



## Exploring Dominant Derivational Suffixes and Their Rhetorical Purposes in Motivational Speech

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### Abstract

*This study analyzes the use of derivational suffixes in Emily Jaenson's speech to understand how morphological processes contribute to rhetorical meaning within motivational discourse. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research examines 17 derivational suffixes found in the speech, including those forming nouns from verbs (-ion, -ment, -ance), nouns from adjectives (-ship), adjectives from a noun (-ful), and a suffix forming adverbs from adjectives (-ly). The analysis specifically focuses on how these derivational forms function in shaping the speaker's message about confidence building, personal development, and professional growth by knowing the dominant use of derivational suffixes in Emily Jaenson's speech and what their rhetorical effects are on the meaning conveyed. The findings show that nouns formed through dominate the speech, such as celebration, recollection, decision, promotion, action, accomplishment, management, engagement, performance, and leadership. These nouns help the speaker talk about big ideas instead of just actions, so the audience focuses on thinking, learning, and personal growth. Each noun has a special meaning and most of those words have the same purpose in meaning. The results show that derivational suffixes are not only language features but also persuasive tools that make the speech more motivational. By creating nouns that describe processes, progress, and achievements, the speaker builds a message that inspires the audience to think about their own development. The study concludes that derivational suffixes are important for making ideas clear, keeping the audience engaged, and supporting the motivational message of the speech.*

## 1. Introduction

Public speaking is one of the most important interpersonal skills for both our everyday lives and careers. When giving a public speech, voice is the primary channel for the speaker to communicate with the audience. Therefore, voice modulation, the manipulation of vocal properties, has a great influence on audience engagement and the delivery of presentations (Wang, 2020). When talking about public speaking, it always relates to language. We know that language is one of the most important aspects of a human's life. According to (Guna, Lehon, Sapong, Sambora, Kurnianto, 2024), Language is integral to human existence, serving as the primary means of communication in our daily lives.

Language is a tool for communication; however we know that one of the most familiar tools of communication is Speech. Speech as one of the communication methods of conveying information, has been gaining no less importance whether in the past and nowadays or in the West and the East (Fengjie, Jia, Yingying, 2016). In the context of public speaking, clear and persuasive delivery relies heavily on precise word choice. A speaker must be able to navigate the richness of English vocabulary to select words that are not only understood but also resonant, enabling them to simplify complex ideas or, conversely, enrich the conveyed meaning.

Failure to master and utilize words contextually can lead to misunderstanding, diminish the impact of the speech, and impede knowledge transfer. Therefore, understanding the internal structure of words becomes crucial. One crucial solution to this challenge lies in understanding morphological processes, particularly derivational morphemes, which reveal how words are formed, classified, and modified according to grammatical functions.

According to Lieber (2009), morphology is the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the language world, and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they're used in the sentence. One part of morphology is the morpheme. Morphemes are the smallest unit in a language that has meanings and grammatical functions (Delahunty and Garvey, 2019). Morphemes can be categorized into free morphemes, which can stand alone (e.g., book, pen, pencil), and bound morphemes, which must attach to a base word to convey meaning (Maulidia et al, 2019). Bound morphemes are further divided into derivational and inflectional morphemes, each serving distinct linguistic purposes. Therefore, the part of studying morphemes is structure analysis, and the structure of the analysis itself is an analysis called an affix (root, prefix, and suffix) or a bound morpheme.

A derivational morpheme is employed to generate new words by altering the meaning or word category of a root word. It can also combine with a root word to produce a new word with a distinct meaning and word category (Lumban Toruan, 2023). Accordingly, Lieber (2009) states that derivational morphemes define new lexemes that are formed with prefixes and suffixes on a base that are

often referred to as derived word. For example, the word “happy,” is an adjective. The adjective “happy,” if added by the suffix –ness becomes happiness, which is a noun. Therefore, the researcher concludes that it can change the meaning of the base word to create a new one or it is called affixing, there are prefixes and suffixes. There are four forms of word category changes in derivation words based on Fromkin’s theory, as follows:

1. Noun to Verb  
(for example, modern → modernize or apology → apologize)
2. Verb to Noun  
(for example, agree → agreement or develop → development)
3. Adjective to Noun  
(for example, happy → happiness or active → activity)
4. Adjective to Adverb  
(for example, quick → quickly or careful → carefully)

Previous studies have explored derivational and inflectional morphemes in various contexts. Guna et al. (2025) investigated derivational and inflectional morphemes in Kamala Harris’ 2024 Democratic National Convention speech and identified 330 morphemes comprising 120 derivational and 213 inflectional forms. Similarly, Jimmi and Sulaeman (2022) analyzed the occurrence and function of derivational and inflectional morphemes in Dwayne Johnson’s speech. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, they identified 48 morphological forms, consisting of 10 derivational morphemes (21%) and 38 inflectional morphemes (79%). These studies have the same focus for the data; there is digital texts.

Although both studies provide useful findings in identifying derivational and inflectional morphemes, they primarily concentrate on structural classification and frequency within transcribed digital speech. The analyses focus on how prefixes and suffixes change word forms and grammatical categories but do not explore the broader communicative function behind these morphological choices. As a result, limited attention is given to how morphology contributes to persuasive meaning, emotional emphasis, or rhetorical strategies in spoken discourse. This gap indicates the need for further research that not only categorizes morphological forms but also examines their role in shaping audience perception and delivering persuasive messages in contemporary speeches.

Emily Jaenson was selected by researchers as the subject of analysis because she represents modern motivational speaker messages and its linguistic richness and its relevance as a case study in effective public speaking. She was an inspirational leader and high-level motivator, a pioneer in the sports industry, host of the top 2.5 percent of global podcasts and in the top 200 business podcasts in the world. Therefore, analyzing Emily Jaenson's speech is important because it can

show how language is used to create meaning and build relationships in a time when communication is more important than ever.

Based on the research gap, most of the studies that examined derivational morphology in speeches only focused on identifying the forms of suffixes without analyzing how these morphological choices contribute to the meaning conveyed by the speaker. Therefore, this study aims to explore the types of derivational suffixes that are commonly found in Emily Jaenson's speech and explain how these suffixes influence the meaning of words and strengthen the communicative intentions of the speaker. The research addresses the following questions: What types of derivational suffixes are most frequently used in Emily Jaenson's speech and what is the meaning behind the use of these types of suffixes?

## **2. Method**

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to analyze linguistic phenomena in natural contexts, without numerical data (Creswell, 2009). According to (Kothari, 2004), descriptive research is a non-hypothesis study; therefore, there is no need for a hypothesis in the research procedure. The researchers identify the types of derivational suffixes that are commonly used, provides examples from the speech, and examines how these suffixes contribute to grammatical transformation and semantic enhancement. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore how these linguistic features affect the rhetorical impact of the speech and the audience's interpretation, especially in the context of public speaking.

This research uses qualitative data focusing on non-numerical information such as text and meaning. According to Resnik (2008), data is recorded information used to develop or test human knowledge. The data from a YouTube video entitled Six Tips for Building Your Confidence, which has been viewed more than 3 million times in a year and ranked 12th out of 16,000 TEDx talks uploaded to YouTube in 2022. The speech lasted approximately 10 minutes and 13 seconds and was manually transcribed by the researcher with verification against the video's closed captions. Furthermore, this qualitative research seeks to explore meaning, context, and interpretation elements essential when examining speech in public discourse (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This methodological framework allows for an in-depth exploration of how derivational morphology operates within the broader dynamics of effective spoken language.

The data were collected through transcription and document analysis. First, the researchers transcribed Emily Jaenson's speech video to understand the linguistic context, tone, and delivery, and this process was repeated several times to ensure accuracy in data interpretation. The transcription was carried out using *Anthiago.com*, following standard procedures for spoken discourse research (Creswell, 2009). After the transcript was finalized, the researcher examined each

word to identify lexical items containing derivational suffixes that are commonly used and every identified word was recorded and coded for subsequent analysis.

This research applied qualitative content analysis, which is a method designed to interpret linguistic patterns and extract meaning from textual data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In examining Emily Jaenson’s speech, derivational suffixes were analyzed using (Lieber’s, 2009) theoretical perspective that such suffixes may modify grammatical categories, semantic meanings, or both. Every word in the transcript that contained a derivational suffix was evaluated first to determine whether the addition changed the class of the word, altered its meaning, or expanded the rhetorical message.

The analytical steps included listing all words with derivational suffixes into a table, identifying their grammatical category and meaning before and after derivation, after that determining the suffix types that appeared most frequently in the speech of Emily Jaenson. Through this approach, the study highlights why Emily Jaenson’s repeated use of specific suffixes contributes to the motivational and persuasive character of her speech, transforming straightforward expressions into more abstract and impactful concepts. The final conclusions were drawn based on how these morphological patterns support the speaker’s intention to motivate and influence her audience.

**3. Result**  
**Suffixes**

Suffixes are a type of affix added to the end of a base word. They play a role in changing a word’s grammatical function (e.g., from verb to noun) or adding semantic nuances (Bauer, 2003; Plag, 2003). The data results of the types and classification word of derivational suffixes are respectively shown in the table below:

Table 1. The Formation of Noun from Verb + (-ion) / (-ment) / (-ance)

No	Noun	Suffix	Verb
1	Celebration	-ion	Celebrate
2	Recollection	-ion	Recollect
3	Decision	-ion	Decide
4	Promotion	-ion	Promote
5	Action	-ion	Act
6	Accomplishment	-ment	Accomplish
7	Management	-ment	Manage
8	Engagement	-ment	Engage
9	Performance	-ance	Perform
Total			9

Based on the table, it shows that there are 9 verbs that undergo derivational processes to form nouns through the addition of the suffixes (-ion), (-ment), and (-ance). These suffixes transform verbs that The verb “celebrate” becomes “celebration”, “recollect” becomes “recollection”, “decide” becomes “decision”, “promote” becomes “promotion”, and “act” changes to “action”. These cases show how the suffix (-ion) nominalizes verbs by shifting the meaning from the action itself to an abstract concept or outcome that results from it. Similarly, the suffix (-ment) functions in the same way as seen in words such as “accomplish” becoming “accomplishment”, “manage” becoming “management”, and “engage” changing to “engagement”, each forming nouns that represent the result or state of performing the verb.

The table also shows the suffix (-ance) in the word “performance”, which derives from the verb “perform” and refers to the result or quality of the action carried out. Therefore, the researcher concludes that when a verb is combined with derivational suffixes such as (-ion), (-ment), or (-ance), it undergoes a morphological transformation that changes its grammatical category from a verb to a noun.

Table 2. The Formation of Adjective from Noun + (-ful)

No	Adjective	Suffix	Noun
1	Successful	-ful	Success
2	Meaningful	-ful	Meaning
Total			2

The table shows there are 2 words that nouns undergo derivational processes to become adjectives through the addition of the suffix (-ful). It changes the grammatical category from a noun to an adjective and adds the meaning of “full of” or “having the quality of” the base noun. For example, the noun “success” becomes “successful”, indicating a person or thing that possesses or achieves success. Similarly, “meaning” changes into “meaningful”, describing something that has significance or value.

These transformations show that the suffix -ful not only modifies the grammatical class but also enriches the semantic value of the word by expressing possession, quality, or abundance of the root noun’s meaning. This morphological process demonstrates how derivational suffixes contribute to word formation and meaning expansion in English. It can be seen when a verb combines with the derivational suffix (-ful), it undergoes a morphological transformation that shifts its grammatical category from a noun to an adjective.

Table 3. The Formation of Noun from Adjective + (-ship)

No	Noun	Suffix	Adjective
1	Leadership	-ship	Leader
Total			1

Based on the table, it shows that there are adjectives that undergo derivational processes to become nouns through the addition of suffixes (-ship). Word of suffixes change the grammatical category from adjectives into abstract nouns that express states, qualities, or conditions. The word “leader” becomes “leadership” after the addition of the suffix (-ship), which refers to the state, role, or quality of being a leader.

The word demonstrates how derivational suffixes function to nominalize adjectives, shifting their focus from describing a characteristic to expressing an abstract concept related to that characteristic. Therefore, when an adjective combines with the derivational suffix (-ship), it undergoes a morphological transformation that changes its grammatical category from an adjective to a noun.

Table 4. The Formation of Adverb from Adjective + (-ly)

No	Adverb	Suffix	Adjective
1	Confidently	-ly	Confident
2	Nationally	-ly	National
3	Vividly	-ly	Vivid
4	Metaphorically	-ly	Metaphorical
5	Promptly	-ly	Prompt
Total			5

The formation of an adverb from an adjective has four adjectives that undergo derivational processes to form adverbs through the addition of the suffix (-ly). This suffix changes the word class from an adjective into an adverb, allowing the new word to describe the manner, degree, or way in which an action is carried out. The adjective “vivid” becomes “vividly”, which indicates that an action is performed in a clear or detailed way. The same process occurs with “confident” becoming “confidently”, showing that someone does something with confidence, and “national” becoming “nationally”, meaning something applies or occurs on a nationwide scale.

Likewise, the adjective “prompt” changes into “promptly”, which refers to an action done immediately or without delay. Although the word “metaphorical” changes into “metaphorically”, referring to an action or statement expressed in a non-literal, figurative manner. These words demonstrate how the derivational suffix (-ly) functions to transform descriptive adjectives into adverbs that provide

more specific information about how actions are performed in the speech. It can be concluded that when an adjective is combined with the suffix (-ly), it undergoes a morphological transformation that shifts its grammatical category from an adjective to an adverb.

#### **4. Discussion**

##### ***Class Changing Derivational Suffixes***

The result of this study is the researcher found 17 words of derivational suffixes in 6 types of derivational suffixes in Emily Jaenson's speech, there are (-ion), (-ment), (-ance), (-ship), (-ful), (-ly). The form that found are (-ion), (-ment) and (-ance) for class changing of noun from verb, (-ful) for adjective from noun, (-ship) for noun from adjective, and (-ly) for adverb from adjective. In Emily Jaenson's speech, the speaker uses many nouns formed with derivational suffixes such as (-ion), (-ment), (-ance), and (-ship).

This means that she often repeats nouns more than other word forms. The nouns that the speaker uses such as celebration, recollection, decision, promotion, action, accomplishment, management, engagement, performance, and leadership. Therefore, these nouns help her talk about important ideas and messages, not just actions.

##### ***The Formation of Noun from Verb***

According to (Andrew Carstairs & McCarthy, 2002) nouns formed from adjectives and verbs are very common, and it is supposed to be clear to come up with numerous examples like those they provided. (Pratama & Utami, 2025) said that several of these nouns come from word bases that differ from the free form of the corresponding adjective.

*Data 1: "Celebration" (Noun = verb + ion)*

*"This is her **celebration**, not mine."*

*"The offer to interview and ultimately land the job came after her public **celebration...**"*

In the sentence "This is her celebration, not mine," the word "celebration" conveys a deeper rhetorical message that aligns with Emily Jaenson's emphasis on supporting and acknowledging the success of others. Rather than viewing another person's achievement as a personal loss or a threat, Jaenson encourages her audience to adopt a confident and positive mindset in which they genuinely celebrate the accomplishments of others. The word "celebration" highlights the belief that success belongs to the individual who has earned it, and confident people are able to appreciate that success without comparison or jealousy.

Like the speaker said, there is a woman who was interviewed and eventually promoted to Chief Marketing Officer after she openly congratulated and celebrated the success of another woman who had just become president of the league. This expression reinforces the speech's broader message that professional and personal growth is not a competition, but a collective journey in which victories are more meaningful when shared, appreciated, and supported by others. It concludes that the word noun "celebration" gives the positive message and want to change the mind of the audience

*Dat 2: "Recollection" (Noun = verb + ion)*

*"....When we do this, the **recollection** of that success is diminished."*

The term "recollection" represents a person's memory of a past success or achievement. She suggests that when individuals do not take time to celebrate what they have accomplished and quickly shift their focus to new goals, the memory of that success becomes less strong or meaningful. In this sense, "recollection" illustrates how achievements may lose their emotional value if they go unrecognized. Like the speaker said that *"you can order a pizza or drink when you reach your personal goals because it doesn't matter how you celebrate, it matters that you do"*. Jaenson uses the word to stress the significance of celebrating accomplishments, explaining that acknowledging success helps reinforce positive memories and increases confidence for future achievements. Therefore, in her speech, "recollection" refers to the mental memory of previous success that can fade if it is not appreciated or celebrated.

*Data 3: "Decision" (Noun = verb + ion)*

*"I made the **decision** to become a more confident person,"*

In the final part of her speech, the word "decision" refers to her big deal to transform herself into a more confident individual. This word shows that confidence is not something a person naturally possesses, but the result of an active decision to behave differently and develop habits that support success. By saying, *"I made the decision to become a more confident person,"* Jaenson emphasizes the significant changes in her life becoming a confident person. It changed from like the girl who couldn't order a pizza to the woman who became GM of a minor league baseball team, started a podcast and delivered a TEDx talk. Thus, the meaning of "decision" in this context highlights that major progress and accomplishments begin with a personal commitment to change and take actions that move someone closer to the best version of themselves.

Data 4: "Promotion" (Noun = verb + ion)

"She got the **promotion**."

"...Big **promotion** at a top team. "

The noun "promotion" in those two sentences not only means getting a higher job position. It also shows the idea that success comes from recognizing and appreciating past achievements. The speaker said that one story of the woman who earned a big promotion after reviewing her accomplishments shows that confidence grows when people remember what they have already achieved. Jaenson suggests that career success is not only about outside opportunities, but also about deciding to believe in yourself, knowing your strengths, and being prepared. Therefore, "promotion" also represents the result of self-reflection, preparation, and strong belief in one's abilities.

Data 5: "Action" (Noun = verb + ion)

"That started with one simple **action**,"

In the educational context, the noun "action" shows the idea that personal and professional growth begins with taking concrete steps rather than only thinking, planning, or waiting for the perfect moment. Emily Jaenson uses the term to show that confidence is not developed passively, but through real experiences that push individuals out of their comfort zone. In the story, the "one simple action" of choosing to sit at the table symbolizes the shift from being a passive observer to an active participant who speaks up because the speaker said there is a woman who told a story at an event.

The woman just stood at the edge of the room, waiting for a seat to become available like everyone else, even though she could have sat down immediately without waiting and followed suit like everyone else. This demonstrates an important educational message of meaningful progress that starts from small but changes a big personality. Thus, the word "action" highlights the value of acting on one's intentions as a foundation for self-improvement and success.

Data 6: "Accomplishment" (Noun = verb + ment)

"...What we achieved or worse yet link that **accomplishment** to stress?"

"...Of your most proud **accomplishments**."

The noun "accomplishment" refers to the achievements that individuals have earned through their efforts. However, the message in the speech is that many people fail to recognize or celebrate their accomplishments, often moving quickly

to the next goal or even associating their success with stress. The speaker explains that it is important to recognize our achievements because it can help to remember good experiences and makes us more confident to reach new goals in the future. Like the speaker said “How can we confidently move forward if we can't remember what we achieved or worse yet link that accomplishment to stress?”. Thus, “accomplishment” symbolizes not only a completed achievement but also the importance of someone’s progress for continuing their goals.

*Data 7: "Management" (Noun = verb + ment)*

*“...In sports an industry that's over 80% male at **management** level and above.”*

The word “management” refers to high-level jobs in the sports industry, which she explains the sports industry as a world where more than 80% of strategic and executive positions, such as managers, directors, and general managers, are still dominated by men. In her speech, “management” shows the career level that many women want to reach, but it is difficult because the industry is male dominated. Jaenson uses this word to suggest that women need confidence and strong skills to succeed and earn leadership roles in these higher positions.

*Data 8: "Engagement" (Noun = verb + ment)*

*“...Shying away from social **engagement**,”*

The noun “engagement” refers to participation or involvement in social interactions. In the context of the speech, “engagement” symbolizes the social interaction that Emily avoided, such as not attending class and staying away from other students because she felt insecure with the others that were smarter than her. The speaker said that avoiding engagement stopped her growth in achieving the goals. Therefore, “engagement” in the speech highlights the importance of taking part in social environments as a key step toward building confidence and personal development.

*Data 9: "Performance" (Noun = verb + ance)*

*“...Through your already great **performance** in another. “*

In Emily Jaenson’s speech, the word “performance” is used to show that people can become more confident by remembering the good things they have done before. The speaker tells the audience to think about what they have already done well in the past and use those successes as proof that they can achieve even bigger things in the future. As in the podcast, the speaker interviewed a woman who was preparing for a major promotion by reviewing her job description, noting her achievements, and bringing examples of her successes. Armed with this, she

appeared confident and successfully got the promotion. It explains that confidence does not appear suddenly, it grows when people recognize how well they have performed before and use those experiences to move forward. The word “performance” means the good results someone has already achieved, believe in themselves, and be ready to face new challenges. It means because the speaker said “*Confidence is born in all we've already done and already achieved*”.

### ***The Formation of Noun from Adjective***

(Katamba, 1994) proposed several representative suffixes for adjectives to nouns, such as: -ness, -ity, -ship, -ery, and -acy. These derivational suffixes could be found attached to an adjective to produce a noun. The noun produced by this process indicates the state or condition of being what the adjective means, said (Cahyani, Maharani, & Tustiawati, 2022).

*Data 10: "Leadership" (Noun = Adjective + ship)*

*"I also went on to host the **Leadership** is Female podcast..."*

*"When I published my podcast, **Leadership** is Female, "*

*"...A woman I interviewed on the **Leadership** is Female podcast was going after a big,"*

In all three sentences, the word “Leadership” is used as part of the name of the podcast Leadership is Female, not as a lexical meaning of leadership. The term simply serves as the identity of the podcast program run by the speaker. The speaker uses this podcast as a real-life example in her speech to support her message about confidence and women's journey in the professional world. By referring to the podcast, the speaker shows that she has interviewed many female executives and discovered important patterns that are relevant to the content of her speech.

In Emily Jaenson's speech, various nouns derived from processes such as celebration, recollection, decision, promotion, action, accomplishment, management, engagement, performance, and leadership are used to convey a message to the audiences that reinforces the main themes of her speech about self-confidence, self-development, and women's journey in the professional world. Each noun reflects an important concept such as celebration emphasizes the importance of celebrating the success of others, recollection describes memories of achievements that should be appreciated, decision shows a personal commitment to change, promotion is the courage to share the results that have been achieved, action emphasizes that change starts with small steps, accomplishment highlights the importance of recognizing achievements, management describes the challenges women face in elite positions, engagement shows the importance of social involvement, performance reminds us that

confidence comes from previous successes, and leadership serves as the name of a podcast used as a real-life example to reinforce the argument.

Overall, the researchers can report that the frequency of nouns formed through derivational suffixes in the speech appears because the main function of speech is to convey abstract concepts related to motivation, leadership, achievement, and self-development. Using these suffixes, the speaker can form conceptual terms that clarify the core ideas to be conveyed. Nouns resulting from this derivation process help transform personal experiences into ideas in the delivery of messages and are easily understood by the audience. Thus, the author argues that the dominance of nouns in the speech is not only a form of linguistic variation, but also a rhetorical strategy to reinforce the message, build credibility, and convey a more persuasive message so that the audience can easily follow the message delivered by the speaker.

## **5. Conclusion**

Focusing on the dominant use of derivational suffixes in Emily Jaenson's speech and examining their rhetorical effects on the meaning conveyed, this researcher found 17 words of derivational suffixes categorized into 4 types of derivational morphemes such as verb to noun, noun to adjective, adjective to noun, and adjective to adverb. There are 9 verbs to noun, 2 noun to adjective, 1 adjective to noun, and 5 adjectives to adverb. Furthermore, it was also found that the speaker frequently uses nouns formed with derivational suffixes such as (-ion) in word celebration, recollection, decision, promotion, action, (-ment) in word accomplishment, management, engagement, (-ance) in word performance and (-ship) in word leadership.

The frequent use of these nouns shows that the speaker focuses not only on describing actions, but on highlighting abstract concepts such as achievement, growth, confidence, leadership, and progress. Each noun carries rhetorical meaning that supports the motivational and educational purpose of the speech. In closing, this research concludes that the frequent use of nouns with derivative suffixes in Emily Jaenson's speech occurs because speakers need to convey abstract concepts in order to form conceptual terms that clarify the core ideas of the message they wish to convey. In this case, the dominance of these nouns serves as a rhetorical strategy to reinforce the message, build credibility, and make the delivery more persuasive to the audience.

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