

The Analysis of Historical Origin and Productiveness of Derivational Affixes in the *Declaration of Independence* of America (1776)

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Abstract

This paper presents the analysis of historical origin and the productiveness of affixes (prefixes and affixes) that are found in the text Declaration of Independence. It focuses mainly on derivational affixes combining with the morpheme and also its derivation in the history of English. It also notes the frequency and distribution of the affixes in the text.

The aim of this study is to reveal the derivational affixes in the Declaration of Independence together with its analysis related to the origin of the affixes. Three sources of guidance are used as a means to aid the identification the affixes. They are dictionaries, books, and online resources.

The result of the study shows that there are eight prefixes and eighteen categories of suffixes found in the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, it is noticed that most of the derivational affixes are still used till nowadays. The frequent prefixes in the text are un-, dis-, and in-. Meanwhile, the common suffixes found are ion (-tion, ation) followed by -ence (-ance) and -ment together with -er /-or. It can be concluded that their productivity remains to be survived till present day though there are also some affixes that show declensions.

Keywords: derivational affixes, Declaration of Independence

Introduction

Declaration of Independence of America is one of the texts that is important in the late 17th Century. It is not only because of the members involved in the moment of declaration but also because of the content of the text itself. With the psychological situation at that time, the *Declaration of Independence* can be stated as a proof of the awareness of nationalism and the status relating to the other countries.

Furthermore, if the text is further analyzed, the content of the text in the *Declaration of Independence* is essential in number ways. Firstly, the text reveals the condition of the people of America at that

time that was under the oppression. That is why they wanted to declare their independence. Likewise, in linguistic sense, the *Declaration of Independence* can show the language development of English at that time. In other words, development of the language and word-formation are used to construct the text.

In this sense, this paper studies the derivational affixation in the *Declaration of Independence* of America. The affixes, prefixes and suffixes, are examined together with the comparison to the other affixes. It is crucial because affixations are added, reduced, and modified from time to time. The historical perspective and productiveness of the affixes are significant to be examined in order to

reveal the more thorough the identification of the word formation of the text. In addition, there is also prediction of some words which are originally seen as derivational affixes but they are no longer identified as affixes since the words have been fused into one morpheme. Some false possibilities of prediction dealing with affixes are also noticed.

The Declaration of Independence of America

The *Declaration of Independence* in America was one of the biggest momentous events in the history. It did not only trigger the nationalism of Americans but also bring influence to the other countries, especially the Britain's colony. It was authorized in the United States, July 4, 1776 (Armitage, 2007: 157). It consists of approximately 1300 words and the rough draft was written by Thomas Jefferson. It was signed by 56 delegates of the congress, including John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Hart, Samuel Adams, John Witherspoon and Thomas Jefferson himself. It is the symbol of freedom that Americans struggled for their independence.

This declaration was defended because of the desire of Americans to get their freedom (Baugh and Cable, 1978: 357). Moreover, it was also related to the consciousness of Americans to be completely separated from Britain. The distinction was not only in the case of land territory but also in the state of the language. That is, being Americans means having their own language that does not have to be the same as British. They wanted to be treated as equal and they fought to get their power and authority in their own land.

The time of the declaration was on 1776 (Late of 17th Century). It can be stated as a time of Modern English. It is the time when the spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary are nearly closed to English on present day (Crystal, 1995: 76). Correspondingly, the form of affixes is also more similar to the affixes that are found nowadays. There are eight prefixes and twenty eight derivational suffixes identified from the text.

The History of Derivational Affixes

The term *affixes* has been noticed since the renaissance (Matthews, 2001: 82). It is the time when English comes to its 'glory' for the inventory and also new word formation. Many new words entered into English vocabulary as an impact of this period, including the creation of new words using affixation.

Affixes have existed in the time of Old English. It has become part of the vocabulary and indicate the flexibility of the vocabulary at that time. That is, the affixes are used to form new words from old words to vary or enlarge the root idea. The affixes of this period are more similar to modern German. The common-used prefixes are *ā-*, *be-*, *for-*, *fore-*, *ge-*, *mis-*, *of-*, *ofer-*, *heafod-*, *on-*, *to-*, *un-*, *under-*, and *wip-* (*with-*). Meanwhile, the common suffixes are *-ig* (*-y*), *-full*, *-leas* (*-less*), *-lice* (*-like*), *-nes* (*-ness*), *-ung*, *-wīs* (*-wise*), *-dōm*, *-end*, *-ere* (*-er*), *-hād* (*-hood*), *-sum* (*-some*), *-scipe* (*-ship*), and *-ing* (Baugh and Cable, 1978: 66; Wiktionary). Most of the above affixes still remain in Middle English as well as in Modern English. However, as the lists in general, many of affixes are disappeared in the latter time.

The latter time after Old English is called Middle English. The affixes in the Middle English time are more or less similar to the affixes in the Old English. Nonetheless, the affixes in this time are combined and noticed more apparently in the word formation. Some of the additional common prefixes besides the above list are *on-* (*un-*), *over-*, *under-*, *counter-*, *dis-*, *re-*, *trans-*. In contrast, the additional suffixes are *-ish*, *-lock*, *-red*, *-ly*, *-more*, and *-ster* (Baugh and Cable, 1978: 181-182; Wiktionary).

Primarily, the most significant time when the affixes are defined more frequently is in the time early modern English (renaissance) up to the nineteenth century or the time of Modern English. The affixes are more familiar with the affixes in the present day and the vocabulary is enlarged in a more readily combination (Baugh and Cable, 1978: 303). The lists of additional prefixes are *pre-*, *de-*, *super-*, *inter-*, *non-*, *sub-*, *mal-*, *anti-*, *contra-*,

extra-, *inter-*, and *neo-*. By comparison, the list of additional suffixes are *-able (or -ible)*, *-age*, *-ate*, *-ify*, *-(i)an*, *(i)al*, *-ist*, *ite*, *-ant*, *-al*, *-(a)tion*, *-ion*, *-or*, *-ity*, *-ive*, *-th*, and *-ary* (Crystal, 1995: 128, 208)

In this sense, there are some affixes from Old English which are no longer used in Modern English. For example, the prefixes *for-* and the suffix *-lock* previously are usually used in the OE period. By contrast, now there are only few words which survive such as *forgive*, *forbid*, *forsake*, *forswear* for the prefix *for-* together with *wedlock* and *warlock* for the suffix *-lock*. On the other hand, there is also an occurrence when the affixes are seldom used in former period but they are noticeable in the later period. The instances are the suffixes *-dom* and *-wise* which become more acceptably used, especially in the rise of American English (Culpeper, 2000: 30).

The Origin of the Affixes

It is also important to review about the origin of the affixes. That is, there are some affixes which are originally come from English (Native Old English) but there are also some affixes which are borrowed or derived from the other language.

According to Plag (2003: 85), the affixes which innately come from English are the affixes which derived from Old English period. For the prefixes, they are *un-*, *mis-*, *be-*, *out-*, *over-*, *under-*, *fore-*. Meanwhile, the examples for the suffixes are *-less*, *-ness*, *-dom*, *-ship*, *-full*, and *-hood*.

Then, there are also affixes which originate from Latin. The examples of the prefixes are *con-*, *contra*, *de-*, *dis-*, *in-*, *im-*, *ir-*, *il-*, *sub-*, *inter-*, *counter-*, *mini-*, *pre-*, *post-*, *pro-*, *re-*, *super-*, and *-trans*. By comparison, the suffixes are *-an*, *-ar*, *-ian*, *-ic*, *-ive*, *-ty*, and *-y* (Lass, 2000: 378-379; Walker-Esbaugh et al., 2004: 92-93).

Comparatively, there are also affixes derived from Greek. The prefixes are *anti-*, *auto-*, *bio-*, *bi-*, *geo-*, *hyper-*, *micro-*, *mono-*, *neo-*, *proto-*, *pseudo-*, and *thermo-*. Meanwhile, the suffixes are *-ism*, *-ist*, *-ize*, *-gram*, *-graph*, -

logue/ -log, *-logy*, *-meter*, *-oid*, *-phobia* and *-phone* (Green, 2008: 72-73).

Another influence is the affixes from French. The affixes of French basically come from Romance, Latin, and Greek. Therefore, it does not influence many in English. The examples are mainly on the suffixes that are *-ette* and *-esque* (Lass, 2000: 393).

Generally, these affixes will contribute to form nouns and adjectives. However, there is also a case when the affixes do not change the lexical category or part of speech of the word. That is, they are more usable in changing the meaning of the word. For example, the prefixes *un-*, *in-*, and *dis-* are used to change the meaning into negative (the opposite of the root meaning).

Prefixes in the Declaration of Independence

There are eight prefixes found in the *Declaration of Independence* text. They are *un-*, *dis-*, *en-*, *ab-*, *in-*, *pre-*, *trans-*, and *with-*. The most prefixes that appear in the text are *un-* (six words), *dis-* (three words), and *en-* (three words). As stated previously, the use of prefixes are mostly modifying the meaning of the words rather than in changing the word category. However, there is a case of *en-* prefix which changes the lexical category of the word. They are exemplified as follows.

Table 1. List of Prefixes
in The Declaration of Independence

1. Words with prefix <i>un-</i> <i>unacknowledged</i> , <i>unanimous</i> <i>uncomfortable</i> , <i>undistinguished</i> <i>unfit</i> , <i>unusual</i>
2. Words with prefix <i>dis-</i> <i>disavow</i> , <i>dissolve</i> , <i>dispose</i>
3. Words with prefix <i>en-</i> <i>encourage</i> , <i>enlarging</i> , <i>entitle</i>
4. Words with prefix <i>ab-</i> <i>absolved</i>
5. Words with prefix <i>in-</i> <i>incapable</i> , <i>independence</i>
6. Word with prefix <i>pre-</i> <i>pretended</i>
7. Words with prefix <i>trans-</i> <i>transport</i>
8. Words with prefix <i>with-</i> <i>without</i> , <i>within</i>

In this extent, the prefixes observed from the text deal mostly with adjectives, verbs, adverbs, preposition, and nouns. The prefixes which relate to adjectives are *unanimous*, *uncomfortable*, *undistinguished*, *unfit*, *unusual*, *incapable*, and *pretended*. Then, the prefixes which cope with verbs are *unacknowledged*, *disavow*, *dissolve*, *dispose*, *encourage*, *enlarging*, *entitle*, *absolved*, and *transport*. The prefixes which contend with adverbs are *without* (also with preposition) and *within*, while the prefix deals with noun is *independence*.

The use of prefixes *un-*, *in-*, and *dis-* usually functions to reverse the meaning. For example, when the prefix *un-* is attached in the word *comfortable*, *fit*, and *usual*, the meaning becomes the contrary. By comparison, the prefixes *ab-*, *pre-*, *trans-*, and *with-* are used in the extent of changing the situation, order, and side of the meaning. Conversely, the remaining prefix *en-* can be treated differently. That is, rather than changing the meaning, the use of prefix *en-* functions more on shifting the word category. For example, prefix *en-* in the words *encourage* and *enlarging* that change the category from the stem *courage* (noun) and *large* (adjective) into verbs.

Suffixes in the *Declaration of Independence*

Compared with the identified prefixes, the use of suffixes in the text is much more extensive. There are at least eighteen categories of suffixes found from the *Declaration of Independence*. They are (1) *ion*, *-tion*, or *-ation*, (2) *-ly* (3) *-y*, *-ty*, or *-ity*, (4) *-able*, (5) *-ence*, *-ance*, (6) *-er* / *-or*, *-ier* / *-ior*, (7) *-ment*, (8) *-ness*, (9) *-ive*, (10) *-ent*, *-ant*, (11) *-ary*, (12) *-ing*, (13) *-al*, (14) *-tude* (15) *-less*, (16) *-ure*, (17) *-ism*, and (18) *-some*. The list of these suffixes can be observed in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. List of Suffixes
in *The Declaration of Independence*

1. Words with suffix <i>-ion</i>, <i>-tion</i>, or <i>-ation</i> <i>accommodation</i> , <i>administration</i> <i>annihilation</i> , <i>appropriation</i> , <i>attention</i> , <i>connection</i> , <i>constitution</i> , <i>convulsion</i> <i>declaration</i> , <i>desolation</i> , <i>destruction</i> <i>emigration</i> , <i>foundation</i> , <i>insurrection</i> <i>intention</i> , <i>invasion</i> , <i>jurisdiction</i> <i>legislation</i> , <i>migration</i> , <i>naturalization</i> <i>operation</i> , <i>opinions</i> , <i>oppression</i> <i>petition</i> , <i>population</i> , <i>protection</i> <i>representation</i> , <i>separation</i> , <i>usurpation</i>
2. Words with suffix <i>-ly</i> <i>accordingly</i> , <i>fundamentally</i> , <i>likely</i> <i>manly</i> , <i>mutually</i> , <i>repeatedly</i> , <i>scarcely</i> <i>solemnly</i> , <i>totally</i> ,
3. Words with suffix <i>-y</i>, <i>-ty</i>, or <i>-ity</i> <i>consanguinity</i> , <i>cruelty</i> , <i>injury</i> <i>magnanimity</i> , <i>necessity</i> , <i>perfidy</i> , <i>safety</i> , <i>security</i> , <i>unworthy</i>
4. Word with suffix <i>-able</i> <i>inestimable</i> , <i>sufferable</i> , <i>valuable</i>
5. Word with suffix <i>-ence</i>, <i>-ance</i> <i>allegiance</i> , <i>compliance</i> , <i>correspondence</i> <i>providence</i> , <i>prudence</i> , <i>reliance</i> , <i>sufferance</i>
6. Word with suffix <i>-er</i> / <i>-or</i>, <i>-ier</i> / <i>-ior</i> <i>creator</i> , <i>executioner</i> , <i>foreigner</i> , <i>frontier</i> , <i>governor</i> , <i>officer</i> , <i>ruler</i> , <i>superior</i>
7. Word with suffix <i>-ment</i> <i>establishment</i> , <i>governments</i> , <i>payment</i> <i>punishment</i> , <i>settlement</i>
8. Word with suffix <i>-ness</i> <i>firmness</i> , <i>happiness</i>
9. Words with suffix <i>-ive</i> <i>destructive</i> , <i>legislative</i> , <i>representative</i>
10. Words with suffix <i>-ent</i>, <i>-ant</i> <i>dependent</i> , <i>inhabitant</i>
11. Words with suffix <i>-ary</i> <i>boundary</i>
12. Word with suffix <i>-ing</i> (as derivational) <i>neighbouring</i>
13. Word with suffix <i>-al</i> <i>political</i>
14. Word with suffix <i>-tude</i> <i>multitude</i>
15. Word with suffix <i>-less</i> <i>merciless</i>
16. Word with suffix <i>-ism</i> <i>despotism</i>
17. Word with suffix <i>-ure</i> <i>legislatures</i>
18. Word with suffix <i>-some</i> <i>wholesome</i>

In this respect, it can be noted from the text the *Declaration of Independence* that the most suffixes used are *-ion* (/ *-tion*, / *-ation*), twenty-nine words. Sequentially, they are followed by *-ly* (ten words), *-y*/ *-ty*/ *-ity* (nine words), *-ence* / *-ance* (seven words), *-er* / *-or* (six words), *-able* (five words) and *-ment* (five words).

As also stated previously, suffixes behave more in changing the lexical category of the attached words. It can be recognized in almost all the suffixes except in the word *boundary* (*bound* → noun, *bound* + *-ary* → noun), *political* (*politic* → adjective, *politic* + *-al* → adjective), *despotism* (*despot* → noun, *despot* + *-ism* → noun), and some words with suffixes *-er* / *-or*, *-ier* / *-ior* (*execution* → noun, *execution* + *-er* → noun; *office* → noun, *office* + *-er* → noun).

The identified suffixes from the text considerably change the verbs into nouns, verbs into adjectives, adjectives into adverbs, adjectives into nouns, and nouns into adjectives. The suffixes that change the verbs into nouns are *-ion*, *-tion*, or *-ation*, *-ence*, *-ance*, *-or*, *-ment*, and *-ure*. The suffixes that alter the verbs into adjectives are *-able*, *-ive*, and *-ent*. The suffix that transforms adjectives into adverbs is *-ly*. The suffixes that convert adjectives into nouns are *-y*, *-ty*, or *-ity*, and *-ness*. The suffix that substitutes nouns into adjectives is *-less*.

Furthermore, the functions of the suffixes in changing the meaning of the words also vary. The suffix *-less* is used to show that the 'thing' is not there (e.g. *merciless*). Besides, the suffix *-able* is used to show the capability or liability of the 'thing' (e.g. *inestimable*, *sufferable*, and *valuable*). While, the suffixes *-er* / *-or*, *-ier* / *-ior* are applied to modify the word which is inhuman to be a person that relates to the base of the word or to state a condition (e.g. *creator*, *executioner*, *foreigner*, *frontier*, *governor*, *officer*, *ruler*, and *superior*).

The Presence of both Prefixes and Suffixes in the Declaration of Independence

In the text, it can be also noticed that there are also some words with the affixes of

both prefix and suffix. There are at least four words of it. They are *dissolution*, *invariably*, *inevitably*, *unalienable*, and *unwarrantable*. The change of grammatical category also varied. That is, for the word *dissolution*, the word *dissolute* which is an adjective (*dis* + *solute*) changes into a noun because of the suffix *-ion*. Meanwhile, for the word *invariably*, the morpheme *vary* which is a verb got a reverse meaning semantically by and adding of the prefix *in-*. After that, it changes into an adjective under the circumstance of the suffix *-able* (*in* + *vary* + *able*). Then it changes the adjective into an adverb under the attachment of the suffix *-y* (*in* + *vary* + *able* + *y*). The more or less similar change also occurs in the word *inevitably* (*in* + *evitable* + *y*).

The similar change also happens for the next two words, *unalienable* and *unwarrantable*. That is, the words *alien* and *warrant* change into adjectives under the suffix *-able* to become *alienable* (*alien* + *able*) and *warrantable* (*warrant* + *able*). Then, the prefix *un-* changes the semantic meaning of the words into the reverse meaning of the adjectives *alienable* and *warrantable*.

The Productiveness of the Affixes

It can be argued from the text that prefix *un-*, *dis-*, and *in-* are commonly used as a reversing suffix for the meaning of the words in the text the *Declaration of Independence*. They are frequently used in adjectives, verbs and nouns. Moreover, they also can be assumed as the productive prefixes in forming a reversal word together with the prefixes *mis-*, and *non-* till nowadays. That is, they are more frequently used rather than the other reversing prefixes such as *mal-*, *a-*, *counter-*, and *anti-*. Likewise, the other four prefixes found in the text (*en-*, *ab-*, *pre-*, *trans-*, *with-*) are also still used till recently though the productiveness of the suffixes are limited now, especially for the prefix *with-*.

The suffixes are more productive in creating the words in English. It is because the suffixes mostly behave as changing the lexical category the words. Thus, many new word categories could be invented through the process of suffixation. As can be assumed

from the analysis, the significant suffixes which are used in forming nouns are *-ion* (*-tion, -ation*) followed by *-ence* (*-ance*) and *-ment*. Meanwhile, the suffix *-ness* is not numerously used in the text. Similarly, the suffixes *-er* /*-or* are frequently used in the text for creating noun which is animate (human).

Besides, the most productive suffix which is used in generating adjectives is *-able* and *-ive*. The suffix *-less* is infrequently used in the text. It can be assumed because of the content of the text which intentionally conceals the weaknesses. By contrast, it shows more on the solidarity and power since it is related to their mission to get the freedom. On the other hand, the most productive suffix in producing the adverb adverbs is *-ly*.

It can be assumed that there is also a case of prediction of words with affixes which are not seen as a derivational morpheme anymore in the present day. They are the words *abdicate*, *assume*, *declare*, *distant*, *impel*, *necessary*, *require*, *respect*, *separate*, and *station*. The argument for this is that, those words are formerly made from the morpheme and the affix but then it becomes permanently assumed as a morpheme alone. For example, the words *abdicate* (originally from Latin, 15th century) is historically formed from the past participle of the word *abdicare* (*ab* + *dicare*). Also, for the word *declare* (originally from Anglo French and Latin, 14th century), it is also made from the word *declarare* (*de* + *clarare*). These days, they are no longer seen as derivations but a single morpheme.

Conclusion

In summary, the text of the *Declaration of Independence* of America shows the amount of word formation and productiveness of the affixes in the late 17th Century. That is, the text consists of numerous affixes in the form of prefixes and suffixes which are still used till nowadays.

Likewise, it can be assumed that the suffixes are more numerous (18 kinds) in the text rather than the prefixes (8 kinds). The found suffixes are more on forming the nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Meanwhile,

the prefixes found are mainly on reversing the meaning (*in-*, *un-*, *dis-*).

Finally, it is important to note that the affixes found are still productive till recently. They are still used in spoken or written text as well as in coinage. Some affixes are survived though the number of words is limited. The examples are on the prefixes *trans-* and *with-* and the suffixes *-tude* and *-some*.

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Online Resources

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<http://dictionary.reference.com>

<http://www.prefixsuffix.com>

<https://www.learnthat.org>

<http://www.macroevolution.net>

[http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix
English_prefixes](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix_English_prefixes)

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