

## DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW TO THE STUDY OF CONVERSION

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**Annotation:** *This article presents an overview of the different theoretical approaches to the study of conversion, focusing on morphological, syntactic, semantic, and cognitive perspectives. Special attention is given to the debates on the status of conversion as a distinct type of word-formation, its classification, and the mechanisms behind it.*

**Keywords:** *conversion, zero derivation, word-formation, morphology, syntax, semantics, cognitive linguistics, category change, English grammar.*

**Introduction.** The English language exhibits a rich capacity for conversion, as seen in examples such as to email (*from the noun email*) or a run (*from the verb to run*). Conversion has sparked significant scholarly interest because it challenges traditional definitions of word-formation, which often emphasize overt morphological change. This article seeks to explore and compare various linguistic approaches to conversion, illustrating how the phenomenon is understood within different theoretical frameworks.

**Morphological Perspective.** From a morphological standpoint, conversion is treated as a derivational process without affixation. Scholars like Marchand (1969) consider it a type of zero-derivation, wherein a zero morpheme is added to change the word class. Morphologists often distinguish between full and partial conversion, depending on the extent of the grammatical change. This approach emphasizes category change while maintaining a formalist view of word structure. *Morphological Perspectives* takes words as the starting point for any questions about linguistic structure: their form, their internal structure, their paradigmatic extensions, and their role in expressing and manipulating syntactic configurations. With a team of authors that run the typological gamut of languages, this book examines these questions from multiple perspectives, both the canonical and the non-canonical.

Generative grammar views conversion not as a lexical process but as a syntactic reanalysis. In this approach, a word's category is determined by its syntactic context rather than morphological form. For instance, *a walk* and *to walk* are considered different instantiations of the same root, depending on the syntactic environment. This perspective diminishes the importance of conversion as a separate process, interpreting

it instead as a grammatical shift. Syntactic approaches aim to represent human activities with the string of symbols, in which each symbol is associated with an atomic action and human activities are represented by a set of production rules (Turaga et al., 2008). Therefore, human activity can be recognized when the activity conforms to the rules of a given grammar. Context-free grammars (CFGs) and stochastic context-free grammars (SCFGs) were widely used in human activity modeling.

The semantic approach focuses on meaning shifts accompanying conversion. Converted words often exhibit metaphorical or metonymic extensions. For example, the noun *a break* from the verb to *break* involves a shift in conceptual perspective, from action to result. Semanticists argue that conversion cannot be understood without considering cognitive models and conceptual mappings. This semantic perspective is the essence of relationships and explains why the resources are related, relying on information that is not directly available from perceiving the resources.

Recent developments in cognitive linguistics view conversion as a form of category extension based on usage patterns and mental representations. These approaches highlight the importance of context and frequency in shaping the acceptability and productivity of conversion. Constructions such as *Google it* illustrate how new verbs emerge from brand names based on pragmatic use. Usage-based approaches focus on learning language through engaging in the interpersonal communicative and cognitive processes. They consider language as the best accomplishment of our social and cognitive competences which bridges society and cognition. Based on usage-based approaches, language can be learned from language use, by means of social skills and generalizations over usage events in interaction. These approaches actually explore how language learning occurs through language experience.

Each approach offers valuable insights into the nature of conversion, yet none is exhaustive on its own. Morphological and syntactic theories explain structural aspects, while semantic and cognitive models account for meaning and use. A comprehensive theory of conversion must integrate these perspectives to fully explain its mechanisms and implications.

**Conclusion.** Conversion remains a complex and multifaceted phenomenon in linguistic theory. By comparing different perspectives - morphological, syntactic, semantic, and cognitive - this article demonstrates the richness and diversity of scholarly approaches to its study. Future research may benefit from interdisciplinary models that bridge structural and functional dimensions of language change.

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