

## Derivational Suffixes In The Novel *A Little Princess*

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### ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the use of derivational suffixes in *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The study aims to identify the types of derivational suffixes and to explain how they influence class-changing transformations in the novel. Data were collected through documentation and systematic note-taking, and analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method grounded in Plag's (2003) and Bauer's (1983) morphological theories. The analysis identified a total of 161 derivational suffixes, consisting of four types: nominal, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial suffixes. Among these, the adverbial suffix -ly was the most frequent, occurring 64 times, and primarily functioning to modify actions or states by expressing manner or attitude. The findings further reveal two derivational effects: class-maintaining and class-changing derivation. Class-changing derivations are dominant, with 158 instances, while class-maintaining derivations occur in only 3 instances. These results underscore the significance of derivational morphology in literary texts, demonstrating how suffixation contributes to lexical expansion and syntactic variation, and offering insights into how morphological processes shape meaning and stylistic expression in literary analysis.

**Keywords:** Morphology, derivational suffix, derivational process, *A Little Princess*, novel

### 1. Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication possessed by humans. Scientific studies that systematically studies language are known as linguistics. Linguistics is the science that studies language systematically and scientifically, with the aim of understanding how language works (Katamba, 1993). A similar view was expressed by Booij (2007), who stated that linguistics is the science that studies the internal structure of human language and the systems of rules that govern how language elements are used to convey meaning. In the field of linguistics, there are five main branches, namely phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. This research specifically focuses on the field of morphology.

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that examines the processes of word formation (Bauer, 2003). According to Nurfaizah and Tanggoro (2018), morphology focuses on the internal structure of words and the formation of new words based on rules governing morphemes and grammatical systems. Thus, morphology can be understood as the study of word forms and the mechanisms through which they are created, a process that may result in changes to a word's form, grammatical class, and meaning.

Bauer (1983) defines a word as a sequence of letters typically separated by spaces in written language; however, a word does not necessarily require written representation to be recognized, as spoken language does not always clearly demarcate word boundaries. Consequently, a word is regarded as the smallest meaningful linguistic unit, while a smaller unit that still carries meaning is referred to as a morpheme.

In morphological studies, morphemes constitute the most fundamental units of analysis. Morphemes are defined as the smallest grammatical units that carry meaning and cannot be further divided into smaller meaningful parts (Sudarmadi & Sukamto, 2022). In English, most vocabulary items consist of one or more morphemes, each contributing to the overall meaning of a word.

Morphemes are broadly classified into two types: free morphemes and bound morphemes. Free morphemes can stand alone as complete and meaningful words, whereas bound morphemes cannot occur independently and must attach to other morphemes to form a word (Katamba, 1994). Accordingly, free morphemes are associated with independent word forms, while bound morphemes function as affixal elements. Affixes themselves are further categorized into three types: prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. Suffix is a type of morpheme that must be attached to the base form or other affixes, and are generally placed at the end of a word (Nisa, 2020). In general, suffix is divided into two categories, namely inflectional suffixes and derivational suffixes. Inflectional suffixes do not affect the basic meaning of the word they are applied to, however rather function to adjust the word form to grammatical needs, such as time, number, or possession (Aronoff, 2004). In contrast, derivational suffixes play a role in forming new words through changes in meaning, and often also change the lexical class of the word. According to Plag (2003), derivational suffixes can be classified into four types, namely suffixes that form nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Furthermore, Bauer (1983) stated that the derivation process is divided into two forms, namely class-changing derivation and class-maintaining derivation.

Understanding derivational suffixes plays a significant role, not only because the process of identifying derived word forms often poses challenges, but also because this knowledge can help in determining the lexical category of a word based on the suffix attached to it. Based on these considerations, this study focuses on identifying derivational suffixes. In addition to describing the process of word formation through suffixation, this study also explains the

meaning of the resulting derived words and analyzes whether the process causes changes or maintains the lexical class of the original word form.

This study examines the use of derivational suffixes in the novel *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The selection of the novel as the object of research is based on the consideration that the work contains various forms of suffixes that allow for adequate linguistic data to be obtained. In addition, *A Little Princess* novel is a widely known literary work, thus, it is relevant and representative to be analyzed in the context of the study of derivational morphology.

## 2. Methods

This research is included in the category of qualitative research. A qualitative approach aims to understand the meaning produced by individuals or groups towards a social problem or phenomenon they experience, which includes aspects such as behavior, perception, action, and subjective experience (Kothari, 2004). From various designs in the qualitative approach, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative design, which aims to identify and describe the forms of derivational suffixes found in the novel. In line with the opinion of Lambert and Lambert (2012), descriptive qualitative design focuses on presenting an accurate description of the phenomenon being studied without trying to find a causal relationship. Therefore, the data collected becomes the main element in the analysis and interpretation process in this study.

In this study, systematic data collection techniques were applied to obtain detailed information from the object of analysis. The primary method employed was a literature-based study, which, according to Zed (2004), involves the use of written sources such as books, journals, articles, and other relevant documents to gather data related to the research problem.

Data collection was conducted through several structured steps. First, the novel *A Little Princess* was examined thoroughly from the opening chapter to the conclusion. Second, words containing derivational suffixes were carefully identified and recorded. Third, the selected words were compiled as research data and grouped according to the types of derivational suffixes and the derivational processes involved.

Following data collection, the analysis proceeded through four main stages. First, the data were identified and coded based on the types of derivational suffixes and their derivational processes. Second, the data were classified according to the relevant theoretical framework. Third, the base forms of the words were described using references from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the results of the analysis.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

After collecting and analyzing the data from the novel *A Little Princess*, the researcher identified a total of 161 derivational suffixes. These consist of 52 nominal suffixes formed by

eleven suffixes, namely -age, -ment, -ion, -ity, -ess, -ness, -ance, -ship, -dom, -ant, and -er; 2 verbal suffixes formed by one suffix, -en; 43 adjectival suffixes formed by seven suffixes, namely -ful, -less, -ing, -ous, -ly, -able, and -ish; and 64 adverbial suffixes formed by one suffix, -ly.

### Nominal Suffixes

#### 1. Suffix -age

That means, 'Come to me through the secret **passage** under the wall,' she explained. (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 212)

Passage (N) = Pass (V) + -age (suffix)

The word "passage" is categorized as a nominal suffix. The root word "pass" is a verb that means to move through or beyond something. When the suffix -age is added, it becomes the noun "passage," which refers to a physical space such as a narrow corridor or route. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, this suffix usually forms nouns from verbs to indicate the result, process, or manner of action. In this case, the meaning shifts from the action of moving to the place where the movement occurs. Therefore, the word class changes from a verb to a noun, making "passage" a clear example of class-changing derivation.

#### 2. Suffix -ment

She sat and watched him without making any **movement**. (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 130)

Movement (N) = Move (V) + -ment (suffix)

The word "movement" is categorized as a nominal suffix. The root word "move" is a verb, which means to change position or cause something to change position. When the suffix -ment is added, the word becomes "movement," which functions as a noun, referring to the act or process of moving. This change from a verb to a noun shows a clear case of class-changing derivation, since it changes the grammatical category and function of the word in the sentence.

#### 3. Suffix -ion

Have you any new **suggestion** to make—any whatsoever? (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 254)

Suggestion (N) = Suggest (V) + -ion (suffix)

The word "suggestion" is categorized as a nominal suffix. The root word "suggest" is a verb, which means to suggest or recommend something. When the suffix -ion is added, the word becomes "suggestion," which functions as a noun, referring to the act of suggesting

or the idea being proposed. This transformation from a verb to a noun shows a clear change in grammatical class. Therefore, “suggestion” is a clear example of class-changing derivation, because the addition of -ion changes the verb “suggestion” to the noun “suggestion,” changing its syntactic role from an action to the result or content of that action.

4. Suffix -ity

Then her **curiosity** got the better of her (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 185)

Curiosity (N) = Curious (Adj) + -ity (suffix)

The word “curiosity” is a nominal suffix. The root word “curious” is an adjective, which describes someone who is curious or wants to learn. By adding the suffix -ity, which forms a noun from an adjective, the word becomes “curiosity”, a noun that means the desire to know or learn something. This changes the grammatical class of the adjective to a noun. Therefore, “curiosity” clearly shows a class-changing derivation, since its form and function change.

5. Suffix -ess

I'm not a **princess** anymore. (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 105)

Princess (N) = Prince (N) + -ess (suffix)

The word “princess” is categorized as a nominal suffix. The base form of the word is the noun “prince,” which refers to a male member of the royal family, usually the son of a king or nobleman. When the suffix -ess is added, the word becomes “princess,” which is also a noun but refers to a female member of the royal family. Because the class of the word remains the same from noun to noun. This is a clear example of class-maintaining derivation, even though the meaning changes to indicate gender.

6. Suffix -ness

"For my **kindness** to you," replied Miss Minchin. (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 103)

Kindness (N) = Kind (Adj) + -ness (suffix)

The word “kindness” is categorized into a nominal suffix. The root word “kind” is an adjective that describes someone who is caring or helpful. When the suffix -ness is added, the word becomes “kindness,” which functions as a noun that refers to the quality of being kind. This shows a change in grammatical class from an adjective to a noun. Therefore, “kindness” clearly shows class-changing derivation, since its form and function in the sentence change.

7. Suffix -ance

“...Miss Minchin could not understand and which was a source of great **annoyance** to her...” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 11)

Annoyance (N) = Annoy (V) + -ance (suffix)

The word “annoyance” is an example of a nominal suffix. The root word “annoy” is a verb, which means to disturb or annoy someone. When the suffix -ance is added, the word becomes “annoyance,” which functions as a noun referring to the state of being disturbed. This changes the word from a verb to a noun, indicating a change in both form and grammatical role. Therefore, “annoyance” clearly shows a class-changing derivation.

8. Suffix -ship

“...her curious **friendship** had developed...” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 132)

Friendship (N) = Friend (N) + -ship (suffix)

The word “friendship” is categorized as a nominal suffix. The root word “friend” is a noun, which refers to a person with whom we share a bond of affection. When the suffix -ship is added, the word becomes “friendship,” which also functions as a noun, but refers to the state or condition of being friends. Since the derivation process does not change the grammatical class—from noun to noun—this is a clear example of class-maintaining derivation.

9. Suffix -dom

“...and felt it as well to make his own **freedom** from responsibility...” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 90)

Freedom (N) = Free (Adj) + -dom (suffix)

The word “freedom” is an example of a nominal suffix. The root word “free” is an adjective that describes being unbound or unrestricted. When the suffix -dom is added, the word becomes “freedom,” a noun that refers to the state of being free. This changes the word from an adjective to a noun, changing its form and function. Therefore, “freedom” clearly shows a class-changing derivation.

10. Suffix -ant

“He was the **servant** of Misse Sahib.” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 158)

Servant (N) = Serve (V) + -ant (suffix)

The word “servant” is an example of a nominal suffix. The root word “serve” is a verb that means to help or provide service to others. By adding the suffix -ant, the word changes to “servant”, which is a noun that refers to someone who performs the act of serving. This derivation not only shifts the grammatical category from a verb to a noun, but also shifts the meaning from an action to the agent performing the action. Therefore, this morphological process qualifies as class-changing derivation, because it changes the function and classification of the original word.

#### 11. Suffix -er

“I wonder Miss Minchin didn't turn Sara out—even if she does want her for a **teacher**.” (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 232)

Teacher (N) = Teach (V) + -er (suffix)

The word "teacher" in the sentence is an example of a nominal suffix. The basic word "to teach" is a verb that means to give instructions or to impart knowledge. When the suffix -er is added, the verb changes to "teacher", which is a noun that refers to a person who performs the act of teaching. This derivation changes the grammatical category of the verb to a noun and also changes the semantic role of the word—from the action to the doer of the action. Therefore, the word "teacher" is a result of class-changing derivation, since its form and function have changed fundamentally.

### Verbal Suffixes

#### 1. Suffix -en

“...she would surely have tried to **soften** it for the Indian gentleman's sake.” (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 258)

Soften (N) = Soft (Adj) + -en (suffix)

The word "soften" is an example of a verbal suffix. The root word "soft" is an adjective that describes a texture or quality that is soft, pliable, or not hard. When the suffix -en is added, the word forms the verb "soften," which means to make or become soft. This derivational process changes the word from an adjective to a verb, shifting its grammatical role and semantic function. Thus, "soften" is derived through a class-changing derivation, because it changes the original word class from one that describes a quality to one that expresses an action.

### Adjectival Suffixes

#### 1. Suffix -ful

“She had always lived in a **beautiful** bungalow...” (Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 2017, p. 9)

Beautiful (Adj) = beauty (N) + -ful (suffix)

The word "beautiful" is an example of an adjectival suffix. The root word "beauty" is a noun that refers to a quality that is pleasing to the senses or mind. When the suffix -ful is added, the word becomes "beautiful", an adjective used to describe something or someone who has beauty. This derivation process changes the grammatical category of the word from a noun to an adjective. Therefore, the formation of "beautiful" from "beauty" is classified as a class-changing derivation, since it changes the function and class of the original word.

2. Suffix -less

"For a few seconds Becky was almost **speechless** with admiration." (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 63)

Speechless (Adj) = Speech (N) + -less (suffix)

The word "speechless" is an example of an adjectival suffix. The root word "speech" is a noun that refers to the act of speaking. When the suffix -less is added, the word forms the adjective "speechless," which describes the condition of being unable to speak, usually due to strong emotion. This suffix changes the form and function of the word, changing it from a noun to an adjective. Although the concept of speech remains central to the meaning, the grammatical class shifts significantly. Therefore, "speechless" is a clear case of a class-changing derivation.

3. Suffix -ing

"During their passing many **interesting** things occurred." (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 279)

Interesting (Adj) = Interest (V) + -ing (suffix)

The word "interesting" is categorized as an adjective suffix. The root word "interesting" is a verb, which means to attract attention or curiosity. When the suffix -ing is added, the word changes to "interesting," which functions as an adjective in this context, modifying the noun "thing" to describe the type of thing that appears. This change in grammatical function—from a verb to an adjective—indicates a shift in word class. Therefore, the derivation process involving the suffix -ing in this case is a class-changing derivation.

4. Suffix -ous

"Papa," she said in a low, **mysterious** little voice which was almost a whisper, "papa." (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 8)

Mysterious (Adj) = Mystery (N) + -ous (suffix)

The word "mysterious" is included in the category of adjective suffixes. The root word "mystery" is a noun that refers to something unknown or difficult to understand. The addition of the suffix -ous forms the word "mysterious", which functions as an adjective in a sentence, describing the form of the word as having a mysterious quality. Since the word class changes from a noun to an adjective, this derivation process is classified as a class-changing derivation.

5. Suffix -ly

"My, ain't it **lovely**!" whispered Becky. (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 217)

Lovely (Adj) = Love (N) + -ly (suffix)



The word “lovely” is categorized as an adjective suffix. The root word is the noun “love,” which expresses a strong feeling of affection. When the suffix -ly is added, the word becomes “lovely,” which functions as an adjective, meaning “beautiful” or “very pleasant.” This suffix changes the grammatical category from a noun to an adjective. In the sentence, “lovely” describes something that is pleasing to the senses or emotions, which functions as an adjective. Therefore, the formation of “lovely” from “love” shows a class-changing derivation, as it involves a shift in word class from a noun to an adjective.

#### 6. Suffix -able

“It is not **agreeable** to stand in a schoolroom...” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 95)

Agreeable (Adj) = Agree (V) + -able (suffix)

The word “agreeable” is an adjectival suffix that refers to something that is considered pleasant or acceptable. The root word is the verb “agree,” which means to agree or be in agreement. When the suffix “-able” is added, the word becomes “agreeable,” which is an adjective. This shows a change in grammatical class from a verb to an adjective and thus clearly shows a class-changing derivation.

#### 7. Suffix -ish

He drew a big sigh and pulled his mustache with a **boyish** expression. (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 18)

Boyish (Adj) = Boy (N) + -ish (suffix)

The word “boyish” is categorized as an adjective suffix. The root word “boy” is a noun that refers to a young male. When the suffix -ish is added, it forms the word “boyish,” which functions as an adjective in the sentence. Here, “boyish” describes a quality or manner of expression, resembling or being characteristic of a boy. Since the derivation changes the word class from a noun to an adjective, this is a clear example of a class-changing derivation, although its meaning remains semantically related to the original noun.

### Adverbial Suffixes

#### 1. Suffix -ly

“He died,” said Sara, very **quietly**.” (Burnett, A Little Princess, 2017, p. 258)

Quietly (Adv) = Quiet (Adj) + -ly (suffix)

The word “quietly” is categorized as an adjective suffix. The root word “quiet” is an adjective, which describes a state of low voice or calmness. When the suffix -ly is added, the word changes to “quietly,” which functions as an adverb in the sentence. Here, “quietly” modifies the verb “said,” which indicates the way Sara speaks. Since the derivation changes the

grammatical category from an adjective to an adverb, this is a clear case of a class-changing derivation.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, two main conclusions can be drawn. First, the analysis of *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett identified four types of derivational suffixes based on Plag's (2003) classification: nominal, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial suffixes. Among these, the adverbial suffix -ly is the most frequently used, occurring 64 times out of 161 data. This suffix plays a significant role in clarifying sentence meaning, particularly in expressing manner, time, or attitude. The study found two types of derivational effects on word classes: class-maintaining and class-changing derivation. The results show that class-changing derivation is dominant, with 158 instances, while class-maintaining derivation occurs in only 3 instances. These findings demonstrate the important role of derivational processes in shaping word formation and grammatical structures in literary texts.

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