Morphological Analysis of Derivational and Inflectional Affixes from Meghan Trainor's Selected Song

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of derivational and inflectional affixes in selected songs by Meghan Trainor. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyzes 10 of Trainor's songs to identify and classify affixes based on their morphological functions. The results show that inflectional affixes dominate the lyrics, with a total of 77 occurrences compared to 27 derivational affixes. This indicates that the lyrics frequently feature inflectional affixes to convey grammatical functions such as tenses, plurality, and comparison. This finding may suggest a tendency in similar English pop lyrics tend to use inflectional affixes to maintain grammatical structure while supporting rhythmic flow.

Keywords: *Affixes; Derivational; Inflectional; Morphology; Songs*

Introduction

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and how they are formed from smaller units called morphemes. The smallest unit in English linguistics which form a word is morpheme (Maulidina et al., 2019). There are two main types of morphemes: free morphemes, which can stand alone as words, and bound morphemes, which cannot stand alone and usually function as affixes. Bound morphemes, which can be categorized into prefixes, infixes, and suffixes.

Affixes, bound morphemes, function by attaching to free morphemes in the process of word formation. According to Kusumawardhani (2020), "Affixation is a morphological process which is supposed to change a root or base word to form a new word" (p.9). In this process, affixes serve two main functions: inflectional and derivational (Handoko, 2019). Derivational affixes form new words and often change the meaning or grammatical category of the base word (Efransyah, 2019). While inflectional affixes do not alter the word class but rather indicate grammatical aspects such as tense, number, or possession(Wulandari et al., 2023). Affixes may appear at the beginning (prefixes), in the middle (infixes), or at the end (suffixes) of words (Katamba, 2006). In English, prefixes and suffixes are common, while infixes are rarely used.

Meghan Trainor is one of the most influential and successful pop singer songwriters of the last decade. Her widespread popularity means that her lyrics have significant reach and influence on global audiences, making her an ideal subject for analyzing linguistic trends in pop music. Trainor's writing style is known for its informal and conversational use of language. The use of conversational language makes her songs memorable and easy to understand, while also offering valuable material for linguistic analysis, especially in relation to how words are formed and modified.

Trainor frequently employs affixes in creative and meaningful ways. These morphological elements help shape the tone and message of her lyrics, contributing to their simplicity and expressive power. Analyzing the use of affixes in her songs can reveal how she constructs meaning and reinforces her messages through morphological choices. Her lyrics serve as rich data for exploring how bound morphemes are used to modify, extend, and create new words in contemporary English pop music.

Meghan Trainor achieved global success following the release of her debut song "All About That Bass" in 2014, which topped the Billboard Hot 100 and earned her several Grammy Award nominations (Lindsay, 2014). Beyond her commercial success, Trainor is widely recognized for her impactful lyrics that address themes such as body positivity, female empowerment, and social critique. These characteristics make her a highly relevant subject for linguistic analysis, as her lyrics represent more than just entertainment; they also reflect contemporary cultural discourse, expressed through accessible language and

morphological creativity.

Although Meghan Trainor has received many global musical achievements and industry recognition, unfortunately her works have rarely been studied in depth from a linguistic perspective, especially in morphological analysis. Most previous studies have focused on other artists and albums. For example, Toruan (2023) examined morphemes in Calum Scott's *Bridges* album, while Afri S Maulina (2021) analyzed Adele's album. Another study by Siregar S Siregar (2021) explored derivational affixes in Harris Jung's *Salam* album, revealing the dominance of derivational suffixes. These studies tend to focus on one complete album by a particular artist and show a pattern of limited exploration in this domain. However, none have addressed the morphological aspects of Meghan Trainor's lyrics specifically.

Therefore, this study aims to fill that research gap by conducting a comprehensive morphological analysis of selected songs by Meghan Trainor. It explores how she uses inflectional and derivational affixes to create meaningful, catchy, memorable lyrics. It specifically investigates how inflectional affixes are used in her songs and their grammatical functions, as well as how derivational affixes contribute to the formation of new words or the modification of existing meanings. By addressing these aspects, this research seeks to provide new insights into morphological creativity in popular music and contribute to a broader understanding of word formation practices in contemporary English.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research method to analyze the use of inflectional and derivational affixes in Meghan Trainor's songs. Qualitative research involves exploring and understanding human experiences and social phenomena through interpretive and descriptive approaches (Creswell, 2018). The research applies a descriptive analysis design, which focuses on identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the affixes found in selected song lyrics.

A total of 10 songs by Meghan Trainor were selected as data sources. These songs represent different stages of Trainor's musical career and showcase a variety of linguistic features and word formations in the lyrics. This selection allows for a comprehensive analysis of morphological processes in contemporary English. The selected songs are as follows:

1) All About That Bass
2) Like I'm Gonna Lose You
3) No
4) My Selfish Heart
5) I'm a Lady
6) Dear Future Husband
7) Made You Look

8) Me Too
9) I Wanna Thank Me
10) Bad For Me

The research primarily identifies the basic types of affixes; prefixes, suffixes, and infixes; based on Katamba's (2006) theory. To distinguish between inflectional and derivational affixes, the study refers to standard morphological criteria such as whether the affix changes the grammatical category of the word (derivational) or simply adjusts tense, number, or aspect without changing word class (inflectional).

To ensure inter-rater reliability, the researcher collaborated with a linguistics expert from the university, who independently cross-checked the identification and classification of affixes. Differences in interpretation were discussed and resolved through consensus to ensure consistency and accuracy in the analysis. Ambiguous cases, such as affixes with unclear functions, were carefully reviewed by both raters, and decisions were based on contextual function in the lyrics and supported by reference materials on English morphology.

The main instrument in this research is the researcher, who plays a central role in data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Yoon S Uliassi, 2022). Additional instruments include the printed lyric sheets of the ten selected songs, and a categorization framework for affix classification. The data collection was conducted through documentation using a note-taking technique. The researcher read and re-read the song lyrics thoroughly to identify all words containing affixes. The affixes were then categorized into inflectional or derivational, and the results were presented in tabular form to show the distribution of affix types across songs.

The data analysis was conducted in several stages. The first stage was comprehension, in which the researcher read the lyrics closely to understand the structure and patterns of word formation. The second stage was identification, where affixed words were marked. The third stage was classification, in which each affix was categorized by type (inflectional or derivational). The final stage was morphological interpretation, where the grammatical functions of the affixes were explained based on morphological theory.

Results

The morphological analysis of ten selected Meghan Trainor songs revealed a total of 108 affixed words. Among them, 77 were classified as inflectional affixes (74,04%) and 27 as derivational affixes (25,96%). These findings show that inflectional affixes were more dominant than derivational ones in Trainor's lyrics.

Distribution of Affixes in Meghan Trainor's Songs
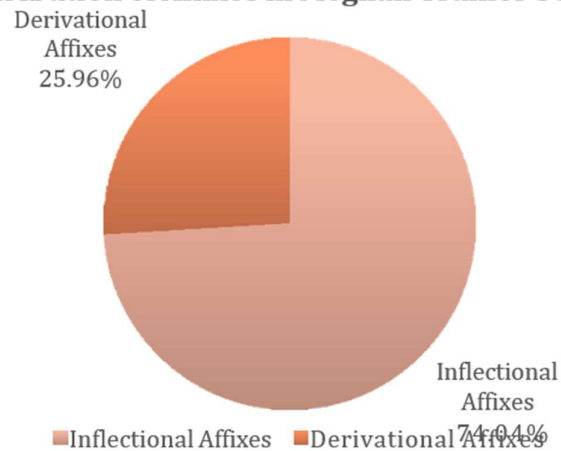
Affixes found in the data consisted of prefixes and suffixes. No infixes were identified. The analysis below is organized into two categories: derivational and inflectional affixes. Each category includes representative examples from various songs and is followed by an observation of general patterns.

Table 1. Derivational Affixes

No	Title of Song	Word	Affixes			Base Word	Derivatio nal	Many of Derivatio nal
			Prefi x es	Infi x es	Suffi x es			
1	All Abou t That Bass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	*Dear Futur Husb an d*	*disagre ee*	dis-			*agree*	*verb into verb (negation)*	6
		dirty			*-y*	*dirt*	*noun into adj*	
		classy			*-y*	*dirt*	*noun into adj*	

		loving				-ing	love	noun/verb into adj	
		beautiful				-ful	beauty	noun into adj	
		apologize				-ize	apology	noun into verb	
3	Like I'm Gonna Lose You	disappeared	dis-				appear	verb into verb (negation)	2
		realize				-ize	real	adj into noun	
4	My Selfish Heart	selfish				-ish	self	noun into adj	3
		lovely				-ly	love	noun into adj	
		hopefully				-ful; - ly	hope	noun into adj into adv	
5	No	encourage	en-				courage	noun into verb	5
		beautiful				-ful	beauty	noun into adj	

		priority			*-ity*	*prior*	*adj into noun*	
		personal			*-al*	*perso n*	*noun into adj*	
		untouc ha ble	*un-*		*-able*	*touch*	*adj into adj (negation*	
6	*Me*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Too							
7	I'm a Lad y	cutie			-ie	cute	adj int o noun	3
		leader			-er	lead	verb into noun	
		judgy			-y	judge	noun/v er b into adj	
8	Ba d Fo r Me	endlessly			-ly	endl e ss	adj int o adv	4
		selfish			-ish	self	noun into adj	
		reality			-ity	real	adj int o noun	
		therapist			-ist	ther a py	noun into noun (specifyi n g	

							a person)	
9	Made You Look	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	I Wanna Thank Me	remind	re-			mind	noun into verb	2
		bestie			-ie	best	adj into noun	
			5	-	22			
	Total							**27**

1. Derivational Affixes

   Derivational affixes are morphemes that change either the meaning or the grammatical category of a base word (Halawa, 2021; Samosir, 2023). These affixes may appear as prefixes or suffixes, and while English rarely employs infixes, none were found in this data set. The analysis revealed that derivational affixes frequently function to shift word classes or add new layers of meaning to base forms. Across the data, derivational affixes were found in various songs, often enriching lyrical expression.

   a. Prefixes
   Dis Data 1: "Why **disagree**?" (Dear Future Husband)
   The word **disagree** functioned as a verb and consists of the prefix **dis**- combined with the root word **agree**. The word **agree** was a verb that meant "to have the same opinion" or "to accept a suggestion or idea." This word had a positive meaning, indicating harmony or acceptance. When the prefix **dis**- was added to the root word **agree**, it changed the meaning to the opposite. The prefix **dis**- in English was commonly used to form words with a negative or opposite meaning. Therefore, **disagree** means "to have a different opinion" or "to not accept or approve of something."

a) un-

Data 16: "**Untouchable**, untouchable (uh, I'm feeling)" (No)The word **untouchable** is a morphologically complex word formed through both prefixation and suffixation. It consists of three elements: the prefix **un-**, the root **touch**, and the suffix -**able**. The root **touch** functions as a verb meaning "to make contact." The suffix -**able** is a derivational suffix that attaches to verbs and forms adjectives expressing the idea of capability or possibility. When added to **touch**, it produces the adjective **touchable**, meaning "capable of being touched." To this, the prefix **un-** is attached at the beginning, serving as a derivational prefix that negates the meaning of the base. As a result, **untouchable** means "not capable of being touched." Although the word involves both prefixation and suffixation; making it a clear case of double affixation; the overall word class remains unchanged as an adjective. This demonstrates how multiple derivational affixes can work together to create a new, semantically opposite form while maintaining grammatical consistency.

b) en-

Data 14: "How you let your friends **encourage**" (Me Too)The prefix **en-** was added to a verb to form a new verb that often meant "to cause to" or "to put into" a certain state or condition. In the phrase "**encourage**", the root word was **courage**, which meant "**bravery**" or "the ability to face fear or difficulty". When the prefix **en-** was added, it transformed the noun courage into verb "**encourage**", which meant "to give someone courage" or " to inspire someone to be confident and hopeful".

c) re-

Data 25: "... to **remind** me I'm sexy" (Like I'm Gonna Lose You) In the word **remind**, the root word was **mind**, which means "to remember" or "to pay attention." When the prefix **re-** is added, it formed the verb **remind**, which meant "to cause someone to remember something again" or "to bring something back to someone's attention."

b. Suffixes

a) -y

Data 2 : "Don't have a **dirty** mind" (All About That Bass) In the word **"dirty mind,"** the word **dirty** was derived from the noun **dirt** by adding the suffix **-y**. The root word **dirt** meant "unclean substance," and by adding **-y**, it became **dirty**, an adjective meant "characterized by dirt" or "unclean."

Data 19 : "To all those **judgy** eyes" (I'm a Lady)

In this word, the word **judgy** was classified as an adjective. This word was formed by adding the suffix **-y** to the root word **judge**. **Judge** is a noun or verb that means "a person who forms opinions" or "to form an opinion." When the suffix **-y** was added, the word became an informal adjective that meant "characterized by judging" or "being critical" which described something or someone that shows a judgmental attitude.

b) -ing

Data 4 : "If you wanna get that special **lovin'**" (Dear Future Husband)

The word **lovin'** iwas a colloquial form of **loving**, which was derived from the verb **love** by adding the suffix **-ing**. The root word **love** was a verb meaning "to feel deep affection or care for someone or something." The suffix **-ing** was a derivational and inflectional suffix that could form the present participle or gerund form of verbs. In this case, **loving** functioned as a noun (gerund) referring to the act or experience of love. In "special lovin'," **lovin'** was a gerund noun, so the word class changed from verb to noun.

c) -ful

Data 13 : "Call me beautiful, so original" (No)The word **beautiful** was classified as an adjective. It was formed by adding the suffix -**ful** to the root word **beauty.** The root **beauty** was a noun that meant "the quality of being pleasing or attractive." When the suffix **-ful** was added, it changed the noun into an adjective that meant "full of beauty" or "having the quality of beauty," which described someone who had beauty.

d) -ize

Data 6 : "After every fight, Just **apologize**" (Dear Future Husband) The word **apologize** functioned as a verb in this sentence. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ize** to the noun **apology**. The root **apology** meant "an expression of regret or asking for forgiveness." By attaching **-ize**, the word changed into a verb that meant "to make an apology" or "to express regret." Therefore, **apologize** meant to perform the action of expressing regret or saying sorry.

Data 8 : "A breath of relief, And I **realized**"(Like I'm Gonna Loose You) The word **realized** was used as a verb in this sentenc e. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ize** to the root word **real**. The root **real** was an adjective that meant "existing or true." When the suffix **-ize** was added, it changed the adjective into a verb that meant "to make real" or "to become aware of something." The suffix **-ize** thus turned **real** into **realize**, indicating the action of becoming aware or

understanding something clearly.

e) -ity

Data 15 : "But it's never my **priority** (hey)" (No) The word **priority** functioned as a noun in this sentence. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ity** to the adjective **prior**. The root **prior** meant "earlier" or "previous." By adding the suffix **-ity**, the word changed into a noun that meant "the state or quality of being prior" or "something that is regarded as more important." Therefore, **priority** referred to something that was considered more important or came first.

f) -al

Data 16 : "Don't want you to take this **personal**" (No) The word **personal** functioned as an adjective. It was derived by adding the suffix **-al** to the noun **person**. The root **person** meant "an individual human being." With the addition of **-al**, the word became an adjective that meant "relating to a person" or "private." Therefore, **personal** described something that concerned or belonged to an individual.

g) -ish

Data 9 : "My **selfish** heart wasn't bit no good to you" (My Selfish Heart) The word **selfish** functioned as an adjective. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ish** to the root word **self**. The root **self** was a noun that meant"one's own person or identity." By attaching the suffix **-ish**, the word became an adjective that meant "characterized by concern for oneself." Thus, **selfish** described a person who was primarily concerned with their own interests.

h) -ly

Data 10: "One day you'll marry such a **lovely** wife" (My Selfish heart) The word **lovely** was used as an adjective in this sentence. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ly** to the root word **love**. The root **love** was a noun that meant "deep affection or care." By adding the suffix **-ly**, the word changed into an adjective that meant "full of love" or "attractive in a loving way." The suffix **-ly** here functioned as a derivational suffix that transformed the noun **love** into the adjective **lovely**, describing someone or something that inspired affection or delight.

Data 21: "No matter what, I'll love you **endlessly**" (Bad For Me) The word **endlessly** functioned as an adverb. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ly** to the adjective **endless**. The root endless meant "without end" or "infinite." By attaching the suffix **-ly**, the word changed into an adverb that described the manner of loving" in a way that has no end." The suffix -**ly** served as a derivational suffix that transformed the

adjective **endless** into the adverb **endlessly**, indicating how the action was performed.

i) -able

Data 16: "**Untouchable**, untouchable…" (No) The word **untouchable** was an adjective formed by adding the suffix **-able** to the verb **touch** with the prefix **un-**.   The root **touch** meant "to make physical contact." The suffix **- able** indicated **ability or capacity**, meaning "capable of being touched." With the prefix **un-** meaning "not," **untouchable** meant "not able to be touched." The suffix **-able** was a derivational suffix that created adjectives expressing the ability or potential for the action of the root verb.

j) -er

Data 18: "I won't play, follow the **leader"** (I'm a Lady)

The word **leader** functioned as a noun. It was formed by adding the suffix **-er** to the verb **lead**. The root **lead** meant "to guide or direct." By attaching the suffix **-er**, the word became a noun that meant "a person who leads." The suffix **-er** is a derivational suffix that creates nouns indicating someone who performed the action of the root verb. Therefore,   **leader** referred to an individual who guided or directed others.

k) -ie

Data 17: "Yes, I'm a **cutie** in my own way" (I'm a Lady) The word **cutie** is a noun used in this sentence. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ie** to the adjective **cute**. The root **cute** meant "attractive or charming." By adding the suffix **-ie**, the word became a noun that referred to "a person or thing that is cute." The suffix **-ie** is a derivational suffix that created informal or affectionate nouns, often used to express endearment or familiarity. Thus, **cutie** described someone who is charming or lovable.

l) -ist

Data 23: "And my, my **therapist** told me to write" (Bad For Me) The word **therapist** functioned as a noun in this sentence. It was formed by adding the suffix **-ist** to the noun **therapy**. The root **therapy** meant "treatment intended to relieve or heal a disorder." By attaching the suffix **-ist**, the word changed into a noun that referred to "a person who practices or specializes in therapy." Although both **therapy** and **therapist** were nouns, the suffix **-ist** was considered a derivational suffix because it created a new word with a different meaning by specifying a person associated with or specialized in the base noun. This suffix changed the semantic role of the word, turning a general

concept **therapy** into a specific agent or practitioner **therapist.**

Table 2. Inflectional Affixes

N o.	Title of Song	Word	Affixes			Base word	Inflectional	Many of Derivati onal
			Prefi xes	Infi xes	Suffi xes			
1	All About That Bass	supposed			-ed	suppose	verb into verb (past tense)	7
		places			-d	place	noun into noun (plural)	
		workin'			-ing	work	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)	
		says			-s	say	verb into verb (third person singular)	
		bringing			-ing	bring	verb into verb (present	
							participle/ge rund)	
		playing			-ing	play	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)	
		boys			-s	boy	noun into noun (plural	
2	Dear Future Husband	things			-s	thing	noun into noun (plural)	
		flowers			-s	flower	noun into noun (plural)	

		buying		-ing	buy	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		grocerie s		-ies	grocer y	noun into noun (plural)
		thinking		-ing	think	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		baking		-ing	bake	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		learned		-ed	learn	verb into verb (past tense)
		acting		-ing	act	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		lovin'		-ing	love	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		sleeping		-ing	sleep	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		kisses		-es	kiss	verb into verb (plural
3	Like I'm Gonn	promise d		-d	promi se	verb into verb (past tense)
	a Loose You	pulled		-ed	pull	verb into verb (past tense)
		disappe ared		-ed	disapp ear	verb into verb (past tense)
		standin g		-ng	stand	verb into verb (present

						participle/ge rund)
		saying		-ing	say	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		dreamin g		-ing	dream	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		knows		-s	know	verb into verb (third person singular)
4	My Selfis h Heart	intende d		-ed	intend	verb into verb (past tense)
		breaks		-s	break	verb into verb (third person singular)
		focused		-ed	focus	verb into verb (past tense)
		pulls		-s	pull	verb into verb (third person singular)
		swervin g		-ing	swerv	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		deservi ng		-ing	deserv e	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
5	No	friends		-s	friend	noun into noun (plural)
		runnin'		-ing	run	verb into verb (present participle/ge

							rund)
		thinking			-ing	think	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		believin g			-ing	believ e	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		telling			-ing	tell	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		giving			-ing	give	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		ladies			-ies	lady	noun into noun (plural)
		lips			-s	lip	noun into noun (plural)
		hips			-s	hip	noun into noun (plural)
		hands			-s	hand	noun into noun (plural)
		feeling			-ing	feel	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		girls			-s	girl	noun into noun (plural)
6	Me Too	standin g			-ing	stand	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		hanging			-ing	hang	verb into verb (present participle/ge rund)
		feelin'			-ing	feel	verb into verb (present participle/ge

							rund)
		loving			-ing	love	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		drinks			-s	drink	verb into verb (third person singular)
		tried			-ed	try	verb into verb (past tense)
7	I'm a Lady	sweeter			-er	sweet	adj into adj (comparative)
		worried			-ed	worry	verb into verb (past tense)
		girls			-s	girl	noun into noun (plural)
8	Bad For Me	hurting			-ing	hurt	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		promise s			-s	promi se	verb into verb (third person singular)
		intentions			-s	intention	noun into noun (plural)
		dies			-s	die	verb into verb (third person singular)
		gets			-s	get	verb into verb (third person singular)
		sometimes			-s	sometime	adv into adv (plural)
9	Made	hotter			-er	hot	adj into adj

	You Look				(comparative)
		ladies	-ies	lady	noun into noun (plural)
10	I Wanna Thank me	believin g	-ing	believ e	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		clappin'	-ing	clap	verb into verb
					(present participle/gerund)
		reads	-s	read	verb into verb (third person singular)
		wanted	-ed	want	verb into verb (past tense)
		lookin'	-ing	look	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		workin'	-ing	work	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		talkin'	-ing	talk	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		hatin'	-ing	hate	verb into verb (present participle/gerund)
		tries	-es	try	verb into verb (third person singular)
		worlds	-s	world	noun into noun (plural)

2828

	-	-	77			
Total						77

2. Inflectional Affixes

Inflectional affixes do not create new words or change grammatical categories; instead, they express grammatical relations such as tense, plurality, and comparison (Guna et al., 2024; Yastanti et al., 2021). In English, these affixes appear only as suffixes.

Inflectional affixes adapt words to grammatical rules without forming new words. For example, the addition of "-es" or "-ed" to a verb does not change the base word but adapts it for a specific subject or a specific time (Cahayaningrum, 2025). Their main role was to help fit words into the grammatical framework of sentences without producing new vocabulary items. All prefixes in English were derivational (Martini, 2016). Therefore, inflectional affixes in English were only found as suffixes, because prefixes are used to create new words or change meaning.

3. Suffixes

a. -ed/d (past tense)

Data 19: "No, we're not **promised** tomorrow" (Like I'm Gonna Loose You) The word **promised** was the past participle of **promise**, formed by adding the inflectional suffix **-ed**. In "we're not promised,"**-ed** marked the past participle in a passive construction, showing that the action was not guaranteed for the subject.

b. -s/ies (plural)

Data 2: "And all the right junk in all the right **places**" (All About That Bass); Data 11: "Buying **groceries**...." (Dear Future Husband)

The word **places** and **groceries** are plural forms formed by adding -**s** and -**ies** respectively. The root **place** referred to a location or area. The root **grocery** referred to food or other goods sold in a grocery store. The suffix -**ies** indicated more than one grocery item. The base nouns remain unchanged in category.

c. -s (third person singular)

Data 70: "She never **reads** the teleprompter (uh-huh)" (I Wanna Thank Me) The word **reads** is formed by adding the inflectional suffix -s to the base verb **read**. In this sentence, the suffix **-s** indicates that the subject (she) is a third person singular noun in the present tense. This inflectional form shows subject-verb agreement, marking that the action of reading is performed habitually or currently by a third person singular subject. The word class remains a verb

d. -ing (present participle/gerund)

Data 51: "That's me, **standin'** in the mirrtor" (Me Too) The word **standin'**

is a colloquial spelling of ***standing,*** which is formed by adding the inflectional suffix ***-ing*** to the base verb *stand*. In this context**, *standing*** functions as a present participle describing the subject (me) in a continuous action. The suffix ***-ing*** does not alter the word class; it remains a verb, but marks the verb for its ongoing aspect, indicating that the action is happening at the moment of speaking.

e. -er (comparative) Data 66: "But I'm **hotter** when my morning hair's a mess" (Made You Look) The word **hotter** is the comparative form of the adjective **hot**, created by adding the inflectional suffix **-er**. This suffix indicates a comparison of degree, showing that the speaker considers herself to be more attractive or more appealing in the described condition (when my morning hair's a mess). The addition of -**er** does not change the word class; hot remains an adjective, but rather marks it for comparative meaning, a grammatical function typical of inflectional morphology.

Discussion

Katamba (2006) distinguished between inflectional and derivational affixes in morphological studies. He explained that the inflectional process was related to syntactic rules that were predictable, automatic, systematic, consistent, and did not change the lexical identity of a word. In other words, inflectional affixes only modified the form of a word to meet grammatical requirements without creating a new word or changing their basic meaning (Bagiya, 2017). In contrast, derivational affixes tended to be unpredictable, did not appear automatically, and often changed the word class and lexical identity of the base form (Mutaqin et al., 2023).

The findings of this study align with Katamba's framework: inflectional affixes were more frequently used than derivational ones in Meghan Trainor's lyrics. This suggests that her songs prioritized grammatical clarity and rhythmic cohesion rather than lexical innovation. The use of inflectional endings such as *-ed*, *-s*, and *-ing* helped structure verb tense, aspect, and plurality; features that support the fluency, rhyme, and natural flow of pop lyrics.

In line with previous findings, a similar pattern was identified in a study by Toruan (2023), who analyzed lyrics from Calum Scott's *Bridges* album and found 99 inflectional morphemes compared to 50 derivational ones. Like Trainor, Scott frequently used inflectional affixes, especially endings such as *-s*, *-ed*, and *-ing*. Toruan concluded that this trend reflected the grammatical demands of English, particularly in song lyrics, which prioritize clarity and rhythmic flow.

While Katamba's theory provides a solid foundation, other morphological scholars such as (Booij, 2010) and (Bauer, 2001) offer complementary insights. Booij emphasizes the interface between morphology and phonology in song lyrics, which may explain the preference for inflectional suffixes that maintain syllabic balance and rhythm. Bauer, on the other hand, discusses productivity in affixation,

helping us understand why derivational processes are less common in lyrics, where simplicity and immediate comprehension are key.The dominance of inflectional affixes in song lyrics could also be interpreted from a usage-based perspective. Pop music, being a form of mass communication, often mirrors spoken discourse; where grammatical markers are essential for processing meaning quickly. Moreover, since lyrics are constrained by melody, artists may favor grammatical forms that are predictable and easily integrated into musical phrasing.

One possible limitation of this study is the focus on only one artist, which restricts generalizability. However, the comparative insight from Toruan (2023) and theoretical support from multiple sources help validate the findings. Further research could include artists from different genres or linguistic backgrounds to explore whether the prevalence of inflectional morphology is consistent across the broader landscape of contemporary music.Overall, both studies highlighted a consistent linguistic pattern in English pop songs, namely the tendency to use inflectional affixes to mark time, number, and level of comparison, without changing the basic meaning of the word. This finding supported Katamba's (2006) opinion that inflectional morphology was systematic, organized, and played an essential role in maintaining fluency and cohesion in lyrical composition.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that inflectional affixes are more dominant than derivational ones, with 77 instances of inflectional affixes compared to 27 derivational affixes. This dominance suggests that grammatical features such as tense, plurality, and comparison are more frequently emphasized in Meghan Trainor's lyrics than the creation of entirely new words.

While this finding aligns with previous research, such as Toruan (2023) , who also identified inflectional affixes as more dominant in Calum Scott's lyrics, it is important to note that this conclusion is limited to the specific data set used; ten songs selected from Meghan Trainor's discography. The generalization of this result to all of Trainor's songs or to pop music in general should be made with caution. Another limitation of this study is its qualitative descriptive approach, which focused primarily on classification and frequency rather than deeper syntactic or semantic analysis of affix usage

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