



AN ANALYSIS OF BOUND MORPHEMES IN THE THREE BLACKPINK ENGLISH SONG LYRICS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate bound morphemes in the three Blackpink song lyrics. The main theory used in this research was from Yule (2010) discussing morphology. This research used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze word formations in bound morphemes. The data collection was taken from the three Blackpink English songs, *Bet You Wanna (BYW)*, *Crazy Over You (COY)*, and *Love To Hate Me (LHM)*. The data were identified and analyzed into derivational and inflectional morphemes. The results of this research show there are 6 data items containing derivational morphemes and thirty-nine data items containing inflectional morphemes. The 6 data derivational morphemes consist of 2 data indicating a change in parts of speech from adjective to adverb, 1 data showing a change in parts of speech from verb to adjective, 2 data indicating a change in parts of speech from verb to verb, and 1 data showing a change in parts of speech from adjective to adjective. Meanwhile, 39 data inflectional morphemes consist of 1 data indicating into past tense, 16 data showing into progressive, 1 data indicating into gerund, 5 data showing into past participle, 11 data indicating into plural, and 5 data showing into comparative.

Keywords: morphemes, bound morphemes, derivational and inflectional morphemes.

INTRODUCTION

Morphology is one of the branches of linguistics dealing with the internal structure of words and morpheme formation. It studies morphemes as the smallest meaningful units in a language (Yule, 2010; Fromkin, Ridman and Hyams, 2017). There are two types of morphemes, free and bound morphemes. The former can stand alone as independent words, while the latter must be attached to a base or root word to convey meaning or grammatical information (Handoko, 2019). In English, the latter play an important role in word formation processes and grammatical structures.

Morphological analysis has also been applied to poetic texts. A study conducted by *Four Poems Entitled 'Still I Rise', 'A Brave and Startling Truth', 'Mother, A Cradle to Hold Me', and 'A Plagued Journey'* by Maya Angelou analyzed derivational morphemes in four poems by Maya Angelou. The study reveals that derivational suffixes were the most prevalent type. These findings



show that bound morphemes, particularly suffixes, significantly contribute to meaning construction in poetic text. Similarly, song lyrics have natural language to convey meaning or message in creative contexts where authentic language is used.

Song lyrics can be described as a form of personal and emotional expression designed for singing, in which words are used creatively and imaginatively to communicate deep feelings. It explains that a song presents language used by a composer to convey emotions, ideas, and intentions (Bull, 2008). Studies have examined bound morphemes in English song lyrics. Meinawati et al. (2020) investigated derivational and inflectional morphemes in Ariana Grande's *Thank U, Next* album, while Purwanti (2020) analyzed bound morphemes in Maher Zain's English songs. The findings of these studies indicate that English song lyrics contain rich morphological features and that bound morphemes play an important role in conveying grammatical meaning and forming new words.

The present study focuses on English songs produced by K-pop artists, Blackpink, as a globally recognized K-pop group, releasing several English songs that are widely consumed by international audiences. Their lyrics provide an interesting object of study because they combine global popular culture with English morphological structures. Specifically, this study aims to investigate types of bound morphemes and the most frequently used in the three Blackpink English song lyrics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morphology, as explained by Yule (2010), is concerned with the study of forms and, in linguistics, focuses on analyzing the smallest meaningful elements that build language. These elements are called morphemes, which has a function as the building blocks of words. In line with this, Handoko (2019) also notes that morphology examines how words are formed through the combination of sounds into minimal units that carry meaning. In other words morphology deals with word structure, especially how morphemes are arranged within a word and the rules that control this arrangement. A morpheme itself is defined by Stewart (2016) as the smallest unit of meaning or grammatical function, such as forms used to mark tense or plurality. In support of this, Handoko (2019) describes a morpheme as the smallest part of a word that contributes meaning. Morphemes are classified into two main types: free



morphemes, which can stand alone as words, and bound morphemes, which must be attached to other morphemes.

Free morphemes, according to Yule (2010), are morphemes that can stand alone as independent words. There are two categories of morphemes, namely lexical morphemes and functional morphemes. The former includes nouns, adjectives, and verbs that have the main content or meaning in a message. They belong to an open class of words because new lexical morphemes can easily be added to the language. Examples sad, long, and look. In contrast, functional morphemes consist of grammatical words such as conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and pronouns. These belong to a closed class of words because new items are rarely added. Examples and, but, on, near, and above.

Bound morphemes, in contrast, cannot stand alone and must be attached to other morphemes (Yule, 2010). Affixes such as re-, -ist, -ed, and -s are examples of bound morphemes. Bound morphemes are further divided into derivational and inflectional morphemes. Derivational morphemes are used to form new words and often change the grammatical category of the base word. For instance, good (adjective) becomes goodness (noun), and care (noun) becomes careless (adjective). Thus, derivational morphemes contribute to word formation and may alter meaning as well as word class.

Inflectional morphemes, on the other hand, do not create new words but instead indicate grammatical information (Yule, 2010). They never change the grammatical category of a word. These morphemes express aspects such as tense, number, possession, and degree of comparison. For example, in Tim's two sisters, both -'s and -s function as inflectional morphemes marking possession and plurality. According to Fromkin (2017), Modern English has eight inflectional affixes: -s for third-person singular (She waits at home), -ed for past tense (She waited at home), -ing for progressive (She is eating the donut), -en for past participle (Mary has eaten the donut), -s for plural (donuts), -'s for possessive (Disa's hair), -er for comparative (shorter), and -est for superlative (shortest). These affixes provide grammatical meaning without forming new lexical items.

Parts of speech (Seaton & Mew, 2007) are classified into eight categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Each part of speech



has its own rules and functions within a sentence. They form the core of English grammar, and understanding them provides a strong foundation for developing grammatical accuracy, effective communication, and better language comprehension.

METHOD

Hancock et al. (2021) state that qualitative research explores an advanced understanding of social phenomena. Following this framework, this study employed a descriptive qualitative method to investigate bound morphemes in the three Blackpink English song lyrics. The data were collected from the three Blackpink song lyrics then the collected data were analyzed and categorized into bond morphemes. After categorizing, they were analyzed and described.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Six data items were identified and categorized into four types of derivational morphemes: adjective to adverb (-ly), verb to adjective (mis-), verb to verb (re-), and adjective to adjective (-ish), as shown in Table 1, which presents the distribution of derivational and inflectional bound morphemes.

Table 1. The derivational morphemes data found in the three songs of Blackpink

Derivational		
Adjective to Adverb	-ly	finally, lately
Verb to Adjective	mis-	Mistaken
Verb to verb	re-	Replace, remind
Adjective to Adjective	-ish	foolish

Table 2. The inflectional morphemes data found in the three songs of Blackpink

Inflectional		
Past tense	-ed	needed
Progressive	-ing	taking, lighting, looking, trying, acting, making, driving, going, stressing,



		getting, wasting, blowing, working, getting, turning, taking
Gerund	-ing	wishing
Past participle	-en	been, been, been, taken, been
Plural	-s	Bags, hips, stakes, girls, enemies, arms, waves, puddles, days, nights, shows
Comparative	-er	higher, higher, higher, higher, higher

Based on the table above, 39 data items were identified as inflectional morphemes and 6 data items as derivational morphemes. Meanwhile, Tables 3 and 4 present the distribution of the data based on Fromkin (2017).

Table 3. Based on Fromkin (2017) Derivational morphemes

Derivational		
Noun to Adjective	-	-
Verb to Noun	-	-
Adjective to Adverb	-ly	Finally, lately
Noun to Verb	-	-
Adjective to Noun	-	-
Verb to Adjective	-	-
Adjective to Verb	-	-
Noun to Noun	-	-
Verb to Verb	re-	Replace, remind
Adjective to adjective	-ish	foolish



Table 4. Based on Fromkin (2017) Inflectional morphemes

Inflectional		
Third person	-	-
Past tense	-ed	Needed
Progressive	-ing	taking, lighting, looking, trying, acting, making, driving, going, stressing, getting, wasting, blowing, working, getting, turning, taking
Past participle	-en	been, been, been, taken, been
Plural	-s	Bags, hips, stakes, girls, enemies, arms, waves, puddles, days, nights, shows
Possessive	-	-
Comparative	-er	higher, higher, higher, higher, higher
Superlative	-	-

Based on Table 3, five data items were identified as derivational morphemes, while Table 4 shows that 38 data items were categorized as inflectional morphemes, following Fromkin (2017). Not all categories of derivational and inflectional morphemes were found in the data from the three songs. The derivational categories identified include adjective to adverb, verb to verb, and adjective to adjective. Meanwhile, the inflectional categories found in the data are past tense, progressive, past participle, plural, and comparative.

There is one category of derivational morpheme found in the data that is not included in Fromkin (2017), which is Verb to adjective. Whereas there is also one data item found excluded



in the Fromkin, that is inflectional morphem -ing as these are indicated in table 5 and 6.

Table 5. Derivational morpheme was found outside Fromkin (2017)

Derivational		
Verb to Adjective	mis-	mistaken

Table 6. Inflectional morpheme was found outside Fromkin (2017)

Inflectional		
gerund	-ing	wishing

Based on Tables 5 and 6, two data items were found that do not fully align with the theory. The first is mistaken, which is classified as a derivational morpheme because the prefix mis- changes the meaning of the base word take. The second item, wishing, is categorized as an inflectional morpheme. Although Fromkin does not explicitly explain the gerund as an inflectional morpheme, inflectional morphemes do not create new words but instead modify grammatical function. Since a gerund does not form a new lexical item, it is classified as an inflectional morpheme in this study.

There are 45 data items, distributed into 6 data items of derivational morphemes and 39 data items of inflectional morphems found in the 3 songs of Blackpink entitled *Bet You Wanna*, *Crazy Over You*, and *Love To Hate Me*. The types of bound morphemes mostly found in the Blackpink songs are inflectional morphemes in progressive. The 6 data items containing derivational morphemes are divided into 2 data showing a change of part of speech from *adjective* into *adverb*, 1 data indicating a change of part of speech from *verb* to *adjective*, 2 data showing a change of part of speech from *verb* into *verb*, and 1 data indicating a change of part of speech from *adjective* to *adjective*. Meanwhile, 39 data containing inflectional morphemes comprises into 1 data showing into past tense, 16 data indicating into progressive, 1 data showing the gerund, 5 data indicating into past participle, 11 data showing into plural, and 5 data indicating into comparative. The types of bound morphemes are mostly found in inflectional morphemes.



CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that in the three English song lyrics of Blackpink's songs entitled *Bet You Wanna*, *Crazy Over You*, and *Love To Hate Me*, there are 45 data items found in the three songs comprising derivational and inflectional morphemes. There are 6 data containing derivational morphemes and 39 data containing inflectional morphemes.

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