

Conversion in English

Conversion in English:
A Cognitive Semantic Approach

By

Sándor Martsa

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P U B L I S H I N G

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By Sándor Martsa

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-4932-4, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4932-6

To Éva, Zsuzsa and András

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the opening paper of a thematic publication the editors, Laurie Bauer and Salvador Valera, observe that while the intensity of conversion research has been changing over the past few decades, “the contribution of Eastern European researchers who have recently joined the mainstream discussion has stirred up the interest in the issue” (Bauer & Valera 2005b: 7). Inspired to a great extent by the monographs written by the Slovakian linguist Pavol Štekauer (1996) and the Polish linguist Piotr Twardzisz (1997) on English conversion, this book aims to be a further piece of evidence of the increased Eastern European scholarly interest in this word-building technique in English and other languages, including Hungarian. In their aforementioned 2005 paper Bauer and Valera also claim that some theories, including cognitive linguistics, have not “tested themselves against the data of conversion yet” (though, see Twardzisz 1997). This book deals with English conversion within the framework of cognitive semantics, so in a way it can also be taken to be a response to this claim.

There are a number of people who helped me in various ways to complete this monograph and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. I am immensely grateful to Tamás Magay and Péter Pelyvás for reading my habilitation thesis on which this book is largely based and giving me invaluable comments and suggestions to improve the content of the manuscript. I also wish to express my gratitude to Günter Radden and Zoltán Kövecses for their recommendations to support my book proposal submitted to Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Many thanks are due to my British colleague, Andrew C. Rouse who read the manuscript with great care and called my attention to misprints, formal and conceptual inconsistencies. His suggestions greatly improved the quality of the language used in the manuscript, and needless to say he is not accountable in any way for the errors and imperfections that have remained. Special thanks go to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pécs, for providing me sabbatical time, and to my colleagues at the Department of English Linguistics for taking on extra teaching loads during my sabbatical. Let me also express my gratitude to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for the decision to publish this book and for the technical support I received from them to bring the manuscript to a publishable state. I dedicate this book to

my family; without their indispensable support and incessant encouragement it could not have been written.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

A	adjective
ACC	accusative case
ADV	adverb
ANIM	animate
COMIT	comitative case
COMP	comparative degree
INANIM	inanimate
INF	nfinitive
IMPERF	imperfective
INTERJ	interjection
FEM	feminine gender
INST	instrumental case
LM	lexical morphology
MASC	masculine gender
N	noun
NEUT	neuter gender
NOM	nominative case
NP	noun phrase
PART	particle
PREP	preposition
X, Y	input and output word class or stem markers
V	verb
(V)	variable vowel segment in Hungarian suffixes
VP	verb phrase
>, <	conversion
→, ←	derivation
↔	morphological (derivational) relation
/ /	phonological representation
→	conceptual mapping
∅	zero suffix

INTRODUCTION

In his seminal book, *Language Instinct*, Steven Pinker argues persuasively that prescriptive grammar rules disallowing, among other things, the sentence-final use of prepositions, the splitting of infinitives and the conversion of nouns to verbs are both useless and nonsensical (1995: 371-379). As regards the conversion of nouns to verbs, he says: “[i]n fact the easy conversion of nouns to verbs has been part of English grammar for centuries; it is one of the processes that make English English” (1995: 379). To illustrate the easiness characterizing this type of conversion, he lists verbs converted from nouns designating human body parts, some of which are reproduced in (1):

- (1) *head a committee, scalp a missionary, eye a babe, nose around the office, mouth the lyrics, tongue each note on the flute, neck in the back seat, back the candidate, arm the militia, shoulder the burden, elbow your way in, finger the culprit, knuckle under, thumb a ride, belly up to the bar, stomach someone’s complaints, knee the goalie, leg it across the town, foot the bill, toe the line* (1995: 379-380)

Pinker estimates that approximately a fifth of English verbs originate from nouns, which, as documented extensively in Clark & Clark (1979; see also sections 8.2.1-6), may also have to do with the fact that new or innovative verbs in English arise predominantly from conversion of nouns to verbs. Without questioning the dominance of noun to verb conversion, I shall claim in this book that it is not only the easy conversion of verbs from nouns, but, more broadly, conversion as a word-formation process that makes English English. Consider, for instance, (2) below demonstrating that the easiness of forming conversion verbs equally characterizes, though in a lesser degree, the conversion of nouns from verbs. The expressions given in (2) are modelled on Pinker’s above examples, and they contain nouns converted from verbs designating actions functionally related to different parts of the human body:

- (2) *have your say, give a shout, let out a shriek / a cry, give a talk, take a look at the notes, keep a close watch, down the whisky with a swallow, have a chew on it, have a smell of this cheese, with a smile, the touch*

of her fingers, Hey! Nice catch!, go for a run, it's worth a go, go for a walk

That conversion is a phenomenon that makes English English had already been noticed by Jespersen decades earlier. Considering the great number of formally identical words (grammatical homonyms, as he calls them) in English belonging to different syntactic categories, he writes that

[the] development of such identical forms must be reckoned one of the chief merits of the language, for this 'noiseless' machinery facilitates the acquirement and the use of the language enormously and outweighs many times the extremely few instances in practical life when ambiguity can arise. (1954: 85)

To the best of my knowledge the first scholarly discussion of English conversion is given in the first volume of Henry Sweet's *A New English Grammar* published in 1891.¹ Since then conversion research has repeatedly set itself the task to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which field of grammar does conversion belong to? More specifically, is conversion a morphological or a syntactic (i.e. derivational and / or inflectional) or a semantic / pragmatic process or some combination thereof? Put differently, is conversion a word(=lexeme)-formation process, or, alternatively, should it be rather seen as a change in a word's syntactic or semantic/pragmatic behaviour?
- 2) How, that is to say, on what grounds can conversions proper or true conversions and less typical, marginal cases and cases of non-conversion be told apart? Put slightly differently, which processes of unmarked word class change yield unquestionable instances of conversion and which should be relegated to phenomena other than conversion?

¹ Drawing on Sundby (1995: 36-37), Valera (2004: 20) has it that the first recorded use of 'converted [words]' dates from 1741. According to Marchand (1960: 293) the term 'conversion' was coined by Kruisinga (1932). Later, however, in the revised edition of his monograph (1969: 360) he already claims that the term 'conversion' was first used by Sweet (1891/1968), and other linguists, e.g. Kruisinga, also adopted the term. Pennanen (1970: 17), drawing on Lee (1948: 2), is of the same opinion and he also points out that the OED ascribes the first linguistic application of the term 'to convert' to Emerson who used it in his *Nature, Lang. Wks.* in 1836 (p. 150) (cp. "Nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs").

- 3) While the formal (orthographic + phonological) identity of items involved in conversion is taken to be a necessary condition, what kinds of formal discrepancies are still permissible? Related to this question is another question: How can the input and the output conditions of conversion be established in English and, more broadly, in a cross-linguistic perspective?
- 4) If conversion is a derivational process (whether in the morphological or syntactic or semantic sense), how can its direction be determined synchronically? To what extent should diachronic data be taken into account?

Despite the relatively great deal of attention conversion has received in works on English morphology and word-formation since the publication of Sweet's aforementioned work, so far no real agreement has been reached in answering any of these questions sufficiently (see also Bauer & Valera 2005b: 8) and therefore its treatment is still far from being unproblematic more than a century later. So while this "noiseless" machinery" continues to thrive in present-day English as an effective means of vocabulary enrichment, its interpretation is still in need of clarification. Although in this work most of the controversies characterizing different authors' approaches to the linguistic status of conversion will be dealt with and suggestions will be made to overcome them, it would be quite unrealistic to suppose that all problematic issues will be solved and no further research will be necessary. However, it is by no means unrealistic to suppose that, relying on the tenets of cognitive semantics, particularly on the conceptual metaphor and metonymy theory, the nature of processes underlying different types of conversion can effectively be accounted for. In this regard, it is important to note that my intention here is not so much to challenge previous interpretations of conversion by suggesting an entirely new interpretation, but to demonstrate and—hopefully—prove that the most adequate analytic tools for the study of this word-formation process of English are those originally proposed within the framework of cognitive semantics by Kövecses & Radden (1998), Radden & Kövecses (1999) and Dirven (1999). Concretely, I intend to justify the claim made most explicitly by the aforesaid authors that conversion is basically a semantic process underlain by a set of metonymic mappings. Drawing on my corresponding research, I also intend to point out that the interpretation of conversion based on underlying metonymic mappings, with some modification though, is also applicable to types of conversion not examined by Dirven, Kövecses and Radden, and that along with

metonymic mappings metaphoric mappings also play an important role in the genesis of a specific class of denominal conversion.

Before outlining the structure of the book, one more remark is in order concerning the assumed Englishness of conversion. As Sweet's description of conversion cited below suggests, this word-building technique is undoubtedly a typical characteristic of the English language, though it is by no means unprecedented in other languages:

But in English, *as in many other languages*, we can often convert a word, that is, make it into another part of speech without any modification or addition, except, of course, the necessary change of inflection. (1891: 38) - Emphasis is added.

What is claimed by Sweet is also confirmed by other authors including, among others, Biese (1941), Marchand (1969), Don (1993), Kiefer (2005a, 2005b) and Manova (2005, 2011). Biese (1941) studies conversion in Greek, Latin, German, Swedish and Tocharian, whereas Marchand (1969) argues for the occurrence of conversion, more precisely zero-derivation, in Latin and Spanish (see also Manova & Dressler 2005). Don (1993), Kiefer (2005a, 2005b) and Manova (2005, 2011) examine conversions in Dutch, Hungarian and some Slavic languages, respectively. Some aspects of non-English conversion will be considered in subsequent chapters, especially in Chapter Six.

The present work consists of twelve chapters distributed into four major parts. The first three chapters, constituting Part I, peruse previous interpretations of conversion, namely derivational, syntactic, lexical-semantic and non-processual interpretations. Out of derivational interpretations the one claiming that during conversion the converting base takes on a zero-suffix is the most widely accepted and, perhaps not accidentally, the most widely criticised. Chapter One presents both the appraisal and the criticism of this interpretation, placing more emphasis on the latter and, in more general terms, on the untenability of the notion of derivational zero morphemes. Chapter Two sets itself the task to give an overview of interpretations according to which conversion arises from functional or paradigmatic shifts, suggesting that conversion is in effect a kind of syntactic or inflectional derivation. In this chapter lexical-semantic and onomasiological interpretations of conversion are also taken into account, and the suggestion is made that the nature of conversion is best captured by these and not by syntactic interpretations. This is so because, while the latter appear to mistake the consequence of conversion, viz. the change of word class, for its cause, the former, i.e. interpretations based on lexical-semantic and onomasiological circumstances, treat conversion as a

process motivated by different types of conceptual mapping or conceptual recategorization leading subsequently to the change of word class. These interpretations serve as guidelines for the interpretation of conversion proposed in Part III.

In Chapter Three non-processual interpretations of conversion are presented, two of which are of special interest. According to one of them conversion results from the relisting of an already existing lexical item in the mental lexicon, whereas the other interpretation is based on the assumption that a lexical item is stored or listed either without category specification or, alternatively, with multiple category specifications. Be that as it may, non-processual interpretations of conversion, though they highlight important aspects of conversion, also appear to confuse the consequence with the cause: lexical relisting or category underspecification is in all probability the consequence and not the cause of conversion.

The main concern of Part II, also including three chapters, is to identify the types and scope of English conversion. First, in Chapter Four, the notion of unmarked change of word class, the most important formal characteristic of conversion is brought under scrutiny. It will be demonstrated that though this formal characteristic can really be used for the identification of conversion, and that sometimes it is even used as a definition of conversion, not all instances of unmarked change of word class signal conversion. Difference must be made between examples of unmarked change of word class characterizing homonymy (e.g. *bank*_N ‘riverside’ / *bank*_N ‘a financial institution’), reference metonymy (e.g. *village*_N ‘a small town in the country’ / *village*_N ‘those who live in a village’), deletion (e.g. *behind*_{PREP} [sth] / *behind*_{ADV}), grammaticalization (e.g. *regarding*_V / *regarding*_{PREP} [sth]), category indeterminacy (e.g. *Canadian*_N / *Canadian*_A) and instances of unmarked word class change that unquestionably signal true conversion (e.g. *bank*_N ‘financial institution’ > *bank*_V ‘put money into a bank account’). In this chapter the notion of word class is also discussed in detail with a view to clarifying what constitutes a word class and the change of which constituent leads to the change of the whole class or only to the change of a subclass or secondary class.

In Chapter Five an attempt is made to identify the types of English conversion and thereby determine its scope. To this end, ten classifications of conversion are compared and analyzed in detail. As expected, in these classifications there is a high degree of agreement concerning the major types of conversion (e.g. N>V, A>V, V>N) and, conversely, a considerable disagreement with respect to the status of what are commonly

called partial and/or minor types of conversion (e.g. $A > N$, $V_{trans} > V_{intrans}$, $N_{count} > N_{uncount}$).

Conversions in other languages are discussed in Chapter Six, where first, relying mainly on Manova & Dressler (2005) and Manova (2005, 2011), the difference is clarified between word-based, stem-based and root-based conversions. Most of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of Russian and Hungarian conversions based on Manova (2005) and Kiefer (2005a, 2005b). The principal aim of this discussion is to arrive at a more justifiable classification of English conversions. Based on the fifth and sixth chapters, the following three groups of English conversion could be identified: 1. $N > V$ (e.g. *referee_N* > *referee_V*), $A > V$ (e.g. *calm_A* > *calm_V*), CLOSED CLASS > V (e.g. *down_{PREP/ADV}* > *down_V*), $V > N$ (e.g. *catch_V* > *catch_N*), PHRASE > N (e.g. *shut down_V* > (a) *shutdown_N*); 2. $A > N$ (e.g. *wealthy_A* > *wealthy_N*), CLOSED CLASS > N (e.g. *must_{AUX}* > *must_N*), $ADV > N$ (e.g. *up_{ADV}* *down_{ADV}* > the *ups and downs_N*); and 3. PHRASE > A (e.g. *up in the air* > *up-in-the-air_A*). While conversions belonging to the first group are characterized as full, prototypical and derivational, conversions making up the second and third groups are partial, non-prototypical and syntactic. All types are examined in detail in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten.

As was suggested above, in this study conversion is treated as a process of semantic derivation motivated by conceptual shifts. Arguments in favour of this interpretation are presented in Part III, where first, in Chapter Seven, lexical semantic and cognitive semantic aspects of conversion are dealt with. As regards lexical semantic aspects, the interaction between lexical meaning, morphology and syntax is examined, as it is presented in works written by Kiparsky (1983, 1997) and Lieber (2004). Two implications of this interaction are of special interest for conversion understood as semantic derivation. One is that in the construction of meaning during conversion and, more broadly, during derivation and compounding only those aspects of lexical meaning prove relevant that are projected to syntax. The other implication is that speakers' encyclopaedic (a.k.a. background or world or conventional) knowledge plays a significant role in processing meaning during conversion.

The role of encyclopaedic knowledge is of crucial importance in the cognitive semantic treatments of conversion as well, viewing conversion either as semantic extension (Twardzisz 1997) or semantic derivation underlain by two types of conceptual mappings: metonymic and metaphoric. These mappings can be described in terms of conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors. It is shown in this and the

following three chapters that during conversion metonymic mappings stemming from the idealized cognitive models (ICMs) of action (Kövecses & Radden 1998; Radden & Kövecses 1999) or event schemas (Dirven 1999) are more fundamental than metaphoric mappings (Martsa 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2007a, 2007b). The chapter concludes with a definition of conversion.

In Chapters Eight and Nine, the types of conversion identified at the end of Chapter Six are examined. In Chapter Ten, pertaining to Part IV, the nature of the semantic link between conversion pairs is explored. Chapter Eight is concerned with conversion verbs, concretely with verbs converted from nouns and adjectives and closed class items such as particles and interjections. In the discussion of denominal verbs, Clark & Clark's (1979) fine-grained classification is taken as a point of departure. Special attention is paid to the conceptual metonymies evoked by different classes and subclasses of these verbs. We shall see that verbs belonging to one subclass of N>V conversions, called animal verbs (e.g. *ape_V* and *wolf_V*), are motivated by metaphoric mappings as well. Finally, it is argued that just like N>V conversions A>V and CLOSED CLASS>V conversions also result from metonymic mappings.

Nouns converted from verbs, adjectives, closed class items and adverbs are dealt with in Chapter Nine. It is argued that due to the reversibility of metonymy-producing relations within the Action ICMs deverbal nouns can also be taken to result from metonymic mappings. As regards A>N conversions, it seems reasonable to distinguish between two groups of input bases: adjectives designating intellectual, physical and other properties of humans (e.g. *clever*, *disabled*) or specific properties attributed to things (e.g. *unbelievable*, *unexpected*) and colour adjectives (e.g. *green*, *red*).

Part IV sets out to explore three interrelated issues concerning the status of conversion as a morphological category: these are the polysemy vs. homonymy issue, the directionality issue and the productivity vs. analogy issue. Out of these issues only directionality has been given due attention in the corresponding literature, the other two having been either completely ignored or, especially productivity, considered self-evident and therefore not been studied seriously. In the chapters constituting this part evidence is provided to prove that these three issues are in effect mutually conditioned and none of them can be properly dealt with without taking the other two into account. Concretely, in claiming that conversion is a productive process, its direction must also be statable in synchronic terms. That conversion is a directional process directly follows from the semantic link between conversion pairs. As is shown in the tenth chapter, this link is

best definable as a kind of polysemy called intercategoryal polysemy, an inherently directional phenomenon. It also means that the traditional view that conversion pairs exemplify (grammatical) homonymy must be rejected. It will be suggested in Chapter Eleven that the (synchronic) direction of conversion can be determined most reliably by using semantic criteria put forward by Marchand (1964). These criteria may also be seen as additional pieces of evidence for the close relationship between directionality and polysemy. In Chapter Twelve the productivity of conversion is examined in relation to other corresponding phenomena such as analogy, creativity and frequency. A word-formation process is productive if it is rule-governed. Consequently, if conversion is taken to be a productive process, its productivity must be statable in terms of rules. Chapter Twelve demonstrates that—with the exception of a few types of conversions, which probably result from analogy—to state such rules is really possible.

Empirical data used in this study come from a number of sources, primarily dictionaries such as CCELD, CEGM, CIDE, LDOCE, OALD4, OALD8 and OED2. Attested examples, used especially in Chapters Eighth to Twelve, were also obtained from *Newsweek* magazine, the British National Corpus (SARA, version 0.98) and from authors (e.g. Marchand 1964, 1969; Clark & Clark 1979; Quirk et al. 1985, Twardzisz 1997; Dirven 1999, and Martsa 1999, 2000, 2001, 2007a, 2007b, 2009) whose works were of utmost importance in the discussion of topics indicated above.

Finally, it has to be noted that parts of this book have already been published elsewhere. In particular, section 1.2.3, presenting the criticism of zero-suffixation, draws on Martsa (2012b), while sections 7.2-3, discussing the semantic aspects of conversion, are based on Martsa (2007b). The role of metaphoric mappings in the interpretation of conversion is examined in sections 7.3.4 and 8.3. These sections derive from a number of previous publications, including Martsa (1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2007a and 2007b). The discussions of conversion nouns and the polysemic link between conversion members in sections 9.2 and 10.2 draw respectively on Martsa (2010) and Martsa (2002). Finally, Chapter Eleven, investigating the issue of directionality, is a modified version of Martsa (2012a), and some aspects of productivity discussed in Chapter Twelve, especially in section 12.2.1, were touched upon in Martsa (2007c).

PART I

PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF CONVERSION

Preliminary remarks

This part provides a survey of interpretations of English conversion proposed by authors with different theoretical persuasions. Similar surveys are also available in other publications, including Pennanen (1971), Don (1993), Štekauer (1996), Twardzisz (1997), Bauer & Valera (2005), and Balteiro (2007), therefore here I take into account first of all those interpretations that have significantly contributed to my understanding of conversion both as a general and a specifically English word-building technique.

Interpretations of conversion that have been suggested since the publication of Sweet's *A New English Grammar* seem to fall into two rather heterogeneous groups. Interpretations belonging to the much bigger group treat conversion as a type of word-formation, concretely, a type of morphological (Chapter One) or syntactic or lexical-semantic derivation, or an independent onomasiological process (Chapter Two). According to interpretations belonging to the other group conversion is not a word-formation process per se; it is seen either as an operation of relisting words already existing in the mental lexicon, or as a phenomenon related to the inherent indeterminacy of word class specifications or, alternatively, to multiple word class specifications (Chapter Three).

CHAPTER ONE

MORPHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1.1. Introduction

In the majority of interpretations listed above conversion is treated as word-formation. In this chapter, first some of those interpretations are dealt with which view conversion as a type of morphological derivation. Concretely, sections 1.2 and 1.3 examine conversion understood as zero-derivation; section 1.4 presents the treatment of conversion as non-derivation within the framework of natural morphology.

1.2. Zero-derivation (i)

In conversion research the term ‘zero-derivation’ designates two rather different approaches to conversion. According to one of them conversion is realized by adding a zero morpheme, i.e. a phonologically null suffix to the base. This is explicitly indicated by the synonymous terms ‘covert affixation’, ‘derivation by a zero-morpheme’ and ‘zero-affixation’. As for the other approach, discussed in 1.3, it regards the process of conversion not as adding a zero-affix to the converting base, but rather as a lack of affixation on that base.

1.2.1. Zero-derivation in descriptive morphology

The claim that conversion is a type of derivation by a zero morpheme and as such it parallels other types of affixal derivation was most famously made by Marchand:

By derivation by a zero-morpheme I understand the use of a word as a determinant in a syntagma whose determinatum is not expressed in phonic form but understood to be present in content, thanks to an association with other syntagmas where the element content has its counterpart on the plane of phonic expression. If we compare such derivatives as *legalize*, *nationalize*, *sterilize* with vbs like *clean*, *dirty*, *tidy*, we note that the syntactic-semantic pattern in both is the same: the adjectives are transposed into the category ‘verb’ with the meaning ‘make, render clean, dirty, tidy’

and ‘make, render legal, national, sterile’ respectively. In the *legalize*-group, the content element is expressed by the overt morpheme *-ize* while in the *clean*-group the same content element has no counterpart in phonic expression. As a sign is a two-facet linguistic entity, we say that the derivational morpheme is (phonically) zero marked in the case of *clean* ‘make clean’. We speak of zero-derived deadjectival vbs. (1969: 359) - Emphases are included.

The idea of syntactic and semantic parallelism between overt and covert suffixation, based on the assumed syntagmatic nature of word-formation, is even more explicitly expressed in the proportional equations (1a) and (1b) adopted from the respective works of Kastovsky (1982: 79) and Lipka (1990: 86). Cf.:

- (1a) $\text{cheat}_V : \text{cheat}_N = \text{write}_V : \text{writer}_N$
 $\text{clean}_A : \text{clean}_V = \text{legal}_V : \text{legalize}_V$
- (1b) $\text{legal} : \text{legal/ize} = \text{clean} : \text{clean}/\emptyset$ ‘make it A’
 $\text{atom} : \text{atom/ize} = \text{cash} : \text{cash}/\emptyset$ ‘convert into N’

The concept of zero suggested by Marchand and the other aforementioned authors draws on Godel (1953: 31-41) who claims that the existence of zero affixes can be justified only by using proportional (equipollent) oppositions in which zeros are shown as being in complementary distribution with overt affixes. In Godel’s opinion the zero morpheme has all the features of the linguistic sign. What (1a) and (1b) represent is also known as the overt analogue criterion, according to which a word can be seen as zero-derived from another word if in the given language there is at least one analogous derivational process with an overt affix (Sanders 1988: 156). So $\text{cheat}_V > \text{cheat}_N$ is a process of zero-derivation justifiable by a precise analogue in English forming an agentive noun from a verb with an overt suffix: cf. $\text{write}_V \rightarrow \text{writer}_N$. In fact, in English not only one such analogue exists: cf. $\text{apply}_V \rightarrow \text{applicant}_N$, $\text{escape}_V \rightarrow \text{escapee}_N$, etc. The overt analogue criterion, just like Marchand’s above description of the process of derivation by a zero morpheme, is based on the fundamental assumption that a derivative is a syntagma whose determinatum is phonologically unexpressed. Where the syntagmatic nature of a process is questionable, for instance in the case of *government* in *government job*, no conversion can be postulated (Marchand 1969: 360). Thus in *government job* the word *government* is not an adjective converted from a noun, but a functional shift, “a purely grammatical matter”, characterizing all nouns used as pre-modifiers in noun phrases.