A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ZERO-DERIVATION IN ENGLISH WORD FORMATION

A.Otebaeva –Student at Karakalpak State University,
G.Sratdinova-Scientific advisor, KSU

Abstract: *This article discusses the investigation of the conversion in the English language. It states that the conversion is one of the main methods of enriching the vocabulary of a language. Many linguists have been interested in the problem of the conversion. The conversion is a productive method of word forming in English. As well as, this article deals with the study of new word forms from various parts of speech, such as the nouns, the adjectives, the verbs, and so on. Basing upon different sources the term "conversion" is remarked and examples from such fields of linguistics as lexicon and grammar have been provided.*

Keywords: *conversion, parts of speech, suffix, prefix, affix, syntactic class, verbification, morpheme, lexeme, lexical category, zero morph.*

_____

Introduction

In linguistics word formation is the morphological phenomenon that leads to creation of new words in a language. English is a productive language due to its different derivation processes. Words can be derived from different parts of speech with the addition of suffixes and prefixes, which occur frequently in many languages. However, in English in some cases new words can be created without the addition of an affix, simply with a change of syntactic class which does not influence the structure and phonological form of the word. Conversion is the most outstanding new method in which the item changes its word-class without any addition of an affix. There is a controversy about where to place the process of conversion as a way of forming new words in English. Some linguists argue that it should be put under derivation since both involve changes in the word function, while some others state that conversion is separated from derivation, and therefore, it is placed together with other processes in English word-formation.

Conversion is considered to be an effective way of increasing the English lexicon as it provides an easy way to create new words from existing ones. *Cannon in Bartolome* points out that conversion will occur more often in the future since the process is simple and easy. Without any reduction or addition, a word can have a new class and also meaning. [3]

In English morphology the following major types of conversion are distinguished:
1. from adjectives to nouns *(e.g. the poor, the good, the accused, the British)*
2. from nouns to adjectives *(e.g. stone wall, air passage, zero modification)*
3. from verb to noun *(to call → a call, to guess→ a guess, to spy→a spy)*
4. from nouns to verb *(a bottle→to bottle, water→to water, a hammer→to hammer)*
5. from adjectives to verb *(to clean, to round, to dry, to calm down).*

Of the several types of zero derivation, the most productive form of conversion in English is noun to verb. This is defined as the phenomenon which is called *verbification (verbalisation),* the formation of verbs from a noun. (e.g. *work → to work, love → to love*). Throughout history, verbs have entered the English language through nouns, the first instance of the word verbification dates back to 1871. This process follows a reliable arrangement: first a verbification is introduced, people use it, the media picks it up, makes its appearance in fiction, newspaper articles and in the process of oral communication in all spheres of human activity gradually force its way into the existing vocabulary and into the dictionaries as well and finally it becomes part of our lexicon. Conversion mostly happens to nouns and verbs because, verbs tend to be abstract since they represent actions, whereas nouns are usually concrete because they name things. 20th century new words include a great many verbs formed by conversion, many neological words which were originally nouns have been established as verbs. e.g. *to motor — 'travel by car'*; *to phone — 'use the telephone'*; *to wire — 'send a telegram'*; *to microfilm — 'produce a microfilm of; to tear-gas — 'to use tear-gas'; to fire-bomb — 'drop fire-bombs'; to spearhead — 'act as a spearhead for'; to blueprint — 'work out, outline'*, etc. [4]

Today, noun to verb conversion is particularly common in the field of technology, especially in the internet and digital communication. This can be exemplified in the verb *to friend* derived from the noun *a friend* without the addition of any affix.

<p align="center">*We friend and unfriend (defriend) people on Facebook.*</p>

Meaning of the verb *to friend* given in the example is to add (a person) to a list of friends on social networking site; to officially designate (someone) as a friend. If we regard this word from the angle of its morphemic structure, we see that it is a root word. As well as this, proper nouns are also used as verbs. Years ago we learned of a famous company named *Google* (noun), within a short period of time, people worldwide began *to google* (verb) everything.

Google → to google, to search for (something) on the internet using the Google search engine;

YouTube → to youtube, to upload a video of something to YouTube;

Skype → to skype, to make a telephone call using Skype software.

Furthermore, adjectives to verbs and vice versa are both very common and unnotable in English. (e.g. the adjective *clean* becomes the verb *to clean*).

Adjectives are parts of speech that describe the noun, while verbs name actions, but the process of zero derivation which by definition means deriving a new lexeme that belongs to a new lexical category, with the same form and with a similar expanded meaning, makes the lexemes close to each other by connecting them cognitively.

According to Laurie Bauer, one of the authors who talks about zero derivation in English language conversion is a totally free process and any lexeme can undergo conversion into any of the open form

classes as the need arises. He lists some zero derived forms from adjective to verb, such as: *better, dirty, empty, faint, open, right, total* [2]. This transfer from one to another category is explained with a *zero morph,* whose existence is claimed by some linguists when they try to explain the functional difference between homophones and these new formations. The explanation is that when there is no obvious change in the word form there is an affix that marks that change. For instance, *empty* does not have an obvious affix but it has a zero morph, which comes at the end of the word and the result is

$$empty + \emptyset$$

thus marking the word as a verb. It is needless to say that the zero morph is a controversial issue, because it is accepted in inflectional cases when paralleling the other forms in a paradigm requires an affix. [5]

In continuation, we will analyze verbs zero derived from adjectives:

1. The first group includes intransitive verbs that mean the subject receives the feature or the quality contained in the adjective, which is realized by performing the action:

    dry → dry: dry hair → The paint dries.

    mature → mature: a mature woman → She matured into a woman.

    plump → plump: The berries were plump and sweet. → Stew the dried fruits gently until they plump up.

In the case with *dry*, whose natural class is adjectival and describes the hair as dry, on the other side, the verb *dry* means performing the action of drying, more precisely, *to become dry*. The adjective contains a certain feature, characteristic or quality with which it modifies the noun, and by the adjective transfer into a verbal lexeme, the noun that is in subject position performs the action of spreading or transferring the feature contained in the adjective. In the other examples, from *mature* as adjective when it means *зрелый*, it is zero derived into a verb which means *созреть*, while the adjective plump meaning *полный*, *пухлый*, is zero derived in a verb meaning *полнеть, толстеть*.

2. The verbs from the second group are transitive and their semantic description explains that, from the adjective that contains the characteristic of the noun, a verb is derived which shows that when the subject does the action, the feature that the adjective gives is transferred to the object which, on the other hand, receives and takes the action on itself. As a matter of fact, the verb means to spread or to transfer to the object the characteristic that the adjective gives: *calm → calm: His voice was calm. → I calmed him down.*

    blunt → blunt: a blunt knife → You should blunt the axe.

    open → open: The door was wide open. → She opened the door

In the last example, if the adjective *open* means *открытый*, then the derived verb means to perform the action of opening, *to make the object open*, to open something, the same as from the adjective *calm – спокойный*, the action means *to calm the object*, and from blunt – *тупой*, the action means *making the object blunt*. In our case, the object of this connotation is *axe* and the cognitive transfer tells us that when the speaker zero derives a verb from an adjective, they want to say the axe to become blunt.

Conclusion

The conversion is a widely spread word forming process in the English language. The examples mentioned above prove it. It happens because there are not enough morphological indicators in the parts of speech in the English language. In the English language there are not morphological flexions of the

parts of speech. Therefore, the conversion is often observed among the parts of speech such as the *nouns, the verbs, the adjectives, the adverbs*, etc. As it is known the word stock of the English language is very rich. Relying on our investigation about the conversion we can say that English must be grateful to its word stock for this.

References

1. Bauer, L. *Conversion and the notion of lexical category*

2. Bauer, L. (1983). *English Word-formation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*

3. Bartolome, Ana I.. Hernandez & Gustavo Mendiluce Cabrera. *Grammatical, Conversion in English: Some New Trends in Lexical Evolution.* (2009).

4. R. S. Ginzburg. *A Course In Modern English Lexicology.* Moscow Vysshaya Shkola 1979.

5. Bauer, L. & S. Valera. (2005). *Approaches to Conversion / Zero Derivation. Münster: Waxmann Publishing Co.*

6. C. Davies (2004) *A Corpus-based Investigation of Noun to Verb Conversion in English.*