***Lingua: Jurnal Ilmiah**, Vol.22 No.2 October, 2026*
e-ISSN: 2715-6478

English students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles, identify the types of derivational morphology present, and uncover the factors influencing students' comprehension. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, supplemented by basic quantitative data. Data were collected through the analysis of articles, a test on derivational morphology, and interviews with students from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The analysis of the articles reveals that the most dominant forms of derivation involve the use of suffixes such as *-tion*, *-ment*, *-ness*, *-ity*, and *-ly* as well as certain prefixes including *un-*, *dis-*, and *re-*. The most frequent shifts in word class observed were the conversion of verbs into nouns and adjectives into adverbs. Test results from 30 students indicate that the majority (12 students, or 40%) fall into the "good" category. Nevertheless, students still encounter difficulties in identifying changes in word class (35%), understanding word meanings based on context (30%), and recognizing irregular derivational patterns (25%). Interviews revealed that limited vocabulary, insufficient exposure to authentic English texts, and the habit of translating words directly are key factors affecting students' comprehension. Furthermore, students who are accustomed to reading English-language articles tend to achieve better test results. The study concludes that *The Jakarta Post* articles can serve as an alternative contextual learning resource to enhance students' morphological awareness, mastery of academic vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Consequently, the instruction of derivational morphology should be systematically integrated through the analysis of word forms, word class shifts, and meanings within authentic contexts.

Keywords: Authentic Text; Derivational Morphology; Morphological Awareness; Morphology; The Jakarta Post

Received: 1 October 2026 *Revised: 27 October 2026* *Published online: 28 October 2026*

INTRODUCTION

One branch of linguistics that studies word formation structures is morphology. Morphology examines how words are formed from morphemes that have specific meanings, resulting in new word forms and functions within a language context. One important area of study in morphology is derivational morphology.

Derivational morphology is the process of forming new words through the addition of affixes that can change the meaning and class of words from their base form. For example, the word *happy* can be changed to *happiness* by adding the suffix *-ness*, or the word *develop* can be changed to *development* by adding the suffix *-ment*. Understanding the derivational process is crucial because it helps language learners understand the relationships between words and expand their vocabulary more systematically. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, the ability to understand derivational morphology can improve students' reading and writing skills, as well as their overall academic abilities.

However, various studies show that many students still struggle to understand derivational forms in English texts. This difficulty usually arises because students only grasp the lexical meaning of words without understanding the process of their formation. As a result, students often encounter obstacles when encountering derived words in academic readings and English news articles. This problem becomes increasingly important because authentic texts such as international newspapers often use a variety of derived words to convey information in a formal and academic manner.

This difficulty can also be viewed from the broader problem of lexical competence among Indonesian EFL learners. Rianugraha (2025) explains that learners may possess considerable vocabulary and grammatical knowledge but still experience difficulty producing or interpreting natural word combinations because of limited exposure to authentic language and insufficient attention to lexical relationships. This suggests that vocabulary learning should not be separated from students' ability to recognize how words are related and used in meaningful contexts.

One authentic media widely used in English learning is *The Jakarta Post*. This English-language newspaper publishes various articles on politics, education, economics, culture, and social issues, using formal language and complex academic vocabulary. The articles in *The Jakarta Post* contain numerous forms of derivation that can be used as a source for students learning morphology. The use of news articles as a learning medium is also considered effective because it provides a real-world context for English use. Therefore, analyzing students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles is relevant for research.

The linguistic value of news articles can also be understood through the way vocabulary and textual structures construct meaning. Dewi and Saswati (2025) found that articles published in *The Jakarta Post* contain identifiable patterns at the vocabulary, clause, and inter-sentence levels, demonstrating that news texts provide linguistic features that can be examined systematically. Therefore, using *The Jakarta Post* as learning material can expose students not only to individual words but also to the ways those words operate within authentic discourse.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of morphological skills in supporting students' English literacy. Understanding derivational morphology

not only helps students recognize the meaning of new words but also improves their ability to infer meaning when reading academic texts. In the context of modern education, students are required to have critical reading skills for various English-language information sources. Therefore, an understanding of word formation is a crucial competency that needs to be developed in the English language learning process in higher education.

Furthermore, research on derivational morphology in Indonesia tends to be limited to purely linguistic analysis and has not focused much on students' understanding of derivational forms in authentic media. Most previous studies have focused on analyzing affixes or types of derivations in specific texts without connecting them to students' comprehension skills. However, studying how students understand derivational forms in real-world contexts is crucial to understanding the difficulties they face in learning English. Therefore, this research is expected to provide both academic and pedagogical contributions to the development of English morphology learning strategies.

This study aims to analyze students' understanding of derivational morphology contained in *The Jakarta Post* articles. It also aims to identify the types of derivations that are easiest and most difficult for students to understand. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide insight into the factors that influence students' ability to understand derived words formation. Therefore, the results of this study can serve as evaluation material for lecturers in designing more effective and contextual morphology learning methods.

Based on the background that has been described, the problem formulation in this research is as follows: (1) what is the level of students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles?; (2) what types of derivational morphology are found in *The Jakarta Post* articles?; and (3) what factors influence students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles?; This study aims to: (1) describe students' level of understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles; (2) identify the types of derivational morphology found in *The Jakarta Post* articles; and (3) determine the factors influencing students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich linguistic studies, particularly in the fields of derivational morphology and English language learning. This research can also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in examining the relationship between morphology and students' reading ability. Practically, this research is expected to help English lecturers understand students' difficulties in forming derived words. The results can also be used as a basis for designing more effective vocabulary and morphology learning strategies through the use of authentic media such as newspaper articles. Furthermore, students are expected to

improve their academic vocabulary comprehension through an understanding of the word derivation process.

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the processes by which they are formed. According to Katamba (1993), morphology is the study of word structure and the systematic relationships between words in a language. In morphological studies, a morpheme is the smallest unit that has meaning. Morphemes can be either free or bound. Bound morphemes usually appear in the form of affixes such as prefixes, suffixes, and infixes.

One of the important processes in morphology is derivation. Derivation is the process of forming new words that can change the meaning and grammatical category of a word. According to Yule (2020), derivational morphemes are used to form new words and often result in changes in word class, such as from a verb to a noun or from an adjective to an adverb. For example, the word *teach* can be changed to *teacher*, while the word *happy* can be changed to *happily*. The derivation process plays a crucial role in vocabulary development because it enables learners to understand the semantic relationships between words.

In English language learning, understanding derivational morphology is considered to improve students' reading skills. Research conducted by Carlisle (2010) shows that morphological awareness has a significant relationship with reading ability and comprehension of academic texts. Students who understand the process of word formation tend to more easily recognize the meaning of new words in the context of reading. Merrita, Amilia, and Iswandari (2025) also found that English major students may experience difficulties when applying linguistic knowledge in written texts. Their study of first-year English students' argumentative essays revealed difficulties in basic sentence construction, particularly sentence fragments and subject–verb agreement. Although their study focused on sentence-level grammar rather than morphology, the findings indicate that knowledge of linguistic concepts does not always translate into accurate application in actual texts. This is relevant to the present study because understanding derivational morphology also requires students to connect word forms with their grammatical functions and meanings in context. This indicates that learning morphology is not only related to grammar but also influences students' academic literacy.

Furthermore, the use of authentic media such as newspapers in English learning is considered effective in improving students' vocabulary comprehension. News articles provide a real-life context for language use, enabling students to understand the function of words in real-life communication situations. *The Jakarta Post*, an English-language newspaper in Indonesia, is a relevant, authentic source for English learning. The language used in *The Jakarta Post* articles tends to be formal and contains many derived vocabulary, making them suitable for use as a medium for morphological analysis.

Several previous studies have also shown that students often experience difficulties in understanding derived words due to a lack of morphological awareness. Research by Nagy, Berninger, and Abbott (2006) found that morphological skills significantly influence students' academic vocabulary development. Meanwhile, research by Michael, Kieffer and Lesaux (2012) explained that morphological awareness can help students understand complex texts and improve critical reading skills. These findings reinforce the importance of research on understanding derivational morphology in the context of English language learning.

Recent evidence also indicates that English learners' difficulties are not limited to vocabulary recognition but may extend to the accurate use of linguistic forms. Merrita, Amilia, and Iswandari (2025), for example, found that first-year English major students still produced errors involving sentence fragments and subject–verb agreement in argumentative writing. Their findings indicate that knowledge of individual linguistic elements does not necessarily guarantee accurate application in larger textual contexts. This perspective is relevant to the present study because understanding derivational morphology likewise requires students to recognize how morphological forms function within actual English sentences and texts.

Based on the theoretical study and previous research, it can be concluded that derivational morphology plays a significant role in developing students' English language skills, particularly in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Therefore, research on students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles is crucial to determine their ability to comprehend English word formation in authentic contexts.

To solve students' low understanding of derivational morphology, this study plans several problem-solving steps. First, this study will identify the types of derivational words that frequently appear in *The Jakarta Post* articles. Second, this study will analyze students' level of understanding of these derivational forms through tests and analysis of student responses. Third, the results of the analysis will be used to formulate a more contextual morphology learning strategy through the use of authentic media.

Furthermore, learning derivational morphology can be conducted using a context-based approach so that students not only memorize affix forms but also understand the function and meaning of words in real-world texts. Lecturers can use news articles as practice materials for identifying derivational morphemes so that students become more accustomed to recognizing word formation patterns in English. With this approach, it is hoped that students' vocabulary and academic literacy skills will improve optimally.

The development of language learning environments also requires teachers to reconsider how linguistic knowledge is presented to learners. Darwanto, Herusatoto, and Rini (2024) argue that the expansion of digital learning sources has

changed the ecology of English language teaching and requires instructional practices to accommodate diverse communication channels and learning resources. In the context of morphology learning, this perspective supports the use of authentic and digitally accessible English texts as materials through which students can examine word formation in meaningful contexts.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method supported by simple quantitative data to analyze students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles. The descriptive approach was used because this study aims to describe the level of students' understanding of derivational forms found in authentic English texts. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive research aims to explain phenomena systematically based on data obtained from participants and research objects. In this study, the phenomenon in question is students' ability to understand the formation of derived words in English news articles.

A qualitative approach was used to analyze the forms of derivational morphology and the difficulties students experienced in understanding derived words. Meanwhile, a simple quantitative approach was used to calculate the percentage of students' understanding based on test results or research instruments. By combining these two approaches, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of students' understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles.

Research Object and Scope

The object of this research is the derivational morphology contained in *The Jakarta Post* articles and students' understanding of these forms of derivation. The research focus is limited to derived words that undergo changes in meaning or word class through affixation processes, such as the use of prefixes and suffixes in English. This study only analyzes derivational morphemes and does not discuss inflectional morphemes in depth.

The research subjects were students in the English Education study program at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, who had studied morphology, specifically English morphology. The students were selected because they were considered to have basic knowledge of word structure and word formation in English. Furthermore, they frequently interacted with academic texts and news articles in English, making them relevant to the objectives of this study.

This study uses articles from *The Jakarta Post* as the primary data source. The articles selected come from the education, social, cultural, and political sections because these categories contain a high proportion of academic vocabulary and

diverse forms of derivation. Articles were selected based on their linguistic complexity and relevance to English language learning in higher education.

The selection of *The Jakarta Post* as the primary textual source is consistent with previous research that has successfully used articles from the newspaper as linguistic data. Dewi and Saswati (2025), for instance, analyzed selected *The Jakarta Post* articles using a qualitative descriptive approach to examine textual representations at the vocabulary, clause, and inter-sentence levels. Following this precedent, the present study treats *The Jakarta Post* articles as authentic textual data in which derivational forms can be identified and examined in their actual linguistic contexts.

Place and Time of the Research

This research was conducted at a university with an English study program. The research location was selected based on the consideration that students in the study program had studied linguistics and morphology and possessed basic reading skills in academic English. The research was conducted over one academic semester, from instrument preparation to data collection and analysis, to the preparation of the research report.

The research was divided into several stages. The first stage involved collecting articles from *The Jakarta Post* and identifying the forms of derivational morphology found in them. The second stage involved administering a test or providing students with an instrument to measure their understanding of derived words. The third stage involved analyzing the research data and interpreting the findings based on relevant theory.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through documentation, tests, and simple interviews. The documentation technique was used to collect articles from *The Jakarta Post* containing forms of derivational morphology. The researcher read and identified derived words in the articles based on the theory of derivational morphology. The identified words were then classified based on the type of affix and word class changes.

The test technique was used to determine students' level of understanding of derivational morphology. The test consisted of questions on identifying derived words, analyzing word meanings, and class changes. Students were asked to read the provided article and then identify words that were classified as derived words. Students were asked to identify the root word, the type of affix, and the meaning of derived words found in *The Jakarta Post* article. This test aimed to measure students' understanding of the word formation process in real-life English contexts.

In addition to tests, this study also used simple interviews to obtain additional information regarding the difficulties students face in understanding derivational morphology. Interviews were conducted with several students as a sample. Interview questions focused on students' experiences reading English

articles, their understanding of derivational morphology, and the strategies they use when encountering new words in texts.

The research instruments consisted of test sheets, interview guidelines, and a derivational morphology classification table. These instruments were developed based on derivational morphology theory and adapted to the research objectives. To ensure data validity, the research instruments were consulted with lecturers or linguistic experts before being used in the data collection process.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this study was carried out in several stages. First, the researcher identified and classified the forms of derivational morphology found in *The Jakarta Post* articles. Derived words were grouped based on the type of affix, such as prefixes and suffixes, and based on the changes in word class that occurred, for example, from verb to noun or from adjective to adverb.

The analysis also considered the contextual occurrence of the identified forms rather than treating derived words as isolated lexical items. This consideration is supported by Rianugraha (2025), who emphasizes contextualized language practice and authentic input in developing Indonesian EFL learners' lexical competence. Accordingly, the present analysis examined the identified derivational forms in relation to their surrounding textual context, including their meanings and grammatical functions.

The second stage was analyzing the students' test results to determine their level of understanding of derivational morphology. Students' answers were classified into correct and incorrect categories, and then percentages were calculated to determine their overall ability level. Simple quantitative analysis was used to describe the test results in terms of percentages or categories of understanding.

The third stage was analyzing the interview results using a qualitative descriptive approach. Interview data was transcribed and then analyzed to identify factors influencing students' understanding of derivational morphology. These factors could include limited vocabulary, a lack of morphological understanding, or difficulty understanding the context of English texts.

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), qualitative data analysis involves three interconnected activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In this study, data condensation was conducted by selecting and organizing relevant information from the students' interview responses and test results. The data were then presented systematically to identify patterns in students' understanding of derivational morphology. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified by comparing the findings from the morphological analysis, test results, and interview data.

Next, the results of the data analysis were linked to morphological theory, morphological awareness, and relevant previous research. Data interpretation was conducted to answer the research problem formulation regarding students' level of

understanding of derivational morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles. With this analysis technique, this study is expected to provide a clear picture of students' ability to understand English word formation in authentic contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main focus of this study is to identify the types of derivations that appear in English news articles and to determine the students' level of understanding of these forms of derivation. The study was conducted on English language students who had studied basic linguistics courses, specifically English morphology. The research data were obtained through article documentation, written tests, and interviews.

Based on the results of document analysis, it was found that articles in *The Jakarta Post* use many forms of derived words, especially in articles on education, politics, economics, and social topics. The use of derived words in news articles aims to create a formal, academic, and informative style. These derived words are generally formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to basic words, resulting in changes in meaning and word class.

The identification results show that suffixes are the most dominant form of derivation found in *The Jakarta Post* articles. Suffixes such as *-tion, -ment, -ness, -ity, -al, -ly,* and *-er* frequently appear in news texts. Furthermore, several prefixes such as *un-, re-, dis-, and in-* are also found in various articles. These derivational forms are used to form nouns, adjectives, and adverbs that support the formal style of journalistic writing.

Table 1. Types of Derived words Found in *The Jakarta Post*

No	Word Base	Derived words	Affix	Word Class Change
1	*Develop*	Development	*-ment*	Verb → Noun
2	*Happy*	Happiness	*-ness*	Adjective → Noun
3	*Educate*	Education	*-tion*	Verb → Noun
4	*Active*	Actively	*-ly*	Adjective → Adverb
5	*Employ*	Employee	*-ee*	Verb → Noun
6	*Nation*	National	*-al*	Noun → Adjective
7	*Create*	Creativity	*-ity*	Verb → Noun
8	*Use*	Useful	*-ful*	Verb → Adjective
9	*Care*	Careless	*-less*	Noun → Adjective
10	*Agree*	Disagree	*dis-*	Verb → Verb

Based on the table above, the most common word class changes are those from verbs to nouns. Nominalized forms such as *development*, *education*, and *creativity* dominate news articles because formal journalistic writing often uses nouns to convey information objectively and scientifically. Furthermore, changes from adjectives to adverbs are also quite common, particularly the use of the suffix *-ly* to describe a particular method or state of affairs.

After conducting document analysis, the research continued with a test to measure their level of understanding of derivational morphology. The test was administered to 30 English students. The test instrument consisted of several sections: root word identification, affix analysis, word class changes, and understanding the meaning of derived words in sentence context.

Table 2. Students' Scores on Derivational Morphology Test

No	Score Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good (86–100)	5	16.7%
2	Good (71–85)	12	40%
3	Fair (56–70)	8	26.7%
4	Poor (41–55)	4	13.3%
5	Very Poor (0–40)	1	3.3%

The test results showed that the largest group of students were in the "Good" category, with a percentage of 40%. This indicates that students generally understood the basic concepts of derivational morphology. They were able to recognize root words and identify most of the derivational affixes found in *The Jakarta Post* article. However, some students still had difficulty determining word class changes and understanding the meaning of derived words in certain contexts.

Students who scored high were generally able to accurately identify the relationship between root words and derived words. For example, they could understand the relationship between the words *educate, education, educational,* and *educator*. Conversely, students who scored low tended to only understand the lexical meaning of words without understanding the word formation process. This caused them to have difficulty encountering new words with complex derivational forms.

This study also found that students' difficulty levels varied based on the type of affix used. Students found it easier to understand derivations using common suffixes like *-ness, -ly, and -ment*. Meanwhile, they struggled with derivations involving specific spelling or phonological changes.

Table 3. Students' Difficulties in Understanding Derivational Morphology

No	Types of Difficulties	Percentage
1	Identifying word class changes	35%
2	Understanding meaning in context	30%
3	Recognizing irregular derivation patterns	25%
4	Identifying affixes	10%

The table shows that students' greatest difficulty lies in identifying word class changes. Some students are able to recognize affixes but do not yet understand the grammatical function of derived words. For example, some students can recognize that the word *national* is derived from *nation*, but they do not understand that the word changes from a noun to an adjective. This difficulty indicates that students' understanding of derivation is still limited to the surface form of words.

In addition to written tests, this study also used interviews to determine the factors influencing students' understanding of derivational morphology. Based on the interviews, most students stated that they rarely study derivational morphology specifically in their English lessons. Learning typically focuses more on grammar and reading skills without providing in-depth explanations of word formation structures.

Students also stated that they rarely read authentic English articles like *The Jakarta Post*. As a result, they are less accustomed to encountering complex academic vocabulary in English texts. Some students admitted to using dictionaries to directly translate words rather than analyzing their morphological structure. This habit leads to students not developing strategies for inferring meaning based on word form.

Furthermore, this study found that students who habitually read English articles tended to score higher on derivational morphology tests. These students were more likely to recognize word formation patterns because they frequently encountered variations of derived words in academic texts and news reports. This finding suggests a relationship between reading intensity and students' morphological abilities.

The results of the study indicate that students have a fairly good level of understanding of derivational morphology, although they still have some difficulties in understanding changes in word class and the meaning of derivatives in the context of texts. This finding indicates that morphological understanding is closely related to students' reading ability and academic vocabulary mastery.

The dominant use of nominalizations in *The Jakarta Post* articles indicates that formal journalistic texts frequently use derivative forms to create an objective and academic style. This finding aligns with Katamba (1993) theory, which states that derivations play a crucial role in expanding the English lexical system. Nominalizations such as *development*, *education*, and *movement* are used to convey concepts or processes more formally than their verbal counterparts.

This finding is comparable to the morphological patterns identified in other authentic news texts. Badri et al. (2026), in their analysis of BBC Business News articles, found that derivational suffixation was more productive than prefixation, with noun-forming suffixes such as -tion, -ation, -ment, and -ity occurring frequently. They also found that class-changing derivation was more dominant than class-maintaining derivation, particularly through nominalization and adjective formation. These findings support the present study's observation that derivational forms, especially nominalizations, are frequently used in formal news discourse. The similarity between BBC Business News and *The Jakarta Post* suggests that derivational morphology is an important feature of authentic journalistic language and can provide meaningful materials for EFL vocabulary and morphology learning.

The research also showed that students had an easier time understanding derivations using common affixes such as *-ly*, *-ness*, and *-ment*. This may be because these affixes are frequently introduced in basic English lessons. This finding supports Yule (2020) theory, which explains that some derivational morphemes are more productive and frequently used in English, making them easier for language learners to understand.

However, students experience difficulties with derivations involving spelling or phonological changes. For example, changing the word *decide* to *decision* or *permit* to *permission* is considered more difficult than regular derivations, such as *happy* to *happiness*. This difficulty indicates that students do not fully understand the morphophonemic relationships involved in English derivation.

Difficulties in processing unfamiliar English forms have also been reported in other areas of English language learning. Merrita (2021) found that Indonesian English department students experienced difficulties in producing the English interdental consonants /θ/ and /ð/, with many participants substituting these sounds with /d/ and /t/. Although the study focused on pronunciation rather than morphology, its findings illustrate that unfamiliar English forms may create difficulties for Indonesian EFL learners. A similar consideration may help explain why students in the present study experienced greater difficulty with derivational forms involving spelling or phonological changes.

The findings of this study also indicate that students' ability to identify word class changes is still low. Many students are able to recognize affixes but do not yet understand the syntactic function of derived words in sentences. This finding aligns with Carlisle's (2010) research, which explains that morphological awareness includes the ability to understand the relationship between word form, meaning, and grammatical function. A related pattern can also be observed in students' understanding of inflectional morphology. Badri et al. (2026) examined English Education students' understanding of inflectional morphology in *The Jakarta Post* articles and found that students could recognize regular forms relatively well but experienced greater difficulties with irregular forms and with determining grammatical functions in sentence contexts. The study also identified limited practice with authentic texts and limited vocabulary as factors contributing to students' difficulties. Although the study focuses on inflectional rather than derivational morphology, its findings are relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that students may recognize morphological forms at a surface level while still experiencing difficulties in interpreting their grammatical functions and meanings within authentic texts. This parallel reinforces the importance of contextualized morphology instruction for developing students' morphological competence.

Students' difficulty understanding the meaning of derived words in context also indicates that their vocabulary mastery is still limited. The importance of

understanding language in context is also reflected in research on translation quality. Wahyuningsih (2023) evaluated the quality of subtitling translation and highlighted the importance of conveying meaning appropriately from the source language into the target language. Although the study focused on translation rather than derivational morphology, its findings are relevant to the present study because understanding derived words also requires students to interpret linguistic forms according to their contextual meaning. Thus, students who rely only on the lexical meaning of a root word may experience difficulties when the derived form carries a different grammatical or contextual function. This supports the need for contextualized vocabulary and morphology instruction in which students analyze both word formation and meaning within actual language use. In some cases, students know the meaning of the root word but not the meaning of the derived word. For example, some students understand the meaning of the word *create* but do not understand the use of the word *creativity* in an academic context. This demonstrates that vocabulary learning needs to be contextualized and not solely focused on memorizing word meanings.

Interview results indicate that a lack of exposure to authentic texts is a major factor influencing students' poor understanding of derivational morphology. The role of students' engagement with digital learning materials is also relevant to this finding. Nehe et al. (2023) found that students' motivation was an important factor in their participation in digital storytelling tasks on YouTube. Their findings suggest that the use of digital platforms can provide opportunities for students to engage more actively with English learning activities. In relation to the present study, students' limited exposure to authentic English materials may not only reduce their familiarity with derivational forms but also limit their opportunities to engage with English vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Therefore, integrating authentic and digitally accessible materials may help increase students' engagement while simultaneously providing greater exposure to different forms of English word formation.

Students' learning experiences may also influence how they engage with English learning materials. Fahmi, Membarasi, and Nurhayati (2022) examined students' experiences in learning English through Photovoice and in-depth interviews and found that students had different perceptions and experiences during online English learning. Their study also demonstrated that Photovoice could help students express their learning experiences and support English writing activities. These findings suggest that students' engagement with English learning materials can influence how they experience and respond to language learning activities. In the present study, limited engagement with authentic English texts may similarly contribute to students' difficulties in recognizing and understanding derivational forms. Students who rarely read English articles tend to have limited understanding of academic vocabulary. This finding supports Gilmore's (2007) theory that using

authentic materials can improve language skills because learners are directly exposed to natural language use in real contexts.

The Jakarta Post articles, as authentic media, have proven effective in training students' morphological skills. News articles provide concrete examples of the use of derived words in social, political, educational, and cultural contexts. By reading authentic articles, students can understand how derived words are used in everyday formal communication. Therefore, the use of authentic media can be an effective learning strategy in increasing students' morphological awareness.

This study also found a relationship between reading ability and comprehension of derivational morphology. Students with better reading skills tended to score higher on morphology tests. This suggests that the ability to recognize word structure helps students understand the overall content of a text. This finding supports research by Nagy, Berninger, and Abbott (2006), which found that morphological skills contribute to the development of academic literacy and reading comprehension.

Furthermore, research results show that derivational morphology learning still doesn't receive sufficient attention in English language learning at universities. Lecturers often emphasize grammar and reading skills without systematically integrating morphology learning. However, understanding derivational morphology can help students expand their vocabulary and comprehend academic texts more effectively. The effectiveness of morphology instruction may also depend on the level of student engagement during the learning process. Iswandari (2022) found that student engagement occurred in virtual English-speaking classes and identified Professional Educators as the most influential factor among the four FLIP Learning pillars. Although the study was conducted in a virtual speaking context, its findings highlight the importance of maintaining active student engagement in language learning. Therefore, derivational morphology instruction may be more effective when students are actively involved in identifying, classifying, and interpreting derived words rather than receiving morphological information only through theoretical explanation.

Based on research findings, learning derivational morphology should be conducted contextually through the use of authentic texts such as news articles, academic journals, and English-language digital media. Students need to be trained to recognize root words, identify affixes, and understand the changes in meaning and grammatical functions of derived words. This way, students can develop meaning inference strategies when encountering new words in reading.

In addition, lecturers can also use morphological analysis exercises as part of reading and vocabulary instruction. Activities such as identifying affixes, grouping words by word class, and analyzing relationships between words can help increase students' morphological awareness. This strategy is expected to optimally improve students' academic reading skills and vocabulary mastery.

Overall, this study shows that derivational morphology plays a crucial role in English language learning, particularly in developing students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Understanding the process of word formation helps students recognize the meaning of new words and comprehend English texts more effectively. Therefore, the teaching of derivational morphology needs to be more systematically integrated into English language learning in higher education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that *The Jakarta Post* articles contain various forms of derivational morphology used in formal journalistic contexts. The most dominant forms of derivational morphology found are the use of suffixes such as *-tion, -ment, -ness, -ity,* and *-ly,* while prefixes such as un-, dis-, and re- are also found in several articles. Most of the derived words experience changes in word class, especially changes from verbs to nouns and from adjectives to adverbs. The use of these derivational forms indicates that journalistic language in news articles tends to use a formal and academic style.

The results of the study also showed that students had a fairly good level of understanding of derivational morphology. The majority of students were in the "Good" category in the morphology comprehension test results. Students were generally able to recognize basic words and identify derivational affixes contained in *The Jakarta Post* article. However, there were still several difficulties experienced by students, especially in understanding changes in word class, understanding the meaning of derived words in sentence context, and recognizing irregular derivational patterns. These difficulties indicate that students' understanding of derivational morphology still needs to be further improved.

Furthermore, this study found that reading ability and academic vocabulary mastery are closely related to the understanding of derivational morphology. Students who habitually read English articles demonstrated better ability in understanding derivational forms. The use of authentic articles such as *The Jakarta Post* has also proven effective in helping students understand the use of derived words in real contexts. Thus, learning derivational morphology through authentic texts can be an effective strategy for improving students' vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Overall, this research shows that derivational morphology plays a crucial role in English language learning, particularly in developing students' academic vocabulary and reading skills. Understanding the word formation process helps students recognize the meaning of new words, understand their grammatical functions, and improve their ability to comprehend English texts more effectively.

Based on the research results, several suggestions can be made. First, English lecturers are advised to pay more attention to teaching derivational morphology in English language learning. Morphology learning should not only focus on theory but also relate it to word usage in real contexts through news

articles, academic journals, or other authentic texts. This way, students can understand the function and use of derived words more effectively.

Second, students are advised to increase their reading habits in English, especially those using academic and formal language, such as those in *The Jakarta Post*. Reading habits can help students expand their vocabulary, understand word formation patterns, and improve their ability to infer meaning when encountering new words in reading. Students should also get used to analyzing words based on their morphological structure rather than simply memorizing their meanings.

Third, further research is recommended to expand the study of derivational morphology using broader data sources and a larger number of participants. Future research could also examine the relationship between understanding derivational morphology and other language skills, such as academic writing, speaking, or understanding scientific texts. Thus, research on derivational morphology can make a broader contribution to the development of English language learning.

Funding
This research did not receive any external funding.

Author Contributions
B: formulated the core research ideas, designed the study, gathered the data, drafted the paper, and revised the draft.
MKP: acted as surveying the models and revised the manuscript.
M and RH: revised the draft.
YH: analyzed the data.
All authors approved the final version for submission.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest
The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies
During the writing process, no AI tools are used in this research.

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