# THE ROLE OF WORD-FORMATION EXERCISES IN TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH TRANSLATION

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***Abstract:*** *The purpose of this study is to investigate how translation activities which focus on word formation can help to develop students' creativity, but also their vocabulary, grammar and communication skills. I will examine the tests that the students took in class and based on their results I will draw a conclusion which either provides evidence in support of the effectiveness of such activities in translation classes or disagrees with this hypothesis.*

***Keywords:*** *translation, word formation, test, evidence, education*

The main reason of my decision to focus on word formation in teaching English is that such exercises seem to be difficult for my students and also because they are often required for the tests that most students want to sit in order to obtain a language certificate. Therefore, during some lessons we solved many exercises on this topic; the exercises and tests examined in my article are only a few of the many that we studied, but I selected them because they were the most familiar to the students and my aim was to help them realise that this topic is actually not such a complicated one.

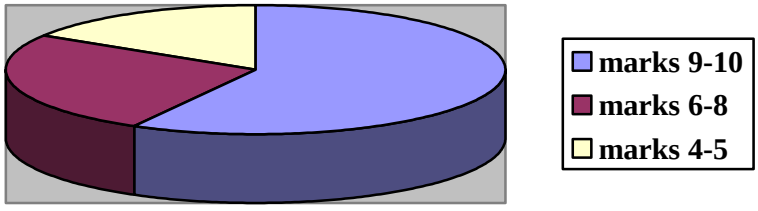
I decided to focus on word formation for a period of time because such exercises seemed to be difficult for my students in the 9$^{th}$ grade and also because they are often required for the tests that most students want to sit in order to obtain a language certificate. Therefore, during some lessons we solved many exercises on this topic; the following words are only a few among the many that we studied, but I selected them because they were the most familiar to the students and my aim was to help them realise that this topic is actually not such a complicated one.

**CERTAIN**: certainty, certainly, uncertainty,
**SIGHT**: near-sighted, far-sighted, sighting, sightless, sighted, sightseeing,
**COLLECT**: collector, collection, collective,
**FAMILY**: familiar, familiarize, familial



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**FRIEND**: friendless, friendly, friendship, unfriendly
At the beginning the students found this type of exercises quite complicated, but they worked with dictionaries, solved many exercises, asked for further explanations, worked in pairs and groups and when they felt confident to use the newly acquired words independently, I gave them the following worksheet with the aim of testing their knowledge.
The class in which the following test was given includes 31 students and all of them took the test. Of the total of 31 students, 18 got very good marks, between 9 and 10 (58%), 8 got marks between 6 and 8 (26%) and 5 students got marks of 4 and 5 (16%).




**CLASS: 9D, 15 year olds, 9th year of study**
**Social Studies, Intensive English, 4 English classes/week**
**WORKSHEET**

**Translate the following sentences using the words in brackets in order to form suitable words:**
1. L-am pierdut din vedere în mulţime şi a trebuit să ne întoarcem la firmă. (SIGHT)
We lost *sight* of him and we had to go back to the firm/company.
2. Acest bărbat are mare grijă de căţelul lui deşi este nevăzător. (SIGHT)



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This man takes so good care of his dog although he is *sightless*.

3. Profesoara mea are o colecţie impresionantă de romane scrise de acest autor. (COLLECT)

My teacher has an impressive *collection* of novels written by this author.

4. Nu cred că mai pot trăi cu această incertitudine. (CERTAIN)

I don't think I can live in this *uncertainty* any more.

5. Unii oameni sunt hipermetropi şi trebuie să poarte ochelari. (SIGHT)

Some people are *far-sighted* and have to wear glasses.

6. Îmi era cunoscut numele lui, aşa că am acceptat să participe la interviu. (FAMILY)

His name was *familiar* to me, so I agreed with his taking part in the interview.

7. Nu îţi mai face griji! Este o certitudine că va veni. (CERTAIN)

Don't worry any more/ Stop worrying! It is certain he will come.

8. Cînd am ajuns în această companie, a trebuit să mă obişnuiesc cu unele principii. (FAMILY)

When I got into this company I had to *familiarize* with some principles.

9. Din cauza caracterului ei a rămas fără prieteni şi a suferit cumplit. (FRIEND)

Due to her character she was *friendless* and she suffered a lot.

10. A lipsit azi de la şcoală din motive familiale, de aceea am sunat-o pe mama lui. (FAMILY)

He missed school today because of some *familial* problems, that is why I called his mother.

11. Nunta a fost cu siguranţă o reuşită, iar mirii au fost foarte fericiţi. (CERTAIN)

The wedding was *certainly* a success and the married couple were very happy.

12. Când era copil era miop şi purta ochelari, iar toţi copiii rîdeau de el. (SIGHT)

When he was a child he was *near-sighted* and wore glasses and all children were laughing at him.

13. Mătuşa ei este o persoană foarte prietenoasă care organizează multe excursii. (FRIEND)

Her aunt is a very *friendly* person who organises many trips.

14. Am vrea să vizităm puţin împrejurimile în această săptămână. (SIGHT)



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We would like to do some *sightseeing* this week.
15. Crede-mă că a fost o decizie colectivă şi şeful a aprobat-o. (COLLECT)
Trust me! It was a *collective* decision and the boss approved it.
16. Prietenia lui a însemnat foarte mult pentru mine, de aceea sunt tristă ca nu mai locuieşte aici. (FRIEND)
His *friendship* meant a lot to me, that is why I am sad he does not live here anymore.
17. Unchiul meu e colecţionar de artă şi participă la multe expoziţii. (COLLECT)
My uncle is an art *collector* and takes part in many exhibitions.
18. Ea a avut o atitudine neprietenoasă care i-a determinat pe musafiri să plece mai repede. (FRIEND)
She was very *unfriendly*, which made the guests leave earlier.

**Note: each sentence is marked 0.5 points. Starting score: 1 point.**

This worksheet belongs to one of the students who obtained a very good result; there are also other, less satisfying results, but after explaining all the mistakes, solving additional exercises, comparing different translation options in groups, even the less good results were definitely improved. And the fact that, in the end, the students know precisely under which circumstances and in which contexts they should use certain words is the most gainful activity.

**Conclusion**

In my endeavour of teaching my students the importance of word formation, I made use of many types of exercises revealing how morphemes can be used in order to connect words to other words and thus produce new words.

After finding solutions to so many tasks related to word formation, my students have realised on their own the fact that word formation highlights the significance of a language because a word can be transformed into a new one with the help of prefixes or suffixes and its meaning changes completely: frost-defrost, lucky-unlucky, discover-discovery, reason-reasonable; we can form nouns from verbs: depend-dependence, improve-improvement; nouns from adjectives: private-privacy, safe-safety; adjectives from nouns: harm-harmful, brilliance-



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brilliant; adjectives from verbs: consider-considerate, respond-responsible; verbs from adjectives: tight-tighten, legal-legalise; verbs from nouns: strength- strengthen.
Another important aspect of this type of assignments is that my students do not consider word formation such a complicated task anymore, but they rather think of it as a challenging one in which they have the chance to prove their mastery at finding solutions and creating new words independently.

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