Derivation without affixation

- Conversion: derivation of new words without the attachment of affixes. Also, in conversion processes words must have the same phonetic realization. See below:
  - Noun-Verb
  - salt – to salt
  - shape – to shape
  - Verb-Noun
  - to alert – alert
  - to attack – attack
  - Adjective-verb
  - green - to green
  - empty – to empty
  - Adjective-Noun
  - poor – the poor
  - sublime – the sublime
Derivation without affixation

- Other forms, however, are also possible, even though they are of minor relevance:
  - Preposition - verb
  - down - to down;
  - Preposition – Nouns
  - up/down – the ups and downs;
- Problems related to conversion processes:
  - Directionality;
  - Zero-morph;
  - The Morphology-syntax boundary
Derivation without affixation

- **Directionality:**
- 1. **Historical approach:** which word is derived from which? Verbs from nouns (e.g. ‘to shape’ from ‘shape’) or the other way round (e.g. ‘alert’ from ‘to alert’). How can we justify the assumptions that one derives from the other?
- History of language: which was used first?
- Such a method works well with many words but not with all words. Think of the word ‘crowd’ as a noun and as a verb. Which is attested first?
- **Semantic complexity approach:** derived words are in general more complex than the bases they come from. This occurs because affixes add meaning to the base. The same goes for conversion: the converted word should be more complex in terms of meaning. To understand which is derived from which we should analyse if the derived word has a more complex meaning.
Derivation without affixation

• Examples:
  • Bottle: ‘a rigid or semi-rigid container typically of glass or plastic having a comparatively narrow neck or mouth and usually no handle’. First Known Use: 14th century;
  • To bottle: ‘to put (something) into a bottle so that it can be sold or so that it is easier to use’. First Known Use: 1594;
  • To help: ‘to give assistance or support to’. First Known Use: before 12th century;
  • Help: ‘something (such as money or advice) that is given to someone who needs it’. First Known Use: before 12th century;
  • To better: ‘to make more tolerable or acceptable’. First Known Use: before 12th century;
  • Better: ‘more attractive, appealing, effective, useful’. First Known Use: before 12th century;
Derivation without affixation

- Historical and semantic information cannot solve all the problems because bases and derivatives also carry different formal properties. Consider the words below:
  - Ring ringed 'provide with a ring'
  - Ring rang *provide with a ring'
  - Wing winged ‘provide with wings’
  - Wing wang *’provide with wings’
- What does the behaviour of the verbs above boil down to?
- The argument runs down as follows: converted verbs have regular past forms. In fact, ‘ringed’ means ‘provide with a ring’ but ‘rang’ doesn’t. This behaviour has to do with the lexicon since irregular forms of verbs are learnt item by item and are stored in the lexicon as such. If for a certain verb there is no stored form, then formation rules derive the past form from regular inflection rules.
Derivation without affixation

- As a consequence, if converted verbs are all regular, directionality is affected by such a behaviour. In fact, if we find a noun-verb pair in which one of the two terms is irregularly inflected this implies that the regular inflecting word is derived from the irregularly inflecting one:
  - Drink drank = drink (deverbal noun)
  - Shake shook = shake (deverbal noun)
Derivation without affixation

- Also stress plays an important role in conversion processes. Look at the words below:
  - A to toːˈmɛnt/ tˈɔːmɛnt
  - to pəˈmɪt/ pəmɪt
  - to kənˈstrʌkt kənstrʌkt
  - B to get away a get-away
  - to let down a let-down
  - to pull down a pull-down

- In which formal properties do the words in the left column differ from those in the right column?
- How can the differences between the two lists of words bear on conversion;
Derivation without affixation

- Frequency of occurrence: there is strong tendency for derived words to occur less frequently than base words;
- The reason for the lower rate of frequency of derived words is semantics. Derived words, in fact, are more complex than bases. As a consequence they cannot occur in all the contexts in which original bases can;
- Take as an example the cases of words like ‘water’ and ‘drink’. As regards the former the noun ‘water’ is more frequent than the verb ‘water’. In the latter pair, instead, the verb ‘drink’ is more frequent than the noun ‘drink’.
- Thus, the verb ‘water’ is derived from the noun ‘water’, while the noun ‘drink’ is derived from the verb ‘drink’;
- Despite all the criteria examined so far, there are cases difficult to solve: e.g. ‘love’: is it a deverbal noun or a denominal verb?
Derivation without affixation

- Conversion or zero-affixation: in which cases it is possible to justify formation processes like zero-forms?
- Most morphologists claim that zero-forms obtain only in those cases where there is also a non-zero form that expresses the same meaning or function;
- Such a constraint has been defined as **overt analogue criterion**;
- Question: is there such a criterion in the case of conversion?
- The answer to this question lies in the possibility of finding at least one affix that expresses the same range of meaning as conversion;
- If such a possibility is found, then we can speak of zero-affixation, otherwise such a hypothesis has to be rejected;
- To support the existence of zero-affixation many morphologists claim that all derivational processes (affixation, conversion, truncation and so on) are in truth affixational.
Derivation without affixation

- If, on the one hand, such a claim is very productive, because it places affixation at the centre of any morphological process, on the other hand it needs theory-internal proof to explain all those phenomena that do not show any overt affix;
- The risk, obviously, is that if we do not find convincing explanations then all the theoretical apparatus fails;
- Let’s analyse conversion from nouns into verbs to see whether the over analogue criterion holds;
- The task is to see if there is a verb-deriving affix which has the same meaning as the hypothesised zero-affix;
Derivation without affixation

- Consider, for example, verb suffixes like –ize, -ate and –ify.
- Plag (1999) holds that they have a more restricted range of meanings than conversion. See below:
  - jail locative meaning put into X
  - staff ornative meaning provide with X
  - yellow causative meaning make more X
  - bundle resultative meaning make into X
  - cool inchoative meaning become X
  - counterattack performative perform X
  - hammer instrumental meaning use X
  - bark privative meaning remove X
- Apart from those listed in the previous slide there is wealth of idiosyncratic meanings: e.g to crew = act as a member of a crew; ‘to eel’ = ‘move like a eel’
Derivation without affixation

- Consider the verb suffixes below:
- \textit{-ate}: it attaches to words that end in one or two stressed syllables. If the base ends in an unstressed syllable, the last syllable is truncated (e.g. \textit{mercury-mercurate}). Semantically it has an ornative/resultative meaning (e.g. \textit{methanate}; \textit{fluorinate}). Yet, lots of verbs ending in \textit{-ate} do not follow this pattern, whereby such a suffix seems only to have the property of attributing a verbal status to nouns (e.g. \textit{formate} – \textit{formation}):
- \textit{-en}: it attaches to monosyllabic words that end in a plosive, fricative or affricate. Semantically it derives verbs from adjectives and has a causative meaning (e.g. \textit{blacken});
- \textit{ify}: it attaches to monosyllabic words, to words stressed on the final syllable and to words stressed on the penultimate syllable followed by a final syllable ending in unstressed /\textit{i}/;
- \textit{-ize}: it attaches mainly to bases which end in unstressed syllables. Semantically it has a wide range of related concepts such a locative, ornative, causative, resultative, inchoative, performative.
Derivation without affixation

- Do verb overt suffixes have the same range of meanings as conversion-derived verbs? Can the overt analogue criterion be accepted?
- Think now of verb-to-noun conversion and consider suffixes like 
  -ation; -al, -ing; -ment;
- Even though there are no apparent differences between converted and affixed nouns, Cetnarowska (1993) holds that at least two differences emerge:
  - First: when the base word is a transitive verb, the suffixed noun may refer to all senses while the converted noun only to one. Hence, a deverbal noun like *drawing* refers to any activity of drawing while ‘draw’ refers only to the drawing of cards or lots;
  - Second: the suffixed nominalization will related to the transitive usage of the verb, while the conversion to the intransitive usage;
Conversion: syntactic or morphological process?

- Conversion: so far seen as a morphological process. Yet, it can also be seen as a syntactic process in that the converted word without apparent changes occupy the position in a sentence usually filled in by another word belonging to a different category. Consider the sentence below:

1. Frank drinks a lot of water every day;
2. Frank tasted lots of drinks during the wedding ceremony;

- From the data above we can see that the word drinks occupies different positions in the sentences and it is the position they occupy that tells us which class of word they belong to;
- In fact, in sentence 1 ‘drinks’ occupy a verbal position, while in the second it occupies a complement position. The assignment of words to specific position in the sentence is a syntactic nor a morphological operation;
Conversion: syntactic or morphological process?

- Yet, this view of conversion as a syntactic operation is not unproblematic;
- Question: how do we know which word can occupy a specific position in a sentence? Which data do syntactic operations need to make well-formed sentences?
- Consider:
  - *Drinks wedding the tasted during of Frank lots ceremony;
  - How do we know that ‘drinks’ occupies a wrong position in the sentence above? What about all the other words? What kind of information do we need to put the words in the rights position to make a well-formed sentence? What kind of process do they reveal?
Truncation

- **Truncation**: a morphological process whereby in the relationship between two words, a derived word and its base, the former is deprived of phonetic material

- Consider the words below:
  - Set 1
  - Ron = Aaron
  - Liz = Elizabeth
  - Mike = Michael
  - Set 2
  - Demo = demonstration
  - Disco = discotheque
  - Lab = laboratory
Truncation and suffixation by –y (+ variants –ie and –ee)

- Mandy = Amanda
- Andy = Andrew
- Charlie = Charles
- Patty = Patricia
- Robbie = Roberts

How do truncated names and diminutive differ from full names?
Consider again the truncated names below. Which formal (prosodica) properties do they reveal?
- Abraham = Abe
- Agatha = Ag
- Alfred = Al
- Bartholomew = Bart
- Bertram = Bert
**Truncation and suffixation by –y (+ variants –ie and –ee)**

- Analysing the data in the previous slide we can arrive at the following generalization about their prosodic structure (the so called **template**):
  - a. CVC
  - b. CVV
  - C. VC

- If we include also consonant clusters (e.g. ‘Bart’ or ‘Abe’) we can arrive at the more complex templates:
  - a. CcVvCc
  - b. CcVV
  - C. VvCc