

Morpho-Semantic Analysis of Word Formation in Abraham Lincoln's "The Gettysburg Address"

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Abstract: This research analyzes word formation, including inflection, derivation, grammatical meaning, lexical meaning, contextual meaning. This research employed a qualitative approach supported by morphological and semantic theory. The study focuses on Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" delivered in 1863. Data collected analyzes words related to inflection and derivation. It has been identified that a number of inflectional morphemes show the presence of morphemes marked by the suffixes "-s", "-d", "-ed", "-ing", "-er", "-al-" and "-re". Six derivational morphemes found in the speech sample include: -ment, -ion, un-, -ing, -ly, and -ed or -d. Inflected and derivative words exhibit a high degree of semantic interconnectedness, both in terms of their lexical meanings and the contexts in which they are employed. Abraham Lincoln sought to emphasize five key points: Change catalysts are historical, and national philosophy is crucial. Respect those who built America's foundation. Unity and dedication are crucial to fulfilling past revolutionaries' unrealized ideals. This research enhanced the understanding of morphological features and semantic categories while reinforcing the non-negotiable importance of human rights and the indispensable role of a democratic system of government. Future research may compare morpho-semantic patterns in political speeches using corpus-based or critical discourse analysis to examine persuasive functions.

Keywords: word formation, grammatical meaning, lexical meaning, contextual meaning

INTRODUCTION

It is generally comprehensible that language plays a crucial role for human life. This is a medium for the transmission of human ideas and concepts, facilitating communication among individuals within any given society (Fransisca, 2023). This perspective reinforces the view that language plays a fundamental role in shaping social interactions across a wide range of contexts, including governmental, professional, and domestic settings (Suhendra et al., 2022). In particular, language is employed for the purpose of maintaining social relationships and

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persuading the public. Fionasari and Saputra (2024) stated that language functions as a medium employed by those in positions of authority to persuade public discourse and maintain societal dominance. Moreover, Joullié et al. (2021) stated that language serves as an essential tool in communication, enabling the identification of whether social interactions are characterized by authority. Thus, in order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to construct language formulation through the proper arrangement of sounds and accurate language forms that will ensure the transmission of language meaning accurately.

One of the linguistics branches that studies the language form is morphology. Fá (2015) revealed that Morphology, a linguistic discipline, is the study of the grammatical construction of word meaning. This is the field of linguistics concerned with the processes involved in the formation of words and the structural composition of words to create language meaning is known as lexicology. According to Bauer (2003) assertion, the discipline of morphology is focused on the structural and evolutionary aspects of lexical formation. In essence, morphology is defined as the branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of morphemes, words, and the relationship between grammatical information, meaning, and form within words (Rizki & Zakrimal, 2020). Furthermore, Morphology is the study of morphemes, the smallest meaningful or significant units of language, and how these units combine to form words (Kusumawardhani, 2023). This lexical approach posits that morphemes serve as the fundamental units of English lexical composition. This leads to the concept stated by Bauer (2003) that the study of morphology encompasses processes that yield novel lexis and may result in a modification of a word's grammatical classification. Therefore, a comprehensive examination of the intricate mechanisms of a language requires an analysis of its minimal units of meaning, known as morphemes.

In the field of morphology, the term "morpheme" is classified into two distinct categories. The initial is free morphemes which are capable of functioning as standalone units and possess lexical meaning. Ramadhan et al. (2022) stated that a free morpheme possesses the capacity to function independently as a word, thereby serving as a lexical unit in uninflected form. The second category is bound morphemes which must be attached to free morphemes in order to effect a change in the meaning of words and word classes, indicating grammatical significance. Tariq et al. (2020) stated that derivational and inflectional morphemes are types of bound morphemes used in daily communication.

Moreover, Khanetnok et al. (2023) documented, affixes in derivational morphology are suffixes, infixes, prefixes, and reduplication categories. Meanwhile, the affixes classified as constitutive of the inflectional morphology are the following: plural, possessive, past tense, comparative, and superlative cases. Similarly, derivations suffixes constitute base words to which affixes are appended, thereby yielding a new word that bears a distinct, novel meaning. Whereas, inflectional suffixes refer to the process of word formation that does not result in category changes or the creation of new meanings. However, word formation is defined as the process of altering a word's class, grammar, and meaning, and shaping its lexicon through semantic and grammatical processes concurrently. This combination is referred to as morphosemantic.

The discipline of morphosemantics is concerned with the integration of morphology and semantics within the field of linguistics. According to Loquellano and Semblante (2025), the

convergence of these two disciplines gives rise to a novel field of study, namely the examination of the formal semantics of lexical changes. The relationship between morphology and semantic can be descriptively analyzed through the analysis of the meaning of the types of morphemes since semantics is the branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of meaning. This means that a significant positive correlation indicates that when grammatical features are expressed with marked morphemes, they are often accompanied by matching semantic marking (Alexiadou, 2019). Moreover, the interaction between morphology and semantics includes cases in which morphological processes on nouns contribute to quantification interpretation (Lieber & Plag, 2022). If a grammatical feature is identified as a morphological feature, it is necessary that the feature in question be semantically marked as well. The morphosemantic domain is defined as an etymological framework that can expose semantic and derivational pathways in the evolution of associated lexical and morphological structures. Thus, this research attempted to analyze the word formation and both grammatical meaning of morphemes, lexical and contextual meaning.

Grammatical meaning can be defined as the structural meaning that words derived from their arrangement and function in a sentence. This is in contrast to lexical meaning. The grammatical meaning of a sentence is conveyed through word order, affixes, which indicate tense, number, questions, and negative sentences. This process creates a coherent sentence, rather than a mere list of words. Grammatical meaning is often contrasted with lexical meaning and refers to all aspects of meaning that arise from an expression's grammatical structure, rather than from the specific words chosen to convey it (Hamawand, 2025). In this instance, each morpheme carries meaning through a combination of lexical meaning and grammatical meaning (Dewa et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Lexical meaning refers to the inherent meaning of a word that can exist independently and is typically defined by its dictionary entry (Sudar et al., 2023). This means that lexical meaning is defined as the basic meaning of a word as stated in a dictionary, as Ramadani et al. (2025) stated that lexical meaning is understood to signify the significance of a word as derived from its original references. The term denotes the inherent significance attributed to a word, serving as a representation of a concept, action, or attribute. This is distinct from grammatical meaning, which pertains to the function of the word in a sentence.

The contextual meaning is meaning that depends upon the context in which it is posed and at least, it would appear that this is the case from social, cultural, and political perspective. This relationship is further explored in the context of language and meaning. Contextual meaning is the meaning assigned to a lexeme or expression based on the context of its use. Additionally, interpreting contextual meaning involves identifying the appropriate meaning of a word based on its context, since many words possess multiple semantic interpretations (Hasanah & Habibullah, 2020). Thus, understanding context becomes an important task in applied linguistics, computational linguistics, lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics, and other linguistic fields, because context triggers variations in meaning and provides valuable information for understanding why and how a particular word varies in meaning when used in a text (Laurino & Kaczer, 2025).

A thorough investigation of the Gettysburg Address has been undertaken from multiple disciplinary perspectives, notably from a linguistic standpoint. For example, the interpersonal

meaning in the speech Gettysburg Address (Systemic Functional Analysis) (Latunra, 2022), Strategic Euphemism and National Face-Work: A Sociolinguistics Study of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (Pasaribu et al., 2025), and Biblical language and themes in Lincoln's Gettysburg address (Dreisbach, 2015). Despite the utilization of the same object in previous studies, there has been a paucity of analyses that have specifically focused on the morphosemantic aspects of the Gettysburg Address. The novelty of this research is derived from its employment of morphosemantic studies, a methodological approach that has not been widely adopted. Practically, the findings of this research can be a useful resource for students, educators, and researchers in linguistics by providing a deeper understanding of how word-formation processes contribute to meaning construction in political discourse. Furthermore, the study may support the teaching and learning of morphology, semantics, and discourse analysis through authentic examples drawn from a historically significant political speech.

In this particular instance, the researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of word formation, encompassing both inflectional and derivational affixation. Moreover, this analysis delved into the grammatical and lexical significance of morphemes, offering an exploration of linguistic morphology. Morphosemantic analysis explores the interaction between morphology and semantics by investigating how structural modifications in words influence their meanings, thematic roles, and levels of semantic transparency this process involves analyzing word structures, focusing on morphological units that carry semantic information, especially in languages with inflectional and derivational morphology. This research attempted to answer the following questions; 1) what kinds of inflectional morphemes? 2) what kinds of derivational morphemes found? 2) What are the meaning of morphemes? Hence, the purpose of this research is to find out and analyze word formation particularly inflection and derivation, and to describe the lexical and contextual meaning of basic words.

METHOD

This research is grounded in the conceptual foundations of morphology and semantics, as these linguistic disciplines provide the theoretical basis for understanding word structure and meaning. Morphology serves as the primary framework for examining word formation and identifying different types of morphemes, while semantics guides the interpretation of the meaning conveyed by these linguistic units. This research employed the descriptive qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003) which necessitates the analysis of data in a qualitative manner, with the objective of describing word formation, and related semantic aspect.

The criteria used to identify and classify morphemes are based on established morphological principles and ensure systematic and consistent data analysis, as each morpheme is analyzed according to its form, function, and meaning. Although morphology and semantics are distinct branches of linguistics, they complement each other in explaining how words are formed and how they communicate meaning, thus strengthening the validity and reliability of the research analysis.

The analytical framework employed to ascertain lexical and contextual meaning offers a systematic approach to interpreting the meaning of words and phrases in a text. Lexical analysis is the study of a word's dictionary meaning, focusing on its semantic range, etymology, and grammatical function. Meanwhile, contextual analysis involved the

consideration of the broader linguistic, historical, cultural, and situational contexts in which words appear to determine their intended meaning. The integration of lexical and contextual analysis within this framework facilitates a more precise and exhaustive interpretation of texts, ensuring that meaning is comprehended not only in the context of individual word definitions but also in relation to the author's intention, the prevailing discourse, and the conditions under which the text was produced.

The data source was the text of written speech entitled “*Gettysburg Address*” delivered by Abraham Lincoln on 19 November, 1863. The data collected in this research study is related to the words that have been identified as being part of word formation. The data collection and analysis facilitated by two instruments. These instruments are documents, and the researcher himself is the instrument.

The procedure of analysis was divided into three main steps. The initial analysis focuses on morphological aspects. The researcher identified word formation processes based on how they were formed particularly inflection and derivation. The subsequent process is concerned with the semantic aspect. The researcher identified the formation of inflected and derivational words. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the grammatical meaning of bound morpheme types and subsequently described the lexical meaning of basic words, and the contextual meaning which related to the background of the speech. To ensure consistency, the researcher applied the same analytical framework and coding criteria to all data. Each stage of the analysis was systematically documented and repeatedly reviewed to verify accuracy and minimize bias. Interpretations were also aligned with relevant theories and literature, ensuring that the findings were reliable, coherent, and consistently derived from the data.

RESULTS

A. Inflectional morphemes

The researcher identified affixes based on the grammatical implications of bound morphemes.

Table 1. Word formation with types bound morpheme

Base form	Affixes				Inflected forms	Findings
	Prefix	Infix	Suffix	Circumfix		
Year	–	–	-s	–	Years	seven years
Father	–	–	-s	–	Fathers	our fathers
Create	–	–	-ed	–	Created	are created equal
Dedicate	–	–	-ed	–	Dedicated	to be dedicated
Struggle	–	–	-ed	–	Struggled	who struggled
Consecrate	–	–	-ed	–	Consecrated	have consecrated
Die	–	–	-d	–	Died	shall not have died
Test	–	–	-ing	–	Testing	testing whether that nation
Live	–	–	-ing	–	Living	living and dead
Remain	–	–	-ing	–	Remaining	remaining before us
Large	–	–	-er	–	Larger	in a larger sense

As illustrated in the above table, the Gettysburg Address features four distinct types of inflectional morphemes: the plural marker (-s), the past tense/past participle marker (-ed), the present participle marker (-ing), and the comparative marker (-er). Of these, the inflectional suffix -ed is the most frequently used, serving to indicate past action or a completed event. The suffix -s marks plurality, -ing indicates ongoing action or participial function, and -er indicates comparison. Overall, the data correctly identifies that all the inflected forms are formed through suffixation, with no prefixes, infixes, and circumfixes. These inflections serve to modify grammatical meaning without altering the word class of the base form.

B. Derivational morphemes

In these types of word formation, the researchers identified the affixes that can change the speech class.

Table 2. Word formation with types bound morpheme

Base Form	Affixes				Derived Forms	Word Class Change	Findings
	Prefix	Infix	Suffix	Circumfix			
Govern (verb)	-	-	-ment	-	Government	V → N	government of the people
Devote (verb)	-	-	-ion	-	Devotion	V → N	take increased devotion
Finish (verb)	-	-	-	un- + -ed	Unfinished	V → Adj	the unfinished work
Rest (verb)	-	-	-ing	-	Resting	V → Adj	a final resting place
Fit (verb)	-	-	-ing	-	Fitting	V → Adj	it is altogether fitting
High (Adj)	-	-	-ly	-	Highly	Adj → Adv	we here highly resolve
Advance (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Advanced	V → Adj	so nobly advanced
Engage (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Engaged	V → Adj	we are engaged
Dedicate (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Dedicated	V → Adj	so dedicated
Conceive (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Conceived	V → Adj	so conceived
Increase (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Increased	V → Adj	take increased devotion

Honor (verb)	-	-	-ed	-	Honored	V → Adj	these honored dead
Together (Adv)	al-	-	-	-	Altogether	Adv → Adv	It is altogether fitting and proper.
Solve (verb)	re-	-	-	-	Resolve	V → V	we here highly resolve.

As demonstrated in the above table, the lexical items “government”, “Devotion”, “unfinished”, “resting”, “fitting”, “highly”, altogether”, and “resolve” are compelling illustrations of derivational morphology, as they result in the creation of new lexical items and/or the modification of the meaning or word class. It is essential to note that “advanced,” “engaged,” “dedicated,” “conceived,” “increased,” and “honored” are more accurately treated as participial adjectives. The categorization of these words as derivational is contingent upon the utilized framework. These words are accepted as derivational because they function as adjectives. Additionally, the words “altogether” and “resolve,” along with the prefixes al- and re-, generate new lexical meanings while maintaining their original grammatical categories (adverb → adverb and verb → verb). This finding underscores the notion that semantic change serves as an important criterion for identifying derivational morphology. These examples illustrate that derivational processes do not invariably result in a change in a word’s grammatical category.

DISCUSSION

A. Inflectional morphemes

As demonstrated in table 1, the inflectional processes observed in The Gettysburg Address illustrate how morphological changes can contribute to grammatical meaning without altering the lexical category of the base words. The English language features an affix, or suffix, morpheme that marks either third-person singular verbs in the present tense or regular plural nouns (Li & Yang, 2022). The base forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives are represented by inflectional suffixes, which are characteristic of basic English. The following endings are observed: -s, -d (-ed), -ing, and -er. Semantically, these affixes do not engender completely new concepts; rather, they modify the temporal, quantitative, or comparative boundaries of the base morpheme.

From a morphosemantic standpoint, the incorporation of inflectional morphemes facilitates the articulation of grammatical information. According to Haspelmath and Sims (2013), inflection refers to the morphological process of modifying a word to encode grammatical categories, including tense, aspect, case, person, number, and gender. These changes convey grammatical relationships and syntactic functions while preserving the word’s fundamental meaning and lexical category. This process occurs while preserving the fundamental semantic essence of the base word. A steady relationship between the base form and its inflected forms signifies the preservation of the fundamental conceptual essence

while enabling the words to function dynamically within complete sentences. The table identifies eleven inflectional forms consisting of plural nouns, inflected verbs, and comparative adjectives.

The plural suffix -s appears in words such as “years” and “fathers,” which are derived from the noun’s “year” and “father.” From a morphological perspective, the suffix serves to indicate plurality. Semantically, it broadens the reference, expanding it from a single entity to multiple entities. Morphosemantically, the plural morpheme effects a semantic shift, whereby the reference is transferred from a singular, specific entity to an open set that exceeds one. In the phrases “seven years and our fathers,” the inflected forms convey quantitative and collective meanings. This is in accordance with Bauer’s (2003) argument that inflectional affixes express grammatical categories without altering the lexical meaning or grammatical class of the base word. This means that, “seven years” employs the plural to measure a specific duration of time, thereby contributing to historical framing. Concurrently, the term “our fathers” undergoes a shift in its usage, transitioning from a designation of a single ancestor to a collective ancestral group.

The lexical meaning of the lexicon “year” is period of time as the term “year” functions as a linguistic marker denoting a specific period of one calendar year (Speranskaya, 2023). The word “year” is used to indicate the prevailing essence, dominant trends, and important events that characterize a certain period of time. The word “fathers” refers to a male parent. In the speech, “fathers” refers to America’s historical ancestors, as the nation’s founders, thus embodying transformation. In other words, drawing on Jaquess’s (2017) discussion of revolutionary fatherhood, the term ‘fathers’ can be interpreted as referring to America’s revolutionary generation. In consideration of the contextual framework, the phenomenon elicits sentiments of shared heritage and profound respect for ancestral lineage, thereby providing a foundational basis for the discourse to take shape within the context of collective historical identity.

Furthermore, the past participle ending -d (or -ed) applied to “create,” “dedicate,” “consecrate,” and “die” exhibits different morphosemantic layers depending on its syntactic environment. In the formation of passive constructions, such as “are created equal,” this morphology entails a transition of focus from the agent of creation to the recipient and their inherent state. In linguistic constructions, such as the perfect “have consecrated” and “shall not have died,” the inflection signifies completed actions whose relevance extends into the present or a projected future. The suffix -ed, including created, dedicated, struggled, consecrated, and died, serves to indicate past tense verbs. Bauer (2003) documented that the suffix -ed functions as an inflectional morpheme in English morphology, indicating either the past tense or the past participle form of regular verbs. The function of this ending is to convey grammatical information, achieved through the marking of changes in the tense or participial form of the verb. Semantically, this inflection places an action or state within a completed time frame. For instance, the terms “created” and “are created equal” signify the culmination of actions whose outcomes persist in their relevance. Conversely, “dedicated” and “consecrated” denote actions that have already been executed, underscoring the utterance’s enduring nature and its historical implications.

The verb form “struggled” exemplifies the semantic role of the past tense marker -ed in emphasizing a completed historical effort. In the phrase “who struggled,” the inflection indicates that the action occurred in the past, thereby reinforcing Lincoln’s reference to the sacrifices made by previous generations. A similar phenomenon is observed in the use of the verb “died” in the phrase “shall not have died,” which combines a participial form with an auxiliary structure. Bobaljik (2012) stated that auxiliary–participle constructions are not treated as separate lexical formations, but as the syntactic realization of inflectional morphology, where grammatical features are expressed through distributed spell-out across functional heads in the clause. Therefore, the phrase “who struggled,” serves to convey the timeless meaning of those who sacrificed their lives.

Furthermore, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) argued, the perfect participle differs from the past tense because it belongs to a distinct inflectional category with different grammatical functions, although regular verbs often share the same form. Thus, the term “to struggle” functions both narrative and temporally, offering a multifaceted interpretation that encompasses the intricacies of both the story’s progression and its temporal unfolding. From a morphosemantic perspective, the event is entirely situated within a completed time frame, so that in the context of the question of “who fought,” underscores the historical reality of the soldiers’ efforts as a unified entity. By placing the narrative within a historical context, the text underscores the concrete basis of sacrifice.

Lieber (2001) stated that lexical meaning is intrinsically shaped by word formation processes, since the meaning of a complex word is derived from the interaction between its morphological structure and the semantic properties of the morphemes that compose it. This suggests that the morphological processes are essential in determining both the grammatical organization of words and the meanings. This statement is consistent with Booij’s (2007) discussion of the relationship between morphology and semantics, which emphasizes that the morphological patterns are systematically linked to the semantic interpretations and that the structure of complex words contributes to their overall meaning. Thus, from a lexical-semantic perspective, create, dedicate, struggle, consecrate, and die each convey distinct conceptual meanings: creating something new, committing to a purpose, facing difficulties, designating something as sacred or special, and ending life or existence. These core meanings remain stable even when the verbs undergo inflectional changes to express grammatical categories such as tense or aspect.

Contextually, the terms create, dedicate, struggle, consecrate, and die serve to establish a conception of an enduring legacy, a sense of nobility in obligation, and the conception of spiritual immortality, all associated with the actions of those who have been honored. The contextual meanings of these words are consistent with the analysis of Pasaribu et al. (2025) which highlights how the portrayal of the soldier that can be comprehended through values of honor, courage, and moral virtue, positioning the warrior figure as a representation of these ideals. In addition, Lincoln’s rhetoric has been preserved and continues to inspire future generations in the spirit of building democracy (Briggs, 2020). It is therefore concluded that the terms create, dedicate, fight, sanctify, and die are used to describe the concept of honor and obligation as a collective responsibility. Additionally, the table illustrates the productive inflectional morpheme -ing, exemplified by the words “testing,”

“living,” and “remaining.” From a morphological perspective, the function of this suffix is to form the present participle or gerund. Semantically, it conveys the notions of ongoing, continuous, or progressive actions and states. The word “testing” conceptualizes the condition of the nation as an ongoing process. In a similar manner, the term “living,” when contrasted with “dead,” underscores a persistent state of existence, while “remaining” accentuates an action that persists into the present moment. Thus, Putri et al. (2021) explained that the suffix –ing can function as a nominal suffix forming nouns and as an adjectival suffix modifying nouns. The notions of “testing” and “remaining” should be conceptualized as processional phenomena, wherein meaning and significance emerge through continuous development, negotiation, and persistence over time.

According to Sudar et al. (2023), lexical meaning refers to the basic meaning of a word as represented in a dictionary, independent of contextual influences. Lexically, testing refers to the act of evaluating something, while civil war denotes an internal armed conflict. Life signifies the state of existence, and the phrase life and death emphasize the sacrifices made by brave men for the survival of the nation. Meanwhile, remaining refers to what continues to exist after others have disappeared or been removed. Contextually, the -ing form conveys immediacy and urgency, emphasizing that the situation remains ongoing and requires continued commitment. Thus, Abraham Lincoln used the phrase “the great task remaining before us” to stress the nation’s enduring responsibilities, a meaning reinforced by the related expression “the unfinished work.” This aligns with Latunra’s (2022) ideas that supports the idea that Lincoln’s word choices in the Gettysburg Address created a sense of shared responsibility and ongoing commitment by showing how his use of interpersonal language encouraged his audience to dedicate themselves, and to the preservation of unity and equality.

Furthermore, inflectional morphology is defined as the process of marking grammatical categories without creating new lexical categories. Examples of grammatical categories include comparison, tense, number, and case. The comparative suffix -er in larger is attached to the adjective large to express a higher degree of comparison without changing its word class. Semantically, it indicates greater extent or scope. In the phrase “in a larger sense,” the suffix broadens the meaning from a literal interpretation to a wider conceptual understanding. According to Cotterell and Schütze (2018), the meaning of derived words can be modeled through the interaction between morphological components and semantic composition, showing that morphemes contribute meaningful information beyond their structural role. This means that the comparative suffix serves to modify the semantic content of the adjective. Thus, Gwilliams (2020) documented that morphological patterns contribute to meaning by showing how morphemes are systematically combined according to morphosyntactic rules to construct the meanings of complex words.

Lexically, the lexical meaning of “big” denotes something large in size, extent, or scope. Its comparative form, bigger, expresses a greater degree and, in the speech, is used to describe the noun sense, emphasizing a broader or more significant meaning. Mesa, (2021) stated that lexical meaning refers to the basic or dictionary meaning of a word and serves as the foundation for interpreting deeper meanings, such as connotative or symbolic meanings. Contextually, the phrase “in a broader sense” acknowledges the limitations of human ritual.

This phrase is used to move from narrow, specific details to more general, and to reflect on context, implications, that go beyond the case directly discussed.

Furthermore, Latunra (2022) stated that Lincoln's use of interpersonal language constructs dedication as a collective commitment connected to the ideals of union and equality. In the same vein, building on Pasaribu et al. (2025), Lincoln's address can be interpreted as transforming a historical event into broader philosophical ideas about collective identity, responsibility, and national ideals. In this instance, Lincoln transforms events into broader philosophical concepts, emphasizing shared responsibility and long-lasting national values. In this manner, Abraham Lincoln establishes a parallel between the Founding Fathers and subsequent generations of Americans. The former secured liberty through their dedication and sacrifice, while the latter bear the responsibility of continuing their legacy by fulfilling the "great task remaining before them" or "unfinished work."

B. Derivational morphemes

A morphosemantic analysis of the Gettysburg Address reveals that derivational affixation is a prominent linguistic feature that shapes political, emotional, and ideological meanings. Through the integration of morphology and semantics, Lincoln employs derivational forms to articulate democratic values, collective memory, and national unity, demonstrating that morphological processes play a crucial role in constructing meaning within political discourse.

In accordance with the foundational principles of morphosemantic theory, the data presented in the table 2 demonstrated the process by which derivational morphology contributes to the construction of meaning in the Gettysburg Address delivered by Abraham Lincoln. The morphological derivation process has been shown to modify the grammatical categories (i.e., word classes) and core meanings of root words in the speech text of the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln. Besides, morphological processes demonstrate the relationship between morphological structure and the meaning it generates. Thus, the utilization of this linguistic mechanism empowered Lincoln to articulate political convictions, emotional principles, and national aspirations with precision and persuasive eloquence.

It can be observable that from a morphological perspective, the suffix -ment in the word "government" (from "govern" + "-ment") indicates the derivation of the verb into a noun. Zalizniak et al. (2012) revealed that semantic shifts can be systematically classified across languages through recurring patterns of meaning change. This means that semantic shifts exhibit systematic and recurrent patterns across languages, allowing them to be classified within a cross-linguistic topological framework. Such shifts are manifested not only through the development of polysemous meanings within a single lexical item but also through semantic relationships established among morphological related lexical forms. This semantically means that the meaning undergoes a shift from the act of governing to the institution or system responsible for governing.

Furthermore, in the phrase "government of the people," the derived noun represents a democratic political structure, not the act of governing itself. The present derivation serves to substantiate the discourse's fundamental principles of democratic engagement and

national unity. Lieber (2001) argued that morphological derivation and lexical semantic composition interact to determine the meanings of complex words through systematic combinations of morphemes and their semantic properties. Moreover, the transition from verb to noun ($V \rightarrow N$), as exemplified by the words “government” (from “govern”) and “devotion” (from “devote”), signifies a process referred to as a noun. Therefore, from a morphological and semantic perspective, the suffix -ment converts the active control of “rule” into an abstract institutional entity.

Lexically, the term “government” is defined as a group of people who govern a country or region in the form of a method or system of government of a country. Mbah and Mbah (2015) stated that government can be lexically defined as method of giving and consolidating the command. In this instance, Lincoln’s expression of “government of the people, by the people, for the people” presents democracy as a system based on popular sovereignty, where political authority originates from citizens and government exists to serve the public. The Gettysburg Address’s “government of the people, by the people, for the people” expresses the principle of democratic self-government, where political authority comes from and serves the people. The term “*government*” is the lexical choice proposed by Abraham Lincoln to emphasize the fundamental system of a nation that is democracy (*the government of the people, by the people, for the people*). In the context of this conceptual framework, speakers are able to conceptualize complex behavior as a physical or valuable commodity that can be possessed, observed, or refined. This phenomenon can be exemplified by expressions such as “people’s government” and “increasing devotion.” Hence, Joullié et al. (2021) documented that language plays a central role in constructing authority and shaping social and political relationships. In this regard, the utilization of these phrases, within the context of their reciprocal application, evinces a concerted endeavour to establish the foundations for a democratic order, at both the national and state levels.

An additional illustration of this phenomenon is evident in the word “devotion.” The suffix “-ion” serves to transform a verb into an abstract noun. A morphosyntactic and semantic analysis of this derived form reveals its use in expressing the state or quality resulting from the act of devoting oneself. The phrase “take increased devotion” conveys commitments, loyalties, and dedication to a national objective. That phrase can be interpreted as reflecting collective commitment and shared responsibility in the Gettysburg Address because Lincoln uses it to call the living to continue the cause for which the fallen soldiers sacrificed themselves. This interpretation aligns with Pasaribu et al.’s (2025) discussion of collectivization, unity, and national identity in Lincoln’s rhetoric. Moreover, this closely related to Latunra’s (2022) analysis of Lincoln’s interpersonal meanings, the Gettysburg Address can be interpreted as constructing collective commitment and responsibility through its emphasis on union, equality, and dedication to national ideals. The term “devotion” was relevant as Lincoln sought to restore peace in America, urging citizens to show compassion, concern, and commitment to completing the “unfinished work” before them.

Furthermore, the word “unfinished” (un- + finish + -ed) exemplifies the integration of a prefix and a suffix. The prefix “un-” is associated with negative meaning, while the suffix “-ed” functions to form an adjectival phrase. From a semantic perspective, the resulting

adjective signifies an unfinished state or quality. In his phrase “unfinished work,” Lincoln conveyed that the mission for which the soldiers fought remained unfinished. This interpretation aligns with Bale et al.’s (2011) discussion of the relationship between morphological and semantic specificity, where morphological marking and semantic interpretation can be linked through the way grammatical features influence the interpretation of lexical forms. The “unfinished work” refers to the work left unfinished by the brave American men who fought and sacrificed their lives for America. This aligns with Hoch’s (2001) interpretation that the “unfinished work” as extending beyond the immediate demands of the Civil War to the larger project of fulfilling the nation’s founding ideals of equality and democratic self-government. Therefore, within the paradigm of “unfinished work,” this phenomenon elicits a profound emotional response, signifying an enduring and unfulfilled task that remains to be completed by the living.

A number of derived adjectives in spoken language are formed through the suffixes -ed and -ing, including resting, fitting, advanced, engaged, dedicated, conceived, increased, and honored. From a morphological perspective, these suffixes function to transform verbs into adjectives, thus indicating quality, condition, or state. This finding is in line with Nagano’s (2023) argument that adjective suffixes play an active semantic role in determining the meaning of derived adjectives, encoding various interpretations such as relational, dispositional, and evaluative functions. Overall, these derivations enhance the speech’s persuasive force by conveying enduring states and internal transformation. Lexically, rest denotes a state of inactivity or repose, whereas fit signifies suitability or appropriateness. Contextually, rest functions as a euphemism for death, referring to the soldiers’ eternal repose on the battlefield. Thus, in Lincoln’s discourse, the battlefield is portrayed as their final resting place. Contextually, phrases such as “we are engaged,” “deeply dedicated,” and “these fallen heroes” serve to indicate the identity, status, and spiritual standing of both the living nation and the fallen soldiers.

The adverb “highly” (a combination of “high” and “-ly”) is employed to indicate the derivation of an adjective into an adverb. The suffix -ly functions as an adverb, modifying the verb resolve. According to Giegerich (2012), the morphology of the suffix -ly, discussing its role in forming adverbs from adjectives and the complexity of classifying -ly forms in English grammar. A close examination of this derived form reveals that it strengthens the level of determination expressed in the sentence “we here highly resolve.” Hence, Gonnerman et al. (2007) found that morphological priming effects are influenced by both semantic and phonological similarity, suggesting that morphological relationships are reflected through interactions among different aspects of word representation. In addition, the morphological process is indicative of rhetorical emphasis, as evidenced by the use of highly (Adj → Adv) and altogether (Adv → Adv). The suffix -ly, when appended to a high, serves to transform a spatial or evaluative adjective into an adverb of degree. Concurrently, the incorporation of the prefix al- into the original adverb serves to reinforce the collective unity of the former.

Furthermore, the term “highly” is generally defined as indicating a significant degree or level. The use of the term “highly” reflects a broader cultural practice of recognizing extraordinary accomplishments and commemorating individuals whose contributions are

perceived as influential in shaping the nation's collective historical memory, aligning with themes explored by Williams (2007) and LaFantasie (2008). It is thus, contextually, "We here highly resolve" and "it is altogether fitting" emphasize a speaker's profound commitment and unwavering stance toward the values being articulated.

Table 2 also contains examples of prefixes that maintain grammatical categories while modifying semantic content. The prefix "re-in-resolve" is employed to derive a new verb from another verb. Semantically, the prefix conveys the notions of re-determination or reaffirmation. Williams (2007) revealed that Lincoln's Civil War leadership was shaped by his commitment to preserving the Union and upholding the principles of the nation's founding documents. This is line the with the lexical meaning of the lexicon "*solve*" that is defined as "finding the answer for the problem". Accordingly, in terms of contextual meaning, Lincoln's speech was intended to resolve the problems confronting the American nation during that period by invoking the endeavors, commitment, and sacrifices of the nation's founders.

In a similar manner, the prefix "al-" altogether generates an adverbial meaning that is strengthened, thereby expressing either completeness or totality. The prefix "Al-" that is attached to the base lexicon "together", does not change the class speech, however the word function is different. The term "*altogether*" is an adverb that functions as a modifier of the adjectives "*fitting*" and "*proper*". Joullié and Spillane (2021) explored how language function and communication shape integrative collective bargaining, demonstrating how effective communication can support the development of mutually beneficial agreements between bargaining parties. Additionally, "as a whole" signifies the state of being a single, emphasizing a comprehensive or completely integrated state. Thus, Lincoln's political language reflected his conviction that the survival of republican government depended on citizens' commitment to constitutional principles, reverence for the Constitution and laws, and respect for the institutions of self-government (Wilson, 1995). This means that "as a whole" exhibits semantic affinities with the clause "all men are created equal," as both expressions emphasize unity, inclusiveness, and the collective identity of the nation.

CONCLUSION

This study incorporates a morphosemantic analysis of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, serving to illustrate the pivotal roles of inflectional and derivational morphemes in the process of meaning formation. The findings show that inflectional morphemes, including -s, -ed, -ing, and -er, mainly convey grammatical information such as number, tense, aspect, and degree of comparison, while keeping the original word's lexical category unchanged. Derivational morphemes, including -ment, -ion, -ly, un-, re-, and al-, contribute to the formation of new lexical meanings and, in many cases, result in changes to word classes. This research found lexical meanings, which can be analyzed within the framework of contextual meaning. Abraham Lincoln illustrates the contextual nuances of his address. 1) History as a catalyst and philosophy of national endeavor. 2) The importance of cultivating respect for the founding fathers. 3) The importance of unity and dedication. 4) Human rights that is based on the principle all men are created equal. 5) Democracy asserts that the supreme sovereignty is the people, and that the government derives its legitimacy from, and

is accountable to, the people. This research contributes to morphosemantic studies by showing how word formation processes shape meaning in historical political speeches. It provides insight into the relationship between morphology and semantics in political discourse and serves as a useful reference for students, lecturers, researchers, and language practitioners in understanding the role of affixes in conveying grammatical and contextual meanings.

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