

An Analysis of Derivational Morphemes in the Lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter's Album *Emails I Can't Send Fwd*

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Abstract

This study investigates the derivational morphemes found in the lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter's album, aim to identify the types of derivational morphemes used and analyze how they influence meaning and word class. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the research presents the data through detailed explanations without numerical analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of word formation and shifts in grammatical categories. The data were taken from selected songs and analyzed using Katamba's theory of derivational morphology. The findings reveal 36 derivational morphemes, consisting of 8 prefixes and 28 suffixes, with no infixes present. Suffixes emerge as the most dominant type, particularly forms such as *-ness* and *-tion*, which commonly create new lexical categories. The analysis also shows that derivational processes significantly affect meaning, as seen in examples like *kind* becoming *unkind*, which produces an opposite or extended nuance. Overall, the study emphasizes the crucial role of derivational morphology in shaping vocabulary and enhancing linguistic creativity in song lyrics, offering valuable insights for students, teachers, and future researchers in morphology.

Keywords: Derivational morphemes, prefix, song lyrics, suffix, word class

Introduction

Analyzing song lyrics has become a common method for understanding how language works in everyday life. Sabrina Carpenter's album "emails I can't send fwd." has gotten a lot of notice. This album features emotive songs about personal experiences, relationships, and self-improvement. Songs like "Feather," "Nonsense," and "Because I Liked a Boy" have gone viral on social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, so many listeners are familiar with the lyrics. This emphasizes the importance of studying how the words in these lyrics are generated and how they influence meaning. Given how many people listen to and repeat the lyrics, it is critical to grasp the structure underlying them. One fascinating approach is to examine how words are constructed using prefixes and suffixes, known as derivational morphemes. This study is unique in that it employs a fresh and popular album rather than old or classic materials. It emphasizes how current music reflects contemporary language use. This also demonstrates that studying song lyrics is beneficial for comprehending how words change and evolve. As a result, this research focuses on morphology.

Morphology is the study of word structure (Katamba, 1993). One important element in morphology is the root. The root of a word is unchangeable (Rugaiyah, 2018). Morphology also examines derivational morphemes, especially affixes including prefixes, suffixes, and infixes. An affix is a morpheme that appears only when it is linked to another morpheme (Finegan, 2008). Prefixes appear before a root, such as *re-*, *un-*, or *in-*. Suffixes appear after a root, such as *-ly*, *-er*, *-ist*, *-s*, *-ing*, and *-ed*. Infixes are inserted into the root itself. Adding an affix to the root can result in a new meaning, which is known as a derivational morpheme.

Morphemes are the smallest units in words that correlate with differences in meaning or grammatical structure (Katamba, 1993). By adding a morpheme, the base or the word class can change. For example, *real* becomes *really*: *real* is an adjective and *really* is an adverb.

Morphemes are classified into two categories: bound morphemes and free morphemes. Bound morphemes are divided into derivational and inflectional morphemes, while free morphemes are divided into lexical and function words. Derivational morphemes produce new terms by modifying the base word's meaning or word class. Meanwhile, inflectional morphemes express grammatical functions without modifying a word's syntactic category (Toruan, 2023). In this study, the main focus is on derivational morphemes. For example, the adjective happy becomes the noun happiness when the suffix -ness is added. To improve vocabulary, language users should learn morphology, including derivation. Derivational morphemes appear in books, movies, songs, and poems. Songs are often used for language learning because they support vocabulary development (Tegge, 2015), and lyrics express personal thoughts directly (Simpson, 2008).

Sabrina Carpenter is chosen as the research subject because of her success as a singer, songwriter, and actress. The lyrics she writes show how language can be used creatively. She uses many derivational morphemes—such as prefixes and suffixes—to build new words or change word forms. This makes her lyrics a strong example for studying word formation in English songs. This research is important because understanding how words are formed is an important part of learning a language. This study gives examples from real song lyrics to show how prefixes and suffixes can change a word's meaning or function. It helps readers see that language rules are not just theory, but something found in everyday life, especially in music.

The analysis of derivational morphemes has been widely used in various research topics. Several earlier studies support this field. The first article is “An Analysis of Derivational Affixes in Song” by Siregar and Siregar (2021). The researchers found two types of derivational affixes, prefixes and suffixes in Harris Jung's Salam album. The theory used was from Edward, and the method was library research.

The second study is “An Analysis of Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes in the Lyrics of Calum Scott's Songs in the Album Bridges” by Toruan (2023). This study aimed to investigate both inflectional and derivational affixes using Lieber and Finegan's framework. A qualitative method was used.

The third study is “Derivational and Inflectional on Selena Gomez Song Lyrics in Revival Album” by Halawa (2021). The purpose was to identify derivational and inflectional affixes using Lieber and Finegan's theory with a descriptive qualitative method. Compared to the previous studies, this research differs in terms of the object and theory used. This research focuses specifically on derivational morphemes in Sabrina Carpenter's album, using theories from Francis Katamba (1993) and Edward Finegan (2008). This makes the study more updated and relevant to contemporary linguistic use. Based on the research topic described above, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To identify derivational morphemes found in the lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter's album.
2. To explain how derivational morphemes affect the meaning and word class in Sabrina Carpenter's album.

This research focuses on derivational morphemes in Sabrina Carpenter's album. This study specifically discusses derivational morphemes categorized as bound morphemes. Free morphemes and inflectional morphemes are not included. This study uses theories from Francis Katamba (1993) and Edward Finegan (2008) to analyze derivational morphemes found in the album emails I can't send fwd. The songs analyzed include: “emails i can't send,” “Vicious,” “Read Your Mind,” “Tornado Warnings,” “because i like a boy,” “Already Over,” “how many things,” “bet u wanna,” “Nonsense,” “Fast Times,” “skinny dipping,” “Bad for Business,” “decode,” “opposite,” “Feather,” “Lonesome,” and “things i wish you said.”

This study helps readers understand how derivational morphemes are used to produce new words, especially in song lyrics. The research can contribute to linguistic theory, particularly in morphology. It may be useful for students, lecturers, and researchers. This study

can serve as a reference for further research and can also support language teaching and the development of educational materials.

Theory and Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a sort of research that uses experiences to describe and comprehend something (Creswell & Creswell, J.D., 2018). In this study, the researcher does not use numbers or statistics, but focuses more on words and explanations. The goal of this study is to explain and describe derivational morphemes found in Sabrina Carpenter's song lyrics. Derivational morphemes are parts of words, like prefixes, suffixes, and infix that can alter the meaning or type of a word. A verb, for example, can be transformed into a noun, and an adjective into an adverb. This study design is designed to assist the researcher in thoroughly examining each word in the lyrics and understanding how derivational morphemes are used. The descriptive method also allows you to explain the purpose of each prefix, suffix, and infix.

Data Source and Research Data

The words from chosen Sabrina Carpenter's songs served as the basis for this study. These song lyrics were taken from her official albums and reliable lyric websites. The songs were selected because they contain many examples of derivational morphemes, which are useful for morphological analysis. Sabrina Carpenter is a popular American singer and songwriter, and her songs often include creative and meaningful language. This makes her lyrics a rich source of data for studying how words are produced, and how their meanings or grammatical categories might change as a result of morphemes.

By analysing these morphemes, the researcher aims to understand how word formation happens in real language use, especially in music lyrics. The words are not taken randomly; they are chosen carefully to make sure they are relevant to the topic of derivational morphemes and provide clear examples for analysis.

Research Instruments

The researcher serves as the primary research tool in this study due to its qualitative methodology. where the researcher does everything directly collecting, choosing, analysing, and understanding the data. Qualitative research is for exploring and understanding the meaning individual or group considered to social or human problem Creswell (2018). Qualitative research can be defined as the investigation and understanding of human or social problems by individuals or groups. in qualitative research, the researcher is the main tool to get and study the information. In this research, the researcher reads the song lyrics, looks for words that have derivational morphemes (like prefixes, suffixes and infix.), and writes them down. The researcher uses simple tools like observation and notes-taking. Observation helps to focus on the right words, and note-taking helps to keep everything organized. There are no special machines or apps used. The researcher only needs basic tools like a notebook, phone, or computer (for example, Microsoft Word or Google Docs). These tools help the researcher collect and arrange the data clearly and simply.

Technique of Data Collection

The researcher collected the data analysis from Sabrina Carpenter's album. The lyrics were taken from the album Sabrina Carpenter's album. These song lyrics were taken from Spotify. To make it easier. The relevant data was collected using the following steps:

1. Identifying derivational morphemes in selected Spotify song lyrics through reading and listening.

- 2.To identify affixes such as prefix, suffix, and infix, highlight and note the derivational morphemes.
- 3.Analysis derivational morphemes to identify the word class and changes the meaning.

Technique of Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher used the data analysis method from (Miles & Huberman, 1994), It comprises the following three steps: reducing the data, displaying the data, and drawing a conclusion. The researcher began by selecting words with affixes and classifying them into three categories: infixes, suffixes, and prefixes. Next, the researcher put the affixes found in the speech into a table to make them easier to see and understand. Finally, to carry out the analysis, the researcher follows these main steps:

- 1.This study uses the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th Edition, to identify affixes and examine the meanings of derivational morphemes. in accordance with Francis Katamba's (1993) and Adward Finegan's (2008) theories.
- 2.In the process of analysis, the researcher applies the data analysis method proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.
- 3.Finally, each data point is given a code, such as S1 for song and D1 for datum.

Findings and Discussion

The words of songs by Sabrina Carpenter served as the research's data source. The information was extracted from a particular song, namely: “*Emails I Can’t Send*”, “*Vicious*”, “*Read Your Mind*”, “*Tornado Warnings*”, “*Because I Like A Boy*”, “*Already Over*”, “*How Many Things*”, “*Bet U Wanna*”, “*Nonsense*”, “*Fast Times*”, “*Skinny Dipping*”, “*Bad For Business*”, “*Decode*”, “*Opposite*”, “*Feather*”, “*Lonesome*” And “*Things I Wish You Said*”. Based on an affix of derivational morphemes by Francis Katamba (1993). The next table shows the frequency of those derivational morphemes found in each song lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter’s album.

4.1 1 List of Song and Total Derivational Morphemes

No	Title of the song	Derivational Morphemes
1.	Email I Can’t Send	3
2.	Vicious	5
3.	Read Your Mind	3
4.	Tornado Warnings	6
5.	Because I Like A Boy	3
6.	Already Over	1
7.	How Many Things	1
8.	Bet U Wanna	2
9.	Nonsense	0
10.	Fast Times	2
11.	Skinny Dipping	2
12.	Bad For Business	1
13.	Decode	4
14.	Opposite	0
15.	Feather	0
16.	Lonesome	1
17.	Things I Wish You Said	2
	Total	36

While the word class and meaning of derivational morphemes. The table below shows the frequency of those derivational morphemes changes the word class and meaning in each song lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter’s album. To support the data analysis of each word. The

researcher using Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) was used as primary references for translation and definition. Here are several data from Sabrina Carpenter's album which belong to the data:

Datum 1: S1D1

*So, I could see what you did October thirteenth
At 10:15, were you really asleep?*

In this line the datum found is the word **really**. The root is **real** and added by a suffix **-ly** as the derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ly** converts the word class from an **adjective** (real) to an **adverb** (really).

Meaning of the root "**real**" is actually existing or happening and not imagined or pretended. after the addition of suffix **-ly** the meaning changes into used to say what is actually the fact or the truth about something

Datum 2: S1D2

*When I'm forty-five, someone calls me their wife
And he fucks our lives in one selfish night*

The word **selfish** is found in the datum. The root **self** and formed by added the suffix **-ish** as the derivational morphemes. The suffixes **-ish** transforms the word class from **noun** (self) into (selfish) **adjective**

Meaning of the root "**self**" is the type of person you are, especially the way you normally behave, look or feel. after the addition of suffix **-ish** the meaning changes into caring only about yourself rather than about other people

Datum 3: S1D3

*Don't think I'll find forgiveness as fast as mom did
And, God, I love you, but you're such a dipshit*

In this lyric the datum found is the word **forgiveness**. The root is **self** and added by a suffix **-ness** as the derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ness** changes the word class from a verb (**forgive**) into a noun (**forgiveness**)

Meaning of the root "**forgive**" is to stop feeling angry with somebody who has done something to harm, annoy or upset you to stop feeling angry with yourself. after the addition of suffix **-ness** the meaning changes into the act of forgiving somebody, willingness to forgive somebody

Datum 4: S2D4

*But it was dressed up in
Heated emotion*

In this line the datum found is the word **emotion**. The root is **emote** and added by a suffix **-ion** as the derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ion** changes the word class from a verb (**emote**) into a noun (**emotion**)

Meaning of the root "**emote**" is to show emotion in a very obvious way. after the addition of suffix **-ion** the meaning changes into a strong feeling such a love, fear or anger the part of a person's character that consist of feelings.

Datum 5: S2D5

*You're lucky I'm a private person
I've quietly carried your burden*

The word **quietly** is found in the datum. The root is **quiet** and added by a suffix **-ly** as the derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ly** changes the word class from an adjective (**quiet**) into an adverb (**quietly**)

Meaning of the root "**quiet**" is making very little noise. after the addition of suffix **-ly** the meaning changes into in the way that makes very little noise.

Datum 6: S2D6

*And everyone thinks you're an angel
But shit, I would **probably** use different wording*

In in this line the datum found is the word **probably**. It from the root **probable** and added by suffix **-ly** as derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ly** changes the word class from an **adjective (probable)** into **adverb (probably)**.

Meaning of the root probable is likely to happen, to exist or to be true. After the adding of suffix **-ly** the meaning changes into used to say something is likely to happen or to be true

Datum 7: S2D7

*You like a certain type of woman
Who's smart but neglects **Intuition***

In the lyrics the datum found is the word **intuition**. It from the root **intuit** and added by a suffix **-ion** as derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ion** changes the word class from a **verb (intuit)** into **noun (intuition)**.

Meaning of the root intuit is to know that something is true based on your feelings rather than on facts, what somebody tells you. After the adding the suffix **-ion** the meaning changes into the ability to know something by using your feelings rather than considering the facts.

Datum 8: S2D8

*when you're **insecure**
could be me, could be her*

The word **insecure** is found in the datum. It from the root **secure** and added by a prefix **in-**. The prefix **in-** changes the word class from an **adjective (secure)** into **adjective (insecure)**.

Meaning of the root secure is feeling happy and confident about yourself or a particular situation. After adding the prefix **in-** the meaning changes into not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people

Datum 9: S3D9

*Made it clear when you told me (ah)
Don't know why, but you gotta be **lonely** (ah)*

In this line the datum found is the word **lonely**. The root is **lone** and added by a suffix **-ly** as derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ly** changes the word class from an **adjective (lone)** into **adjective (lonely)**.

The meaning of the root lone is without any other people or things. After adding the suffix **-ly** the meaning changes into unhappy because you have no friends or people to talk to.

Datum 10: S3D10

*Say it's hard, but you make it look easy (ah)
So I'm tryin' to live in **reality** (ah)*

In the lyrics the datum found is the word **reality**. The root is **real** and added by a suffix **-ity** as derivational morphemes. The suffix **-ity** changes the word class from an **adjective (real)** into **noun (reality)**.

Meaning of the root real is actually existing or happening and not imagined or pretended. After addition of suffix **-ity** the meaning changes into the true situation and the problems that actually exist in life, in contrast to how you would like life to be.

The findings of this research showed that Sabrina Carpenter's album *Emails I Can't Send* contained 36 derivational morphemes, which consisted of 8 derivational prefixes and 28 derivational suffixes. The dominance of suffixes indicates that English songs tend to rely more on suffixation to adjust word class and meaning. This supports Katamba's (1993) explanation that suffixes are highly productive and are often used to create new lexical items or shift

grammatical categories in a way that fits sentence structure naturally. In song lyrics, this flexibility is especially important because lyricists must follow rhythm, rhyme, and emotional nuance, which require precise word forms.

The high number of suffixes also shows that Sabrina Carpenter frequently modifies words to express abstract ideas, emotions, and personal reflections—something that is commonly found in expressive or narrative song genres. The patterns of word class changes, such as verb to noun or adjective to adverb, suggest that the songwriter uses derivational morphology to strengthen meaning and adjust the flow of the lyrics. For example, the transformation from verb to noun, which appeared most frequently, reflects how actions are often reinterpreted as concepts or emotional states in her storytelling style. Meanwhile, transformations like adjective to adverb help describe actions more vividly, creating a dynamic lyrical voice.

When compared with previous studies, this research aligns with earlier findings which also reported that derivational suffixes are more dominant than prefixes in song lyrics. Siregar and Siregar (2021) found that suffixes such as *-ness*, *-ly*, and *-ful* appeared more often than prefixes in Harris J's *Salam* album. Similarly, Halawa (2021) discovered that Selena Gomez's *Revival* album also used more suffixes like *-ly*, *-ion*, *-ity*, and *-er*, with prefixes appearing far less frequently. These similarities suggest a recurring pattern in English songwriting, where suffixation is preferred due to its flexibility in shaping meaning without drastically altering the rhythm of a lyric.

Meanwhile, the study by Toruan (2023), which analyzed both derivational and inflectional morphemes in Calum Scott's *Bridges* album, also showed a large variety of suffixes, reinforcing the idea that suffixation is a dominant morphological process in English song lyrics. Although Toruan focused more on the combination of derivational and inflectional morphemes, his findings still support the trend observed in this research.

However, the uniqueness of this study lies in its focus not only on identifying derivational morphemes but also on analyzing the changes in word class they produce. Previous studies mostly emphasized types and frequencies of morphemes, while this research goes further by exploring how those morphemes influence grammatical structure and lyrical expression. For example, identifying the most dominant transformation—verb to noun—offers insight into how abstract ideas and emotional states are formed lyrically. This deeper look into word class shifts provides new understanding of how songwriters construct meaning through morphology, showing that derivational morphemes contribute not only to vocabulary expansion but also to stylistic choices in songwriting. Overall, the results of this study fit well within the pattern established by earlier research while also providing additional insight into how derivational morphemes affect grammatical function and lyrical style. This makes the study not only confirmative but also contributive, offering a more detailed perspective on morphological processes in contemporary English song lyrics.

Conclusion

The ability of derivational morphemes to generate new words, improve sentence structure, and clarify meaning makes them crucial in song lyrics. Additionally, they demonstrate how language history continues to impact contemporary music and appreciate lyrics more. Songs by Sabrina Carpenter, Julia Michaels, and JP Saxe demonstrate this, since the lyrics reveal Sabrina's true emotions and sense of style. The song's rhythm is maintained by the emotional lyrics, which discuss feelings like love, regret, and melancholy. They also incorporate syllables that complement the music.

In this study, the lyrics contain 36 derivational morphemes, along with 28 suffixes, 8 prefixes, and no infixes. The most prevalent kind are suffixes, which are frequently employed to alter a word's shape and give it a new meaning. Changes from verbs to nouns and adjectives

to adverbs are the most common word class transitions. These findings demonstrate that in addition to altering a word's shape and meaning, derivational morphemes also improve the accessibility and enjoyment of songs.

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