**L2 Affix Knowledge as Predictor of the Breadth of Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension**

**Ali Malmir**

[*malmir@hum.ikiu.ac.ir*](mailto:malmir@hum.ikiu.ac.ir)

*Assistant Professor of TEFL, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin; Email: malmir@hum.ikiu.ac.ir*

**Abstract**

Knowledge of L2 affixes exerts a significant influence over learning the words in that target language as claimed by many studies; however, the well-designed empirical studies are limited and most claims have just remained at the realm of theoretical speculations. Moreover, the earlier studies have not used comprehensive corpus-driven instruments for gaging the knowledge of either L2 vocabulary or the affixes themselves. Accordingly, the present study sought to examine Iranian EFL learners’ knowledge of English affixes after the studying English for four years during BA at University level and how that affix knowledge could predict learners’ receptive knowledge of L2 vocabulary from various difficulty and frequency levels. A total of 192 BA holders of English language teaching and English translation studies who graduated from Imam Khomeini International University during the years 2015 to 2018 voluntarily participated in this study by taking the three tests as follows. First, The Word Part Levels Test (WPLT) developed and validated by Sassao and Webb (2015) that measures three aspects of affix knowledge including form, meaning, and use was taken by students. The WPLT includes 118 derivative affixes selected based on frequency data from the British National Corpus (BNC). Second, Nation and Beglar’s standardized Vocabulary Size Test (2007) (VST) was given and finally, a revised paper-based TOEFL reading test was administered. Results of the data analysis showed that 92% of the learners knew 35 out of the 40 affixes at the first level of difficulty (beginner level) and could provide either an English or Persian meaning and examples. The percentage lowered for the second group of affixes to 86% knowing 32 out of 39 intermediate-level affixes, and 82% knowing 30 out of 39 at the advanced-affix-level. Correlations also revealed that there were moderate relationships between knowledge of English affixes and L2 receptive knowledge from every fourteen 1000-word levels. Surprisingly, stronger correlations were found for affix knowledge and less frequent levels. Furthermore, correlations between reading comprehension and affix knowledge were higher compared with vocabulary knowledge. The results suggest that teachers and learners can expand their affix knowledge to give a boost to their receptive vocabulary and reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** *affix knowledge, receptive vocabulary, reading comprehension*