

APPLYING WEBQUESTS TO TEACHING ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY



**UNIVERSIDAD
DE SEVILLA**

Guillermo López Cabrera

Tutor: José Gabriel de Amores Carredano

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Abstract

This work explores the application of WebQuests as a pedagogical strategy in teaching English morphology. It aims to investigate the potential benefits of WebQuests in enhancing students' understanding of morphological concepts. This work includes a comprehensive literature review on traditional approaches to morphology instruction and the role of WebQuests in language learning. It also presents the development of three WebQuests focusing on back formation, eponyms, and idioms. Additionally, practical recommendations for implementing WebQuests in university settings are provided, highlighting aspects such as the integration of technology in class. This thesis aims to contribute to this field by exploring the effectiveness of WebQuests in offering a deeper understanding and application of morphological concepts in the English language, and also by offering valuable points of view for language teachers and researchers.

Keywords: WebQuests, English morphology, teaching, pedagogical strategy, language

Este trabajo explora la aplicación de los WebQuests como una estrategia pedagógica para la enseñanza de morfología inglesa. Su objetivo es investigar los beneficios potenciales de los WebQuests en aumentar los conocimientos de conceptos morfológicos. Este trabajo incluye una completa reseña bibliográfica sobre enfoques más tradicionales a la enseñanza de la morfología y el rol de los WebQuests en el aprendizaje lingüístico. También presenta el desarrollo de tres WebQuests reales basados en los conceptos de la derivación regresiva, epónimos y expresiones idiomáticas. Además, incluye recomendaciones prácticas para su implementación en situaciones reales de aprendizaje en Universidades. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo contribuir a este campo explorando la efectividad de los WebQuests para ofrecer una mejor comprensión y aplicación de conceptos morfológicos en inglés, además de ofrecer valiosos puntos de vista para profesores e investigadores de idiomas.

Palabras clave: WebQuests, morfología inglesa, enseñanza, estrategia pedagógica, idiomas.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

The acquisition of language, particularly in this era of communication, takes a crucial role. Understanding the structures of the language is pivotal for effective communication, as well as academic success. One of the key aspects of language is morphology, the study of word formation and structure.

In this context of education, the digital world is stirring up the traditional approaches to learning and teaching. To take advantage of this digitalization, every day more educators are using online resources, and inquiry-based learning has opened doors to the most innovative educational strategies. One such strategy that is changing English morphology instruction is the application of WebQuests. Throughout this work, the integration of WebQuests into the world of English morphology instruction will be explored.

1.2. Justification

WebQuests offer opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of English morphology in authentic language contexts. Through interactive online tasks, students can investigate real-world examples of word formation, examine linguistic patterns, and explore the practical applications of morphological concepts. This practical application enhances students' understanding and ability to transfer their knowledge to various linguistic situations, ultimately strengthening their language proficiency.

In today's world, the majority of students are already familiar with technology, and teachers should make use of this familiarity. By using WebQuests as a learning tool, students can not only enhance their technological competence but also improve their learning. WebQuests act as a bridge between traditional teaching methods and the most innovative digital approaches. Furthermore, this study addresses a relatively unexplored area, specifically examining the application of WebQuests in teaching English morphology at the university level. While WebQuests have been used in multiple educational domains, their potential in teaching English morphology has not been fully explored. This study aims to fill this gap and provide valuable insights for educators who are looking for effective teaching strategies.

1.3. Objectives

Firstly, one of the objectives of this work is to assess the impact of WebQuests on students' comprehension of morphological concepts. It involves exploring how WebQuests contribute to a deeper understanding of important elements in the English language. Additionally, this work also studies the effectiveness of WebQuests in facilitating the acquisition and retention of morphological knowledge. It involves evaluating their effectiveness in helping students internalize morphological rules, identifying patterns, and applying their knowledge to real contexts.

Another key objective is to investigate students' attitudes, motivation, and engagement when utilizing WebQuests as a learning tool. This point involves gathering data on students' experiences and preferences of the WebQuest-based approach, providing insights into the effectiveness of this pedagogical strategy from the learners' perspective.

This work aims to provide practical recommendations for implementing WebQuests in university settings. This objective focuses on offering guidance to teachers interested in incorporating WebQuests into their English morphology classes, making their students' learning experience much more engaging and enriching.

1.4. Methodology

There are various interpretations of WebQuests, with Bernie Dodge, an educational technology professor at San Diego State University, being one of the first to define and structure this educational approach. Dodge (1995) initially introduced the term, describing a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet...".

Vidoni and Maddux (2008) offer a different view of WebQuests, describing them as a design activity that provides learners with resources to help them search for information to achieve tasks that challenge their academic and intellectual abilities.

March (2004), who assisted Bernie Dodge in the creation of WebQuests, states that it is a scaffolded learning method that guides students through online resources and a real-world task to promote their investigation of an open-ended question. It encourages students to build their knowledge and actively participate in a group activity where they can turn what they've learned into a deeper understanding.

In general, the most common definition of a WebQuest found on internet resources characterizes it as a lesson format centered around inquiry-based learning, where the majority, if not all, of the information that learners engage with, is acquired from various websites. Web projects can take various forms, from a simple word-processing activity with links to online materials to large collections of web resources for a specific topic.

Dodge (1995) categorized WebQuests into two distinct levels: Long-term WebQuests and short-term WebQuests.

A long-term WebQuest is essentially a project that takes place over an extended duration. During this time, students engage in activities like reading, analysis, and drawing their conclusions. They then take the knowledge gained and apply it to various assignments, demonstrating a deep and comprehensive understanding of the topic.

In contrast, short-term WebQuests are designed to be completed within a relatively brief timeframe. These WebQuests provide a concise amount of information and typically involve quicker, more focused activities and assignments.

The WebQuests on which the students will be working adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative tasks. Due to the absence of real-world testing, the focus is on exploring the design and potential benefits of the WebQuests.

2. Literature review

2.1. Traditional Approaches to Teaching English Morphology

Even though language learners have always recognized the significance of words, morphology, commonly defined as the internal structure of words, didn't become a distinct part of linguistics until the 19th century (Katamba & Stonham, 2018). Morphology is an integral part of a language's grammar, and it deals with how words are built and how they carry grammatical and semantic information by the arrangement of different morphemes (the smallest units of meaning).

The most traditional ways of teaching English morphology emphasized explicit instruction. In these methods, teachers typically present the students with clear grammatical rules and definitions, followed by examples to reinforce their understanding of the concept they are trying to learn. The main goal is to provide learners with a

structured framework to guess the structure of words. Additionally, there's an emphasis on grammatical analysis, in which students are asked to break down words into their constituent parts, such as roots and affixes.

These traditional methods have served as an important foundation for understanding English morphology, but they have limitations. The main aspect that this methodology has is that it lacks meaningful context, in the sense that it often isolates morphological concepts from real-world language use. In addition, traditional methodology heavily relies on rote memorization, which can lead to students not fully understanding morphology and potentially forgetting it in a short time.

2.2. WebQuests as an Educational Strategy

WebQuests are a dynamic and innovative educational strategy that has gained very significant popularity recently. WebQuests are a teaching strategy with the potential to connect students to other students, experts, and researchers not only in the United States but also across the entire planet (Fraaze, 2004).

WebQuests possess a structured framework that differentiates them from other educational approaches. As stated before, WebQuests include components such as a clear introduction, a well-defined task, a list of resources to do some research, a systematic process for students to follow, and a method to evaluate the results. This structure serves as a clear guide for both educators and students. The structured nature of WebQuests acts as a scaffold, offering clear directions and avoiding ambiguities.

Certainly, a key component of the WebQuest model is 'scaffolding', a temporary structure that provides aid to students at specific points in the learning process, and it is important because it allows learners to accomplish a task that they may not be able to do without help (Dodge, 2003, as cited in Frazee, 2004). The goal of scaffolding is to make the student as confident as possible, and they achieve this by gradually reducing assistance or guidance. Scaffolding in WebQuests is a pedagogical approach that aims for a balance between support and autonomy, allowing students to develop critical thinking, research, and problem-solving in a controlled and digital way. Awada et al. (2020) conducted a 12-week study aimed at examining the impact of combining the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD), a structured cooperative learning approach,

and WebQuests on enhancing argumentative writing skills in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. The study involved a total of 78 participants, with 54 students assigned to the experimental group and 24 to the control group. To gather data, the researchers employed both pre- and post-writing tests and administered questionnaires. Data analysis involved the use of ANCOVA. Notably, the primary outcome of the research indicated that improvements in writing skills in the foreign language were observed primarily among students with lower proficiency in their second language. Back to scaffolding, this study found that even students at advanced levels of instruction with lower ability writing skills need, benefited equally whether the scaffolding was provided by the instructor or classmates (Awada et al., 2020).

The study conducted by Melnik et al. (2019) aimed to assess the utility of integrating WebQuests into English language instruction at the university level. The purpose of the study was to involve all students and provide them with an opportunity to work not only in class but also at home. The advantages of WebQuests were obvious, as the research questions of the study were answered positively. Melnik et al. found out that the teacher does not have to spend hours preparing assignments for his students. Also, students' passion and motivation to proceed with working was maintained by the creativity of the task itself. Finally, they realized that the activity can be integrated into the teaching-learning process naturally.

Looking at the topic from an alternative point of view, Synekop (2020) investigated how teachers perceive the use of WebQuests as an instructional tool and assessed their application in teaching information technology. The study involved 31 students majoring in English for Engineering and adopted a qualitative research approach. The key results indicated that teachers showed a favorable attitude toward WebQuests. Furthermore, it was found that WebQuests play a crucial role in enhancing the communication skills of English learners.

The existing research on the utilization of WebQuests as an educational strategy demonstrates promising results, however, the study conducted by Awada et al. (2020) only recognized advantages for students with lower proficiency in their second language.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. English Morphology: Key Concepts

In the study of language, morphology is all about understanding how words are formed and structured, and it's essential for effective communication. When a language is described, all four varying facets – sounds, constructions, meanings, and forms of words – have to be paid attention to (Matthews, 1991).

The field of linguistic theory may be said to include at least four major subfields: phonology (sounds), syntax (structure and meaning), semantics (word meaning), and the one which will be dealt with in this section, morphology.

The term ‘morphology’ is a Greek-based parallel to the German *Formenlehre* (the study of ‘forms’), and the first reference that is known dates back to the 1860s, according to the OED (Matthews, 1991). Paradoxically, morphology is both the oldest and one of the youngest subdisciplines of grammar. It is the oldest because the first linguists were primarily morphologists, and the earliest extant grammatical texts are lists of morphological forms of Sumerian words. However, the term ‘morphology’ itself was not invented until the second half of the nineteenth century, simply because it was not needed, as the term ‘grammar’ (i.e., morphology) had existed for centuries before (Haspelmath & Sims, 2013).

In the study of English morphology, two fundamental concepts take center stage: derivational and inflectional morphology.

In the case of derivational morphology, it deals with word creation and transformation. In this process, new words are formed by adding prefixes or suffixes to base words, which alter the meaning or grammatical category of it. For example, the word ‘happy’ can transform into ‘happiness’ by adding the suffix ‘-ness’.

On the other hand, inflectional morphology focuses on changes within a word to convey grammatical information. This typically includes variations in tense, number, gender, and case. For example, the word ‘run’ can change into ‘ran’, which would indicate past tense.

These morphological concepts provide the foundation for understanding how words work in the English language, and they are essential for language learners.

Understanding these concepts sets the stage for exploring the connection between morphology and WebQuests.

3.2. Designing Effective WebQuests for Language Learning

The design of a WebQuest is a crucial part of creating effective online learning experiences, especially in the context of language education. In essence, WebQuest design is about constructing engaging and meaningful online activities with a clear purpose: language acquisition. One of the main priorities in the development of the WebQuests on back formation, eponyms, and idioms, is the incorporation of authentic materials, engaging tasks, and collaborative elements. Each WebQuest is designed taking careful consideration of learning objectives, inclusion of interactive web-based resources, and the use of appropriate technologies to enhance student engagement.

To achieve these goals, Dodge (1995) argues that all WebQuests should contain at least the following parts:

- An introduction that sets the stage and provides some background information.
- A task that is doable and interesting.
- A set of information sources needed to complete the task, which may be found embedded in the WebQuest.
- A description of the process with a clear explanation of all the steps.
- Some guidance on how to organize the information acquired.
- A conclusion that brings closure to the quest, which reminds learners of what they have learned and encourages them to keep exploring.

One key aspect that must be taken into account when designing a WebQuest is that it should be designed with a student-centered approach (i.e., placing learners at the front of the educational process). By doing this, WebQuests encourage learners to take ownership of their learning journey, participating in class and being active. One of the worst aspects of the traditional methodology for teaching English morphology was that students were passive in class, and their interaction was very limited.

Next, a good WebQuest should focus on collaboration, which is a key element of them. Collaborative learning within the context of WebQuests is a dynamic and interactive process that takes a crucial role in language education, particularly when teaching English morphology. In the WebQuest environment, they work together to solve

problems, decipher complex words, analyze word structures, and many other tasks which allows them to construct knowledge together. Furthermore, the diverse perspectives that collaborative learning gives to students are very valuable. As they explain concepts to their peers, they become both learners and educators, solidifying their knowledge while they are helping others.

Another element that should be present in every WebQuest is the presence of multiple examples and good explanations. Examples serve as concrete demonstrations of how you would like the activity to be done, so it must be carefully illustrated. Examples offer insights into how learning objectives can be matched with authentic contexts and how an activity can be designed to measure students' understanding of morphology. For students, these examples bring transparency to what they can anticipate in the WebQuest, as they present a clear picture of the main learning objectives and what the teacher expects them to do. Thanks to the clarification of every element in the WebQuest, students will be able to learn both easier and faster.

Lastly, two concepts that should be kept in mind by every educator when designing a WebQuest are adaptability and accessibility. Both these elements are crucial to make sure that an online activity is effective. Adaptability implies that WebQuests can be adapted to the different needs of every learner. This is crucial in language education, as students come from varied backgrounds and may have different proficiency levels, and therefore have more or less difficulties. On the other hand, accessibility refers to ensuring that WebQuests are available and usable to all students, regardless of their circumstances. They should be user-friendly and considerate of students with any disability. In the case that a WebQuest doesn't achieve this inclusivity, it would be the educator's task to provide the student with tools to help them complete the activities in the WebQuest.

The design of effective WebQuests for teaching English morphology is a complex process that requires the educator to take careful consideration of multiple elements. Creating WebQuests that include all these elements ensures that English morphology is not only taught but, most importantly, understood and internalized by students.

3.3. The Role of WebQuests in Teaching English Morphology

WebQuests, as an educational strategy, present an influential and distinct role in the teaching of English morphology. This role rejects the traditional classroom methodology and embraces the dynamics of technology and active learning.

Among many benefits that have been discussed before, WebQuests offer one that is crucial and applicable to English morphology: critical thinking. Vidoni & Maddux (2008) state that WebQuests provide students with an opportunity to put critical thinking skills to use, and proceed to cite Mark Weinstein, of the Institute for Critical Thinking at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Weinstein presented a framework for critical thinking that he adapted from a definition suggested by his colleague, Matthew Lipman. Lipman defines critical thinking as ‘skillful, responsible thinking, that facilitates good judgment because it (a) relies on criteria, (b) is self-correcting, and (c) is sensitive to context’ (Weinstein, 2000, p.41, as cited in Vidoni & Maddux, 2008).

WebQuests present students with tasks that require them to solve linguistic puzzles. For instance, in the exploration of back-formation, students might dissect complex words to understand their origins. When diving into eponyms, they could be challenged to trace the historical roots of words or phrases. In the case of idioms, students might have to decipher the figurative language and explore its cultural context. These tasks demand more than just surface-level knowledge; they need critical thinking. This process enhances their analytical skills and develops a deeper understanding of English morphology.

After students have completed the activities, they should reflect on what they have done to make sense of their experiences, connect theory to practice, and deepen their understanding of English morphology. This brings the concept of metacognition which, according to Stanton et al. (2021) is awareness and control of thinking for learning. They also state that students with well-developed metacognition can identify concepts they do not understand and select appropriate strategies for learning those concepts.

In the context of using WebQuests to teach English morphology, encouraging metacognition is particularly important. By promoting metacognition, students can gain a deeper understanding of which strategies work best for them and how to apply their new knowledge effectively. This self-awareness not only helps them complete the WebQuest but also grants them valuable skills for learning and problem-solving in multiple contexts.

4. Development of WebQuests for Teaching English Morphology

4.1. Back Formation WebQuest

4.1.1 Introduction and Objectives

This is the first of the three WebQuests that will be presented in this section. It is designed to facilitate the understanding of English morphology, a vital component of language acquisition. Among the many different elements that comprise English morphology, this WebQuest deals with back formation. In linguistics, back-formation refers to the process of creating a new word by removing affixes from an existing word (Suffern, 2023). Back-formation offers a unique view of linguistics through which students can explore new words and their components.

This WebQuest has clear objectives that every student is expected to fulfill. These objectives are the following:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the concept of back formation and recognize its usage in English words.
- The knowledge that they will acquire should be put into practical use. Students are intended to deconstruct words and identify their origin, among other tasks.
- Collaborate with peers using electronic devices to make research about the concept of back-formation.

4.1.2 Resources and Activity

In this section of the back formation WebQuest, the main activity is presented. It is divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Resources

In this section, students will have available different links to online resources. At this point they may not be familiarized with the term 'back formation', so they can access a very useful YouTube video in which the concept is explained (youtu.be/Ly4TLkZcnd8?si=9qEM5NUN_MwA0Cue). It is specially intended for those students who find that visual and auditory learning enhances their comprehension. However, there may be students that prefer a more traditional way of learning, and choose the link to a website in which the concept of back-formation is tackled as well. This resource offers a detailed exploration of back formation and provides real-world examples

that illustrate their application in the English language (www.thoughtco.com/back-formation-words-1689154).

Finally, the last link is related to one of the tasks that students will deal with in the next section: EtymOnline (www.etymonline.com). They will be able to research the origin of words on this website, which is very useful for this task.

Note that while students are encouraged to use online resources for their research, it's important to be cautious. The internet is a vast space and not all sources are reliable, so they are warned about this in the WebQuest. They are emphasized to verify the credibility and accuracy of the information presented and check multiple references to ensure the reliability of the information.

Phase 2: Activity

With a solid foundation established through the resources provided in Phase 1, students are now ready to start the activity on back formation. This activity is designed to be a collaborative learning experience, so they must work with a partner to complete each of the tasks.

First, students will be presented with a list of words that have undergone back formation, and they will have to analyze why this occurred. They should follow these steps:

- a. Research the etymology of the word: They should research the origin of each word in the list, looking for information on the original word from which the back-formed word was created.
- b. Identify the affix that was removed: Once they have researched the origin of the word, they should identify the affix that was removed to create the back-formed word.
- c. Analyze the reasons for back-formation: Finally, they should analyze the reasons why each word was back-formed, considering factors such as changes in language use, the need for shorter words, etc.

To help the students get started, an example of how to approach this activity is included.

4.1.3 Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment is a crucial part of the learning process, measuring the achievement in the back formation WebQuest. In this section, the criteria by which the students' performance is evaluated will be discussed. The method used is a rubric, which comprises three essential categories, each of which plays a unique role in assessing the competence of students. The maximum points attainable are 15, distributed as follows: 5 points for 'Excellent', 3 points for 'Good', 1 point for 'Fair', and 0 points for 'Poor'.

The categories are the following:

1. Understanding of back-formation (5 points).
2. Research and Analysis (5 points).
3. Collaboration (5 points).

The combination of these three categories will determine the overall performance in the WebQuest. Students can make use of the rubric as they do the activity so they can enhance their understanding, research, and collaboration skills.

4.2 Eponyms WebQuest

4.2.1 Introduction and Objectives

It is now the turn of the second WebQuest, which is based on eponyms. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an eponym is one for whom something is or is believed to be named. That is, eponyms are words that find their origin in the names of people, typically individuals who have made significant contributions to various fields, such as science, literature, or history.

Exploring eponyms is a linguistic journey in which students learn not only English morphology but also history. This WebQuest is designed to be an engaging and informative exploration of these unique words, and students will delve into the world of eponyms discovering their origins and the individuals to whom they are attributed.

This WebQuest has some clear objectives:

- Develop research skills by investigating the origin, history, and cultural significance of the most frequent eponyms, using various resources.

- Actively participate in the activity proposed by the professor, working with their peers and discussing the main points with them.
- Demonstrate the ability and knowledge that they have gained thanks to this WebQuest.

4.2.2 Resources and Activity

As in the previous WebQuest, this section is divided into two phases: the first one will deal with resources and the second will be the activity.

Phase 1: Resources

To lay a solid foundation for the students, the WebQuest provides four links to useful resources. The first one is a website that deals with meaning and types of eponyms (www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english/lexis-and-semantics/eponyms/). Students may not be familiarized with the term so it serves as an introduction to it. Next, the activity will require them to check the frequency of several eponyms, and a great place to do that is the English Corpora (www.english-corpora.org/coca/). This resource will enable them to not only check their frequency but also find real instances of their use, making them understand each eponym better. The next resources included are dictionaries, which are encouraged to be used because they offer an in-depth exploration of the history, origins, and evolution of words, especially the OED (www.oed.com). The Collins Dictionary is another valuable linguistic resource as it provides several examples, offering insights into the contemporary use of eponyms (www.collinsdictionary.com).

Phase 2: Activity

In this section, this WebQuest presents the activity that will help students gain a comprehensive understanding of eponyms. It is important to note that this activity is intended to be done in groups of 3-4 students, who must work collaboratively.

Each group will be provided with a list of 20 eponyms, and each one will be responsible for researching information about them. The details that must be researched are the following:

- Origin of the word.
- Frequency of the eponym.
- Spanish translation.

- Two real instances of the eponym's usage.

After the students have completed the activity, they will engage in a Kahoot quiz to test their knowledge of eponyms. This quiz serves as a fun and interactive way to reinforce the knowledge gained from the previous activity.

4.2.3 Assessment and Evaluation

As well as in the previous WebQuest, the method to evaluate students' performance in this activity will be a rubric. However, there are different categories and points distributions. The categories are the following:

- Origin identification (5 points)
- Frequency identification (5 points)
- Spanish translations (5 points)
- Real instances of usage (5 points)

The maximum number of points attainable in this activity is 16, distributed as follows: 5 points for 'Excellent', 3 points for 'Good', 1 point for 'Fair', and 0 points for 'Poor'. The rubric provides a structured framework for evaluating the quality and depth of participants' research and analysis. The final Kahoot will not be evaluated, as it is just a way to have fun at the end of the class.

4.3 Idioms WebQuest

4.3.1 Introduction and Objectives

The last of the three WebQuest that will be presented is based on idioms. An idiom is an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements or in its grammatically atypical use of words, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Idioms represent a challenge and an opportunity in language learning, as they are a source of confusion for non-native speakers. Learning idiomatic expressions is a way to mark the difference and become a fluent and competent speaker.

This WebQuest aims to make idioms more accessible and enjoyable for learners of English. The main objectives are the following:

- Enhance the students' comprehension of idiomatic expressions in English and their usage.
- Improve the students' language skills by recognizing and using idioms in appropriate contexts.
- Encourage them to do research and analysis about idioms and apply them to their language production.

4.3.2 Resources and Activity

This WebQuest is divided into three phases, unlike the ones based on back formation and eponyms. This is due to the presence of a second activity, which will be discussed later in this section.

Phase 1: Resources

For the students to be able to complete the activities successfully, this WebQuest has available four links to useful resources. The first one is a link to 'The Free Dictionary', a place where students can see the meaning of the different idioms that will be present in the first activity (www.thefreedictionary.com). Next, there is a link to a webpage called 'The Idioms', a great site to check the origin of these words (www.theidioms.com). The third link redirects the students to the English Corpora (COCA) once again, as it is the perfect place to see the frequency of use of each idiom (www.english-corpora.org). The last link is related to the second activity, and it is a magazine that talks about multiple topics in a very conversational way, meaning that they will be able to find several instances of idioms (www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/38480/etp-sample-july-2021.pdf).

Phase 2: Activity 1

For the first activity, students will have to work in pairs and complete a list of five tasks. They will be provided with a list of 10 idioms, and they will have to fill in the following details:

- Equivalent in Spanish.
- Origin of the idiom.
- Frequency of usage.
- Comparison with the meaning in Spanish.
- Two real instances of the idiom being used.

It is important to note that for the last point in this activity, students will be required to cite the source where it was taken from. This way, students will also practice how to cite a work or any kind of source. In addition, they have an example of the activity available in the WebQuest, to guide the students through the process.

Phase 3: Activity 2

In this activity, students are required to search in the 4th link found in Phase 1. In groups of four students, they will have to look for idioms in this magazine and present them to the class. This activity serves as a bridge between theory and real-world application, allowing the students to explore idiomatic expressions as they appear in real and recent sources. It enhances their understanding of the practical use of idioms and cultural context.

Also, as in the previous WebQuest, a Kahoot will be done at the end of the class, to reinforce what they have learned in a fun and engaging way.

4.3.3 Assessment and Evaluation

The rubric that is used in this WebQuest to evaluate the students' performance has four different categories, and a maximum of 20 points distributed as follows: 5 points for 'Excellent', 3 points for 'Good', 1 point for 'Fair', and 0 points for 'Poor'.

The categories that will be evaluated are the following:

- Translation accuracy.
- Origin identification.
- Comparison analysis.
- Collaboration.

As in the WebQuest based on eponyms, the Kahoot quiz is not evaluated, as it is just an activity to loosen up after completing the main activities.

5. Implications and Recommendations

5.1. Practical Recommendations for Implementing WebQuests in Universities

WebQuests offer a wide variety of possibilities and they can be applied to any educational setting. As stated above, the three WebQuests proposed are intended to be used in a university context. However, successful integration requires careful planning and consideration of different factors, which will be discussed in this section.

The first thing that students and educators need if they want to dive into the world of WebQuest is equipment. Universities should invest in good equipment to adapt to new technologies. Not every student can afford to buy a good PC with an internet connection, so it is important to help everyone integrate into this educational approach. This brings us to the next point, which is related to technical support. Universities should always have professional technical support ready to help any student who may have troubles with their PC. To make a class fluid and engaging these two elements are crucial.

Next, at the start of every course, students should receive orientation and training on how to navigate WebQuests. This introduction should include an overview of the WebQuest's structure, resources, and expectations. Sometimes educators assume their students know everything beforehand and that is not always the case, so this is an important point to take into account.

The next recommendation has been already discussed but it is crucial in this context: inclusivity. WebQuests should be designed to accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students, and educators should create variations in tasks and resources to provide an inclusive learning experience.

The last point is related to monitoring and giving feedback. Some educators commit a common mistake which is to explain the activity and forget about the students until they are done, but this should not be the case, especially in WebQuests. Instructors should actively monitor student progress during the WebQuest and provide timely feedback to guide their learning. Formative assessment can ensure that students are on the right track.

These practical recommendations offer guidance for universities looking to implement WebQuests effectively in any course. By taking these recommendations into account, educators will reach the maximum potential of this educational approach.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

The benefits of WebQuest have been widely discussed, but it is also important to know the limitations of them, and which areas should be researched in the future.

One key challenge in implementing WebQuests is the presence of technological barriers. Students may have difficulties related to access to devices, inconsistent internet connection, etc. As stated in the previous point, universities should be aware of these potential problems and be prepared to solve them as soon as possible, but that is not always the case. Further research into strategies to mitigate these problems might be needed.

Variable student engagement can be another challenge. While WebQuests are intended to be equally engaging, some students' motivation levels can vary and might need additional support to fully immerse in the WebQuest experience. Another field that can be researched is motivating strategies adapted to WebQuest-based learning.

Exploration into the cognitive and metacognitive processes engaged by students during WebQuests can reveal interesting facts about how students learn. This is a field that can also be further researched, as understanding these cognitive mechanisms can enhance the WebQuest experience.

WebQuests are still evolving, and its adaptability to other linguistic contexts beyond English morphology is promising. It is important to investigate how the WebQuest approach can be adapted to other fields, considering the different linguistic features and challenges.

6. Conclusion

This work has investigated the use of WebQuests in university settings to teach English morphology. Its goal is to introduce this teaching tool and compare it to traditional methods of teaching English morphology as well as other areas of linguistics.

Throughout the work, we have delved into the foundations of morphology and WebQuests. In doing so, we have explored how WebQuests can bridge the gap between theory and practice, emphasizing the significance of contextualizing language learning and fostering metacognition among other important elements.

Furthermore, the creation of well-designed WebQuests has been discussed. The WebQuests on back formation, eponyms, and idioms have served as illustrations of how

this tool can be designed to accomplish specific educational objectives. We have discovered that thanks to the structured nature of WebQuests, students feel more comfortable and require less guidance. In addition, it has been explored that WebQuests that are meticulously designed and thoughtfully prepared, enhance the learning outcomes of students.

However, as with any educational innovation, it has limitations and challenges that difficult the implement of WebQuests. One significant limitation is the presence of technology and the problems that it may have. It is suggested that further research is done into this topic, as improving it would make this pedagogical tool much more effective. Also, many students lack technological skills; as a result, educators may need to provide extra support and guidance to these individuals, while more skilled students can proceed with more independence.

While this work focuses on teaching English morphology in university settings, it is suggested that further studies explore the impact of WebQuests in other linguistic fields. This tool can set the way for opportunities in research related to language education in the current era.

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Appendices

Back-formation WebQuest (zunal.com/webquest.php?w=783030)

WebQuest
Back Formation in English

Welcome

Welcome: Back Formation in English
Description: This Back-Formation Webquest is designed to introduce you to the fascinating world of linguistics and explore the concept of back formation. Through a series of research-based tasks, you will discover the history and mechanics of back formation and learn how it has influenced the English language.
Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: English / Language Arts
Keywords: backformation, language, English, learning, morphology, word origin
Author(s): Guillermo López

WebQuest
Back Formation in English

Process

PHASE 1
 In order to understand how the process of back formation takes place, you should do some research about it. There are some helpful links to resources explaining the process and how it affects English morphology.
[Word Formation: Backformation](#)
[Definition and Examples of Back-Formation](#)
[Etymology of words](#)

PHASE 2
 In this step, you will be provided with a list of words that have undergone back formation, and your task is to research and analyze why these words were back-formed. You should follow these steps:

- Research the etymology of the word:** You should research on the origin of each of the words in the list, and look for information on the original word from which the back-formed word was created.
- Identify the affix that was removed:** Once you have researched the origin of each word, you should identify the affix that has been removed to create the back-formed word. For example, the affix -er was removed from babysitter to create babysit.
- Analyze the reasons for back formation:** Finally, you should analyze the reasons why each word was back-formed. You should consider factors such as changes in language use, the need for shorter words, and shifts in the meaning or usage of the original word. It's important to note that this activity should be done in pairs, so you must divide the work equally. One could be in charge of the etymology and the other in the analysis of the reasons for the back formation, for example.

So that you can understand the activity, I will show you an example with the word "babysit (babysitter)":

- You will research the origin of the word babysit, and will discover that the original word was babysitter. The word babysitter came into use in the mid-16th century, and it originally referred to a person who takes care of a child or children for a short period of time while the parents are away.
- Next, you will have to identify the affix that was removed from babysitter to create the back-formed word babysit. In this case, the affix that was removed was -er. By removing the -er affix from babysitter, the new word babysit was created.
- Now you have to analyze the reasons why the word babysit was back-formed. You might discover that the process of back formation is often used to create shorter words that are easier to use and remember. In the case of babysit, it's possible that people found it easier to say and remember than babysitter, especially when using the word in everyday conversation.

Now it's your turn to do the same! As mentioned above, this is the list of words in which you will have to work:

1. Thief (from heftling)

WebQuest
Back Formation in English

Evaluation

In order to evaluate this activity, we will make use of a Rubric. This Rubric is showed you to know how you will be evaluated after successfully completing the activity on back formation.

#	Excellent (5)	Good (3)	Fair (1)	Poor (0)	Score
Understanding of Back Formation	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the concept of back formation and its various forms. Provides clear and accurate explanations of back-formed words and their origins.	Shows a basic understanding of back formation, but may not be able to provide detailed explanations or identify all types of back-formed words.	Demonstrates limited understanding of back formation and its various forms. May provide inaccurate or incomplete explanations of back-formed words.	Shows little or no understanding of back formation and its various forms.	33%
Research and Analysis	Effectively uses a variety of resources to conduct research on back formation. Demonstrates strong analytical skills by identifying patterns and trends in the history and evolution of back-formed words.	Uses appropriate resources to conduct research on back formation, but may not effectively analyze the information gathered.	Conducts limited research on back formation and may struggle to effectively analyze the information gathered.	Fails to conduct research or provide any analysis of the topic.	33%
Collaboration	Collaborates effectively with peers through group tasks. Contributes to the group's overall understanding of back formation and offers feedback to others.	Participates in group tasks and discussion forums, but may not effectively contribute to the group's overall understanding of back formation.	Demonstrates limited participation in group tasks and discussion forums and may not offer constructive feedback to others.	Fails to participate in group tasks or discussion forums.	33%
					Total Score:

Eponyms WebQuest (zunal.com/webquest.php?w=785004)


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WebQuest

Eponyms in English

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Welcome



Welcome: Eponyms in English
Description: This is a WebQuest based on eponyms in English. It consists on a simple activity that will help students develop their research skills and have a deeper view on the world of eponyms.
Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: English / Language Arts
Keywords: eponyms, English, etymology, linguistic evolution, historical context
Author(s): Guillermo López


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WebQuest

Eponyms in English

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Process



PHASE 1
 Firstly, in order to do the activity you will be required to do some research. Make sure that you are familiarized with the term 'eponyms' before you start! These are some helpful links:
[Meaning and types of Eponyms](#)
[English Corpus \(COCA\)](#)
[Oxford English Dictionary](#)
[Collins Dictionary](#)

PHASE 2
 For this activity, you will need to form groups of 3-4 students. I will provide you with a list of 20 eponyms, and each group will be responsible for researching information about them. Please include the following details:

- Origin of the eponym: Determine if the eponym originated from the English language or if it is borrowed from another language.
- Frequency of the eponym: Utilize the links provided in Phase 1 to gather information about how commonly the eponym is used. Remember, you are encouraged to use any academic resource, but please refrain from consulting blogs, as they may contain inaccuracies.
- Spanish translation: Find the Spanish translation equivalent for each eponym.
- Provide two real instances of the eponym's usage, along with the source from where it was taken.

List of eponyms:

1. Diesel	11. Pinocho
2. Ampere	12. Healle
3. Nicotine	13. Pecan
4. Galvanize	14. Celsius
5. Cardogram	15. Frankenstein
6. Silhouette	16. Cadogan
7. Boycott	17. Sandwich
8. Farris wheel	18. Guillotine
9. Pasteurize	19. Charivari
10. Leonard	20. Fahrenheit


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WebQuest

Eponyms in English

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Evaluation



In order to evaluate this WebQuest, we will make use of a Rubric. This Rubric is showed you to know how you will be evaluated after successfully completing the activity on eponyms.

#	Excellent (5)	Good (3)	Fair (1)	Poor (0)	Score
Origin identification	Provides clear and comprehensive explanations of the origins of the assigned eponyms	Provides satisfactory explanations of the origins of the assigned eponyms	Provides limited explanations of the origins of the assigned eponyms	Provides incomplete or inaccurate explanations of the origins of the assigned eponyms	25%
Frequency identification	Accurately describes the frequency of the assigned eponyms' usage	Provides adequate descriptions of the frequency of the assigned eponyms' usage	Provides some information on the frequency of the assigned eponyms' usage	Provides limited or inaccurate descriptions of the frequency of the assigned eponyms' usage	25%
Spanish translation	Provides the correct Spanish translations of the assigned eponyms	Provides acceptable Spanish translations of the assigned eponyms	Provides fairly accurate Spanish translations of the assigned eponyms	Provides incorrect or unclear Spanish translations of the assigned eponyms	25%
Real instances of usage	Provides two real instances of the use of the assigned eponyms with accurate sources and dates	Provides two instances of the use of the assigned eponyms with sources, but the dates may be missing or inaccurate	Provides one instance of the use of the assigned eponyms with a source, but the date may be missing or inaccurate	Does not provide any real instances of the use of the assigned eponyms	25%
Total Score:					

Idioms WebQuest (zunal.com/webquest.php?w=784963)

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Idioms in English

Welcome

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Welcome: Idioms in English
Description: This WebQuest is designed to take a deeper look at the fascinating world of idioms in English. Students will explore the meaning and usage of multiple idioms, as well as collaborate together to expand their knowledge on this fascinating topic.
Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: English / Language Arts
Keywords: idioms, English, idiomatic expressions, language, meaning, usage
Author(s): Guillermo Lopez

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Attachments

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Idioms in English

Process

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PHASE 1

First, I will provide you with some resources that might be helpful:

[The Free Dictionary](#)
[The Idioms](#)
[English Crepera \(COCA\)](#)
[English \(webinar Professional\) \(2:19\)](#)

PHASE 2

Now it's the moment to start our exercise about idiomatic expressions. For this exercise, you will work in pairs to translate and compare idioms between English and Spanish. First, you will be given a list of 10 idiomatic expressions in English. Your first task is to work together to translate the idioms from English to Spanish only by reading the meaning in English, making sure that you keep the figurative meaning of the phrase in the target language. After you have translated the idiom, you will have to identify its origin. This involves researching the history and cultural context of the expression, and sharing your findings with your partner. Remember that it is essential to include citations for the sources from which the information in this section was obtained, as it is showed in the example below. Next, to determine the current frequency of usage of the idiom, you can consult reliable sources such as corpora like the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) or corpora dictionaries that provide information on usage frequency. In the next step, you will compare the idiomatic expressions in English with its equivalent in Spanish. This will help you analyze similarities and differences in how the expressions are used in both languages. Finally, you will have to search two real instances of idioms in magazines, making sure that they do not appear in the list I provided, and filling the same information as in the ones you did before (translation, origin, frequency and comparison). Remember to always properly cite the source where the idioms were taken from.

This list of idioms is which you will have to work:

a. "Let the cat out of the bag" i. "Hit the nail on the head"
 b. "Under the weather" g. "It's raining cats and dogs"
 c. "Jump the gun" h. "Piece of cake"
 d. "A dime a dozen" j. "Kick the bucket"
 e. "Break a leg" i. "Break the ice"

This is what I expect you to do in this activity:

Idioms: "beet around the bush"

Translation: The idiom "beet around the bush" is translated as "andarse con rodeos" in Spanish, which means to talk in circles or avoid the main point.

Origin: The origin of the idiom "beet around the bush" is unclear, but it is believed to come from hunting. In medieval Europe, hunters would beat around the bushes to scare birds and other animals, making it easier to catch them (Bemis, 2021).

Frequency of usage: The idiom "beet around the bush" has a frequency of usage of 172, according to the COCA (June 12, 2023). This is considered a low frequency, in comparison to other idioms.

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Idioms in English

Evaluation

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In order to evaluate this WebQuest, we will make use of a Rubric. This Rubric is showed you to know how you will be evaluated after successfully completing the activities on Idioms.

#	Excellent (5)	Good (3)	Fair (1)	Poor (0)	Score
Translation accuracy	The idioms are accurately translated with good understanding of their figurative meaning.	Most of the idioms are translated with some understanding of their figurative meaning.	Some of the idioms are inaccurately translated.	Many of the idioms are inaccurately translated.	25%
Origin identification	The origins of the idioms are clearly identified and demonstrate appropriate research of the cultural context.	The origins of most of the idioms are identified and demonstrate appropriate research of the cultural context.	Some of the origins of the idioms are identified but demonstrate minimal research or understanding of the cultural context.	The origins of the idioms are not identified or show a lack of research of the cultural context.	25%
Comparison analysis	The student demonstrates a clear understanding of similarities and differences in how the expressions are used in English and Spanish.	The student demonstrates some understanding of similarities and differences in how the expressions are used in English and Spanish.	The student's analysis of the idioms is minimal and demonstrates little understanding of similarities and differences in how the expressions are used in English and Spanish.	The student shows no understanding of the similarities and differences in how the expressions are used in English and Spanish.	25%
Collaboration	The student worked well in group, actively participated and supported the rest in the group.	The student worked mostly well in groups, participated and supported the rest in the group.	The student worked fairly well in groups and participated somewhat in the group.	The student did not work well in groups and did not participate in the activities.	25%
Total Score:					

[Change Page Content](#)