**Conversion in present - day English**

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Development of language is considerably stipulated by development of its word-formation system, creation of a new word-formation models of the words, changing of existing ones by increase or reduction of their efficiency and many other factors of word-formation process.Creation of new words is carried out, first of all, as a reflection in language of needs of society for expression of the new concepts which are constantly resulting from development of science, technique, culture, the public relations and many other.

Emergence of new words in language happens in various ways: 1) by borrowing from other languages; 2) by means of word formation (affixation, composition, conversion, reduction, contamination, etc.); 3) as a result of emergence of new values of the words which are already existing in language.

One of the important ways of formation of new words in language is conversion. Such scientists as A. I. Smirnitsky, V. N. Yartseva, I. V. Arnold, T. S. Bochkaryova, G. B. Antrushina, M. V. Nikitin, V. V. Yeliseyev, etc. dealt with a problem of conversion.

Important factor of speech activity is not only that we speak but also why we speak this way. What causes a choice of a certain lexical unit in the course of communication? The pragmatics is also engaged in searches of answers to the matter.

Unlike other sections of linguistics (phonology, semantics, grammar, etc.) considering language as static system, the pragmatics approaches studying of language from the point of view of its dynamics, i.e. practical application, in real communicative conditions. The pragmatics is faced by a task to reveal internal regularities to which the adequate use of this or that lexical unit in each concrete communicative act submits.

Attempts to classify the words of a language into parts of speech in terms of semantic aspects cannot have universal application as they tend to conceal genuine differences among languages instead of revealing them. Our structural approach leads us to the statement that the classification of words must be based primarily on the participation of words in the basic morphological oppositions actually found in a language and that the bundle of the oppositions into which particular words of the language enter constitutes their class. Thus in English all words that take part—at least potentially—in the opposition of countability versus uncountability. In that of singularity versus plurality and in that of the adnominal case versus the common case, are substantives, while the words which participate in the oppositions of the present tense v. preterite, indicative v. imperative, and the third person sing, ind. versus all other persons sing, ind., form the class of finite verbs, and all other words that do not take part in any bundle of basic morphological oppositions belong to the class which may be called—in want of a better term—'neutral' [1, 2]. A further criterion for the subdivision of the neutral class is provided by the syntagmatic relationship of determination. If a 'neutral' word is used for the determination of substantives and only substantives, it is an adjective, while its use as a determinant of other neutral words or verbs makes it an adverb. The application of the syntagmatic relationship of determination to the subdivision of neutral words makes the discussion of whether cannon in the cannon ball is an adjective or a substantive, superfluous.

In fact, it is a 'neutral' part of speech, and being a determinant of the substantive ball it belongs to a special subclass of these words. It may be noted that our subdivision of word-classes has little in common with Jespersen's theory of rank-classes as opposed to word-classes, and that it has nothing to do with syntactic relationships as it is based entirely on the morphological level of a language as viewed from its horizontal axis, i.e. from the viewpoint of the chains of words the study of which phonemes and sentences, can be analyzed in terms of both axes.

From what has been stated it follows that word-classes in English have different relations to each other than e.g. in Russian or in German, since the bundle of distinctive morphological features between the verb and the noun is smaller in English. The result is that the so-called conversion of one word-class into the other, i.e. the formation of verbs from substantives and that of substantives from verbs without the help of any derivational exponents, is easier in English than in Russian or German. The productivity of the conversion in English cannot be, however, accounted for as due to the regularity and facility of morphological exponents, as it stands to reason that for German of which conversion is not so typical, the derivation of the verbs *lieben* and *kreuzen* from the substantives *Liebe* and *Kreuz* is as easy as the corresponding formations for English. It is obvious that conversion is far from being a process depending on the phonemic implementation of morphological oppositions. In the Bohumil Trnka's view the chief motive of the wide extension of the conversion of nouns into verbs in English is to be sought in the speakers' strong need of new verbs with stricter semantic boundaries and with more definite shades of meaning than are those possessed by the old verbs [1, 5]. According to its etymological meaning the word conversion (Latin -conversio) denotes “reverse, overturn”, “change of the direction”. Thus, this word serves for designation of any type of a turning or transposition, shift, transposing. In logic it is used for designation of operation by means of which terms of the sentence are rearranged upside-down. In religious and philosophical meaning concept of conversion designate change of a mental order — from simple change of opinion to full transformation of the personality.

The term of conversion is also applied in economics (financial operations), and in medicine (in clinical psychology conversion as change of an orientation, affect at hysteria), and in physics (for example, in nuclear), and in bacteriology (phage conversion when cell changes properties after infection), and in advertising (a ratio of contacts to results) and even in staff work we have a concept of conversion of the personnel [2, 199].

Conversion in modern linguistics is defined as "a way of word formation without use of special word-formation affixes; the kind of a transposition at which transferring of the word from one part of speech to another is going on in such a way that a nominative form of the word of one part of speech is used without any material change in quality of the representative of other part of speech"[3, 235].

In other words conversion is "a way of formation of new words at which the external form doesn't change, but the word passes into other grammatical category, getting new functions and new value"[4, 72].

Some authors use also terms non-affixal or root word formation. At formation of the new word by conversion changes not only its grammatical meaning, but also lexical, as leads to emergence of the new word. At conversion in derivative and initial bases there are following changes:

- there is a change of semantics of the derivative word in comparison with an initial basis; for example, the adjective passing into a noun ceases to designate a sign of a subject and starts expressing a subject;

- compatibility of derivative words changes; so, the noun can be used in any position in the sentence, and, passing to the class of adjectives, it is used only before a noun;

- the word paradigm changes; the passing word accepts all grammatical features of a new part of speech; for example, a noun, passing into the category of adjectives, as well as adjectives, ceases to change by cases, numbers and category of possessiveness. About it A. I. Smirnitsky writes: "Conversion is such type of word formation (word production) at which only the paradigm of the word serves as a word-formation means "[5, 24].

O. S. Akhmanova when determining essence of conversion puts forward and proves concept of a paradigm. She writes: "Conversion is a formation of the new word by transfer of this basis to other paradigm of word change" [6, 202].

The phenomenon of conversion came into the view of grammatists comparatively early. English grammatist J. Grinwood noted that many nouns and some adjectives (and sometimes and other parts of speech), being used instead of verbs, become verbs. So, from a noun *a house* the verb *to house* is formed, from a nouns *fish* and *oil* – verbs *to fish*, *to oil* are formed [7, 169-170]. He one of the first English grammatists paid attention to syntactic feature of the considered phenomenon. The attention, after J. Grinwood, in Buchanan J. and J. Ward's works is paid to a non-affixal way of word formation; [7, 156].

In work of other English grammatist of Hazlitt W. for the first time in English grammar the question of the direction of derivativeness is discussed – one of the most difficult in modern linguistics one. "It is sometimes difficult to define, whether substantive came from a verb or on the contrary. Generally, however, it is possible to assume, - he writes, - that the substantives expressing actions come from verbs", and those from them which express "things or objects", can be considered as "roots of the verbs concerning these objects" [5, 66].

Thereby, he puts into the forefront semantic criterion at determination of derivativeness. At the same time, comparing verbs *to love, to sleep* to nouns *love* and *sleep*, Hazlitt W. emphasizes that they differ "not according to the contents, and in a form and a manner of expression" [7, 39].

The last quarter of the XIX century represents an important milestone in formation of the doctrine about conversion in English grammatical tradition. The essential contribution to its development was made by the famous English linguist Sweet H. It is considered that he is the first to introduce the term *conversion* into English grammar [2, 38-40; 11, 360]. Conversion according to Sweet H. is two-dimensional. On the one hand, he doesn't refuse idea of syntactic poly-functionality of words, with another, conversion is treated by him as syntactic-morphological word-formation process. It begins with syntax and comes to an end with morphology. Similar approach to conversion is widely adopted further [2; 13; 14].

Conversion, according to Sweet H., has lines of similarity to a derivation, though not always as a result of conversion the new lexical unit is formed. He considers that the use of the word in functions of other parts of speech isn't the basis to consider it as belonging to other part of speech yet. So, the word *silk* in the phrase *silk thread* Sweet H. considers as a noun. The converted word, the grammatist emphasizes, has to gain formal lines ( inflexions, etc.) of that part of speech to which it passed. "The question of to what part of speech the word belongs, - he writes, - is, therefore, the issue of form, but not meaning".

Sweet H. among English grammatists introduces for the first time the concept of partial conversion which essence he sees that the word is characterized by formal indicators at once of two parts of speech. Analyzing the sentence *The good are happy*, he concludes that the word *good*, on the one hand, functions as a noun, being used with a definite article, with another, - as an adjective as has no plural suffix. As for the word *goods* in the phrase *goods and chattels*, it is a case of full conversion of an adjective in a noun.

Relying on experience of the previous generations of linguists, H.Sweet generalized rich material which was saved up in English grammatical tradition concerning conversion.

Conversion is one of the most productive ways of word formation functioning in English. Conversion is in a varying degree inherent in many languages, but in English it has especially wide circulation. As the major reason for that it is possible to consider that in English almost completely there are no morphological indicators of parts of speech. This circumstance couldn't but promote a wide circulation of conversion on which models there is a formation of the new lexical units which are filling up dictionary structure of English.

Many researchers dealt and are engaged in a problem of conversion, and they can be divided into two groups conditionally. The first group of researchers doesn't consider conversion as way of word formation, for example "foreign linguists (A. Kennedy, R. Waddell, K. Pollock, P. M. Vogel, etc.) are inclined to consider this phenomenon as the use of the same word in functions of various parts of speech, or functional transition from one part of speech to another" [6, 151]. That is such words as ‘*wife’*, ‘*to wife’* – '*to get married’* are the forms of the same word. For example, in the book of 1996 devoted to parts of speech and change of characteristics of parts of speech at the same form by Petra M. Vogel in detail is considered the conversion as unmarked change of categorial signs of the word and notes opportunity to consider conversion as the phenomenon not of word formation (i.e. creations of the new word), and its syntactic use [7, 2].

In English the word of any part of speech can act as a part of a predicate (For example: *He is big; He is a student; He is out; He sleeps*, etc.) and it does possible to a pure basis to appear in the same syntactic positions and, thus, to confer responsibility for definition of part-of-speech belonging on syntax. Itself such "pure basis" remains still "underspecified for "word-classes". The similar specification (thanks to an article or other environment of unit) happens only at the syntactic level [2, 274].

However the researchers adhering to this theory are in minority.

The most part of lexicologists and linguists hold the opposite opinion which says that conversion is not only one of the ways of word formation in English, but one of the most productive ways. At the same time, the researchers adhering to this point of view give various definitions to conversion. For example, A. I. Smirnitsky offered the following representation: "conversion is such a type of a word-building at which word paradigm serves as word-formation means". Also there is another definition of conversion: "the term conversion which many linguists consider insufficient for the description of this phenomenon, belongs to a number of cases of phonetic identity of word forms, mainly, of so-called initial forms, two words belonging to different parts of speech" [3, 127].

According to E. S. Kubryakova the phenomenon of conversion makes a striking distinctive feature of English and it should be studied, first of all, from the typological point of view. "And it means that conversion has to be investigated as a special kind of processes of a transposition, i.e. the processes establishing connection between separate parts of speech of separately taken language and being that the word of one part of speech (or even certain parts of speech) acts as a derivation source for creation of the word of another part of speech, other category or a class. Conversion appears thus the representative of process of a transposition of the non-affixal, i.e. occurring at total absence any special affixal morpheme testifying the means of implementation of this process". [5, 33]

The main sign of conversion as word-formation process is formation of new designation with the new contents modeled by the same rules that are observed, for example, at suffixation. At conversion the source of a derivation and its result are financially identical and therefore – indistinguishable (For example, *'salt'* – *to add salt - 'to salt'* or *'to work'* –*'work'*). The obligatory identity of nominative forms of two words – initial and productive appears one more condition of conversion. This fact causes difficulties as with definition of the direction of derivativeness (that from what is formed), and with determination of the most derivative character of the studied unit.

In other words, it is a question of why in the word-formation pairs mentioned above *salt 'salt'* or *work 'work'* are initial units, and also about on what the conviction that *to add salt 'salt'* or *to do the work 'work'*, are really derivatives is based.

In the history of conversion the accurate tendency to its expansion is traced – owing to efficiency of this way of word formation it captured not only the most frequent verbs for formation of verbal names or, on the contrary, many frequency names for formation of designations of actions at the denominate object, etc., conversion consistently has extended and still extends on new layers of initial units, for example, abbreviations or the whole initial phrases. We can compare: *to DIY (from Do It Yourself), to OD (from overdose)* [2, 14].

In summary it is necessary to say that the questions raised in this research are actual for modern English in general. Also this research can be useful to students of language faculties and for all who learns English as it gives a complete idea of conversion process as about a way of word formation and helps to receive more profound knowledge of language.

Also we hope that the provisions which are put forward in the work, the actual material and the conclusions drawn on its basis will make a certain contribution to development of the theory of parts of speech and word formation and will allow to expand a framework of research of the phenomenon of conversion in modern English.

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