

CONVERSION AS THE MAIN WAY OF FORMING VERBS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Word formation is a process which is very important to enrich vocabulary of a language. There are various ways of word formation in English such as affixation, word composition, conversion, abbreviation, sound imitation, sound interchange, stress interchange, backformation, blending. Conversion is one of the productive way of forming new words. It involves the change of a word from a word class to another. It is also called zero derivation, root formation, functional change or affixless derivation. This article discusses the conversion as the main way of forming verbs in Modern English and their formation from different parts of speech, semantic groups.

Keywords: *word formation, conversion, parts of speech, semantic groups, linguists, functional change, approaches, paradigm*

INTRODUCTION. Conversion is the process of coining a new word in a different part of speech and with different distribution characteristic. However, conversion is a way of forming a word without adding any derivative element, so that the basic form of the original and the basic form of derived words are the same. Conversion is considered as the formation of a new word through changes in its paradigm. Conversion exists in many languages as a type of word formation. In English many verbs are formed by conversion of words from mainly nouns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. There are many approaches to the study of conversion. Some linguists think that conversion is the formation of words without affixes. Others say that conversion is the formation of new words with the help of zero morpheme. Conversion is also defined as a shift from one part of speech to another.⁵

Conversion, one of the principal ways of forming words in modern English is highly productive in replenishing the English word - stock with new words. Conversion refers to the numerous cases of phonetic identity of two words belonging to different parts of speech. This may be illustrated by the following cases:

⁵ Kennedy, A.G. (1935). Current English. Boston, USA, 1935

work - to work. e.g. "No; said the housekeeper; there is only about three days work to do every week ..." (Th. Dreiser, p.22). The daughter hearing the statement, turned uneasily, not to work, but because she hated people to guess at the poverty that made it necessary. (Th. Dreiser, p.20)

love - to love. e.g. "Haven't you been in love, since you came to Paris?" (W.S. Maugham, p92) Why shouldn't she - he loved her. He had asked over and over to marry her. (Th. Dreiser, p.75)

look - to look. e.g. Poor Strolve gave me a troubled look, but I was not disconcerted by so little. (W.S. Maugham p.86) I paused, and I looked at him searchingly. (W.S. Maugham p.92)⁶

RESULTS. Conversion is the main way of forming verbs in English. The most common types of conversion are the formation of verbs from nouns and the formation of nouns from verbs. A great number of verbs converted from nouns are used in both oral and written speech. Verbs such as *to doctor, to butcher, to bank, to cake, to face, to box, to dust, to eye*, have been converted from nouns. They also can be divided into different groups according to the meanings and semantic groups of nouns:

Table 1

Verbs formed from nouns denoting parts of human body	<i>to hand, to eye, to face, to shoulder, to stomach, to finger, to elbow, to knee, to arm etc;</i>
Verbs formed from nouns denoting tools, weapons, instruments, machines	<i>to bomb, to hammer, to gun, to knife, to rifle, etc;</i>
verbs can denote an action characteristic of the living being denoted by the noun from which they have been converted	<i>to dog, to fox, to crowd, to wolf, to ape, to cow, to horse, etc;</i>
verbs can denote acquisition, addition or deprivation if they are formed from nouns denoting an object	<i>to flower, to water, to fish, to dust, to peel, to paper, etc;</i>
verbs can denote an action performed at the place denoted by the noun from which they have been converted	<i>to park, to garage, to bottle, to corner, to pocket, etc;</i>
verbs can denote an action performed at the time denoted by the noun from which they have been converted	<i>to summer, to winter, to spring, to dawn, to week-end, etc.</i>

⁶ Stella, T. (2019). Conversion as one of the principle ways of the word formation in the English language. *Journal of Social Sciences*, June, 2019, Vol. II (2)

Moreover, verbs can be converted from adjectives as well. Verbs like *to yellow*, *to clean*, *to dirty*, *to busy*, *to thin*, *to narrow*, *to large*, *to calm*, *to tame* have been converted from adjectives.

DISCUSSION. Verbs that have been converted from nouns can be distinguished according to their pronunciation in speech and they can be different from nouns, adjectives according to their functions in a sentence. In most cases, the accent shifts according to the part of speech.

Work: 1. 'I hope you've been at work this morning, my dears?'.(n) (Ch. Dickens, p.64) 2. The worm does not work more surely on the dead body, than does this slow creeping fire upon the living frame. (v) (Ch. Dickens, p.81)

Dust: 1. 'We have not so much dust as that in London,' replied Fagin,... (n) (Ch. Dickens, p.324) 2. ...than Mr Bumble darted, with much agility, to the wine bottles, and began dusting them with great violence...(v) (Ch. Dickens, p.174)

Help: 1. Darkness had set in; it was a low neighborhood; no help was near; resistance was useless. (n) (Ch. Dickens, p.113) 2. Help! help! Oliver's gone mad! (v) (Ch. Dickens, p.45)

Sleep: 1. In the morning, after an hour's sleep, she went to Johnsy's bedside. (n) (O. Henry, p.16) 2. "Try to sleep," said Sue. (v) (O. Henry, p 15)

Rain: 1. A cold rain was falling, with a little snow in it too. (n) (O. Henry, p.16) 2. It was a cheerless morning when they got into the street; blowing and raining hard; and the clouds looking dull and stormy. (v) (Ch. Dickens, p.156)

Laugh: 1. As Mrs Sowerberry said this, she gave an hysterical laugh, which threatened violent consequences. (n) (Ch. Dickens, p.27) 2. Mr Sowerberry was much tickled at this: as of course he ought to be; and laughed a long time without cessation. (v) (Ch. Dickens, p.27)

Yellow: 1. There was paint, green paint and yellow paint. (adj) (O. Henry, p 17) 2. The paper had yellowed with age.

CONCLUSION. It is considered that conversion is an exceedingly productive way of forming words in Modern English though there are varied views of linguists about conversion. They studied this way of forming words both diachronically and synchronically. We can define conversion as the formation of a new word through changes in its paradigm. Particularly, it is commonly used for word formation of verbs in English.

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