

## WORD FORMATION IN SELECTED LYRICS WRITTEN BY ASIAN SONGWRITERS

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of the study is to explore the type of word-formation process in Selected Lyrics Written by Asian Songwriters. The form of this research was a qualitative method thus the result was conducted in descriptive. The data were taken by sorting out the English song written by Asian songwriters which were released around 2018-2021 and have at least 3 million listeners on an online streaming platform then making the transcript of the lyrics. The focus of this research is to find out and analyze word-formation process using Yule's theory (2010) and Plag (2002) as supporting theories. As the result, there are 8 processes of word-formation, and the most prominent lyrics are formed through Inflectional with 45 data then followed by Compounding 27 data, Derivation 25, Multiple Processing 24 data, Clipping 11 data, Blending 8 data then Acronym and Conversion that has 6 data of each.*

**Keywords:** Asian Songwriters, Word formation, Yule's Theory.

## INTRODUCTION

A songwriter expresses their mind through the lyrics before it becomes a song. In a song lyric, commonly a message is implied which can be what they want to convey thus it creates a certain meaning. Music can be listened to by everyone without any age restrictions, therefore it makes music a means to entertain most people. As the result, there are various platforms for listening to music online such as YouTube, Joox, Melon, Spotify, and others.

In globalization era, English is not only used by native speakers. Many non-native speakers make use of English to speak and even write a lyric in English. Asian, especially Korea and Indonesia, is well-known for the singer-songwriters who write and release their songs in English that can be found in music streaming platforms mentioned above.

A song has various kinds of words that are composed into a lyric that has meaning. The field of linguistics that studies about the word is Morphology. Morphology is related to morpheme or the smallest meaningful unit in the language system. A word in English, consists of free morpheme that doesn't need any affixes and bound morpheme that needs affixes which can be classified into prefix, infix, and suffix. Prefix placed in the beginning of root. For example, *un-* for *unaffected*. while suffix is

placed after the root word. For example, *-ed* for *watched*. Besides that, there are bound morphemes that can be combined with other morphemes to create a meaningful word in a language or it is called word formation.

As explained by Lieber (2009), morphology is the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world, and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they're used in sentence. Therefore, it's not surprising if new vocabulary, such as *wanna*, *'bout*, *gonna*, and *lookin'*, is found since language is mobilizing and developing. This is a challenge for singer-songwriters in writing English lyrics because they need to choose a word to harmonize the rhyme as a non-native English speakers. Rhyme is a repetition of similar sounds in the last stressed syllables and any following syllables of two or more. It makes a song can be harmonious and helps to strengthen the structure and form of the lyrics.

Therefore, the author is interested in analyzing what Word Formation contained in the song lyrics by using descriptive-qualitative methods to find out and elaborate how the Word-formation process occurs on the data.

### **Acronym**

Acronym is the process of forming a new word by combining the initial letters of the words. For example, the popular term R.I.P that stands for Rest in Peace.

### **Blending**

Blending is the process of producing a new word by taking the beginning of a word and attaching it to the end of the other words such as brunch which comes from *breakfast* and *lunch*.

### **Clipping**

Clipping is the process where a new word is formed by eliminating the syllable and it possibly occurs at the beginning or final syllable of a word. For example, the word *flu* that derived from *influenza*. Additionally, this reduction has one type that comes from Australian and British English called **hypocorism** when the addition of *-y* and *-ie* occurred at the end of long word reduction such as *Aussie* for *Australian* and *Telly* for *Television*.

### **Compounding**

Word-formation process of forming a word by attaching two or more words to produce a single form is called Compounding. It can be seen in word *sunlight* which is the combination of *sun* and *light*.

### **Conversion**

Yule (2010) defined conversion as the process of shifting a word into a different word class without adding any affixes unless it occurs grammatically. For example, the word *bottle* in which can be a noun and also used as a verb.

### **Derivational**

Derivation is accomplished using a lot of small "bits" of English which isn't usually given a separate listing in dictionaries or generally called as affixes (Yule, 2010). According to Plag (2002), when an affix is attached to a root, the meaning and word class of a word can change. The familiar example is the elements *un-* and *-ly* which appear in words like *unhappy* and *simply*.

### **Inflectional**

Inflection is a word-formation process by adding affixes thus it creates a new form without changing the word class and the meaning (Plag, 2002). For example, the word *watching* which is added by suffix *-ing* yet it doesn't change the meaning and the word class of *watch*.

### **Multiple Process**

Multiple process is a process where there are two or more processes in creating a word. For example, "*I'm **gon'** meet you*". The word **gon'** has two process. Firstly, blending where **gonna** is derived from **going** and **to** then clipping where it's reduced by using apostrophe become **gonn'**.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative method. This method used to analyze the data of various types of Word Formation process in selected lyrics written by asian songwriters. The subject of this research were the Asian songwriters who write their song in English such as Ardhito Pramono, Blackpink Rosé, Wonho, and Monsta X and there are 2 non-native English label music, 88Rising and DPR. The selected songs were released around 2019-2021..

The object that will be analyzed was a word of the lyrics that had been collected with several steps, those are; (1) finding English songs written by asian songwriters on digital music streaming, Spotify. (2) selecting the song that has at least 3 million listeners on Spotify, (3) finding the lyrics through the online website: <https://spotify.com>, (4) making the transcript of the lyrics, (5) sorting out the words that contain the type of word-formation.

After the data had collected, the author classified the data based on the type and analyzed how the word-formation process of the lyrics classified by using Yule's theory (2010) which talks about the process in forming a word such as coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, back-formation, conversion, acronym, derivation, prefix and suffix, and multiple processes and Plag's theory(2002) to strengthen the theory.

## FINDINGS

After analyzing the type of word formation used in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters, the author has found 151 data. All of the data are categorized based on Word formation theory by Yule (2010) and Plag (2002). As the result, there are 8 processes in forming a word, they are; *Acronym, Blending, Clipping, Conversion, Compounding, Derivational and Inflectional, and Multiple-process*. The most data that goes through these processes occurs to adjust the rhyme of the song itself. Hermintoyo (2018) said rhythm in the lyrics, aesthetically gives the neatness of sound at the end of the stan neatly with the pattern aaaa (full), abab (cross), abba (hug), aabb (spouse), and broken (abcd).

### a.) Acronym

The word-formation process in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters is acronym which can be defined as the process of forming a new word by combining the initial letters of the words (Yule, 2010). There are 6 words that are constructed by acronym process. All of the them are a noun as object which give the detail in the lyrics such as *R.I.P* which gives the detail the verb "**repeat**" and *D.T.R* that explains the verb "**couldn't**".

#### Data 1

Song	DPR LIVE - Summer Tights
<i>I repeat, <b>R.I.P</b></i>	

The word *R.I.P* stands for *Rest in Peace* and is categorized as an acronym because it contains the initials of each word then becomes a new word that commonly used to express respect for someone who has died or to express a sadness.

**Data 2**

Song	Rich Brian & NIKI – Shouldn't Couldn't Wouldn't
<i>You couldn't DTR</i>	

*DTR* is quite popular term in chat and texting which stands for *Define the Relationship*. Commonly, *DTR* is used when two people start dating about what the relationship can and should look like going forward.

The acronym process found in lyrics written by native speakers are also formed as an object such as *LA* for Los Angeles and *DJ* for disk jockey (Putri and Zakrimal, 2019), *CC* for Crack and Cocaine (Tanamal et al., 2020), *SMS* for Short Message Service and also the using of period (.) to create acronym found in *R.I.P* (Budasi and Bhuwana, 2020).

**b.) Blending**

Based on Yule (2010), blending is the process of producing a new word by taking the beginning of a word and attaching it to the end of the other words. There are 8 data constructed as blending words in the selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters which mostly has a function as a verb that shows the action in the clause and all the terms are used informally.

**Data 1**

Song	Monsta X - Beside U
<i>Gonna be there when you wake up in the middle of the night</i>	

The word *gonna* is categorized as blending word because it is formed by combining two words **going** and **to**. Therefore, this term is included in the blending process. Since this term is included as an informal word, there's a modification on the word "*to*" where this word is varying the spelling from "*to*" become "*a*".

**Data 2**

Song	Monsta X - Who Do U Love
<i>I'm just tryna say</i>	

*Tryna* comes from "**trying to**". The blending process occurs on these words where **trying** and **to** are joined and then the spelling of "**to**" is modified to be "**a**". therefore, the word *tryna* is formed and generally used in written English informally.

This is in accordance with previous research by Puspitorini (2019), Putri and Zakrimal (2019), Tanamal et al (2020), and Budasi and Bhuwana (2020) where blending words in lyrics written by native speakers were also found in informal words such as *tryna*, *gotta*, *wanna*, and *ain't*.

**c.) Clipping**

Clipping is the process where a new word is formed by eliminating its syllable and it occurs at the beginning or final syllable (Yule, 2010). As the result, 11 clipping proces are gathered and broken down into 10 clipping words and 1 hypocorism. Some of the acquired data serve as an adverb that provides information in the lyrics like *'til*, *round*, and *'cause*. The rest of the data is in the form of objects such as *ya*, *mom and dad*, *bud*, and *celly*.

**Data 1**

Song	Wonho - Ain't About You
<i>To know the world don't circle</i>	
<i>'round you now</i>	

The word **'round** is included in the clipping process because this word is the shorter form of the word "**around**" which means to be positioned around a place or object means to surround it or be on all sides of it. The eliminating process happened at the beginning of a word by using apostrophe (').

**Data 2**

Song	DPR LIVE - To Whoever
<i>As long as my mom and dad were</i>	
<i>smiling</i>	

The word **mom** which comes from free morpheme, **mommy**, and **dad** which also comes from free morpheme, **daddy**. The clipping process that occurs is eliminating the word at the end of each word that are **-dy** and **-my**. The words themselves refer to female and male parents.

**Data 3**

Song	Niki, Rich Brian, Warren Hue - Always Rising
<i>Momma call my <b>celly</b></i>	

The word **celly** in the data above comes from the word **cellular** which refers to the communication system. It's different from other clipping words because there is suffix **-y** after eliminating the last syllable. This process is called *hypocorism*.

It's similar to the lyrics written by native speakers where the clipping process found in Puspitorini (2019) and Lestari (2021) are often found in the form of an adverb such as 'til, 'round, 'cause.

**d.) Compounding**

Word-formation process of forming a word by attaching two or more words to produce a single form is Compounding (Yule, 2010). As the result, there are 26 compounding words. Most of them have a function as a noun such as *passport, backstreet, sunlight, fingertip, nightmare*, and *Silverlake*. Furthermore, it functions as an adverb, namely *instead, somewhere, forever, and tonight*. Pronouns are also found in selected lyrics such as *anything, someone, everything, and something*. Finally, the least found is as a preposition, namely *inside*.

**Data 1**

Song	DPR IAN - Scaredy-cat
<i>I find everything a <b>nightmare</b></i>	

Nightmare consists of two free morphemes, **night** and **mare** that can stand independently as a word. This is a compounding process where the word **night** attaches to **mare** and becomes new term that has a different meaning from original words. Nightmare itself is a frightening or unpleasant dream or experience.

**Data 2**

Song	Wonho - Losing You
<i>'Cause you're the air <b>inside</b> my lungs</i>	

The word **inside** has two free morphemes; they are **in** and **side**. This term is counted as compounding process because there are two words which attached into one then form a new word. The word inside itself refer to the inner part of something.

26 data are found in this process. It means compounding word is quite often used in lyrics written by Asian songwriters meanwhile in lyrics written by native speakers, it's slightly different. Putri and Zakrimal (2019) and Puspitorini (2019) didn't find any compound process in their research. However, Budasi and Bhuwana (2020) found out 3 data in compounding process.

**e.) Conversion**

Yule (2010) defined conversion as the process of shifting a word into a different word class without adding any affixes unless it occurs grammatically. The findings serves as verbs that express the action such as *face*, *color*, *circle*, *dreaming*, *packing*, and *rain* which is a noun that shifted to the verb in the lyrics.

**Data 1**

Song	Rosé - Gone
<i>the one to let me down to <b>color</b> me blue.</i>	

Generally, the word color is known as a noun which is a hue or tint, a visible color, the color of something. In this case, the word class of color has shifted to a verb because the previous word is preposition "to" which means it should be followed by a verb. The changes in the form of word color isn't found, thus the word color is also included in the conversion process.

**Data 2**

Song	DPR IAN - Scaredy-cat
<i>They might just <b>rain</b> on me</i>	

The word **rain** is discovered as a conversion process because it was derived from a noun that has the meaning water falling in drops condensed from vapor in the atmosphere. While the word rain, as a verb, is (water) falls in drops through the air. On the lyric above, it is included as a verb since there's an auxiliary verb "might" which is it should be followed with a verb. Therefore, it proves that rain has shifted to be a verb.

The author has obtained 7 conversation process in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters where the shifting from noun to verb is dominant. However, based on previous research, this process rarely occurs in lyrics written by native speakers yet Lestari (2021)

found several words that underwent this process where the results were dominated by verbs that turned into nouns, prepositions, and adjectives.

**f.) Derivational**

Derivation is accomplished using a lot of small "bits" of English which isn't usually given a separate listing in dictionaries or generally called as affixes (Yule, 2010). According to Plag (2002), when an affix is attached to a root, the meaning and word class of a word can change.

There are 24 data in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters with Adjectives in suffixes *-y* (*peachy*), *-al* (*accidental*), *-ous* (*nervous*), *-ful* (*faithful*), *-less* (*meaningless*), and prefix *a-* (*alive*) are the most. Then there is noun with suffix *-ion* (*hesitation*), *-ing* (*losing*), and *-ity* (*electricity*). And adverb in suffix *-ly* (*suddenly*). Furthermore, prefix that changed the meaning are also found, they are *a-* (*away*), *in-* (*insane*), *en-* (*enlist*), *re-* (*remind*), and *dis-* (*disguise*). The affixes found occurring at the same times in word ***reincarnation*** which comes from *incarnate* then is attached by prefix *re-* then suffix *-ion* which changes the class into a noun.

**Data 1**

Song	Rosé - On the Ground
<i>Funny when you want it...</i>	

On the data above, the word *funny* is included in derivational process because there is suffix *-y* attached to root ***fun***. Essentially, fun has a function as a noun yet when it's added by suffix *-y*, it becomes an adjective. Thus it proves suffix *-y* can change a noun to be a verb.

**Data 2**

Song	Wonho - Losing You
<i>Drive me insane</i>	

The word *insane*, comes from word *sane*. This word is included in derivational process even though the function of word are same. According to Plag (2002), every prefix will change the meaning of the words thus it's categorized as a derivational process. *Insane* itself has the meaning the opposite of *sane*, that means the existence of prefix *in-* can change the meaning of a word.

Derivational process is also found in lyrics written by native speakers such as Ariana Grande's Position album (Lestari, 2021) which has found 12 data such as infinite, usually, and spending which the affixes found are both suffix and prefix.

**g.) Inflectional**

Inflection is a word-formation process by adding affixes thus it creates a new form without changing the word class (Yule, 2010) and it also doesn't change the meaning (Plag, 2002). The most prominent inflection has a function as a verb with (1) suffix *-ing* (*pouring, leaving, and tempting*). The verb with suffix (2) *-ed* (*figured, and kissed*). (3) suffix *-s* (*dances and goes*). Furthermore, adjectives with suffix *-est* (*darkest*) and *-er* (*higher*).

**Data 1**

Song	Wonho - No Text No Call
<i>I'm <b>staring</b> at my phone</i>	

The word *staring* is indicated the use of present continuous tense because of suffix *-ing* attached to the base *stare*. However, the suffix *-ing* doesn't change the meaning and the function of the base because *staring* is still a verb. therefore, it's included in inflectional process.

**Data 2**

Song	Ardhito Pramono - Here We Go Again
<i>I <b>kissed</b> that girl again</i>	

The word *kissed* comes from base *kiss* that attached to suffix *-ed*. This word indicates as past tense and still have the same function. Therefore, the suffix *-ed* in word *kissed* is categorized in inflectional process because it doesn't change the meaning and the function of a word.

As the result, the author has obtained 45 data containing inflectional process with suffix *-ing* as progressive type is dominant and It is in line with previous research, lyrics written by native speakers which have suffix *-ing* which is 37 words in Deen Squad Lyrics (Rizkia, 2020).

**h.) Multiple Process**

The last process found in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters is multiple processes. As stated by Yule (2006), multiple process is a process where there are two or

more processes in creating a word. The most frequent findings in multiple-process are inflectional and clipping where the word attached with suffix -ing then the final syllable is cut such as *gettin'*, *figurin'*, and *walkin'*. Moreover, a combination of conversion and clipping is found on the word *coolin'*. Also, blending and clipping in the word *gon'*

**Data 1**

Song	NIKI - La la lost you
<i>...and the nights are <b>coolin'</b> down</i>	

The word **coolin'** consists of multiples process because there are two processes that participate in the word. They are; **Conversion** and **clipping**. The word coolin' comes from base cool which is an adjective that shifted to a verb because there's auxiliary verb "**are**". Then the whole word **cooling** is being cut at the end syllable to become **coolin'** and the cutting process is a clipping.

**Data 2**

Song	Monsta X - Beside U
<i>You roll with me, you <b>gon'</b> see</i>	

The multiple processes that occur in the term *gon'* are **blending** and **clipping**. The word *gon'* comes from *gonna* which is it is a blending word because it consists of two words, *going to*. then it's reduced at the last part thus it becomes *gon'*.

**Data 3**

Song	DPR LIVE - Boom
<i>her eyes <b>rollin'</b> out</i>	

The word **rollin'** has experienced two process, they are **inflectional** and **clipping**. This word comes from lexical **roll** which is a verb, then it's attached with suffix **-ing** that doesn't change the function and meaning (this process is named inflection). After being the word rolling, it's being eliminated at the final part thus it becomes **rollin'**. the process of eliminating is called clipping.

The last process found in lyrics written by Asian songwriters is multiple-process which has 24 data and mostly clipping as the second process is often found. This process is rarely found in the previous research yet Budasi and Bhuwana (2020) found 41 data of multiple-process in the Lyrics of Drake's Songs.

## CONCLUSION

The author concludes that there are 151 data identified in selected lyrics written by Asian songwriters. Selected songs are the song which has at least 3 million listeners in spotify. There are 8 processes of forming a word, including derivational and inflectional, based on Yule (2010) and Plag (2002). The most dominant Lyrics written by Asian songwriters are formed through *Inflectional* with 45 data then followed by *Compounding* 26 data, *Derivation* 25, *Multiple Process* 24 data, *Clipping* 11 data, *Blending* 8 data then *Acronym* and *Conversion* that has 6 data of each.

In inflection, the data have the functions as verb and adjective. While in compounding, the data are formed as noun, adverb, pronoun, and preposition. Derivational suffix found in adjective, noun, adverb, and some prefixes to modify the meaning of a word. All of the data in Multiple-process are a verb. It's in accordance with Conversion which the data are verbs that is derived from nouns. In addition, the obtained data in blending are formed as verb. For acronyms, most of the term is an object. Lastly, data in clipping process are an adverb and a noun.

Based on the analyzed data, the words that experience the process of the word-formation because the singer-songwriter wants to harmonize the rhythm with the lyrics with the pattern aaaa (full), abab (cross), abba (hug), aabb (spouse), and broken (abcd).

By the end of this research, the author hopes this study will provide the knowledge in the field of Morphology and be useful for the next other authors who want to take this topic. In order to develop this research, the author hopes further author could analyze the process of word-formation using different data sources and theories. The author also suggests that the reader could learn this topic to improve their knowledge in forming a word.

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