ON CONVERSION IN ENGLISH

Titik Sudartinah
Yogyakarta State University
titiksudartinah@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

There are several processes in English word-formation: coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, acronyms, derivation, and conversion. Among them, conversion is one of the most common to occur. It is the derivational process whereby an item changes its word-class without the addition of any affix. It is done by converting a lexeme belonging to one class to another, without any overt change in shape.

However, it is not easy to determine the original and the converted word in a pair of words that are exactly the same in spelling. There are some elements that are to be considered: the semantic dependence, the range of usage, the semantic range, and also the phonetic shape.

Conversion almost always involves open-class vocabulary, especially noun, verb, and adjective. The converted words produced by this process are also in these three classes. The original words, compared to the converted ones, usually have broader range of meaning and usage.

Keywords: word-formation, conversion, zero-affix