



Analysis of word formation processes during the Algerian *Hirak*

تحليل عمليات تركيب الكلمات المتداولة في الحراك الجزائري

Analyse de la synthèse des mots utilisés dans le *Hirak* Algérien

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ملخص

لا يُذكر الحراك الجزائري فقط بعظمة سلميته من أجل الديمقراطية، ولكن أيضًا بكلماته الخاصة، والتي هي باختصار مكونات حاسمة للاعتراف والتغيير. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى فحص أنواع عمليات تركيب الكلمات المتداولة من طرف الحراكيين الجزائريين وتحديد أكثرها إنتاجية. ولهذه الغاية، تم استخدام تحليل المستندات المقدمة من المستندات الشخصية الإلكترونية مثل منشورات الفيسبوك ومقاطع فيديو اليوتيوب والتعليقات التوضيحية وعلامات التصنيف على انستغرام و تويتر. تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة أن هناك بعض عمليات تكوين الكلمات المستخدمة في الحراك الجزائري مثل التركيب المزج، القص، الاستعارة والتشكيل الخلفي، ولكن العملية الأكثر إنتاجية هي الإلصاق الذي يتأثر إلى حد كبير باللاحقة الإنجليزية "ist". يمكن لهذه النتيجة أن تبرر تأثير اللغة الإنجليزية على اللهجات الجزائرية.

الكلمات الدالة:الصرف؛ عملية تكوين الكلمات؛ الحراك الجزائري؛ وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؛ تحليل المستندات.

Abstract

The Algerian Hirak is not only remembered for its most impressive peaceful revolutions for democracy but also for its particular words, which are in short, critical components of recognition and change. The present study aims at examining the types of word formation processes found in the words recently formed by the Algerian Hirakists and identifying the most productive process. To this end, this study opts for the use of document analysis; the data presented is gathered from electronic personal documents such as Facebook posts, YouTube videos, captions and hash tags on Instagram and

Twitter. The findings of this study reveal that there are some processes of word formation used in creating Algerian Hirak new words such as compounding, blending, clipping, borrowing and back formation, but the most productive process is affixation, which is at a large extent influenced by the English suffix 'ist'. This result can justify the impact of English language on Algerian dialects.

Keywords: morphology; word formation process; algerian hirak; social media; document analysis.

Résumé

On se souvient non seulement du Hirak Algérien pour ses révolutions pacifiques les plus impressionnantes pour la démocratie, mais aussi pour ses slogans particulières, qui sont en bref, des éléments critiques de reconnaissance et de changement. La présente étude vise à examiner les types de processus de formation de mots trouvés dans les mots récemment formés par les Hirakistes algériens et qui ont le processus le plus productif. À cette fin, cette étude opte pour l'utilisation de l'analyse documentaire. Les données présentées sont collectées à partir de documents personnels électroniques tels que des publications Facebook, des vidéos You tube, des légendes et des hashtags sur Instagram et Twitter. Les résultats de cette étude révèlent qu'il existe certains processus de formation de mots utilisés dans la création de nouveaux mots de Hirak algérien tels que la composition, le mélange, le découpage, l'emprunt et la formation arrière, mais le processus le plus productif est l'affixation qui est dans une large mesure influencée par le suffixe anglais 'ist'. Ce résultat peut justifier l'impact de la langue anglaise sur les dialectes algériens.

Mots-clés: morphologie; processus de formation de mots; hirak algérien; médias sociaux; analyse de documents.

Introduction

On February 22nd. 2019, Algerians launched a rare non-violent movement for recognition and change. They left their homes and went to the public spaces, mainly streets, in staggeringly large numbers to protest against corruption in different sectors and send a message to those who oversee public affairs. This movement has taken on the name of 'Hirak', which has now become a common word to define the popular protests across the Arab world.



While El Hirak in Algeria is likely to be remembered as the call for political reform, few may remember it as a revolution of unlimited creativity. Creativity has been most apparent when it comes to forming new words. Algerian hirakists have created new words to ask for a radical change and more importantly to find meaning for their personal experiences. In other words, the Algerian Hirak, also called revolution of smiles, is believed to have contributed in creating new words that are related to different word formation processes.

The creation of any new word is made through some processes of word formation, which are dealt within morphology. Morphology refers to the branch of linguistics that deals with the study of morphemes, their different forms (allomorphs) and the way they combine in word formation (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985). Yule (2010) further describes morphology as the study of words, their formation and their relationship to other words in the same language. Words recently formed by Algerian Hirakists must have undergone some word formation processes; they may also involve more than one process. Some Algerian people know how to use the words, the ones used in the Hirak period in particular, but they may not know how those words are created. As a researcher and a native speaker of Algerian Arabic, I have wondered how the Algerian Hirak new words are formed. Hence, this paper aims at:

- examining the word formation processes found in the Algerian Hirak words;
- finding the most productive word formation process used in the creation of Hirak words.

1. Word Formation Processes

1.1 Word Formation Processes

Through time, every society undergoes various changes that may allow speakers to create new words. To address the question of how such words are related to other existing words and how they are created, it is possible to find meaningful answers in the area of study traditionally referred to as word formation (Ingo Plag, 2002).

The term word formation, as Trask (1997) and Plag (2003) suggest, is a process to construct or create new words from existing other words. Relevant to this, Harley (2006) adds that new words are the



words, which are built by manipulating the existing words based on some rules. To fully elaborate this, the new words are built by some processes that can be productive or non-productive. Conclusively, word formation process is productive if it is appropriate to use in the production of new materials, which means if it can be used to produce new words. But, if it is not appropriate, it is called non-productive (Bauer, 1983).

Plag (2003) divides word formation process into four kinds which are: compounding, blending, abbreviation and affixation. Delahunty and Garvey (2010), on the other hand, propose that word formation process includes coinage, conversion, acronym and borrowing. Reduplication, back-formation and clipping are rather wide-spread word formation processes as they are further illustrated by Argenis A. Zapata (2007), Reima Al-Jarf (2015) and Annisa Faradisa et al. (2019).

Notwithstanding their degree of productivity, these major morphological processes are used as the basic framework to analyze the data obtained in the present paper.

1.2. Social media and Language of Algerian Hirak

What is called El Hirak Chaabi (popular movement) is sometimes referred to as social media revolution. That is to say there is a significant relationship between social media tools and Algerian Hirak. There has been always a possibility for social media users to react immediately, comment, like, and share posts. Many Facebook pages and most notably YouTube videos have reported the events as they happened. Regardless of geographical location, this has facilitated the necessary information and helped the coordination among Algerian protesters.

As far as the role of social media in rendering support and empowering Algerian Hirak is concerned, various experts of the subject area have attempted to forward what they believe is appropriate role of these tools. Therefore, among the major commonly identified roles are cited in the Role of Social Media Networks in the 2011 Arab Revolutions by Hibamo Ayalew (2012, p.15):



- ❖ “Social media tools are important mechanisms for collective action and social movements used “to mobilize public opinion, organizing mass protests, and publicize concerns and demands locally and globally” (Howard, 2011).
- ❖ Social media provides channels of organization [-“*create digital public spheres*”.(Wolff, 2011)
- ❖ For Wolff (2011), social media has “*the function of the so-called ‘political street’.*”Asef Bayat’s “*Theory of the Political Street*” in the Arabic World can be divided into four basic components:
 - The street as a collective term for public spaces such as parking lots, markets, work places...etc offers the average citizen a place for active discussion, space to express the collective moods and opinions.
 - The street serves as a place where the problem under discussion collects: the individual becomes communal. That is, they function as transmitters and transfer individual experience in an organized form to collective construction of identity.
 - Joint activities to change specific problems develop without having been organized or planned.
 - So-called “*social non-movements*” can develop a basically unorganized collection of different emotions, expressed opinions and problems of individual average citizens that can develop from individual action to a collective activity space not originally intended for this use” (Ibid).

Social media can be also a vehicle through which language of protest is diffused (Oussama Raqui, 2019). In December 31st, 2011 YouTube posting, Al-Arabiya spotlights language as a critical component of the Arab Spring uprisings and the Algerian Hirak cannot be an exception. Language used in the Algerian Hirak has been extensively shared online. On reflection, it seems that language is a complex system that serves a great many functions. As described by H.G. Widdowson (1996), it is of course language which figures our lives. In his words: “it provides for present needs and future plans, and at the same time carries with it the impression of things past” (Linguistics, 1996, p.03)



While many studies have explored “language and politics”, or the “language of politics” broadly, few, have systematically investigated the role of language itself in revolutions. Nazir Nader Harb Michel (2013) continues saying that an imperative like the key slogan of the Arab uprisings/*irḥal*/(leave/get out) or the Algerian Arabic slogan that appeared during the protests that have taken place in Algeria since 22 February 2019/*jetnahaw gāʿ*/(they should all be removed!) is interpreted by regime security apparatuses as action. Certain kinds of speech and particularly anti-regime expressions are monitored, regulated, and punishable by both legal and extra-legal means.

In most cases, the language used in Arab protests is colloquial Arabic. The November 1st, 2019 online article written by Nabil Mansouri is directly relevant to this claim. The article titled “We are free to speak Algerian” demonstrates that language of El Hirak Chaabi must not be disregarded by analysts. The author of this article expounds that whilst a journalist for the Emirati channel Sky News Arabic was covering the “demonstrations of joy in central Algiers” on the evening of 11 March 2019 when the former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced he was giving up a fifth term, a young Algerian interrupted her live report and demanded to be heard. The young man had decided to intervene to explain that Algerian people were not joyful at all and that the President’s stepping down was just another move in the political game, the young man said: ‘*Yetnahaw gaâ*’. The journalist asked him to speak standard Arabic so that the channel’s listeners might understand what he was saying. Yet, the Algerian young man shot back: “I don’t speak Arabic, this is our *darja*!” (Algerian dialect).

The slogan in Algerian Arabic ‘*Yetnahaw gaâ*’ appears in Wikipedia, it has now become a sort of rallying cry of social media users. This in fact makes understand how critical words of El Hirak Chaabi are. To use the terms of the American scholar of the Middle East Elliot Colla (2011), the slogans the protestors are chanting are as loud as they are sharp.

2. Research Methodology

This study is designed as qualitative research as it presents descriptive data in words. The formulated aims of this paper are to



know what word formation processes are found in the Algerian Hirak words and which process is more productive. The instrument used to collect the data is documentation, mainly electronic personal documents such as: Facebook posts, YouTube videos, captions; hashtags on Instagram and Twitter. This is in line with the suggestion of Glenn A. Bowen (2009) that document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic material. The researcher has analysed the lists of recently formed Hirak words from year 2019-2020 by using a systematic random sampling. In other words, 26 words used in the Algerian Hirak were taken randomly to analyse. Moreover, the researcher validated the data to an expert who is a linguistics lecturer at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Then, the results were compared with some theories and, in the last step, a conclusion was made.

3. Data Analysis

As stated before, this study focuses on the word formation processes proposed mainly by Plag (2003), Delahunty and Garvey's theory (2010) and Reima Al-Jarf (2015). Each of them is analysed and explained as follows:

3.1 Compounding

a compound (sometimes also called composition) is defined loosely as a combination of two independent lexical categories such as adjectives, nouns, verbs, or prepositions, in purpose of constructing a single meaningful form such as newspaper, blackboard, highlight, undergo, ... (Plag, 2003, Yule, 2010; Delahunty & Garvey, 2010). Reima Al-Jarf (2015) argues that, unlike English, this process is not very productive in Arabic language. We have found two compounds; they are further described in the table 3.1. below:



Table 1: Finding words related to the compounding process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
كليتو لبلاد-1	/kli:tu:lbleɖ/	1-verb= to corrupt or misuse of national resources.
بوصبع لزرق-2	/bu:sbɔ̃fɛzreg/	2- noun= refers to voters

This table shows that each compound involves two elements which are attested as existing independent lexical categories. The abovementioned compound /kli:tu:lbleɖ/ is composed of (**kli:tu:** 'verb'+ **lbleɖ**'noun'). /**bu:sbɔ̃fɛzreg**/ is a combination of the noun /**bu:sbɔ̃f**/ and the adjective /**ɛzreg**/.

3.2. Blending

According to Plag (2003), blends are amalgamations of parts of different words. They are compounds created by clipping and blending elements of a complex term. Usually the first part of the first element is combined with the second part of the second element such as *smog* (*smoke*/*fog*), *brunch* (*breakfast* + *lunch*) or *Oxbridge* (*oxford*+ *cambridge*)...As it can be shortly seen in table 3.2, three blends are discussed each in turn.

Table 2: Finding Blending process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
بوتسريقا-1	/bu:tesriqɑ /	1-noun= The thief
بوتعويقا-2	/bu:teʃwiqɑ /	2- noun= The handicapped
3-vendredire	/vɔ̃ndredɪy/	3- verb= to protest on a Friday

In this table, we are dealing with different independent existing words that are shortened to form blends. The meaning of each blend is one; the first element modifies the second. Thus, the word /**bu:tesriqɑ** / is an amalgamation of the back clipping of the name of the former president / **bu:teflika**/ and the noun/**sariqɑ** / which means 'theft'. /**bu:teʃwiqɑ** /is a combination of both/**bu:teflika**/ and the noun /**ɪʃɑqɑ**/,i.e., 'a handicap'. The last blend is combined of the



back clipping of the French noun /**vɔ̃ndredi**/ and the French verb /**dɪr**/.

3.3. Affixation (derivation)

is the process of creating a new word out of an old word, usually by adding a prefix or a suffix. For instance: ‘un’ in unhappy, ‘less’ in careless ‘-ment’ in ‘agreement’, ‘-hood’ in ‘brotherhood’ or ‘-ship’ in ‘friendship’...Table 3 provides some cases of affixational process.

Table 3. Affixation (derivation) process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1- حزبست	/hɪzbɪst/	1-supporters of the FLN party.
2- خبزست	/xɔ̃bzɪst/	2-refers to the widespread nepotism
3- كاشيرست	/kɑ̃ʃɪrɪst/	3-Used sarcastically to refer to the supporters of Bouteflika's fifth term.
4- حيطيست	/hɪtɪst/	4-The unemployed youth
5- حر كيست/شياتيست	/harkɪst/or ʃɪjɑ̃tɪst/	5- a person who flatters powerful individuals for personal benefit
6- بني عميست	/bnɪʃɑ̃mɪst/	6-nepotistic (nepotism)
7- زواليست	/zɑ̃wɑ̃lɪst/	7-The poor

This word formation process involves the English suffix *-istas* its primary or only means of deriving words from other existing words. This suffix derives nouns denoting persons, mostly from nominal and adjectival bases (Plag (2003)./bnɪʃɑ̃mɪst/for instance is someone who is guilty of nepotism.

3.4. Back-formation

it is a little bit same with clipping; however, it can change the part of speech. Back formation is the creation of derived word forms by analogy, either by dropping an affix, or by creating a new base form (Reima Al-Jarf, 2015). It is also defined as a word of one type (usually a noun or an adjective) which is reduced to form a word of another type (usually a verb). Examples of words created by this process are ‘*donate*’ (from “donation”), ‘*babysit*’ (from “babysitter”), *enthus* (from “enthusiasm”), *haze* (from “hazy”), *obsess* (from “obsessive”) and *televise* (from “television”)...Let us have a look at the following



table 3.4 that shows further characteristics by which this process can be distinguished from the previous word formation processes.

Table 4: Back formation process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1- يتمنجلو (v) = المنجل (n)	/jətmendʒlɔ/	1-This verb means 'to purge'
2- شنقرحة (v) = شنقرحة (n)	/ʃengrahəm/	2-This verb means 'to kill, destroy...'
3- يشيتة (v) = شيتة (n)	/jʃəjət/	3-This verb means to fatter (praise) powerful individuals for personal benefit

As already indicated above, these words are formed by analogy and by changing the word class. The verb /jətmendʒlɔ/ is derived from the noun /mendʒəl/, i.e., the sickle in English language. /ʃengrahəm/ derives from the name of the supreme leader of the Algerian military /ʃengriħa/. The last verb /jʃəjət/ is derived from the noun /jita/, i.e.; 'a brush' in English language.

3.5. Abbreviation

Abbreviation is similar in nature to blending that is most commonly formed by taking initial letters of multiword sequences to make up a new word such as: BA ↔ Bachelor, EU ↔ European Union. Abbreviation has also in common with clipping. It may incorporate non-initial letters such as: gymnasium ↔ gym, influenza ↔ flu, mathematics ↔ math...and so on.

Abbreviations can be either spelled in capital or in lower case letters, and they can be either pronounced by naming each individual letter (so-called **initialisms** or **alphabetisms** as in *USA* [ju.es.eI]) or by applying regular reading rules (e.g. *NATO* [neI.təu]). In the latter case the abbreviation is called **acronym** (Plag, 2003). **Acronyms** are pronounceable words formed from initial letters of words. For example: radar, OPEC, UNESCO...

In the following table, examples of abbreviations and acronyms are examined:



Table 5 : Abbreviation and Acronym processes

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1- 3 Bs/الباءات الثلاثة	/lɪxwabi/ /bāʔātɔalāθa/	1-It has a historical reference to the “three Bs” of the war of responsible for the assassination of AbaneRamdane.
2- Dz سلمية	/di:zed sɪlmjə/	2-Protestors in Algeria have repeatedly insisted that their movement is peaceful

Apart from the perhaps more obvious possibility to derive words with the help of affixes, there are a number of other ways to create new words on the basis of loss of material (not addition of material, as affixation). The abbreviation /lɪxwabi/ or the acronym /bāʔātɔalāθa/ is formed by taking initial letters of Abdelkader Bensalah, Noureddine Bedoui et Tayeb Belaïz. The initialism /di:zed/ refers to Algeria.

3.6. Clipping

Clipping is often termed as shortening as well as ellipsis (Bussmann, 1996); it is also used as an equivalent to ‘truncations’ in some publications (Plag, 2003). Clipping denotes the subtraction of one or more syllables from a word such as: ad (advertisement), fax (telefax), lab (laboratory), *sweet* or *Frannie* (oratory), prof (professor)....

Unlike diminutives (such as *sweet* or *Frannie*), clippings and truncated names are used to express familiarity. Diminutives express not only familiarity, but also (usually positive) affection towards the person or thing referred to.

Consider the following words and take a moment to think about their own structure and its relation to their respective base words.



Table6: Clipping process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
بوتي-1	/bɒtɪ/	1- A diminutive of the word 'boat'
الخامسة-2	/elxamsa/	2- the fifth mandate.

As evidenced in our small data set above, the word /bɒtɪ/ is derived from the English word 'boat', it is disyllabic and seems a diminutive. It can be written with the orthographic variant—y. /elxamsa/ is a shortening of the phrase /elxamsa/; that is to say phrase clipping.

3.7. Borrowing

Reima Al-Jarf (2015) says that borrowings (transferred terms) are linguistic units introduced into a language from another language. She continues saying that this happens when for the new concept no term is available or can be easily formed. Borrowed terms can be borrowed from the same language or from another language. Borrowings from foreign languages can be: (1) a direct transfer of a term as it is; (2) a loan translation (calque); or (3) a loan word.

English for instance has borrowed from different languages, from French (for instance the word: boulevard); from Italian (pizza), from Arabic (alcohol) and from Spanish (cigar) (Barber, 1987). To have our discussion of this process, we should first consider some data:



Table 7: Borrowing process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1-بلاد-Mickey	/bled mi:ki/	1- This expression captures the absurdity of everyday life and politics in Algeria (The word Mickey is borrowed from English language)
2-Cadre	/kady/	2-means a frame and it refers to the x-president and more generally a reference to his picture of displayed in every public building.
3-La Momie	/lamɔmi/	3-it means a Mummy and refers also to the former president.
4-Poupiya	/pu:pja	4--meansa doll, it refers also to the former president who was unable to move. He was manipulated.

This table shows that Algerian Hirakists have borrowed from different languages. The word /mi:ki/ is an English word. The words /kady/ and /lamɔmi/ are French words. The loan word /pu:pja/ is an integrated French word adapted in the Algerian language.

3.8. Reduplication

Reduplication is the repetition of all or of part of a root or stem to form new words. If the entire root or stem is repeated, the process is called *complete (or total) reduplication*, and the new word is considered as a repetitive compound. If only a part of the root or stem is repeated, the process is called *partial reduplication*, and the repeated portion is called a reduplicative.

Table 8: Reduplication process

Algerian Hirak words	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1- خاوة خاوة	/xawaxawa/	1-brothers
2- قيو قيو	/qiwqiw/	2-we know what you are doing



These words are examples of complete reduplication, their entire stems are repeated. The second example/**q̣ṛwq̣ṛw**/ may represent a natural sound.

3.9. Coinage

Coinage it is also named as ‘neologism’ or word manufacture. Coinage is often found in industrial fields that needs a name for goods. According to Delahunty and Garvey (2010) cited in Annisa Faradisa et al. (2019), coinage is the process of forming a new word which is from a brand name or product, it can also be derived from taking the name of individuals. For instance, *Xerox*, *Samsung*, *Honda* and so on. For Reima Al-Jarf (2015), many neologisms existing in Arabic are borrowed.

Table 9: Coinage Process

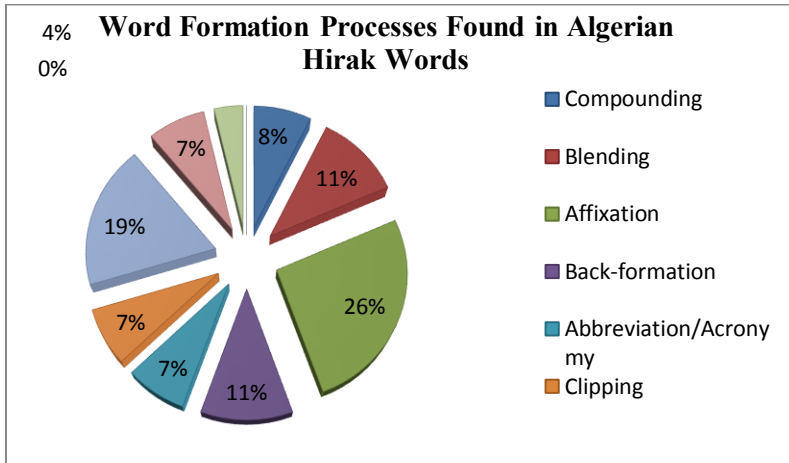
Algerian Hirakwords	Phonemic Transcription	Meaning
1-Chkoupī /chkoupistan	/ʃku:pī, /ʃku:pīsten/	1-refers to the corruption in many sectors and failure of political elites.

The word/**ʃku:pī**/ is a green seaweed that gets stuck in fishermen’s net, and synonym of a worthless catch ([/www.jadaliyya.com/](http://www.jadaliyya.com/)). The Algerians used this word to degradingly describe the dominance of trash in their country.

4. Discussion of the Findings

Based on the data analysis, the findings of this research may be explained as follow.





It is found that there were 2 words of compounding, 3 words of blending, 7 words of affixation, 3 words of back-formation, 2 words of abbreviation/acronymy, 2 words of clipping 4 words of borrowing, 2 words of reduplication and one word for coinage process from the total of 26 words found. For conversion process, no examples are found.

Conversion can be defined as the derivation of a new word without any overt marking (Plag, 2003), that is by shifting, changing or converting its original grammatical class to another class without any change in its form (cf. Godby et al., 1982; Byrne, 1978; Pei, 1966). Different types of conversion can be distinguished, in particular noun to verb, verb to noun, adjective to verb and adjective to noun. Reima Al-Jarf (2015) states that Arabic makes no use of conversion; it is outside the ordinary derivational structure of Arabic language and Algerian Hirakists perhaps make no use of it.

Worthy of notice is that the most productive process is affixation which is at a large extent influenced by the English suffix 'ist'. The data gathered show some adjectives derived from nouns by the suffixation of -ist. This can reveal the impact of English language on Algerian dialects.

Conclusion

The complexity and instant progress of Algerian dialects faces many linguistic questions, which are required to be investigated. The



present study focuses on the analysis of word formation processes drawing upon the theoretical framework of Plag (2003), Delahunty & Garvey (2010) and Reima Al-Jarf (2015). Based on the concluding discussion made above, it is suggested that this study findings might support the data for further research that is interested in investigating the word formation process. Hence, further research may conduct the same study with different data and based on different theoretical frameworks.

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