FUNCTIONS OF THE SUFFIX –*MOST* IN ENGLISH

Efrika Siboro
Universitas Katolik Santo Agustinus Hippo, West Kalimantan, Indonesia
correspondence: efrikasiboro@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper explored the functions of the suffix –*most* in English and the formation of new categories of the suffix *-most* by analyzing the words containing it. This quantitative descriptive study collected the data from Wordbyletter.com and the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). The text-based document analysis examined 40 words having the suffix *-most*. Results showed that four functions of the suffix –*most,* namely to form: a noun into an adjective (25%), an adjective into an adjective (45%), an adverb into an adjective (15%), and a preposition into an adjective (15%). It was analyzed that the usage frequency of several words represents all the grammatical categories of the suffix –*most* based on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Firstly, *foremost* functioning as noun formation occurred 7,078 times. Secondly, *lowermost* functioning as adjective formation occurred 40 times. Thirdly, the *uppermost* functioning as adverb formation appeared 532 times. Lastly, *aftermost* functioning as preposition formation occurred twice only.

Keywords: affixation, -most, suffix, word-formation

Introduction
Affixation is the process of adding an affix into a single or complex form (Herman, 2015; Tambusai et al., 2016). Affixation plays an important role in morphology because it is one of the word-formation types that change the meaning of a word (Zainuddin, 2016). Affixation refers to a morphological process that comprises the encasement of affixes to the bases to produce new words (Charles, 2018; Raja, 2014). Tariq et al. (2020) explain that an affix is connected to a free morpheme and a bound morpheme. A free morpheme is defined as a morpheme that can stand alone as a word with a particular meaning, for example, speak, eat, and drink whereas a bound morpheme is a morpheme that cannot stand as a word and it doesn't have a meaning without the addition of root word, for example, dis-, un-, -ly and -ity (Adisutrisno, 2013; Fortes-Galvan & Roxas, 2006; Giyatmi, 2019; Kazemian & Hashemi 2014; Luthfiyati, 2017; Martini, 2016; Maulidia, 2017; Maulidina et al., 2019; Nurjanah et al., 2018; Ramadan, 2015; Rugaiyah, 2018). There are two kinds of affixes. If the affix is put before the basic word it is named a prefix but if the affix is put after the basic word it is called a suffix (Altay, 2006; Bauer, 2003; Brinton & Brinton, 2010; Roaini & Ansar 2019; Somathasan, 2018; Tariq et al., 2020). It means all of the words are bases before the added suffixes or prefixes. On the other side, Aronof

(1994) has a different perspective, he argues infix also includes the part of affix in which the words are inserted within the roots.

In English, an affix that follows the base word is called a suffix (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010). A suffix commonly attached at the end of the base word, such as *-er, -ly, -ful, -dom,* and *-ness*. For instance: cheat-er, proper-ly, beauty-ful, free-dom, weak-ness (Al-Mutmainah, 2014; Halawa, 2017). According to Kolenchery (2015), a suffix cannot stand alone without basic words. It means a suffix needs to be inserted into the root word to create a meaning for example the word readers, consists of two suffixes they are suffixes (-er which means who) and (-s which means more than one), and read is base word. Furthermore, a suffix is classified into two parts namely derivational suffix and inflectional suffix. Somathan (2018) argues derivational suffix is defined as an affix that is added to a certain lexeme to make a new word which possibly changes the class of the word for example the word 'eat' is a verb when the suffix able is inserted to 'eat', then it becomes eatable and is classified as an adjective. While an inflectional suffix is an affix that is added at the end of the word the affixation doesn't change the category of the word. Inflectional suffixes commonly only change the word. for instance, changing from singular to plural (shoe → shoes).

The scope of this study is the formation of affixation. The researchers limited the study which only focuses on the adjective suffix (-most). Many people assume that the word "most" is only used in the formation of adjective superlatives particularly for words having more than one syllable. However, the word "most" also has a function as a suffix, for example, *aftmost, aftermost, backmost, midmost, undermost, westernmost, lowermost,* and *innermost.* All of the words receiving the suffix (-most) are categorized as adjectives but they have different characteristics of basic words. Therefore, the researchers consider choosing this topic to give a better understanding of learning adjective suffixes, especially in learning the suffix (-most). It will help the readers to comprehend the function and the word-formation process of the suffix (-most). Moreover, Herman (2015) states the knowledge of suffixes will help learners or readers enhance their vocabulary. Once the readers know the meaning of a certain prefix, they have a clue related to the meaning of the word and they will be able to recognize the function of a particular word by analyzing or identifying the word.

This study is also supported by several relevant types of research. First, Susilawati and Putri (2018) analyzed the derivation and affixation process in English speech. Their results showed that there were three formations of a derivational process in Speech of Dananjaya Hettiarachchi, namely adjective formation which contains 6 variations in 13 words, noun formation which contains 3 variations in 12 words, adverb formation which contains 3 variations in 3 words, and verb formation which contains 2 variations in 2 words. Second, Luthfiyati et al. (2017) found out there were 52 derivation words with three kinds of derivation processes, namely 17 words of adjective derivation, 26 words of noun derivation, and 9 words of verb derivation. Last, Nur and Kirom (2016) focused on analyzing both suffixes and affixes. The researchers discovered 28 noun makers, 5 verb makers, 29 adjective makers, and 16 adverb makers.

To guide this study, the researchers formulated the following research question: What are the functions of the suffix *-most* in English? It is expected that

this study will assist us in enriching our knowledge of the word-formation in English involving the suffix –*most.*

Method

This study was qualitative and descriptive. The researchers collected the data from Wordbyletter.com and Oxford Learner's Dictionary. The data collection in this study was carried out by using the purposive sampling technique. According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) "The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses". It means the data is obtained by a nonrandom technique. So, the samples of this study are the words receiving the suffix (-most). Based on the sources, forty-six words attach the suffix (-most) to those words.

Regarding data analysis, the researchers took several steps to answer the research questions above. First, the researchers obtained forty-six words that contain the suffix (-most) from Wordbyletter.com by presenting them using a data display. To make data more accurate the researchers used the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). It also helps the researchers to check the function, the base, and the characteristics of the words.

The second step to answer the research question is to analyze the function of the suffix (-most). The researchers classified the root words according to the lexical category and gave simple explanations, drafts, and relation inter categories and flowcharts. By doing this classification, it enables the researchers to decide the function of the suffix (-most) and the characteristics of those words that have the suffix (-most).

Findings and Discussion

The researcher discovered forty words ending with the suffix (-most). All of the base words are free morphemes because they can stand alone as a word. Those words are composed of noun bases, adjective bases, and preposition bases.

Table 1. The formation of new categories of the suffix (-*most)*

Word	Part of Speech	Root	Part of Speech	Suffix	Note
aftermost	adjective	after	preposition	(-most)	preposition maker
aftmost	adjective	aft	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
backmost	adjective	back	adverb	(-most)	adverb maker
bettermost	adjective	back	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
bottommost	adjective	bottom	noun	(-most)	noun maker
easternmost	adjective	eastern	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
endmost	adjective	end	noun	(-most)	noun maker
farmost	adjective	far	adverb	(-most)	adverb maker
farthermost	adjective	farther	adverb	(-ther, -most)	adverb maker
foremost	adjective	fore	noun	(-most)	noun maker

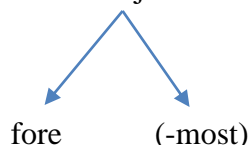| furthermost	adjective	further	adverb	(-most)	adverb maker
headforemost	adjective	head	noun,	(-Fore, -most)	noun maker
headmost	adjective	head	noun	(-most)	noun maker
highmost	adjective	high	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
hindermost	adjective	hind	adjective	(-er, -most)	adjective maker
hindmost	adjective	hind	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
hithermost	adjective	hither	adverb	(-most)	adverb maker
inmost	adjective	in	preposition	(-most)	preposition maker
innermost	adjective	inner	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
lowermost	adjective	low	adjective	(-er, -most)	adjective maker
middlemost	adjective	mid	preposition	(-dle, -most)	preposition maker
midmost	adjective	mid	preposition	(-most)	preposition maker
nethermost	adjective	nether	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
northernmost	adjective	northern	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
northmost	adjective	north	noun	(-most)	noun maker
outermost	adjective	out	adverb	(-er, -most)	adjective maker
outmost	adjective	out	adverb	(-most)	adverb maker
overmost	adjective	over	preposition	(-most)	preposition maker
rearmost	adjective	rear	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
southernmost	adjective	southern	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
southmost	adjective	south	noun	(-most)	noun maker
sternforemost	adjective	stern	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
sternmost	adjective	stern	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
topmost	adjective	top	noun	(-most)	noun maker
undermost	adjective	under	preposition	(-most)	preposition maker
uppermost	adjective	up	adverb	(-er, -most)	adjective maker
uttermost	adjective	utter	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
weathermost	adjective	weather	noun	(-most)	noun maker
westernmost	adjective	western	adjective	(-most)	adjective maker
westmost	adjective	west	noun	(-most)	noun maker

Functions of the suffix (-most)

The suffix (-most) is identified as a bound morpheme and the base that comes from the noun, adjective, verb, adverb, and preposition are free morphemes. After analyzing the data, the researchers discovered four functions of the suffix (-most) they are to change a noun into an adjective, an adjective into an adjective, an adverb into an adjective, and a preposition into an adjective.

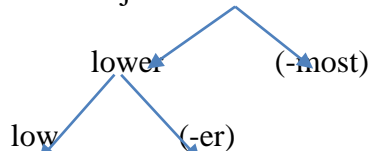Table 2. The number of the function of the suffix *(-most)*

No.	Lexical Category	Frequency	Change Form	Percentage
1.	noun	noun into adjective	10	25%
2.	adjective	adjective into adjective	18	45%
3.	adverb	adverb into adjective	6	15%
4.	preposition	preposition into adjective	6	15%
		Total	40	100

a.   From noun into adjective ➔ foremost

fore   (-most)

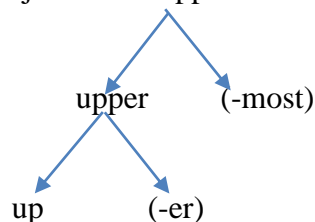The chart above shows the adjective foremost is shaped by the free morpheme *fore* and the bound morpheme *(-most)*. The word *fore* is classified as a noun and *(-most)* is classified as a suffix. The attachment of the suffix *(-most)* has changed the grammatical class /category from a noun into an adjective. Furthermore, the suffix *(-most)* also changed the meaning of the root word. According to the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), *fore* consists of two meanings, firstly to make something to be recognized or noticed by people and secondly to play a significant part. While the word *foremost* is defined as the most well-known or the most important. The usage of *foremost* has a high frequency, such as on the web, blogs, and news. Based on the data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the frequency of foremost is 7078.

b.   From adjective into an adjective ➔lowermost

lower   (-most)
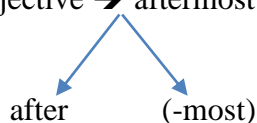
low   (-er)

Lowermost is categorized as a noun base and it contains three morphemes. The word *low* is included as a free morpheme while the suffix *(-most)* and *(-er)* belong to a bound morpheme. The suffixation reveals there is no class alteration in the word *lowermost* but the suffixation process has converted the meaning. *Low* means not tall, it is the opposite of high whereas *lowermost* is defined as the lowest position. Moreover, according to the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the frequency of lowermost is 40.

c.   From adverb into adjective ➔ uppermost

upper   (-most)

up   (-er)

Uppermost consists of three morphemes. The word *up* belongs to free morpheme whereas the suffix *(-most)* and *(-er)* are classified as bound morphemes. The addition of the suffixes *(-most)* and *(-er)* transmutes the grammatical category and meaning of the base word. The chart above shows the lexical category of the word base is an adverb and after the suffixation, it turns into an adjective. The word *up* refers to a higher position or level and *uppermost* means nearer to the top of the most important position. In addition, the word *uppermost* is quite often used on various platforms. The data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English representing the frequency of the word *uppermost* is 532.

d.   From preposition into adjective ➜ aftermost

<div align="center">

after   (-most)

</div>

The chart above represents the word *aftermost* containing two morphemes they are *after* which are classified as free morphemes and the suffix *(-most)* as a bound morpheme. The insertion of the suffix *(-most)* at the end of the based word converts the grammatical category from preposition to adjective. The suffixation also affects the meaning of the base word. *After* means later than something or the following something in time while *aftermost* is defined as the nearest position to the stern of a ship. The usage of *aftermost* is extremely rare. According to the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the frequency of the word *aftermost* is two.

Conclusion

In this study, the researchers gathered and analyzed 40 words that are enclosed to the suffix *(-most)*. The suffix *(-most)* is categorized as a bound morpheme because it cannot stand alone without the root word. Besides, the suffix *(-most)* is also identified as a derivational suffix because it can create or shape a new adjectival word. Based on the analysis above, the suffix *(-most)* has four functions namely to change a noun into an adjective, an adjective into an adjective, an adverb into an adjective, and a preposition into an adjective. Noun formation consists of 10 data (25%), adjective formation consists of 18 data (45%), adverb formation consists of 6 data (15%), and preposition formation consists of 6 data (15%). Furthermore, the researchers analyzed the usage frequency of the words that are used on various platforms, such as websites, blogs, and news. The data was taken from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The researchers took four words from forty to be analyzed that represent each grammatical category and function. Firstly, the word *foremost* is included in noun formation, the frequency of the word is 7078. Secondly, the word *lowermost* is included in adjective formation, the frequency of the word is 40. Thirdly, the word *uppermost* is included in adverb formation, the frequency of the word is 532. The last is the word *aftermost* which is included in preposition formation, the frequency of the word is only twice.

References

Adisutrisno, D. W. (2013). English morphology. *Magister Scientiae*, (33), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.33508/mgs.v0i33.607

Al-Mutmainah., Jos, E., Ohoiwutun., Waris, A. (2014). Teaching derivational suffixes to improve the vocabulary mastery through reading text. *E-Journal of English Language Teaching Society (ELTS), 2*(1), 1-11.

Altay, İ. (2006). Ways of creating prefixes and suffixes and foreign language teaching. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *2*(1), 56-71.

Aronoff, M. (1994). *Morphology by itself*. London: MIT Press.

Bauer, L. (2003). *Introducing linguistic morphology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Brinton, L. J., & Brinton, D. (2010). *The linguistic structure of modern English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Charles, O., B. (2018). Affixation in Uwu language. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: G Linguistics & Education, 18*(11), 34-39.

Davies, M. (2008) The corpus of contemporary American English (COCA): 520 million words, 1990-present. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/.

Etikan, I,. Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R.S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Fortes-Galvan, F. C., & Roxas, R. E. (2006, November). A constraint-based morphological analyzer for concatenative and non-concatenative morphology. In *Proceedings of the 20th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation* (pp. 273-279).

Giyatmi, G. (2019). Morphology for English language teaching. *Proceeding of the 2nd ICoLLiT (International Conference on Language, Literature, and Teaching) 2019*.

Halawa, A. (2017). An analysis of derivational and inflectional English morphemes. *Jurnal Ilmiah Langue and Parole*, *1*(1), 132-144. https://doi.org/10.36057/jilp.v1i1.13

Haspelmath M., & Sims, A.D. (2010). *Understanding morphology* (2nd ed.). London: Hodder Education.

Herman, H. (2015). Suffixes found in narrative writing at grade eight of SMP Methodist Pematangsiantar. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 20*(4), 40-48. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-20444048

Kazemian, B., & Hashemi, S. (2014). A contrastive linguistic analysis of inflectional bound morphemes of English, Azerbaijani and Persian languages: A comparative study. *Journal of Education & Human Development*, *3*(1), 593-614.

Kolenchery, G. (2015). Analytical components of morphology in linguistics. *Global English-Oriented Research Journal*, *1*(1), 161-166. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.5082.7609

Lieber, R. (2009). *Introducing morphology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Luthfiyati, D., Kholiq, A., & Zahroh, I. N. M. (2017). The analysis of word formation processes in the Jakarta Post website. *Linguistic, English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal*, *1*(1), 30-36. https://doi.org/10.31539/leea.v1i1.30

Martini, I. D. A. K. (2016). Derivational of bound morpheme. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences*, *3*(1), 15-22.

Maulidia, S. N., Brilian, A., Safitri, M., Firdaus, R., Evansam, R. G., & Siswanto, A. (2017). Morpheme analysis of English language. *JOSAR (Journal of Students Academic Research)*, *2*(1), 37-47.

Maulidina, S., Indriyani, F., Mardewi, T. (2019). Derivational and inflectional morphemes in the Jakarta Post. *Journal of English and Teaching Research, 4*(2), 104-122. https://doi.org/10.29407/jetar.v4i2.13625

Nur, D. R., & Kirom, A. (2016). An analysis of derivational affixes in commencement speech by Steve Jobs. *Script Journal: Journal of Linguistic and English Teaching*, *1*(1), 25-35. http://dx.doi.org/10.24903/sj.v1i1.18

Nurjanah, S. Y., Ramdhaniah, A., & Efransyah, M. (2018). Affixation of derivational and inflectional process in narrative text entitled the ugly duckling. *Project (Professional Journal of English Education)*, *1*(3), 309-318. https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v1i3.p309-318

Oxford English Dictionary. (2020). London: Oxford University Press.

Raja, L. V. (2014). Word formation: A morphological analysis. *Journal of Language and Literature, 14*(1), 81-86. https://doi.org/10.24071/joll.v14i1.401

Ramadan, S. (2015). Morphological errors made by Jordanian university students. *Romanian Journal of English Studies*, *12*(1), 40-49. http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/rjes-2015-0006

Roaini, R., & Ansar, F. A. (2019). Prefix and suffix analysis in relation with students English ability. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, *12*(1), 49-62.

Rugaiyah, R. (2018). Derivational and inflectional morphemes: A morphological analisis. *J-SHMIC (Journal of English for Academic), 5*(2), 73-86. https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2018.vol5(2).1887

Somathasan, M. (2018). The study of affixes (prefixes and suffixes): An ESL and innovative approach. *International Journal of Applied Research, 4*(11), 1-5.

Susilawati, S., & Putri, F. B. (2018). Derivation and affixation process in speech of Dananjaya Hettiarachchi. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, *1*(3), 217-224. https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v1i3.p217-224

Tambusai, A., Nasution, K., Widayati, D., & Jufrizal, J. (2016) Morphological typology of affixes in Riau Malay Azhary Tambusai. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6*(8), 43-53.

Tariq, T.R., Abid, M., Sultan, B., Asif, M., & Rafique, N. (2020). An Analysis of Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes. *International Journal of Linguistics, 12*(01), 83-91. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i1.16084

Word ending with suffix (-most). (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.wordbyletter.com

Zainuddin. (2016). A study on derivational affixes of Indonesian noun-formation in newspaper editorial: A semantic perspective. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *6*(3), 148–155.