MORPHEMIC FEATURES IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Nazwa Syafrida, Devi Melani, Andini Putri, Aldi Rohim Pratama, Dewi Nurmala
Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah
nazwasyafrida36@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzes the morphemic features found in five selected poems by Charlotte Brontë, namely Life, Stanzas, Parting, On the Death of Anne Brontë, and Regret. The study aims to determine how Brontë's morphological structures contribute to meaning, rhythm, and stylistic character in her poetry. The analysis focuses on identifying free morphemes, bound morphemes, inflectional affixes, derivational affixes, and other word-formation processes. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method using textual documentation and morphemic analysis. The findings, based on an analysis of 1229 total morphemes across the five poems, reveal that all poems are dominated by emotional free morphemes and inflectional bound morphemes (-ing, -ed, -s). Thus, it is concluded that morphological structures play a significant role in shaping the aesthetic effect in Brontë's poetic works, specifically by combining simple structural forms with expressive word formation.

Keywords: *Morphemic features, Charlotte Brontë's poetry, morphological analysis, affixation, word formation.*

Abstrak

Studi ini menganalisis fitur morfemik yang ditemukan dalam lima puisi pilihan karya Charlotte Brontë, yaitu Life, Stanzas, Parting, On the Death of Anne Brontë, dan Regret. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menentukan bagaimana struktur morfologi Brontë berkontribusi pada makna, ritme, dan karakter stilistik dalam puisinya. Analisis berfokus pada identifikasi morfem bebas, morfem terikat, imbuhan infleksional, imbuhan derivasional, dan proses pembentukan kata lainnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan dokumentasi tekstual dan analisis morfemik. Temuan, berdasarkan analisis terhadap total 1229 morfem di kelima puisi tersebut, mengungkapkan bahwa semua puisi didominasi oleh morfem bebas emosional dan morfem terikat infleksional (-ing, -ed, -s). Dengan demikian, disimpulkan bahwa struktur morfologi memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk efek estetika dalam karya puisi Brontë, khususnya dengan menggabungkan bentuk struktural sederhana dengan pembentukan kata yang ekspresif.

Kata kunci: *Ciri-ciri morfemik, puisi Charlotte Brontë, analisis morfologi, afiksasi, pembentukan kata.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Brontë is recognized as one of the most influential writers in nineteenth-century English literature, known for her emotional depth and distinctive linguistic style. While she is mainly celebrated for her novels, her poetry also reflects strong linguistic creativity through deliberate word choices and stylistic techniques. Similar to Romantic and Victorian poets, Brontë constructs meaning through language patterns that convey personal experience and artistic intention. However, one aspect that has received limited scholarly attention is the use of morphological structures in her poetry. Morphology, as defined by Haspelmath (2021) and Aronoff and Fudeman (2017), focuses on morphemes as the smallest units of meaning and their combination in word formation. In poetry, morphological choices do not only serve grammatical functions but also influence tone, imagery, rhythm, and emotional nuance. Previous studies have mainly emphasized phonology, stylistics, and semantics, while detailed morphemic analyses of Brontë's poetry remain scarce. Some earlier research, such as studies by Ariani (2022), Rahmawati (2021), and Amalia (2020), demonstrates the importance of morphology in literary analysis, yet Brontë's poems are still underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to examine the morphemic features in selected poems by Charlotte Brontë, namely *Life*, *Stanzas*, *Parting*, *On the Death of Anne Brontë*, and *Regret*. By identifying and classifying free and bound morphemes, as well as inflectional and derivational forms, this research seeks to reveal patterns that characterize her morphological style. The results are expected to provide deeper insight into Brontë's linguistic creativity and contribute to broader discussions on morphology in literary texts.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method combined with morphemic segmentation to analyze the linguistic structures in Charlotte Brontë's selected poems. The qualitative design is appropriate because the research focuses on describing and interpreting the form, function, and stylistic effect of morphemes rather than measuring them statistically. The data consist of five selected poems by Charlotte Brontë, chosen based on thematic relevance and linguistic richness. Data Collection Procedures are:

a. Collecting the original texts of the five poems.

b. Identifying all lexical items in each poem.

c. Segmenting words into morphemes using morphological theory (Haspelmath, 2021; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2017).

d. Classifying morphemes into free, bound, inflectional, and derivational types.

Data Analysis Techniques are:

a. Categorizing morphemes based on form and function.

b. Counting morpheme frequency.

c. Creating tables of morphemic distribution.

d. Interpreting the poetic effect of morphological choices.

The study applies references from morphology and stylistics to ensure accuracy (Plag, 2018; Liu, 2020; Al-Taei, 2018).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results of the morphemic analysis applied to the five selected poems by Charlotte Brontë. The discussion is structured around the identification and classification of free and bound morphemes (inflectional and derivational), as well as their frequency and function in shaping the poetic style. The findings are summarized in three tables detailing the dominant morpheme types, specific morphemic breakdowns, and overall morpheme count per poem.

Tabel 1. Dominant Types of Morphemes

Poem	Dominant Free Morphemes	Dominant Bound	Inflectional	Derivational	Contractions
Life	life, hope, day, gloom, courage	-ing, -ed, -s	-ing, -s	-ly	—
Stanzas	love, memory, dream, light, heart	-ing, -ed, -s	-ing, -s	-ly	—
Parting	love, thought, world, friend	-ing, -ed, -s	-s, -ing	-ance	—
On the Death of Anne Brontë	life, death, breath, heart	-ed, -ing	-ed	-ly	I've

Regret	life, light, years, sea, heart	-ed, -ing, -s	-ed	-ward, -y, -less	—

The analysis demonstrates that Charlotte Brontë's selected poems consistently display distinct morphological patterns. The free morphemes dominating across the five poems often relate to emotional concepts and central themes, such as *life, hope, gloom, and courage* in "Life," or *love, memory, dream, and heart* in "Stanzas". These essential free morphemes form the basic structure of meaning in her poetic language. This structure is strongly supported by the dominant inflectional bound morphemes. Specifically, the suffixes **-ing, -ed, and -s** (forming verb tenses and plurals) appear most frequently, ensuring grammatical accuracy while also contributing to the poems' rhythm. Furthermore, derivational morphemes are also used regularly. For instance, the suffix -ly is found in "Life," "Stanzas," and "On the Death of Anne Brontë," while -ance appears in "Parting," and a variety of other affixes like -ward, -y, and -less are found in "Regret". These derivational morphemes play a role in creating richer vocabulary, strengthening imagery, and adding emotional nuance to her work.

Tabel 2. Five Examples of Morphemic Breakdown per Poem

a. LIFE

Word	**Morphemes**	**Type**
foretell	fore + tell	derivational + free
bloom	bloom	free
merrily	merry + ly	free + derivational
flit	flit	free
victorious	victory + ous	free + derivational

b. STANZAS

Word	**Morphemes**	**Type**
returning	return + ing	free + inflectional
breezeless	breeze + less	free + derivational

belated	be + late + ed	derivational + free + inflectional
meeting	meet + ing	free + inflectional
changeful	change + ful	free + derivational

c. PARTING

Word	Morphemes	Type
remembrance	remember + ance	free + derivational
dwelling	dwell + ing	free + inflectional
follies	folly + es	free + inflectional
restrain	re + strain	derivational + free
cheerful	cheer + ful	free + derivational

d. ON THE DEATH OF ANNE BRONTË

Word	Morphemes	Type
failing	fail + ing	free + inflectional
beloved	be + love + ed	derivational + free + inflectional
feverently	fervent + ly	free + derivational
tempest-tossed	tempest + tossed	free + inflectional
lived	live + ed	free + inflectional

e. REGRET

Word	Morphemes	Type
unknown	un + known	derivational + free
forlorn	for + lorn	bound + bound
homeward	home + ward	free + derivational

| weary | wear + y | free + derivational |
| returning | return + ing | free + inflectional |

This table of morphemic segmentation illustrates the word-formation processes employed by Brontë. Words are broken down to show how free morphemes (the base words) interact with bound affixes. Examples from "Life," such as *foretell* (derivational + free) and *merrily* (free + derivational), demonstrate the use of derivational affixes to modify the meaning or part of speech. In "Stanzas" and "Parting," many verbs show the use of the inflectional suffix -ing for grammatical function, as seen in *returning* and *dwelling*. The poem "On the Death of Anne Brontë" features more complex structures, like *beloved*, which combines derivational, free, and inflectional morphemes (be + love + ed). Meanwhile, "Regret" provides examples of derivational affixes such as un- in *unknown* and -ward in *homeward*, alongside a less common case like *forlorn*, which consists of two bound morphemes (for + lorn). Overall, these examples clarify that Brontë constructs her work using a balanced combination of free morphemes, inflectional forms, and derivational affixes.

Tabel 3. Total Morphemes per Poem

No	Poem Title	Total Words	Total Morphemes	Avg. Morphemes/Word
1	**Life**	185	**224**	1.21
2	**Stanzas**	260	**307**	1.18
3	**Parting**	222	**268**	1.20
4	**On the Death of Anne Brontë**	140	**165**	1.18
5	**Regret**	221	**265**	1.19

The quantification results reveal a striking consistency in the morphological structure across Brontë's poetry. A total of 1229 morphemes were identified across the five analyzed poems. When comparing the total morphemes to the total words in each poem, the average morphemes per word is found to be highly uniform. This average ranges consistently between 1.18 and 1.21. This low and consistent figure underscores the study's conclusion that Brontë tends to combine simple structural, words that are mostly single free

morphemes with expressive word formation, a strategy that ultimately strengthens her poetic tone and distinguishes her style among poets of her period.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that Charlotte Brontë's selected poems display clear and consistent morphological patterns. Free morphemes appear most frequently and form the basic structure of meaning in her poetic language. These are supported by inflectional suffixes that help shape grammatical accuracy and rhythm. Derivational morphemes also appear regularly and contribute to creating richer vocabulary, stronger imagery, and emotional nuance. Overall, the balance between free morphemes, inflectional forms, and derivational affixes highlights Brontë's tendency to combine simple structural forms with expressive word formation. This combination strengthens her poetic tone and distinguishes her style among other poets of her period.

5. REFERENCES

Abdullah, R. (2019). Word formation processes in English. IJEL.

Al-Taei, H. (2018). Linguistic analysis of stylistic features in English poetry. IJALEL.

Amalia, R. (2020). An analysis of inflectional morphemes in the short story "The Child's Story". SALEE Journal.

Ariani, N. (2022). Morphological stylistic analysis in William Blake's poem Spring. ELL Journal, 11(2), 125–138.

Aronoff, M., & Fudeman, K. (2017). What is morphology? Wiley-Blackwell.

Hadi, M. (2017). Stylistic devices and linguistic patterns in English poems. Journal of Language and Literature, 8(2).

Haspelmath, M. (2021). Understanding morphology. De Gruyter.

Indiyati, L. V. (2019). An analysis of word formations used in Jane Eyre novel by Charlotte Brontë. IAIN Ponorogo.

Karpova, O. (2023). Structural and semantic traits in the poetry of the Brontë Sisters. RULB.

Lestari, S. (2019). A linguistic analysis of lexical choice in selected poems. JETL, 3(1).

Liu, M. (2020). An overview of derivational morphology in modern English. TPLS.

Plag, I. (2018). Word-formation in English. Cambridge University Press.

Putri, A. (2017). Affixation and its role in English morphology. JELS.

Rahmawati, S. (2021). An analysis of inflectional suffixes in selected poems by Robert Frost. English Journal of Education, 8(1), 45–56.

Sari, L. (2021). Morpheme analysis of English language. JOSAR, 5(2), 112–120.