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**MORPHOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY OF EFL STUDENTS IN NOMINALIZING VERBS  
WITH SUFFIXES**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to determine which suffix students most frequently used and the factor of difficulty they encountered when converting verbs to nouns using nominal suffixes. Tests and questionnaires were used in the study's quantitative descriptive design to gather information from fifth-semester English education study program students. The findings indicate that students had no problems and that the most common suffix used was -ing.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is the main part of learning all languages, especially in English. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language proficiency, serving as the foundation for effective speaking, writing, reading, and listening, and the more vocabulary learners acquire, the better they can perform in these areas (Nikijuluw, 2022; Nurhaliza & Sari 2023; Kelendonu & Katermba, 2023). Most of students assume that writing is more challenging than listening, speaking, and reading. One factor of the assumption is their incapability to use appropriate affixation in forming new word. The scientific study about forming new word called morphology.

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Morphology is one aspect of linguistics that studies word and its formation. Word formation is a process of how a word derives to other words. It means that a word is formed of several components from the combination of sounds (phonemes) to be meaningful and it has grammatical function. The smallest unit in a language which have grammatical function is called as morpheme (Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Nandito, 2016; Rizki & Zakrimal, 2020; Toruan, 2023; Rahmadewi et al., 2023).

Morpheme is the smallest part of words which cannot be divided into smaller unit. There are two types of morpheme, including free morpheme and bound morpheme (Nurjanah et al., 2018; Fediany & Indriani, 2021; Sari et al., 2023). According to (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002; Rizki & Zakrimal, 2020; Cao, 2023; Hasanati & Alim, 2023; Herina & Zuriati, 2023), free morpheme is a morpheme that can stand on their own whereas bound morpheme is a morpheme that cannot. For example, the English words, such as walks, walked, walking, and walker consist of one free morpheme walk. Other components such as *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er* are called as bound morpheme. One type of bound morpheme is affixes.

Affixes are bound morpheme which cannot stand by itself. Haspelmath & Sims, (2010) categorize that there are four kinds of affixes, such as suffix is followed the base, prefix is preceded the base, infix occurred inside the base, and circumfix is occurred on both sides of the base. Additionally, there are two categories of affixes namely inflectional and derivational (Herman, 2018; Wibowo & Rismawati, 2022). Derivational affixes are morpheme which change the meaning, class, or subclass of the word that attached. Derivational morphemes in English can be either prefixes or suffixes (Halawa et al., 2017; Martini, 2018; Fitria, 2020; Wulandari et al., 2023). It is possible to think of derivative suffixes as affixes that create new words. In the word improvement, for instance, the derivational suffix *-ment* changes the word class from verb *improve* to noun *improvement*, and it also alters the meaning. The word class is altered by the suffix *-ment*, it indicates that the word has been transformed into a new one with a distinct meaning. Plag, (2002) distinguishes between four categories of derivational suffixes: verbal, adjectival, adverbial, and nominal.

Nominal suffixes are affixes commonly used to transform verbs, adjectives, and nouns into abstract nouns. These suffixes denote actions and their outcomes, individuals, qualities, characteristics, and other concepts, thereby enhancing the meaning conveyed. The English nominal suffixes include: *-age*, *-al*, *-ance* (*-ence/-ancy/-ency*), *-ant*, *-cy/-ce*, -

*dom, -ee, -eer, -er(-or), -(e)ry, -ess, -ful, -hood, -an (-ian/-ean), -ing, -ion, -ism, -ist, -ity, -ment, -ness, and -ship.*

According to Enesi (2017), word formation can be considered as the most important element in learning and teaching English. By learning the word formation, English Second Language (ESL) and English Foreign Language (EFL) can enrich their vocabulary. However, in reality, some students of English education study program at Tadulako University find difficulties in using word formation in terms of nominal suffixes in their writing because they do not know using appropriate suffixes. The students incorrectly attached a suffix to a base, for example in word *approve* becomes *\*approvement* instead of *approval*. It shows that the students have insufficient knowledge regarding changing a new word. Therefore, the students make mistakes when forming new word.

Some of previous studies have conducted the same topic, derivational suffixes, but they have different focuses. First, Rahmawati et al., (2021) focused on identifying the derivational suffix from verb forming noun found in *Revenge Wears Prada* Novel. Second, the study from Widiadnyani & Sulatra, (2023) focused on analyzing derivational suffixes forming noun from verb and their process found in *The Art of Racing in the Rain* novel. Third, Afrilya et al., (2024) focused on the derivational affixes (prefixes and suffixes) found in students' sentence writing. Additionally, the researcher also compared the studies from Ningsih et al., (2017) and Naseeb & Ibrahim, (2017) found that students find difficulties in using derivational suffixes. Unlike prior studies, which primarily examined students in high school, this research focuses on the fifth semester student of English education study program who have passed the morphology class, addressing the population gap.

According to the explanation given above, the researcher is motivated to carry out this research in order to examine students' proficiency in converting verbs into nouns through the use of nominal suffixes. Not much in-depth research has been done on the use of nominal suffixes with verbs as the bases; most previous studies have concentrated on derivational suffixes. The goal of this study was to identify the most common suffix that students used when writing. The researcher ascertained the frequency of students' use of the dominant suffixes by examining them. Additionally, the researcher wants to know what factors make it difficult for students to use nominal suffixes to change verbs

into nouns.

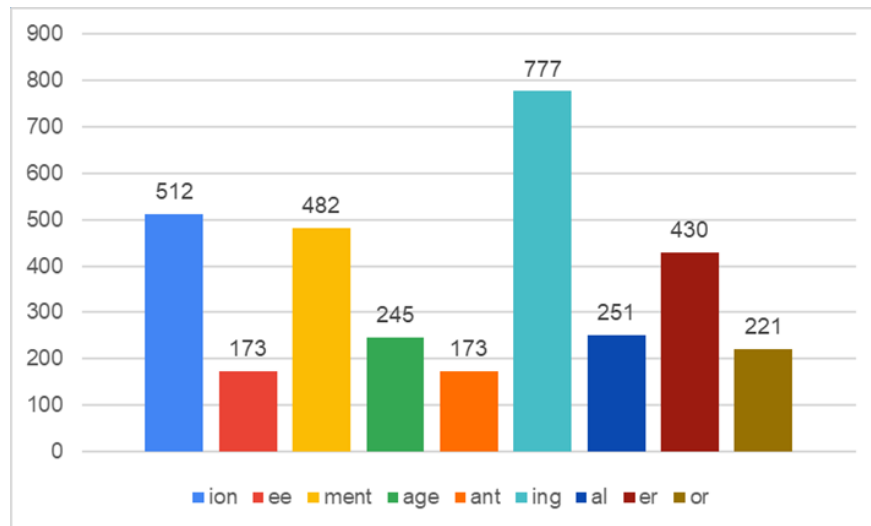
## **METHOD**

Because the data in this research will be presented numerically and analyzed using statistical techniques, quantitative descriptive research was used. The researcher explains the significance of the numbers in tables and figures that present the data. The design of this study is non-experimental. The fifth semester Tadulako University English education study program students who passed the morphology course make up the research population. The students are divided into six parallel classes, there are A, B, C, D, E, and F. Simple random sampling was the method used by the researcher to choose samples for this study. 136 students make up the sample for this study. The questionnaire and test items served as the research's instrument. This study used a fill-in-the-blank test, which consists of 24 questions, to find out which suffixes students most frequently used. Google Form is used to distribute the test. Additionally, the researcher employed a questionnaire to ascertain the challenges students encountered when utilizing nominal suffixes to transform verbs into nouns. The Google Form was used by the researcher to distribute the questionnaire. The researcher used the SPSS program to verify the validity and reliability.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

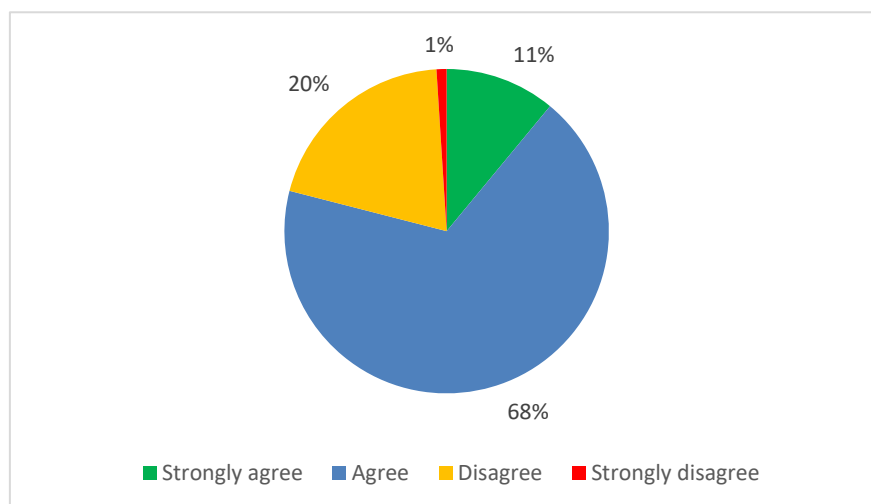
The researcher describes the findings of the most dominant suffix students used in their writing by analyzing the data from the test. The researcher focuses on nine nominal suffixes, such as *-ion*, *-ee*, *-ment*, *-age*, *-ant*, *-ing*, *-al*, *-er* and *-or* provided in the written test. The following table shows the frequency of students' usage of the nominal suffixes.



**Figure 1.** The Most Dominant Suffix Applied by Students

As shown in figure 1, the frequency data above show how students use nine nominal suffixes. Of these suffixes, the -ing suffix is the most frequently used by students, occurring 777 times in total. Subsequently, the suffix -ion appeared 512 times, followed by -ment 482 times, -er 430, -al 251 times, -age 245 times, -or 221 times, -ee 173 times, and -ant 173 times.

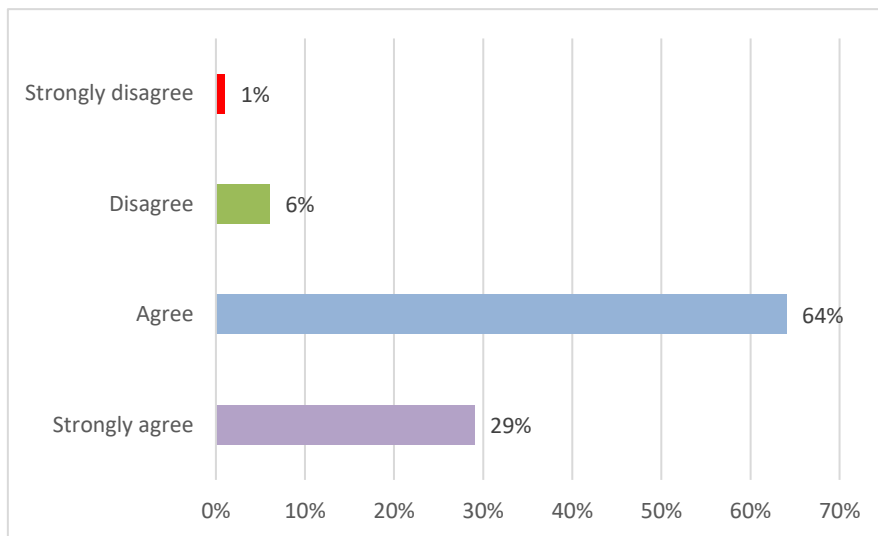
In order to know the difficulties factors influencing the students on changing verb to noun by using nominal suffixes, the data are presented below.



**Figure 2.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 1

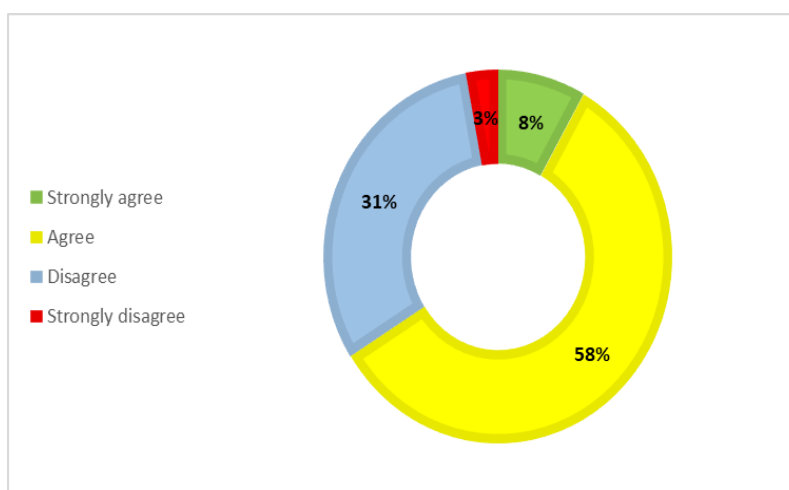
Figure2 displays the frequency of responses from students based on variable one. This variable shows that the students' deficiencies in part of speech, word order, or sentence

structure lead to problems not only with derivational suffixes but also with other linguistic topics. There are nine affirmative statements about this variable. Students who were chosen agree with 68% and strongly agree with 11%, as shown in the following chart. Nonetheless, 20% of students chose disagree, and 1% chose strongly disagree.



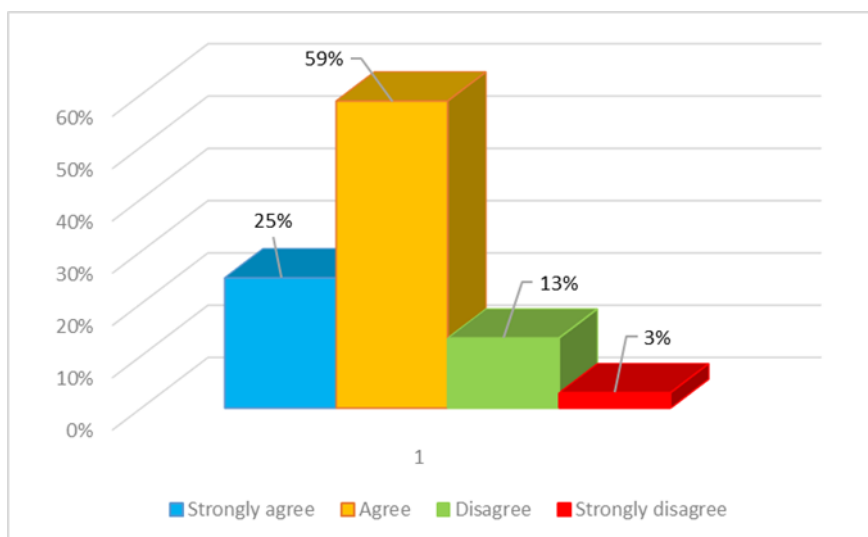
**Figure 3.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 2

The aforementioned data illustrate how frequently students respond to variable two, which states that they have difficulty to learn English derivation since there is no special method to employ. This variable contains nine affirmative statements. Figure 3 makes it evident that while 29% of students strongly disagreed, 64% of students selected agree. However, 6 percent of students chose disagree, and 1 percent chose strongly disagree.



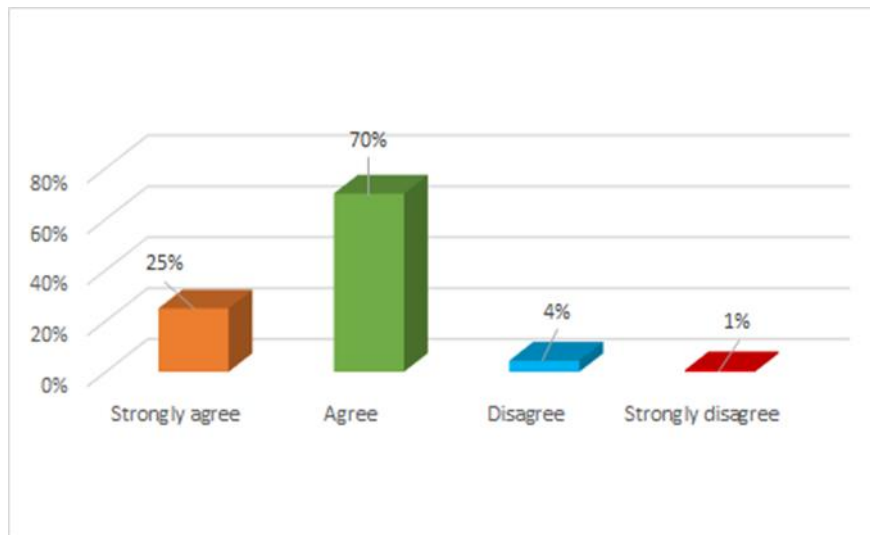
**Figure 4.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 3

According to variable 3, which is that students lack time to learn English derivation, explanation figure 4 shows how frequently students respond. The variable contains eight affirmative statements. According to the results above, students' most common response was "agree," which accounted for 58% of the total frequency, while their least common response was "strongly disagree," which accounted for 3%.



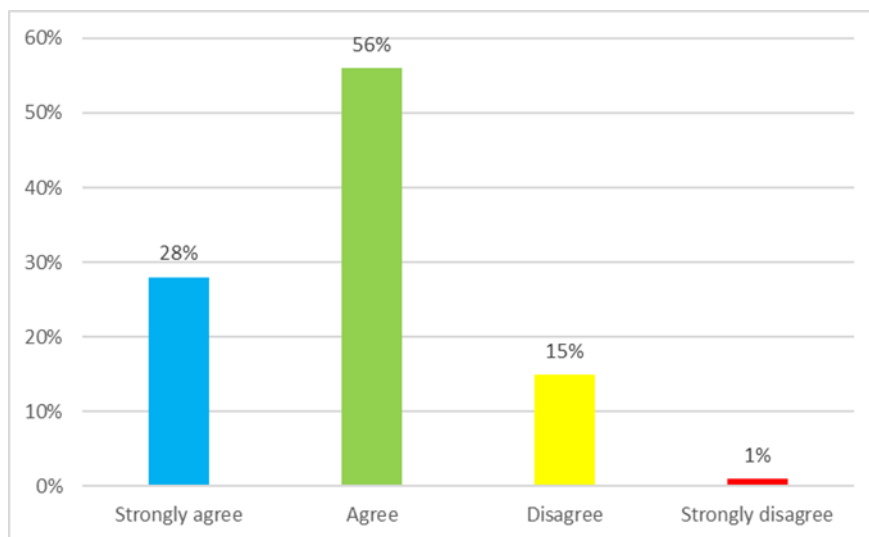
**Figure 5.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 4

Students' frequent responses to variable number four—that is, their lack of interest, attention, and concern for morphological derivation—are illustrated in the explanation of figure number five. The variable contains eight affirmative statements. The data showed that while the agree option received the most responses (59%), students strongly disagreed with 3% of the answers.



**Figure 6.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 5

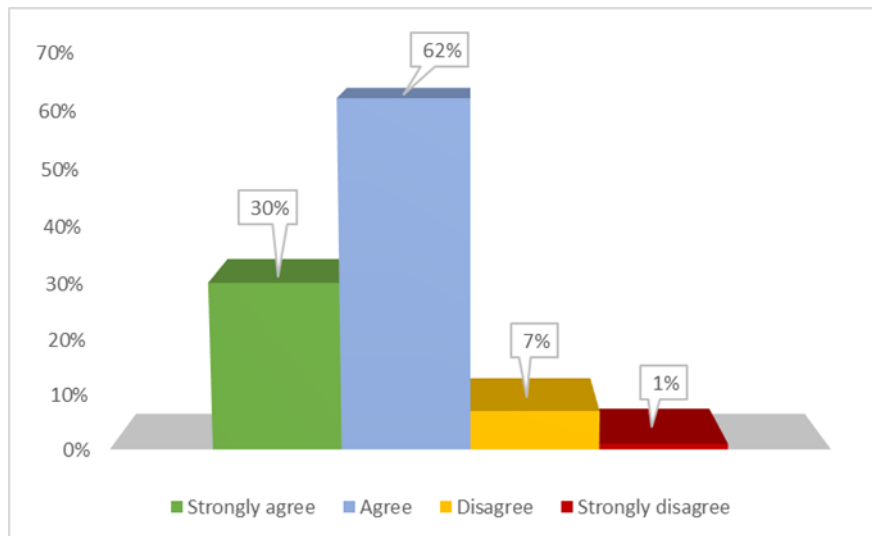
Figure 6 shows the data pertaining to variable five, which indicates that students are not very motivated to learn English derivation. There are nine affirmative statements in the data. The results showed that 25% of students selected "strongly disagree," while 70% of students selected "agree." On the other hand, 4% of students chose to disagree, and 1% chose to strongly disagree.



**Figure 7.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 6

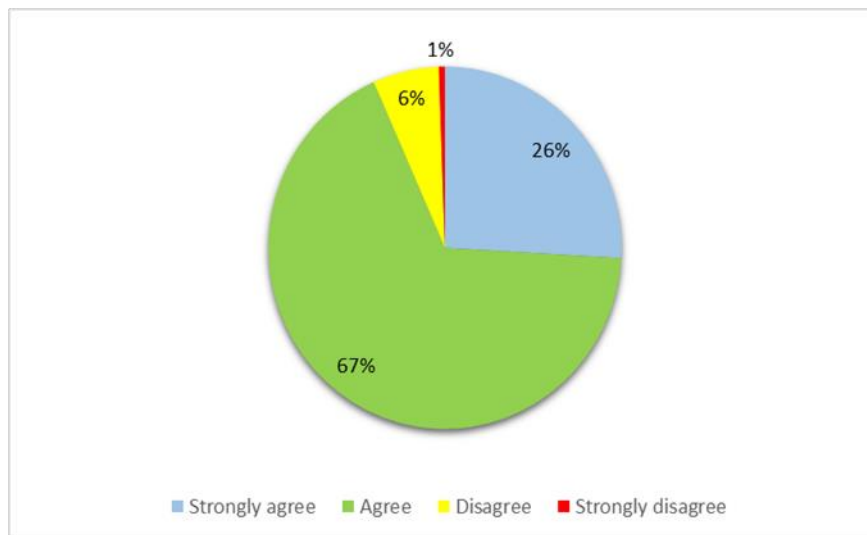
Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between variable number six and students' perplexity with English derivation content. There are eight affirmative statements in this variable. According to the results, 28% of respondents selected "strongly disagree," while

56% selected "agree." Furthermore, only 1% of students selected "strongly disagree," the lowest percentage, and 15% of students selected "disagree," which is a low number.



**Figure 8.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 7

Variable number seven, which focuses on teachers' and lecturers' proficiency in teaching English courses, especially derivational suffixes, is made up of ten statements. Figure 8 shows that the option that receives the most responses, 62%, is "agree," while the option that receives the fewest responses, 1%, is "strongly disagree."



**Figure 9.** The Frequency of Students' Answer Based on Variable 8

Figure 9's difficulty factor, the last variable, contains eight affirmative statements.

67% of students selected "agree," while 26% selected "strongly disagree," according to the data displayed by this variable. The least number of them responded negatively, with only 6% choosing to disagree and 1% choosing to strongly disagree.

## **Discussion**

The researcher addresses the most dominant suffix that students use when converting verbs to nouns through the use of nominal suffixes in this section. Additionally, the researcher wants to determine the factors that make using a nominal suffix to change a verb into a noun difficult. By examining the dominant suffix, the researcher only focuses on the suffixes that are most frequently used and end up being dominant. According to the results, students most frequently used the suffix *-ing*, which appears 777 times. The same findings found by Widiadnyani & Sulatra, (2023). They found that suffix *-ing* with 51.9% is considered as the most dominant suffix that found in the Novel *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein. The research findings by (Rahmawati et al., 2021) also found that suffix *-ing* became as third one of the most dominant suffix used in *Revenge Wears Prada* Novel. Understanding the suffix *-ing* as the most dominant suffix over other suffixes can help educators and researchers identify patterns in morphological usage, informing teaching strategies and further linguistics studies.

After analyzing the difficulty factors faced by students in learning derivational suffixes, the researcher classified into two types of factors, namely internal and external. The researcher used two sources to find out the difficulty factors faced by students of derivational suffixes. A study by Ningsih et al., (2017) found that the difficulty factors came from: 1) the students have low motivation learning English derivation, 2) the students get confused about the English derivation material, 3) the students have lack of time in learning English derivation, 4) the students get difficulties in learning English derivation because there is no special trick to use, and 5) the teachers do not give enough explanation about the derivational material. From those findings, the authors found that the majority of students have low motivation and the students get confused about learning English derivation material with the highest percentage of 43%. Furthermore, the second study by Naseeb & Ibrahim, (2017) found that the difficulties encountered by students in morphological derivations are: 1) the students lack of attention, interest, and care of morphological derivation, 2) the students get difficulties not only in derivational suffix but

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also in other linguistics topic caused by their weaknesses in part of speech, word order, or sentence pattern, 3) the teacher/lectures are not entirely competent in teaching English course and particularly in English derivation.

According to the results in variable number one, students have no trouble learning derivational suffixes or other linguistic concepts. According to variable number 2, the students have no difficulty learning the English derivation derived from the specific trick. The results of the following variable showed that students had adequate time to learn English derivation. According to the results of variable number four, students are highly attentive, interested, and concerned with morphological derivation. Morphological derivatives are a topic that students are very interested in, attentive to, and concerned about. The results of variable five indicate that students are highly motivated to learn English derivation. The results of variable six show that students do not cause confusion for one another. The following variable is thought to be an outside influence causing students to struggle with derivational suffixes. The results showed that students believe their lecturers are capable of teaching both the English course and derivational suffixes. The final variable showed that students thought their lectures provided a reasonable explanation of the derivation material.

Examining the results, the researcher found no evidence that students in the fifth semester of the English study program at Tadulako University were experiencing problems with derivational suffixes. This occurs as a result of the different populations used in the research conducted by Naseeb & Ibrahim (2017) and Ningsih et al., (2017). This study included students in the English education study program who had finished the morphology course, whereas the earlier studies only included high school students. Consequently, this study did not have the same difficulty factors as the two previous studies.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

According to the research findings, the -ing suffix is the most common nominal suffix among the students examined, and its high frequency of usage is indicated by the number 777. The researcher can draw the conclusion that the suffix -ing has taken over because it is simple to use and students are accustomed to using it in sentences.

In response to the second research question, the researcher discovered that

students' learning of derivational suffixes is not influenced by any factors of difficulty. The students' comprehension, recognition, and application of the derivational suffix, especially in nominal suffixes, can be inferred.

Building on the results of this research, similar research should be carried out by future researchers. Researchers can learn more about the factors influencing students' use of the suffix and the reasons behind their preference by looking at the frequency with which students use the suffix -ing. Furthermore, the researcher provides and recommends that other researchers use the results of this study as a point of reference and comparison in order to close any knowledge gaps and open up opportunities for additional research. Some examples of this include: 1) using different research techniques; although this study uses a quantitative approach, future research may use a qualitative one; 2) using a variety of theories. Although this study employs Plag theory (2002), future researchers may employ other theories, such as Carstairs-McCarthy (2002). Future researchers may use different variables or scope to focus on changing other classes of words, such as nouns or adjectives changing into verbs, adjectives changing into nouns, and the category of nouns becoming adjectives. 3) Future researchers may use students from other study programs; in this case, they used students from the fifth semester of Tadulako University's English education study program, but they may also use a different population.

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