Nominal Suffixes in William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

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Abstract
This research focuses on analyzing the derivational nominal suffixes found in William Shakespeare's novel *Romeo and Juliet* (Wordsworth Classics). The study aims to identify what types of derivational nominal suffixes appear in the novel and to find out which type is the most frequently used. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the researcher collected data by reading the novel carefully and selecting words that contain derivational nominal suffixes. The collected words were then grouped into three categories based on their base forms: nouns formed from verbs, nouns formed from adjectives, and nouns formed from other nouns. The analysis found a total of 161 words with derivational nominal suffixes. The most dominant type is nouns formed from verbs, which appeared 90 times (55.90%), followed by nouns formed from adjectives with 45 occurrences (27.95%), and nouns formed from nouns with 26 occurrences (16.15%). This study helps to better understand how word formation works in English, especially in literary works, and may serve as a helpful reference for students and researchers who are interested in studying English morphology and vocabulary development.

Keywords*: derivational suffixes, morphology, nominal suffixes, Romeo and Juliet, word formation*

Abstrak
Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis sufiks nominal derivasional yang ditemukan dalam novel William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet (Wordsworth Classics). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis sufiks nominal derivasional yang muncul dalam novel tersebut dan untuk mengetahui jenis mana yang paling sering digunakan. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, peneliti mengumpulkan data dengan membaca novel dengan seksama dan memilih kata-kata yang mengandung sufiks nominal derivasional. Kata-kata yang terkumpul kemudian dikelompokkan ke dalam tiga kategori berdasarkan bentuk dasarnya: kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata kerja, kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata sifat, dan kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata benda lain. Hasil analisis menemukan total 161 kata dengan sufiks nominal derivasional. Jenis yang paling dominan adalah kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata kerja, yang muncul sebanyak 90 kali (55,90%), diikuti oleh kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata sifat dengan 45 kemunculan (27,95%), dan kata benda yang dibentuk dari kata benda lain sebanyak 26 kemunculan (16,15%). Penelitian ini membantu untuk lebih memahami bagaimana pembentukan kata dalam bahasa Inggris, terutama dalam karya sastra, dan dapat menjadi referensi yang berguna bagi siswa dan peneliti yang tertarik untuk mempelajari morfologi bahasa Inggris dan pengembangan kosakata.

Kata kunci: *sufiks derivasional, morfologi, sufiks nominal, Romeo dan Juliet, pembentukan kata*

Introduction

Choi (2015) describes morphology as the study of word structures, focusing on how words are formed and how they relate to each other within a particular language. Similarly, Nurfaizah and Tanggoro (2018) Morphology is a field of linguistics that analyzes the structure of word components to form new words, adhering to certain rules that link morphemes and words within a grammatical framework. Inflectional and derivational morphology are two key areas of study in linguistics. Derivational morphology studies the creating of new words by combining affixes, such as suffixes and prefixes, in root words. This method helps to enhance a language's vocabulary. In English, derivational suffixes are affixes inserted at the end of a word's basic form to change its lexical category and meaning. For example, adding the suffix "-ly" to the adjective "slow" converts it into the adverb "slowly," which changes its grammatical function. This process is required for the formation of new words and their adaptation to their roles in sentences, allowing old words to be transformed into nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

A morpheme is a key element in morphology, serving as the smallest unit of grammar in linguistic terms (Sudarmadi & Sukamto, 2013). Most English words are formed by one or more morphemes, which provide meaning to the word. There are two kinds of morphemes: bound morphemes and free morphemes (Rastle, 2019). Free morphemes, such as the word "happy," can stand alone as independent, meaningful words (Bunau & Yusof, 2018). On the other hand, bound morphemes cannot stand alone and must attach to another morpheme to form a meaningful word. For example, the prefix "un-" in "unhappy" means "not," but it requires attachment to another word, as it has no meaning on its own (Khan et al., 2016). Free morphemes represent complete words, while bound morphemes involve affixes. Affixes are further categorized into prefixes, infixes, and suffixes (Kusumawardhani, 2020).

Plag (2003) classifies suffixes into four main categories: nominal, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial, each contributing uniquely to word formation. Nominal suffixes create nouns, often abstract, from other words, such as –ance (acceptance), -dom (freedom),-ism (realism), and –ship (friendship). Nominal suffixes are the process of forming nouns by adding a suffix to a base word. This morphological process commonly transforms verbs, adjectives, or even other nouns into new noun forms. The resulting noun typically conveys an action, the outcome of that action, or a related concept that remains connected to the original word's meaning (Plag, 2002, p. 109).

This research investigates the use of derivational suffixes in the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, which serves as the primary source for analysis. As a major work of English literature, *Romeo and Juliet* offers a valuable resource for exploring language development and word formation, particularly in the context of teaching and learning English. Written in the Early Modern English period, the play demonstrates a rich use of vocabulary and morphological structures, including various derivational nominal suffixes that transform base words into nouns. William Shakespeare, one of the most influential figures in English literature, is widely recognized for his significant contributions to the evolution of the English language. For students and educators in the field of English education, analyzing morphological features in Shakespeare's works provides deeper insights into historical language

usage, vocabulary expansion, and the development of grammatical understanding. This study aims to support English language teaching by highlighting how classical literature can be used to examine and teach morphological concepts effectively.

Several studies have been conducted on the morphological examination. The first previous study came from Alam's work "Morphological Analysis of The Derivational Suffixes Found in Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone By J.K. Rowling" in 2023. This comprehensive study identifies the various types of derivational suffixes and their unique linguistic functions. The second earlier study, "Derivational Suffixes in The Return of Sherlock Holmes Novel: A Morphological Analysis" (2024), was conducted by Utami et al. The primary goal of classifying sentence positions is to give clarity and guidance about a sentence's meaning, especially when it is connected to other sentences. The third previous study was taken from an article entitled "Derivational Suffixes Analysis Found in "Every Summer After" Novel by Carley Fortune" by Winarta et al., 2024. The study focused on conducting in-depth analyses of the various forms of derivational suffixes. The fourth previous study was taken from the article entitled *"The Functions of Derivational Suffixes Found in Moby-Dick"* by Dewi and Yuliantini (2022), which, although focused on a different literary work, offers comparative insights into how derivational suffixes function in classic English literature. The fifth part of relevant literature entitled "An Analysis of Word Formation Processes in *Romeo and Juliet*" by Pratiwi's (2023), which focuses on the morphological creativity found in Shakespeare's poetic language through derivational suffixes.

Looking from those several explanations about derivational suffixes, the previous studies how gaps in several parts from this study. Alam (2023), Utami et al. (2024), Winarta et al. (2024), Dewi and Yuliantini (2022), and Pratiwi (2023)—have contributed valuable insights into the analysis of derivational suffixes in various literary works, most of them focus mainly on identifying and classifying the types and functions of suffixes within a specific text. Although previous research has examined derivational suffixes in various literary works, these studies have not investigated how the use of derivational suffixes in *Romeo and Juliet* is shaped by its literary genre as a dramatic tragedy, its poetic narrative style, or its Early Modern English historical context. They also provide limited explanation regarding the stylistic functions and contextual roles of these suffixes within the dialogue and structure of the play. These limitations constitute the central problems of this study.

To address these issues, the present research aims not only to identify the types of derivational nominal suffixes found in *Romeo and Juliet*, but also to analyze their contextual distribution, frequency of occurrence, and stylistic impact within the play. Additionally, this study aims to provide deeper insight into how Shakespeare's morphological choices contribute to meaning-making and character expression, and to highlight the pedagogical value of using classical literature to enhance students' understanding of English morphology and vocabulary development.

Method

This study employed observation and qualitative methods to collect and analyze the data. Wolley and Heggie (2015) said that the goal of qualitative research was to comprehend human experiences by means of the acts, motives, perceptions, and behaviors of participants.In this research, the observation method was used to examine derivational nominal suffixes in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The research objective was to explore how these suffixes contributed to meaning-making and linguistic expression within the text. Key excerpts from the play, including selected dialogues and monologues, were chosen as the primary data source. An observation guide was constructed, containing a list of commonly used nominal suffixes (such as *-ness*, *-ment*, *-tion*, and *-ity*) and analytical categories including function, word class transformation, and frequency. The collected data were then identified, classified, and categorized based on the types of nominal suffixes found.

The analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach that focused on descriptive interpretation rather than numerical analysis. This study was grounded in Plag's (2003) morphological theory describes four categories of derivational suffixes: verbal, adjectival, adverbial, and nominal, although the emphasis here was only on nominal suffixes. The analysis was further supported by Carstairs-McCarthy's (2002) theoretical framework, particularly in the structural aspects of word formation. The integration of textual data and descriptive analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the morphological features present in Shakespeare's language, making the findings relevant for both linguistic and educational contexts.

Result and Discussion

Result

Based on the theories proposed by Plag (2003), Nominal suffixes are commonly used to create abstract nouns from adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Some common nominal suffixes include -ment (adjustment), -ship (leadership), -ant (applicant), -ful (handful), -er (writer), -ion (creation), -ing (painting), -age (leakage), -hood (neighborhood), -ity (curiosity), -ess (princess), -al (refusal), -ness (sadness), -ist (pianist), and -ance (attendance). These suffixes help change the meaning and function of a word so it can describe a thing, a state, or a person.

The table below shows all of the derivational nominal suffixes that were found in the data source. The table categorizes these suffixes based on the types of base words they are attached to. This data provides the foundation for a deeper analysis of the morphological processes involved. Here is the data:

Table 1. *Data Found in William Shakespeare's Novel Romeo and Juliet*

No	Derivational Process	Nominal Suffixes	Data	Total Data	Percentage %
		-ion	6		
		-ism	5	26	16.15%
	Noun Derived from Noun	-ship	7		
		-ist	8		
		-ion	10		
	Noun Derived from Adjective	-an (-ian, -ean)	6	45	27.95%
		-ity	10		
		-ness	19		
		-ment	30		
		-al	7		
	Noun Derived from Verb	-er (-or)	9	90	55.90%
		-ion	5		
		-ance (-ence, -ancy, -ency)	8		
		-ing	28		
		-ee	3		
		TOTAL		161	100%

The table above shows the classification of the derivational suffixes forming nouns that were classified based on the type of the words they were attached to. The total data found from the novel Romeo and Juliet was 161 words. The most frequently occurring type was noun derived from verb with 90 words, which accounts for 55.90% of all data. It was followed by noun derived from adjective with 45 words, with the percentage of 27.95%, and noun derived from noun with 26 words, with the percentage of 16.15%. This result shows that the derivational process of forming nouns from verbs is more productive than other derivational processes in this novel. The dominance of nouns derived from verbs can be attributed to the thematic and stylistic features of *Romeo and Juliet*. The novel revolves around actions, decisions, conflicts, and emotional transitions that are primarily expressed through verbs. When these verbs undergo nominalization, they enable the text to conceptualize actions as entities or

states, which is essential for expressing abstract themes such as love, honor, betrayal, and fate. Furthermore, the linguistic conventions of Early Modern English frequently employed verb-to-noun derivation to achieve rhetorical emphasis and enhance poetic expression. These factors collectively contribute to the high productivity of this derivational process in the data source.

Discussion

The table offers an in-depth analysis and a comprehensive breakdown of the derivational nominal suffixes that were identified within the dataset. The table shows that nouns derived from verbs are the most common type, with 90 data instances. The second most common type is nouns derived from adjectives, with 45 data instances. Nouns derived from nouns are the least frequent type, with only 26 instances identified in the dataset. This distribution clearly indicates that verb-based nominal suffixes are the most productive derivational process found in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Following a meticulous examination, the dataset was analyzed in depth by applying the comprehensive theoretical framework detailed by Plag (2003) in his influential work, *Word-Formation in English*. This analysis included a detailed investigation of the various word-formation processes proposed by Plag, which provided a strong foundation for categorizing and interpreting the derivational patterns found in the data. The thorough application of this framework allowed the study to accurately classify each suffix according to its function and base word type. Furthermore, the book *An Introduction to English Morphology: Words and Their Structure* by Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) offered valuable theoretical insights and scholarly support throughout the analysis. These insights were instrumental in developing a deeper understanding of the structure and formation of the derived nouns found in the play. The combination of these theoretical perspectives enabled a more profound interpretation of the morphological processes in the dataset and contributed significantly to explaining how derivational nominal suffixes function within the linguistic structure of *Romeo and Juliet*.

1. Noun Derived from Noun

The analysis of noun derived from noun in this study is based on Plag (2003), who states that certain derivational suffixes—such as **–ship, –ism, –ist, and –ion**—form new nouns from existing nouns without changing their word class. These suffixes usually add meanings related to state, quality, ideology, or profession. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) also explains that noun-to-noun derivation keeps the grammatical category but expands the meaning of the base word. These theories were used to identify the base noun, the suffix attached, and the meaning created in each data example. All of the definition or meaning of the word will be explained based on (Oxford Dictionaries).

Data 1

*...Or, if sour woe delights in **fellowship** and needly will be ranked with other griefs...* — Act 3, Scene 2, Page 85 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[\textbf{fellow}]_N - \textbf{ship}]_N \rightarrow \textbf{fellowship}_N$$

The word *fellowship* is formed by adding the derivational suffix –ship to the base noun *fellow*. According to Plag (2003), the suffix –ship derives abstract nouns that express a state, condition, or social relationship. According to Oxford Dictionaries, fellowship means "a friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests." The suffix "-ship" allows fellow to express the concept of a relationship or shared condition. The derivational process does not change the word class (it remains a noun), but it creates a new abstract meaning.

Data 2

*The very butcher of a silk button, a **duellist**, a **duellist**, a gentleman of the very first house...* — Act 2, Scene 4, Page 66 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[\textbf{duel}]_N - \textbf{ist}]_N \rightarrow \textbf{duellist}_N$$

The word "duellist" is created by attaching the derivational suffix "-ist" to the base noun "duel." The suffix "-ist" usually forms agent nouns—words that refer to someone who performs or is involved in a particular action or activity. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a "duel" is "a fight with deadly weapons between two people to settle a matter of honor." When "-ist" is added, the meaning shifts to "someone who takes part in a duel." This process does not change the word's grammatical category (noun to noun), but it adds a more specific, agentive meaning.

Data 3

So shalt thou show me friendship...— Act 5, Scene 2, Page 117 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[\textbf{friend}]_N - \textbf{ship}]_N \rightarrow \textbf{friendship}_N$$

The phrase "friendship" is created by adding the derivational suffix "-ship" to the noun "friend." The suffix "-ship" is frequently used to form abstract nouns that describe a state, condition, or quality related to the base noun. As defined by Oxford Dictionaries, friendship refers to the condition of being friends or having a close and friendly connection. In this case, the suffix doesn't change the word's part of speech—it stays a noun—but it adds a more abstract idea to the base word "friend."

2. Noun Derived from Adjective

The analysis is based on Plag's (2003) classification that suffixes like **–ness, –ity, –ion, –ian,** and **–al** convert adjectives into nouns expressing qualities, conditions, or abstract concepts. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) states that this process changes the word class from adjective to noun by turning descriptive properties into entities or states. The theory is applied to identify the adjective base, the suffix added, and the meaning shift that occurs. All of the definition or meaning of the word will be explained based on (Oxford Dictionaries).

Data 4

She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste: For beauty, starved with her severity... — Act 1, Scene 1, Page 41 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[\text{severe}]_{\text{Adj}} - \text{ity}]_{\text{N}} \rightarrow \text{severeity}_{\text{N}}$$

The term "severity" is formed from the base word "severe" by adding the suffix "-ity". The suffix "-ity" is a derivational nominal suffix that changes the word class from an adjective (severe) into a noun (severity). This suffix creates a noun that refers to the state, quality, or condition of being severe. According to Oxford Dictionaries, "severe" describes something very great, intense, or harsh. By adding "-ity", the word expresses the abstract concept of harshness, strictness, or intensity as a quality or state. In this case, "severity" refers to the degree of harshness or strictness, especially in the context of beauty being diminished due to extreme restraint.The suffix "-ity" does not simply modify the meaning, but it creates a completely new word class and allows the concept of "severe" to be treated as a noun in grammatical structures, thus enabling it to function as the subject or object in a sentence.

Data 5

*The **brightness** of her cheek would shame those stars..* -Act 2, Scene 2, Page 58 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[\text{bright}]_{\text{Adj}} - \text{ness}]_{\text{N}} \rightarrow \text{brightness}_{\text{N}}$$

The derivational suffix "-ness" is added to the adjective "bright" to create the word "brightness." The productive nominal suffix "-ness" turns adjectives into abstract nouns that denote a state or characteristic. Oxford Dictionaries defines brightness as "the quality of being full of light or shining." This derivational procedure changes the word's class from adjective (bright) to noun (brightness).

3. Noun Derived from Verb

According to Plag (2003), suffixes such as **–ment, –ing, –er/-or, –al, –ance/–ence,** and **–ee** form nouns from verbs, often representing actions, results, agents, or states. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) emphasizes that verb-to-noun derivation is one of the most productive morphological processes because verbs naturally represent actions that can be conceptualized as nouns. This theoretical framework helps identify the verb base, the suffix, and the new nominal meaning formed. All of the definition or meaning of the word will be explained based on (Oxford Dictionaries).

Data 6

*... our common **judgment**-place.* — Act 1, Scene 1, Page 38 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[judge]_V - ment]_N \rightarrow judgement_N$$

The word "judgement" comes from the base word "judge" with the addition of the suffix "-ment," which is used to form nouns. The suffix "-ment" turns the verb "judge" into a noun "judgement". This derivational process changes the word class from a verb (an action) into a noun (a thing or result). According to Oxford Dictionaries, "judge" means to form an opinion or conclusion about something. By adding the suffix "-ment", it creates a noun that refers to the result or process of judging — the act of forming an opinion or decision. The suffix "-ment" not only changes the word class but also allows the word to function as a subject, object, or complement in a sentence, representing the abstract result of the action implied by the verb "judge".

Data 7

*At thy good heart's **oppression*** — Act 1, Scene 1, Page 40 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[oppress]_V - ion]_N \rightarrow oppression_N$$

The word "oppression" is formed by adding the suffix –ion to the base word "oppress." According to the Oxford Dictionary, "oppress" means to treat someone in a cruel or unfair way, especially by taking away their freedom or rights. When the suffix –ion is added, it changes the verb "oppress" into the noun "oppression," which refers to the act of unfairly controlling or mistreating people. Since the meaning of the word changes, –ion is considered a derivational suffix.

Data 8

*But **saying** o'er what I have said before:..* — Act 1, Scene 2, Page 42 (Wordsworth Classics)

$$[[say]_V - ing]_N \rightarrow saying_N$$

The Oxford Learner's Dictionaries define "say" as speaking or telling someone something using words. According to Oxford Dictionaries, when the suffix "-ing" is added to the core word "Say", it transforms into "Saying", which defines a well-known opinion or statement about life that many people think to be smart or true. When the suffix -ing is added to "say," which was previously categorized as a verb, it transforms into a noun. This change affects not only the word's classification but also its meaning. As a result, the process presented above illustrates the importance of derivational suffixes in language.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that in the novel *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, there are 161 data of derivational nominal suffixes. The data are classified into three types of derivational nominal suffixes based on the base form of the word. The most dominant type found in this research is noun derived from verb, with 90 data or 55.90%. The second type is noun derived from adjective, with 45 data or 27.95%. The least type is noun derived from noun, with 26 data or 16.15%. This research shows that verb-based derivational nominal suffixes are the most productive in the process of word formation in this novel. The result of this research is expected to give more understanding to the readers about how derivational nominal suffixes work in forming English words, especially in literary works. Furthermore, this research can also be used as a reference for students or researchers who are interested in studying morphology, particularly in the area of derivational suffixes.

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