

**STUDENTS' ACQUISITION OF DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES  
IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**



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#### RATIFICATION

A journal entitled “**Students’ Acquisition of Derivational Morphemes in Descriptive Text**” by Novia Ekayana (E1D110070) has been approved by the board of consultants as the requirement to achieve *Sarjana Pendidikan* (S.Pd). Degree in English Education Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Mataram University.

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# **“Students’ Acquisition of Derivational Morphemes in Descriptive Text”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis, entitled “Students’ Acquisition of Derivational Morphemes in Descriptive Text”, is aimed at finding out the students’ acquisition of derivational morphemes in descriptive text. The subject of this research is the eighth grade students of MTsN Darul Muhibbin Praya. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The data was collected through gap-filling test. The result from gap-filling test showed the dominant related to the research questions, the most problematic type of derivational morpheme found in students’ descriptive text is in the form of prefix unimportant. As the result, the level of students’ acquisition of derivational morpheme in descriptive text is in the very poor level (0-45) or 31%. This means that there is a substantial need to correct the problems faced by students in learning derivational morphemes in descriptive text.

**Key words:** *Students’ Acquisition, Derivational Morphemes*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English constitutes the international language that should be mastered well since most of the regions in the world use English as their language whether as their first, second or foreign language. Thus, it cannot be parried that its role is important because it impacts all aspects of life such as economy, social, and culture.

As the world tool of communication, English becomes urgent to be studied. Today, English is programmed as one of the compulsory subjects at schools, from elementary, junior, senior high school and University. Moreover, some of the kindergartens also have English classes. The aim is to sharpen the students' English skills in speaking and writing. However, in fact, learning language is not easy. The students will face the significant difficulties including in morphological terms that constitutes one of the key materials of language dealing with morphemes and how they operate in the structure of words.

A derivational morpheme is the morpheme which produces a new lexeme from a base (Bauer, 1988: 12). Sari (1988: 82) says that derivational morphemes are bound morphemes which derive (create) new words by either changing the meaning or the part of speech or both. In the word happiness, the bound morpheme -ness creates a new word by changing both the meaning and the part of speech. Happy is

an adjective but the derived word happiness is a noun. Some derivational morphemes create new meaning but do not change the syntactic category or part of speech. The word unhappy, for example, consists of the base happy and the derivational morpheme (prefix) un-. Happy is an adjective and the derived word unhappy is also an adjective.

The elucidation above motivates the researcher to conduct the research about students' acquisition related to their understanding of derivational morphology especially about derivational prefixes and suffixes in writing descriptive text including their knowledge about the word formation and how they apply it on their writing.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. What is the most problematic type of derivational morpheme found in students' descriptive text?
2. What is the level of students' acquisition of derivational morpheme in descriptive text?

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

1. To explain the most problematic type of derivational morpheme found in student's descriptive text.
2. To identify and describe the level of students' acquisition of derivational morpheme in descriptive text.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Morpheme is the smallest unit of language capable of carrying meaning (Small: 2016; McCarthy: 2002). From this definition we can say that the words “horse”, “cat”, or “chair” are morpheme. The word “horse”, is a morpheme because if this word is broken into some units such as “-hor” and “-se” or “-ho” “-rse”, it will be meaningless. In addition, (Dehhunty and Garvey : 2010.) and (Zapata : 2007) stated that morpheme is the smallest part of a word that has grammatical function or meaning. We will designate it in braces—{ }. This definition is more comprehensive since it explains that morpheme syntactically and grammatically affects the root of word. For example, *sawed*, *sawn*, *sawing*, and *saws* can all be analyzed into the morphemes {saw} + {-ed}, {-n}, {-ing}, and {-s}, respectively. Let see the word “believable”. This word consists of two morphemes: “believe” and “-able”. Each units of word have meaning. However, we have to remember that morpheme is different from syllable that constitutes a unit of pronunciation with one vowel sound. The crucial difference of syllable and morpheme lay on semantical reason. Unlike morpheme, syllable does not have meaning. Both morpheme and syllable have correlation on the degree of lexically and grammatically of word classes.

Linguists such as Mark Twain (2013) agreed that morpheme generally identified into two types depending on the way morphemes

occur in an utterance. Our morphological knowledge has two components: knowledge of the individual morphemes and knowledge of the rules that combine them.

One of the things we know about particular morphemes is whether they can stand alone or whether they must be attached to a base morpheme. Some morphemes like *boy*, *desire*, *gentle*, and *man* may constitute words by themselves.

Other morphemes like *-ish*, *-ness*, *-ly*, *pre-*, *trans-*, and *un-* are never words by themselves but are always parts of words. These affixes are bound morphemes and they may attach at the beginning, the end, in the middle, or both at the beginning and end of a word. Bound morphemes are those morphemes which never occur alone as words but as parts of words( Zapata : 2007), they must be attached to another morpheme (usually a free morpheme) in order to have a distinct meaning. For example *-er* in *worker*, *-er* in *taller*, *-s* in *walks*, *-ed* in *passed*, *re-* as in *reappear*, *un-* in *unhappy*, *undo*, *-ness* in *readiness*, *-able* in *adjustable*; *-ceive* in *conceive*, *receive*, *-tain* in *contain*, *obtain*.

Bound morphemes like *-ify*, *-cation* and *-arian* are called derivational morphemes. When they are added to a base, a new word with a new meaning is derived. The addition of *-ify* to *pure*—*purify*—means ‘to make pure,’ and the addition of *-cation*—*purification*—means ‘the process of making pure.’ If we invent an adjective, *pouzy*,

to describe the effect of static electricity on hair, you will immediately understand the sentences “Walking on that carpet really pouzified my hair” and “The best method of pouzification is to rub a balloon on your head.” This means that we must have a list of the derivational morphemes in our mental dictionaries as well as the rules that determine how they are added to a root or stem. The form that results from the addition of a derivational morpheme is called a derived word.

Derivational morphemes have clear semantic content Mark Twain (2013) . In this sense they are like content words, except that they are not words. As we have seen, when a derivational morpheme is added to a base, it adds meaning. The derived word may also be of a different grammatical class than the original word, as shown by suffixes such as *-able* and *-ly*. When a verb is suffixed with *-able*, the result is an adjective, as in *desire + able*. When the suffix *-en* is added to an adjective, adverb is derived, as in *dark + en*. One may form a noun from an adjective, as in *sweet + ie*.

Acquisition has two divergent perspectives stated by Ellis (2001) cited in Schuwerk (1997) on his study about Morpheme acquisition in Second Language Acquisition:

“ one definition looks at acquisition as onset or initial introduction of new form into a learners productions. Other definition view acquisition from gramatically judgment, comprehension, and production.”



From the viewpoint above, it can be said that acquisition is the students' development in learning languages, although Ellis (2001) affirmed that the second of those definitions is the subject of some controversy, since no adequate measure has been developed to address grammatical comprehension.

Derivational morphology is the basic knowledge of lexical access formation (Fowler, Napps, and Feldman : 1985). In addition, it is useful to create a good sentence. Because of its importance in language acquisition, Andrea Tyler and William Nagy (1987) indicate that the acquisition of derivational morphology begins as early as the preschool years.

Taylor and Nagy (1987) conducted their experiment of students' acquisition of derivational morphology focus on the suffixes knowledge of the students of fourth, sixth, eighth, and college students.

At least six meanings of 'writing' can be distinguished: (1) a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks; (2) the activity of putting such a system to use; (3) the result of such activity, a text; (4) the particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing; (5) artistic composition; (6) a professional occupation

Halliday (1978) cited in Yocco (2009), text is semantic choice of data in social context. It means that text is a way to express the meaning in written or oral form. Thus, descriptive text is one of the

types of text writing that aims to describe something such as person, object, place, event, or idea.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **1. Research Design**

This study designed as descriptive quantitative research since it pointed out the information about students' acquisition of derivational morpheme in descriptive text. Descriptive research is research that try to describe an indication, incident, event that happen now (Wijaya and Syahrum: 2013). It aims to describe the situation of things that exist of the same time of the study. Quantitative research used to find out the types and the percentages of dominant type of derivational morpheme used by the students.

#### **2. Setting**

The fieldwork of this research is in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darul Muhibbin Praya, Middle Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara.

#### **3. Population and sample**

The population in this study is the students of 8<sup>th</sup> MTs Darul Muhibbin NW Mispalah Praya are divided into two classes, A class and B class which each class contains of 21-23 students. The total populations of 8<sup>th</sup> grade are 44 students.

The researcher takes all of students as the sample of the research. So there are 44 students were investigated as well as analyze for seeking of answering the proposed research questions.

#### **4. Data Collection**

Data gathered of this study was in the form of students' test result about derivational morpheme in descriptive text. In this case, the students were given a test; an uncomplete descriptive text. The students were asked to gap-filling test with right derivational morphemes. There were 10 gap-filling test and time allocated for this test in 60 minutes. Moreover, the students were given some key words of derivational morphemes to help the students answer the questions.

The students tested were those who were in the second grade that consisted of class A and B. Total number of the students were 44 students. However, 8 students were absent. Thus, the resercher got 36 data in the form of students' test result to be observed further.

#### **5. Method of Analysing the Data**

The result of testing by the students would be the source of the data that need to be analyzed. The gap-filling test was analyzed by identification the answer from gap-filling test. Next, classification the answer, how many students with right answer and how many students with wrong answer. Finally, the researcher counting the percentages of errors of Derivational Morphemes to get the most problematic type of derivational morphemes.

The collecting the individual score from each student after the test, the researcher use the formula as follow:

$$\text{Individual Score} = \frac{\text{Right Answers}}{\text{Number of Test items}} \times 100\%$$

After the researcher get the individual score in each student, and then the researcher will determine the mean score of all the students' score by using the formula below:

$$Ms = \frac{\sum \cdot s}{N}$$

Where: Ms = the Main Score

$\Sigma$  = the Sum of

S = Students' Score

N = Number of Sample

The formula use to find out the level of students' acquisition in derivational morphemes in descriptive texts.

In categorizing the students score, researcher applied the category below :

**Table Category of score**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Interval</b>
Very good	80-100

Good	65-79
Fair	56-64
Poor	46-55
Very poor	0-45

*Source : Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan FKIP Universitas Mataram:33)*

## 6. RESULT

### 1. Result of test A class

No.	Name	Score	Information
1.	Abdul Muhyi	70	
2.	Asmiranda	60	
3.	Gunawan	40	
4.	Hazura Erma	50	
5.	Jumisah	60	
6.	Kariani	50	
7.	Kunuzul Asror	50	
8.	usrini susila wangi	-	Absent
9.	L.M. Nizom Mulitjihad	50	
10.	M. Maulana ardi	20	
11.	M. Damar wulan	50	
12.	Natasya	70	
13.	Fatmawati	-	Absent
14.	Rahman jayadi	40	
15.	Rama novandi	60	

16.	Riska indah	70	
17.	Sulis sulastri	40	
18.	Lena yuniar	60	
19.	Lola amelia	40	
20.	Rias ayu candra	50	
21.	Yazid marzan	-	Absent
$\sum .s$		<b>930</b>	
Average		<b>54,70</b>	

Based on the data above, we can see that the total score of all of the students in A class is 930 with average 54,70. It means that they are in poor score category. The highest score achieved is 70 and the lowest is 20.

No.	Name	Individual Score	Information
1.	Adam husaini	40	
2.	Ananda rizkia latifa	90	
3.	Ayu novia lestari	-	Absent
4.	Azizah turrahmi	90	
5.	Bq. Dian eptiana	0	
6.	Dewi septiani	0	
7.	Farizatul alya	40	
8.	Hamzan wadi	80	
9.	Karmila	90	
10.	Laili salsabila	70	
11.	Liza maulida	30	

12.	M. Fahri alhasani	-	Absent
13.	M. Fahrizal rahman	50	
14.	M. Nasrullah	50	
15.	M. Rozi pandawa	-	Absent
16.	adia rizkia windiani	70	
17.	ratama aditya putra	80	
18.	Septianingsih	60	
19.	Teguh wiraguna	-	Absent
20.	Yasir amrillah	60	
21.	Isan maulana hidayat	60	
22.	Zainuddin	40	
23.	Mukri	-	Absent
$\sum .s$		<b>940</b>	
Average		<b>52,22</b>	

Table 2 explains that the result of this class also is in poor category. The total number attained is 940 and the average is 52,22. A student has different cases with the student in A class: there is a student got highest score till 90 and two of them got score 0.

## 7. DISCUSSION

1. Problematic type of derivational morpheme found in students' descriptive text

The students seem to face the difficulties in determining a word to gap-filling sentences. In general, the students feel difficult to understand the use of derivational morpheme. In the table below, it

proves the students commonly make mistake, the students prefer to use not important in the use of word unimportant and followed by word happiness .

The table 3 below shows the number of right word answered by the students.

Table 3. Number of right answer for each words

No.	Word	Part of Spech	Number of Right
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Unimporta nt	Adj.	6
2.	Disagree	Verb	16
3.	Unhappy	Adj.	19
4.	Disadvanta ge	Noun	15
5.	Inefficient	Adj.	16
6.	Happiness	Noun	13
7.	Wonderful	Adj.	23
No.	Word	Part of Spech	Number of Right
8.	Useful	Adj.	24
9.	Comfortabl e	Adj.	25
10.	Education	Noun	31
Total			188



2. Level of students' acquisition of derivational morpheme in descriptive text

From the table of students' individual scores above (table 1 and 2 ), then the mean score of the students will be figured out by using the following formula :

$$\frac{\sum.s}{N} = \text{students' mean score}$$

$$\frac{1870}{36} = 52$$

According to value gained, it was obtained that the students' mean score was between 46-55 (see table 5). It means that the mean score of the students are in poor category. The table of the level of acquisition and its scores range in writing can be seen as follow :

Table 4. table of the level of acquisition and its scores range in writing

<b>Category</b>	<b>Interval</b>
Very good	80-100
Good	65-79
Fair	56-64
Poor	46-55
Very poor	0-45

Based on the table of category and its score above, furthermore the result of the students Descriptive writing test score will be classified according to its as follows :

Table 5. Classification of the students result

No.	Category	Scores range	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very good	80-100	5	14%
2.	Good	65-79	5	14%
3.	Fair	56-64	7	19%
4.	Poor	46-55	8	22%
5.	Very poor	0-45	11	31%
<b>Total</b>			<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above describes that there are 5 students (14%) classified into very good level, 5 students (14%) classified into good level, 7 students (19%) classified into fair level, 8 students (22%) classified into poor level and 11 students (31%) classified into very poor level.

From the data above, it can be seen that the average of students ability in writing Descriptive text is in very poor level. It can be seen from the largest number of the students is very poor level (11 students/31%). Which is followed by poor level (8 students/22%), then respectively fair level (7 students/19%), good level (5 students/14%), and the last is level of very good (5 students/14%).

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The result of the analysis of the data of this study indicate that the most problem of the students who are classified as poor and very poor level is in the form of prefix. The students prefer to use not important in the use of word unimportant . The level of the students of the eight grade of MTsN Darul Muhibbin Praya in acquiring derivational morphemes in descriptive text is poor. This is proved by the finding that most of the students have low score in writing as seen in table 2 and 3 see table 2 and 3 ( page 30 and 31 ). Most of the students' score are between 0-45 (very poor level). Obtained by eleven students in the other eight students scores are between 46-55 (poor level), and there are seven students got scored that is between 56-64 hence they are classified as in fair level. It means that the students had a poor command on derivational morphemes in descriptive text.

These students are found were not able to use simple derivational morphemes in descriptive text although some of them made very good level. On the other hand, there are significant numbers of students who are scored in good and very good level. There are five students who scored between 65-79 categorized into good level, and other five students scored between 80-100 (very good level). .

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