

Foreword

The texts published in this volume were presented at the international workshop *Conversion and Mixed categories* organized by the Centro de Linguística da Universidade do Porto (CLUP), which took place at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, on 2nd and 3rd november, 2012.

Grammatical categories have always been at the centre of linguistic reflexion. It is easy to classify the majority of words according to their syntactic category, based on phonological form and lexical meaning. As regards other words, however, phonological form and lexical meaning are insufficient for classification and it is crucial to take into account their syntactic behaviour. This is specially the case with words obtained by conversion. Conversion, sometimes referred to as “functional shift”, “functional change”, “transposition”, “zero derivation” and even “improper derivation” according to the approach adopted, is a process that has no similarities with canonical derivational processes because it does not involve affixes, being a process whereby a word’s category changes without any change of form.

English is a language rich in conversion phenomena, as in the noun / verb relation present in *bottle - to bottle* or in the adjective – verb relation present in *clear – to clear*. In this kind of examples, conversion is said to be total, because the converted verb gives rise to other nouns, such as *bottler*, and it can have morphological tense and person endings (e.g. the simple past *bottled*, the third person of the present *bottles*).

Deadjectival nouns referring to humans, such as *the Germans*, have also been analyzed as being the result of a (total) morphological conversion. By contrast, conversion is sometimes considered to be the result of a syntactic process of nominal ellipsis in an example such as *poor_{ADJ}, the poor_N* or as a case of partial conversion, because the noun is formed from an adjective by the presence of an article and it cannot have a plural ending, **the poors* being ungrammatical in English.

For a long time, grammarians described conversion as typical of English,

related to the gradual loss of inflection in this language. As Varela (2006: 174) clarifies, “the connection between conversion and inflection levelling largely depends on the value given to inflection (...) and to what units the concept may be applied, whether words or stems”. In the latter case, other languages are considered to have instances of conversion: in French *rose* (‘pink’) – *roser* (‘to pink’), in German *Regel* (‘rule’) – *Regeln* (‘to regulate’), in Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, in the so called “regressive” nouns, as in *brillo* (‘shine’) – *brillar* (‘to shine’) (cf. Varela, *loc. cit.*).

Conversion being a morphological process with syntactic repercussions, how and in which grammar component should this phenomenon be treated?

For many authors, there is a component responsible for word formation, Morphology, with its own rules and constraints, which are not dependent on syntactic principles, as argued by Jackendoff (2002) and, in this volume, by Graça Rio-Torto, Alexandra Rodrigues, Alina Villalva and Daniela Marzo. Ackema & Neeleman (2007), Williams (2007), developing Di Sciullo & Williams (1987), and many others, preserve the distinction between Morphology and Syntax, considering that Morphology is the system of words and Syntax is the system of phrases: they may share certain notions (such as merge, c-command, head, argument) but they also have specific operations and primitives that distinguish them.

A strong lexicalist view is also proposed by Hale & Keyser (1993). According to their framework, the Lexicon is the component whereby operations similar to movements may operate in the lexical structures. Starting with denominal verbs such as *bottle*, *saddle*, traditionally considered cases of conversion, Hale & Keyser (1993) proposed that this type of verbs is formed from nouns by a movement from an N position to a V position within the lexical structure. This proposal has had an important impact: one of its consequences being that intransitive verbs were analyzed by several linguists as «disguised» transitives; and such a way of looking to lexical structures influenced a lexicalist view of morphological processes.

At the other extreme, other authors consider that there is no distinction between Morphology and Syntax. Julien (2007) considers that the notion of word is even an epiphenomenon (see in particular pp. 212, 234), because it is based on syntactic conditions and because many words are derived from syntactic relations, such as head-head relation, specifier-head relation,

and others, among others. Svenonius (2007) defends that Morphology operates with the same types of structures and primitives as Syntax, and that there are movements responsible for certain linearizations. Moreover, for Embick & Noyer (2007), inspired by Halle & Marantz (1993), the founders of Distributed Morphology, the only generative component is Syntax, the words being introduced into terminal heads of syntactic structure. For Artemis Alexiadou and Petra Sleeman, in this volume, the category of a word may be considered the result of the movement of an acategorical root to functional categories that define its final category as a noun, or as a verb, for example.

The domain that mostly inspired Alexiadou (2001), Alexiadou *et al.* (2011) and Sleeman (2011a, 2011b) was mixed categories: participles (in their diversified uses), deverbal nominalizations, nominal and verbal gerundives in English and German (*John's performing of the sonata* versus *John's performing the sonata*), supines and infinitives in Roumanian (*citi(ul) contant al ziarelor*, 'the act of constantly reading newspapers', versus *constanta omitere(a) a unor informatii*, 'the constant omitting of information'), nominal and verbal infinitives in Spanish (*el murmurar la gente*, 'the fact that people (nominative) murmur', versus *el murmurar de las fuentes*, 'the murmuring of the fountains'). The choice of Distributed Morphology and the abandoning of both the Lexicalist Hypothesis and the traditional X' model seem justified because it is difficult to account for the intermediary steps that all these constructions may exhibit together with their hybrid properties.

From this brief presentation we see that morphological processes are at the centre of interesting discussions regarding the architecture of grammar. If it is true that conversion is classically considered a morphological process, as opposed to that which allows the creation of new words through affixes and different from syntactic constructions, it is also true that both conversion and the creation of words through affixes is an area in which the frontiers of grammar components must be carefully considered.

The texts here assembled analyse different phenomena and represent different theoretical approaches to the main topics of the workshop.

Graça Rio-Torto studies NN appositions such as *empresas-fantasma(s)* (lit. 'businesses-phantom(s)'), *palavras-chave(s)* (lit. 'words-key(s)'). Several questions have been raised about these constructions: are they compounds,

syntactic objects or lexicalizations of phrases? Are they phrasal compounds or phrasal nouns? Rio-Torto argues against a syntactic analysis, showing that they do not present any functional categories typical of nominal phrases, and argues that they are lexical phrases downgraded to lexical units.

A different approach to NN appositions (like *equipa maravilha* (équipe merveille, lit. 'team wonder') is taken by Fernando Martinho, who sees in this process, very common in Romance languages, the emergence of the second N as an adjectival modifier, very similar to relational adjectives, based on some syntactic behaviour.

Daniela Marzo studies another controversial issue, that represented by the relationship between the Italian nouns *cammino* ('walking, path'), *sosta* ('stop, rest, short break') with the verbs *camminare*, *sostare*. Are these nouns the result of conversion, zero-suffixation or overt suffixation? In her contribution these approaches are compared with respect to their explanatory power. While the suffixation account is ruled out for semantic and distributional reasons, it is shown that the conversion approach is the more plausible in being able to account for the two cases. In order to explain the formation and structure of a noun of the type of *basta* (verb *bastire*) it is proposed that it is the synchronic remnant of an Old Italian conversion type.

The differences between conversion, affix word formation and syntactic structures are highlighted by Alexandra Rodrigues, who analyses converted deverbal nouns such as *remendo* ('event of mending') and *curte* ('event of having fun'), and argues for their formation in the Lexicon, distinguishing them from purely syntactic types of nominalisation such as the one that occurs in *o estudar matemática traz-me vantagens* ('studying maths brings me benefits') or in *o remendar roupa é um recurso nesta época* ('mending clothes is a good resource nowadays').

Alina Villalva studies several cases of Portuguese words that share the same root string and argues that they represent different types of conversion. Such is the case with *firm*_{ADJ} – *firmar*_V; *abaix*_{ADV} – *abaixar*_V; *manch*_N – *manchar*_V; *afia*_V – *afia*_N. In order to set them apart one needs to take into account features from every grammar domain. Villalva concludes that this fact is one of the best arguments for considering conversion as a lexical word formation process (as opposed to morphological, syntactic or semantic notions).

Artemis Alexiadou examines two types of nominalizations related to colour adjectives in Greek, a suffixed one and a neutral one. The author shows that the two differ in that suffixed nominalizations denote stage level properties, while neuter nominalizations denote individual level properties. This difference is due to the fact that suffixed nominalizations are count nouns, while neuter nominalizations are mass nouns. A comparison between Greek, Dutch/German and English shows that different languages have different nominalization strategies: nominalization can take place on three layers: on the root level, on the nP level, and finally on the DP level. This explains the differences in distribution and interpretation among the different nominalization types across languages.

Sleeman analyses the human construction *de zieken* ('the sick people') in Dutch, which has mixed adjectival and nominal properties, and argues against the ellipsis analysis. An analysis within the framework of Distributed Morphology is proposed, which is a combination of the ellipsis analysis (without an empty noun) and the traditional derivational/conversion analysis.

Celda Choupina, comparing different approaches, studies cognate objects of verbs in Portuguese, *chorar um choro...* (lit. 'to cry a cry'), *cantar uma cantiga* ('to sing a song). Remember that Hale & Keyser (1993) proposed that English verbs such as *to saddle*, *to bottle* are formed from nouns by a movement from an N position to a V position within the lexical structure, according to a strong lexicalist view of morphological processes. According to another view, that supported by Distributed Morphology, there are no primitive word categories and, for instance, *dance*, in *the dance*, or *dance* in *to dance*, may be the result of the movement of an acategorical root to functional categories that define its final category as a noun or as a verb. At the same time, however, if there are cognate objects of certain verbs, why not consider that they are obtained by a movement of a root that leaves a copy, as argued by Haugen (2009), inspired as to the general idea of movement by copy of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995)? We see that cognate objects are a central topic in the discussions regarding the form and function of grammar.

We sincerely hope that this volume will contribute to the discussion concerning the interface between Lexicon, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics not only amongst the linguists that were present at the workshop but also among the members of the linguistic community in general.

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