—this knowledge improves instructional clarity.

Improves language skills. General language proficiency is enhanced through morphological understanding.

Enhances language skills. Suggests improved appreciation or production of literary works (e.g., writing).

Can easily decode Unfamiliar Words More Efficiently. Reiterates decoding as a key function of morphological skill.

Enhances ability in teaching. Morphology knowledge strengthens instructional delivery.

Understands how words are formed. Core definition of morphological awareness; foundational concept.

Comprehend Any Digital or Printed Material. Shows relevance in real-world application (e.g., reading news, instructions).

Less Confusing. Suggests clarity in understanding language structure.

Helps Understand New Words. Similar to top-ranked benefits, but perhaps phrased less specifically.

Explains Words Clearly to Students. A teaching benefit, reinforcing clarity in instruction.

As perceived by the respondents, morphological awareness is seen as a powerful tool in language learning and teaching, with benefits that span from vocabulary acquisition to reading comprehension and instructional effectiveness. The data reflects a strong consensus on its foundational importance, especially in educational settings.

Teaching Strategies in Morphology as Applied by the Teachers of Pre-service teachers at the College of Education, Kalinga State University

In the teaching and learning process, teaching strategies are very important as it gives direct plans on teaching morphology. There are strategies that are employed for the better retention of students. In the interview process, the respondents gave teaching strategies that they could remember which their teachers employed in order to teach them morphology.

Teach Word Formation

Respondent one stated, *“Our teacher teaches the parts of words by telling us the simple components of words”*. This response implies that teachers are using teaching strategy in teaching morphology by breaking down the words, comprehending their components for better understanding. By teaching students about the basic parts of words, such as, prefixes, suffixes and their root words, it will help for the improvement of students’ knowledge on vocabulary, their reading comprehension and even their use of the English language as a whole. This is an effective strategy to build strong foundation on how learners’ understand the formation of words. This is corroborated in the study of Davidson & O’Connor (2019) which suggests morphological analysis as a strategy to improve vocabulary knowledge of English language learners. This implies how the strategy makes sure about the improvement or the building of strong language skills. More so, by focusing on the parts of a word, learners could easily know the pattern of word formation which helps them to have a clear and concise understanding of the English language.

Moreover, Respondent two said, *“Our teacher plainly teaches roots and spelling pattern”*. In here, the focus of the strategy is on the construction and the repeated design of these words. With this, understanding and knowing the meaning of words will be easily achieved by learners. This is supported by the study of Wardana (2023) which showed how understanding the formation of words from smaller units helps learners to understand complex words, deduce the meanings and improve their vocabulary size. These underscores the importance of explicit instruction in morphology to help in the improvement of learning the English language.

Respondent three stated, *“Teaching us new vocabularies with their meaning and how they are formed”*. This indicates that comprehension on how words are formed will give additional cognition of how they will improve their vocabulary size. Using their knowledge on affixes will help them comprehend new words and build new meanings. This is corroborated in the study of Sukying (2020), which showed how comprehension on the characteristics of affixes helps learners understand words and build their vocabulary and new meanings. The study supports how teaching word formation enhances morphological awareness as explicit instruction on affixes can assist English learners to comprehend words and build their individual vocabulary that they can use in their everyday communication. This indicates that acquiring morphological knowledge through learning word formation is a great tool to language skills development.

Making Use of Hands-on Activities (Authentic Texts/Materials)

Respondent one stated, *“Engaging in hands-on activities, such as, authentic texts/materials that not only helps us in learning morphology but also in understanding more of the English language”*. This means that with the use of these materials, it will give the learners more ways to discover words and learn word formation. This implies that this teaching strategy is a nice way for it gives learners contextualized materials, such as games, epics, folktales and songs, that are easy to find and easy to understand as it provide words that are within their surroundings. This provides a learning process which is engaging and relevant to the learners since they will have knowledge on the function of morphology on their everyday communication. This corroborates with the study of Wang & Zhang (2023) which showed that the use of a game-based morphological awareness intervention involving authentic texts benefits the Chi-

nese EFL learners on their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. This only strengthen how contextual activities helps learners in their morphology learning.

Moreover, Respondent two asserted, *“One strategy that I remembered was the use of interactive games that are popular with us, students, that focuses on morphological words”*. This suggests that hands-on activities can provide direct experience for learners to improve their knowledge in morphology as supported by John Dewey’s educational theory which emphasizes that learners learn through experiences and through their hands-on on activities. For example, in a game called ‘Morpheme Tiles’, where learners will arrange the tiles to form new words that will give them an idea about word formations and structures. By doing this, learners are given a chance to learn morphology through actively doing it and experiencing it. This will also give them a knowledge about the different affixes to be used in word formation. This is corroborated in the study of Lee & Kim (2020), where the outcome demonstrated a noteworthy increase in vocabulary through the application of the hands-on intervention. Through these hands-on interventions, language teachers can create more engaging and effective learning experiences that could help learners to improve their knowledge on morphology and its significant role in developing language skills. Therefore, hands-on activities, with the use of authentic texts, are valuable tools in developing knowledge on morphology as they provides real-world experiences and interactive learning process to all learners and teachers alike.

Comprehensive Reading

Respondent one declared, *“They let us read, read, and read for the additional knowledge that we can get on the usage of words in what we read and for the improvement of our vocabulary”*. In here, it signifies the importance of reading in the exposure of learners to complex words. This implies that with the addition of reading in every morphology instruction, an enjoyable and meaningful learning process will occur. This is corroborated with the study of Chen & Nation (2021), which found that with the use of reading authentic texts, there are significant improvement on the vocabulary accumulation of the respondents.

More so, Respondent two stated, *“Our teacher always gives us time to read as it will give us understanding on new words for better vocabulary knowledge”*. This denotes that continuous reading will expose learners to many complex words that will help them to have better opportunities to meet many types of morphemes, such as prefixes and suffixes with root words. If they will encounter these morphemes repeatedly, they will be helping their mind to recognize patterns and structures of how words are formed, thus, giving them ample opportunities to understand these patterns and structures. At the same time, as reading helps on the development of knowledge in morphology, morphology also has a great impact on the comprehension of learners on the things that they are reading. This is corroborated on the study of Badawi (2019) which showed how explicit morphological instruction affects not only morphological awareness but also reading comprehension of learners.

Therefore, reading texts truly helps on the betterment of learning morphology that will also help the development of the other macro skills of the English language. In addition, reading is an integral part of the development of morphology as it provides learners ways for them to be exposed in wide range of words that will help them easily comprehend patterns and structures that could help them on their strong understanding of morphology.

Summary of Findings

Based from the data gathered, and from the discussions of the research objectives, it was found out that:

1. Majority of the respondents, who are pre-service teachers in the College of Education, have “Excellent” as their level of morphological awareness.
2. The respondents are in agreeable stance that the factors affecting the building of their morphological awareness has wide range as it falls in the descriptive equivalent of “Much Affect”. Furthermore, the results shows that basic education, vocabulary and cultural backgroud have the most effect on the development of the morphological awareness as these received the highest means.

However, difficulty recognizing morphological items and derivational awareness have less impact as these received the lowest means.

3. The respondents perceived that there are benefits of having morphological awareness in the everyday communication, specifically in the following areas:
 - a. Vocabulary Improvement.
 - b. Improving and Strengthening Language Skills.
 - c. Reading Comprehension.
4. The respondents' teachers employed variety of teaching strategies when it comes to morphology, including:
 - a. Teach Word Formation.
 - b. Making Use of Hands-on Activities (Authentic Texts/Materials).
 - c. Comprehensive Reading.

Conclusions

From the summary of findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. 52.54% of the pre-service teachers are excellent on their morphological awareness. Only 6.78% or 8 of the 118 respondents fall under "below average".
2. The respondents are in unison on the factors that really affects their morphological awareness. Basic education of learners really has a big impact on the accumulation of knowledge on all disciplines as it is the foundation of the learnings of students as they go on the higher ladder of education. Moreover, with the many cultures that we have, this has a great effect on how we used certain words that could affect our understanding of these words in the English language;
3. Morphological awareness not only benefit one aspect of the language learning but in many aspects as well. Having knowledge on morphology helps learners to learn effectively the English language, such as, understanding word formation, improving grammatical structures and vocabulary size; and,
4. There are many teaching strategies in teaching morphology. However, effective teaching strategies may be utilized based on the preferences of learners. The curriculum should be revised to add more part on the planned instruction on morphology.

Recommendations

Based from the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. There is a need to improve pre-service teacher training programs, such as English proficiency training seminars that includes practical strategies; contextualized application of morphological knowledge, such as reading comprehension and writing compositions; and peer-teaching among themselves.
2. The factors that have direct impact on morphological awareness of the learners may be addressed by:
 - a. Basic Education. Providing a planned instruction among learners that are age-appropriate and engaging. More so, integration of morphological instruction across disciplines may be given attention to as it will help learners to see the use of morphological awareness beyond language arts.
 - b. Vocabulary. Providing contextualized vocabulary within sentences, real-world scenarios, and stories may help learners to enhance their morphological awareness.
 - c. Cultural Background. Integration of contextualized materials, such as songs, games and folktales, from the learners' own place is needed as it will help them to connect to what they are learning confidently.
3. Teachers may integrate morphological awareness in classroom practice, by direct and clear instruction; engaging hands-on activities, such as code-switching analysis and a debate on word meanings, that will give a chance to learners to really explore morphology concepts; and the use of authentic texts which will help learners to connect the concepts to real-world scenarios.

4. School administrators may focus on providing the necessary resources, support, and professional development opportunities for teachers for the enhancement of their teaching strategies, such as trainings, seminars, workshops and conferences. Furthermore, joining research collaboration and sharing of resources will deem beneficial for the enhancement of said strategies.
5. For further study, focusing on the effective strategies to be employed should be addressed to.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Directions: Write the appropriate information about yourself. Put a mark check (/) on the corresponding information.

PART I: Students' Profile

Name (Optional): _____

Course: BEED: ____

BSED English: ____

BSED Mathematics: ____

BSED Filipino: ____

BSED Social Studies: ____

BSED Science: ____

PART II: To determine the level of morphological awareness among pre-service teachers in the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

Final Validated Morphological Awareness Measure

Retrieved and adopted from: Wilson-Fowler, E. & Apel, K., (2015). Influence of Morphological Awareness on College Students' Literacy Skills: A Path Analytic Approach. *Journal of Literacy Research* 47 (3), 405-432, 2015.

Part 1. Instructions: Read the sentence and circle the nonsense word that best fits the sentence.

Example: Despite her knowledge, the floxatist was unable to respond to the question.

Floxatize floxatism floxatist floxatation

1. Desert animals are not normally ____.

commalianization commalious commalianism commalianize

2. Please ____ these forms as soon as possible.

scribsumptist scribsumptious scribsumption scribsumptize

3. The meeting was highly ____ and invigorating.

loquarify loquarial loquarialize loquarialism

4. Their progress was stopped by an unexpected ____.

postramify postramic postramity postramicize

5. Their approach to the problem is deceptively ____.

torbatify torbative torbativize torbature

6. The breeders ____ their stock every four generations.

genilify genility genilification geniliar

7. Everyone resented the obvious ____ on the manager's part.

spectitious spectitionalize spectition spectitive

8. All the suspiciously ____ specimens are kept in a separate tank.

tribacize tribacion tribacism tribacious

Part 2. Instructions: For each item, you will see a word and a sentence with a blank. Please change the word that is given to fill in the blank in the sentence. Please use only one word for each blank (no phrases). You must change the word that is given.

Example:

impress: John wanted to make a good impression on his first date.

1. muscle: The disease resulted in slower ____ contractions.
2. correct: The judge explained the need to take ____ action.
3. produce: The new owners turned the failing business into a highly ____ operation.
4. demonstrate: She wished her fiancé were more ____.
5. logic: It is possible to pursue a career as a ____.
6. odor: The neighbors were upset by the ____ garbage can down the street.
7. weary: The doctor asked the patient to rate his ____ on a scale from 1 to 5.
8. intense: Frank broke down under the highly ____ questioning.
9. electric: The family needed to call an ____.
10. odd: It is an ____ that some cats have six toes.
11. observe: His emotions were ____ only to those who knew him.
12. gene: The boy's family consulted with a ____.
13. tense: The ____ between the two countries was growing every day.
14. critic: John didn't anticipate the harshly ____ response to his work.
15. diverse: It is important to maintain natural ____ in our forests and parks.
16. migrate: The geese follow the same ____ path every year.

PART III: To determine the extent of factors affecting the building of morphological awareness pre-service teachers in the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

Directions: Please put a check (/) on the blanks that fit your answer.

LEGEND: 5 - Very Much Affect, 4 - Much Affect, 3 - Moderately Affect, 2 - Less Affect, and 1 - Not Affect

Factors	(VMA) 5	(MA) 4	(MoA) 3	(LA) 2	(NA) 1
1. Basic Education (primary and secondary).					
2. Nonverbal Cues					
3. Phonological Awareness					
4. Difficulty recognizing morphological items					
5. Cultural Background (how words is used in own culture/community)					
6. Vocabulary.					
7. Interest about the subject/topic at hand.					
8. Derivational Awareness					

PART IV: The benefits of morphological awareness to the pre-service teachers of the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

1. What are the benefits of morphological awareness in the life of a pre-service teachers?

PART V: Teaching strategies in morphology as applied by the teachers of the pre-service teachers of the College of Education of Kalinga State University.

1. What are the teaching strategies that your teachers employed which you think are helpful in improving your morphological awareness?

Intervention Plan

Morphological Awareness Intervention Plan

- A. Difficulties on Building Morphological Awareness of the Pre-Service Teachers of the College of Education students of KSU

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