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Vol. 8 No. 4 (2025): DECEMBER

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ACCREDITED
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SK No.177/E/KPT/2024

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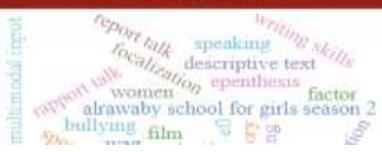**Word Class Conversion And Its Benefits In The EFL Context**

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Word Class Conversion And Its Benefits In The EFL Context

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ABSTRACT

One way to increase learners' skills and the language's elements is through the word formation process, especially conversion. This study aimed to investigate types of word conversion in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), and the implications of word conversion for the EFL context. This study was a descriptive qualitative study, and the researcher used morphological analysis in analyzing the data. In gathering the data, the researcher accessed the website of the Oxford English Dictionary and tried to search the word conversion between Noun-Verb, Verb-Noun, and adjective-verb. The result of the study showed that 227 words were included in word conversion. Those words consisted of 104 noun-verb conversions, 12 noun adjectives, 55 adjective-nouns, and 56 verb-nouns. Furthermore, as demonstrated by previous studies, word conversion can improve learners' skills, especially in reading, writing, and speaking. It is also crucial in learning the elements of language, such as grammar and vocabulary.

1. Introduction

The compositional method is driven by the fact that word categorization must be based primarily on word involvement in the essential morphological oppositions inherent in a language, and the bundles of oppositions into which specific words of the language join define their class (Trnka, 1969). The use of words developed over time. The form, the meaning, and the function developed and shifted due to its use. Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies such language properties. It focuses on some areas, such as word formation. In the process of word formation, morphs are merged to produce new words. There are some types of word formation, but this study focuses on word conversion and its benefits in the EFL context. In conversion, a term is derived from a source word that instantiates a different syntactic category, without overt marking (Kisselew, 2016; Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Weda et al., 2021).

In English morphology, conversion is thought to be the most effective method of producing new words. It is a derivational process with no overt marking; for instance, although the fact that the lexical category of the word has moved from one class to another, there is no difference in the form now. Ideally, the conversion will shed light on some pretty practical and explanatory solutions to conversion challenges. There are three forms of conversion, namely noun to verb, verb to noun, and adjective to verb (Israfilova 2018). As stated by Clark (1979) in Valera (2017), when the interpretation of conversion is based on a figurative extension of meaning, the possibilities are expanded by their context, because the figurative extension of meaning's focus is inextricably linked to its frame. Nonetheless, meanings are considered to follow the general rule that the derived term's meaning is somehow correlated to its antecedent term.

The term "conversion" refers to the countless instances in which two words from distinct sections of speech have the same phonetic identity. The following example can help to demonstrate this case; work - to work. e.g. "No; said the housekeeper; there is only about three days work to do every week…." and "The daughter hearing the statement, turned uneasily, not to work, but because she hated people to guess at the poverty that made it necessary". In a morphological level, there is a distinction between numerous components of speech, particularly between nouns and verb. For instance, there is an obvious distinction in meaning between the noun "doctor" and the verb "doctor". "The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English" by A.S. Hornby gave the explanation related to these two words: A doctor "The one who has studied diseases and how to treat them" and "The highest degree given by a university". To doctor "colloquial - give medical treatment to or for" and "Make change in order to deceive people" (Kisselew, Rimell, Palmer and Pado, 2016). In modern English, each of these forms exists as a single word – forms and variants, rather than as a single form doctor.

True, some of the forms are homonymous in sound, but they are radically different grammatically and semantically. From the perspective of the morphemic structure, such as word – pairs doctor–to–doctor, water – to water, and brief–to–brief. Since one of them belongs to a different part of speech and is understood through a semantic and structural relationship with the other, it should be referred to as a derived term.

Conversion is a process that does not require concatenation. In English morphology, derivation without affixes is also a very prolific way of producing new words. It is a derivational method that does not include any overt making; for example, even when the lexical category of the word has moved from one class to another, there is no difference in form (Kim 2010). The fact that conversion is a constructive process, Dalton-Puffer (1992) has two implications, namely, English speakers favor the invariable base form, and English is becoming more isolated. Conversion can also enrich words or vocabulary, because it is a tool for communicating with others. As demonstrated by the previous study, morphology-based training is a practical and successful way to teach vocabulary (Jiang 2021). Through the detailed explanation and in-context practice, students have the opportunity to learn how to autonomously increase their vocabulary and gain their metalinguistic awareness. Conversion has so many benefits for the element of English foreign language. As proved by Velasco (2009), conversion not only demonstrates how the English language's lexicon is becoming more adaptable, but also assists the speaker's capacity to contrive and comprehend distinctive expressions.

Moreover, Chen (2022) stated that conversion as a kind of morphology can enhance the learners' performance in learning, and it is an effective way of assessing the meaning of new words. Bhatti and Mukhtar (2020) also admitted that conversion helps the learners in grasping the vocabulary. Besides, it helps in managing learners' interest, fluency, accuracy, and participation as well. Since conversion is a lexicological process that has profound syntactic and semantic ramifications for the language in general, it is certainly beneficial to research and is seen as a crucial component of TEFL (Vladimir 2021). Regarding the implications of conversion in the EFL context, some studies have investigated this field. However, few studies in Indonesia emphasized the related case. Hence, the current study aims to investigate the number of words converted and their benefits to the EFL context.

1.1 Literature Review

Morphology is the study of word formation, including how new words are coined in different languages around the world, as well as how word forms change depending on how they are employed in sentences (Lieber 2021). Moreover, Aronoff & Fudeman (2011) demonstrate that morphology refers to the mental system involved in word production, as well as the discipline of linguistics concerned with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. According to Kolenchery (2015), morphology is associated with the building of words.

In the morphology process, it is known that many words make sense when used independently, but some words only make sense when combined with other words. Some of the components that can be separated into words can stand alone as words, while others cannot (Eliason et al., 1965). The word parts that can only be found in combination must be properly combined, and languages generate new words in a structured manner. Morphology, which is a subset of phonology, is defined as the study of speech sounds and patterns. It is a scientific study centered on the "phoneme" which is the smallest meaningful unit of speech (Eliason et al., 1965; Kyeongjae et al., 2025; Panggabean et al., 2025).

Word formation is the study of the concepts involved in the production of new words (Hamawand 2011). According to Yule (2020), word formation is the study of how new words are formed. Plag (2018) also notes that the study of word formation is the study of how new complex words are formed from other words or morphemes. Hence, word formation is linked to the process of constructing existing words as well as the creation of new words. English word-formation processes are classified into eleven kinds; they are derivation by affixation, derivation without affixation, compounding, creation de novo, blending, clipping, back-formation, abbreviations, and eponyms (Stockwell & Minkova, 2001). On the other hand, O'grady and Archibald (2015) also propose a theory on word formation. Based on their theory, there are 14 kinds of English word formation, namely derivation, compounding, inflection, internal change, suppletion, reduplication, cliticization, conversion, clipping, blending, back-formation, acronym, onomatopoeia, and coinage.

In English, conversion, particularly N-to-V conversion, has been widely examined in terms of morphology and syntax. Previously, explanations for this occurrence included (a) conversion (proper), a category-changing word-formation operation thought to be distinct from other types of derivational morphology (Plag, Dalton-Puffer, and Baayen 1999), or (b) zero-derivation, which involves a phonologically null derivational suffix similar to –ize, -ify, and -er (Kiparsky 1982). Conversion's wide range of meanings has been a crucial source of evidence for numerous theoretical theories. Verbs formed from N-to-V conversion can have a huge range of meanings, seemingly limited only by the template "activity

involving the noun" (Grieco et al., 1979; Sachiya et al., 2025; Junaid et al., 2025). The semantic range of V-to-N conversion is less. It is likely to produce a noun that refers to the verb's reported occurrence or its outcome.

In English, conversion is a very productive word-formation process (Schmid 2016). Furthermore, Yule (1996) also stated that conversion is the process of putting the term into a new category without adding the suffix. The number of words that can be converted is almost limitless. There are two types of conversion, namely major and minor conversion. In major conversion, there are three primary forms. They are nouns, verbs, and adjectives, which are historically named word classes or consist of adjective-to-noun conversion, noun-to-adjective, verb-to-noun conversion, and noun-to-verb conversion (Kim 2010).

2. Methodology

Two kinds of research methodology are commonly employed in the data collection process, namely quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods consist of systematic empirical research that entails quantifying with the use of mathematics and statistics (Bryman and Bell 2007). He also states that qualitative methods are frequently used to describe case studies in which data is gathered from a small number of research objects. On the other hand, Chigbu (2019) also demonstrates that a qualitative study considers the results that do not use statistical procedures or other methods of quantitative study. He also added that it can produce the results or findings in the pattern of stories, plots, numbers, scenarios, or hypotheses.

This study was developed as a qualitative study. The primary goal of this study was to examine the process of changing a noun into a verb, a verb into a noun, and an adjective into a verb or a noun. In analyzing the data, the writers used morphological analysis because the data of this study were presented by word formation in the creation of new words. In analyzing the data, the writers made several steps; the first step was browsing the noun, verb, and adjective words on the internet through the links that were also provided in the appendix.

The writers used https://www.talkenglish.com/vocabulary/top-1500-nouns.aspx to gain the noun words. Through this link, the writers found 116 words that can be converted into verbs and adjectives. The noun-to-verb conversion consisted of 104 words, and the noun-to-adjective conversion consisted of 12 words. Furthermore, the writers tried to find the adjective words through https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/adjectives/list-of-adjective-words.html. In this source, the writers found 56 words that can be converted into noun form. For the verb-to-noun conversion, the writers used https://www.talkenglish.com/vocabulary/top-1000-verbs.aspx to find the data. Through this link, the writers found 55 words that were included in this type. The writers used the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to determine whether those words can be converted into another part of speech or not.

Second, the writers calculated the number of words included in the types of conversion in a table. Furthermore, the writers also analyzed the example of sentences. Based on the example of the sentences in the Oxford English Dictionary, the writers knew to which part of speech the word belonged. After doing all the steps, the writers discussed how necessary the conversion is in the EFL context.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

Based on the research question that had been provided previously, this part implied the types of words that can be converted in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and their benefits in the EFL context. According to Kim (2010), major conversions consisted of four types, namely adjective to noun, noun to adjective, verb to noun, and noun to verb. Every amount of word conversion is indicated in the following table.

Table 1. The Number Of Words Conversion

No.	Types of conversion	Σ	%
	Verb→Noun	55	24,23%
	Noun→ Verb	104	45,81%
	Adjective→ Noun	56	24,67%
	Noun→ Adjective	12	5,29%
Total		227	100%

a. Noun-to-verb conversion

The conversion from noun to verb was the highest percentage among others. The writers found 104 words that are included in this type. Some of them are the word answer in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), which means a response, whether verbal or nonverbal to a question, statement, or communication. If the word answer is converted into a verb, it will have to mean to the senses associated with answering a question, making a remark, or communicating. There is also the possibility of correspondence. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) also shows the year when the words were used by many people. Furthermore, the symbol of the word answer is eOE for the noun and verb. eOE (early Old English) means the use of the word answer as a noun and verb since the enforcement of Old English.

b. Adjective to noun conversion

The process of conversion is a manifestation of language inventiveness that allows numerous words to take root in the language to the point where it is nearly impossible to distinguish which two formally identical words come from an etymological dictionary. Another conversion process that has a high percentage is the conversion from an adjective to a noun. The author found 56 words included in this type. The word bad in adjective form means poor in quality or worthless. In noun form, it means that which is unsatisfactory; the state of being unsatisfactory; or the quality of being unsatisfactory. Many people know that the word bad is an adjective form, but the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) showed that the word bad was used as both an adjective and a noun in the same year, in 1203. Next, the author also found the word better. In adjective form, the word better means having a higher level of excellence; having a higher level of character or quality, for example, we are hoping for better weather tomorrow. Furthermore, in noun form, the meaning of better is that which is great; a greater person or object. For instance, I expected better for him. This word used as an adjective and a noun since the early Old English era.

c. Verb-to-noun conversion

The verb-to-noun conversion also had a high percentage. The author found 55 words that can be converted into noun form. The author explained some of those words here, such as the word go. As known by learners, in verb form, the word go means to relocate or travel on foot, and it was familiar since early Old English. In 1635, the word go took part as a noun form, which means the activity or fact of going, for instance, I doubt if he will listen to advice from me, but I will give it a go. Converting a verb into a noun is quite useful. It is usually the same form as the verb, or it takes the form of a noun, with the only difference being that it recognizes the grammatical context to determine which category the lexeme belongs to.

d. Noun-to-adjective conversion

The kind of noun-to-adjective conversion was the last type analyzed by the author. This type was the lowest percentage among other types since the author only found 12 words that were included in this type. Different from others, the noun-to-adjective word conversion took part at the same time, such as in 1388, the word family took part as both a noun and an adjective. Familiarly, in noun form, family means the slaves of a specific household or establishment. Meanwhile, in adjective form, it means designed for a family's use; suited for all family members. For instance, the event promises games and fun for the entire family. When it is converted into a noun, it can be that the job was starting to affect his family life. Next, the word street, in noun form, means a road that has been paved. For instance, you can find these shops on every street corner. When it comes to an adjective form, the form of a sentence can be a street sport is informal and based on whatever people want to play. This word took part as a noun and an adjective in the early Old English era.

1) The benefits of conversion in the EFL context

Learning English morphology is crucial for EFL learners since it helps them to get in-depth knowledge about language instruction and also assists with language elements and skills. The language elements are vocabulary and grammar. The language skills include reading, speaking, and writing. Effective communication only happens when the listener comprehends the accurate information or concept that the speaker is trying to convey. A vocabulary course is one of the subjects that must be studied by English foreign language learners. Many ways are done by the learners to increase their vocabulary, such as through animation videos, games, songs, word formation, etc.

According to O'Grady & Archibald (2015), some kinds of word formation can assist learners in enriching vocabulary knowledge. One of them is conversion. This statement is also strengthened by a previous study that showed word formation can create the learners' interest and they are willing to learn new words (Bhatti& Mukhtar, 2020). Conversion is

a lexicological occurrence with substantial syntactic and semantic implications for the language as a whole; thus, it is well worth considering as a part of teaching English as a foreign language. Cannon (1985) stated that conversion is a simple approach to making new terms in English, and it has an impact on the learners' vocabulary mastery. On the other hand, it is a useful tool for maintaining sentence cohesiveness and bridging structural gaps.

When it comes to learning new words, some strategies must be mastered by the learners. Firstly, related to the sources. Learners must be able to obtain knowledge about words to cope with new vocabulary when it arises and to learn unfamiliar vocabulary. Analyzing words is a beneficial method because it can help the learners know the connection between related words, clarify guesses based on context, develop form and meaning connections, and also figure out what a word means. On the other hand, appropriately reviewing reference sources, such as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), can also assist in vocabulary acquisition. Secondly, know the process that creates vocabulary knowledge. It contains methods for memorizing terminology and putting it to use. Recognizing is a common method of storing vocabulary, and it can be highly important for in-depth word processing.

The development of vocabulary was linked to classroom training on word formation rules. As stated by the previous study by Wood and Schatschneider (2021), when the learners were taught morphological concepts, they did not need to learn vocabulary using traditional methods like memorizing, dictionary checking, and spelling. Despite their weakness in English skills, the learners were able to increase their word usage in their studies.

4.2 Discussion

The objective of this paper is to examine the process of conversion through the meaning and sentences and their implication for the EFL context. It has been discovered that the majority of the time, people, especially students, use a dictionary to learn new terms, and this approach can help them improve their vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, through dictionaries, especially the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the students know the process of word conversion. Conversion is the process of deriving a new lexical item by adapting the base or input's part of speech without explicitly stating the change (Bram 2011). A major type of conversion consisted of four types, namely adjective to noun, noun to adjective, verb to noun, and noun to verb.

The first stage in word learning is to understand them. (Dooling and Lachman 1971) revealed that the contextual guessing strategy can help students better understand vocabulary. It also improves their skill such as writing, reading, and speaking. The second major purpose of vocabulary instruction is to help students recall words, especially to assist them in storing words in their minds. Because the function of words is limited and repeated, they can be recalled rapidly. However, nouns, adverbs, and verbs that reflect abstract notions are typically difficult to recall because they include complicated material. The morphology instruction is used to classify the root affix and word memory methods. These strategies have the advantage of allowing learners to guess the meaning of new words based on their understanding of the root meaning. This reduces the stress on the memory and improves the memory effect when remembering the words.

A conversion may be used to generate a specific response from the reader or to align the writing with others that use comparable constructs. The concept of zero-affixation analysis is based on the assumption that the process is identical to morphological affixation. Conversion, like suffixation in English, is affixation without overt affixes (Velasco 2009). Based on the findings, the author found 227 word conversions that consisted of 56 adjective-nouns, 14 noun-adjectives, 52 verb-nouns, and 102 noun-verbs. Following a previous study, Stratulat (2011) stated that conversion, also known as zero affixation, is the technique of allowing an object to be used in several sections of speech while maintaining its original form.

In English, Conversion is an effective way of word formation in improving the skills and language elements such as reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar (Astuti and Nurhayati 2009). It forms words of any word class. Knowledge of affixing rules and derivation concepts might be useful, especially for advanced English language learners. It is well understood that learning and acquiring English skills is a complicated and unpredictable process in which some elements are easily remembered while others are rejected by the memory for various reasons. Thus, it is crucial to recommend that any English language course provide conversion theory or guidelines, and always have a significant role in English language courses.

Learning the process of conversion can help EFL learners broaden their vocabulary knowledge of elements of knowledge. Learning the process of conversion means learning how to construct sentences by using different forms of words, such as making an adjective sentence by using noun words. This way can sharpen learners' memory. As explained by Yonghuan Liu (2018), the word memory technique improves learners' skills. On the other hand, it can also help learners

to recall new words more simply and efficiently by improving correct word spelling, and increasing the number of words they understand their meanings.

4. Conclusion

Understanding word conversion is beneficial, particularly for those learning English as a second language. Conversion refers to the non-affixing production of lexical units of one part of speech, associated with a semantic shift. Hence, a new lexical unit appears that is similar to the original. Verbs that have been changed to nouns can indicate object action, instrumental use of the object, acquisition or addition of the object, and deprivation of the object. Adjective-to-noun conversion is also one of the categories of conversion. Based on the results, the writers found so many examples of word conversion, for instance, noun-to-verb, verb-to-noun, noun-to-adjective, and adjective-to-noun conversion. The most common was the conversion from noun to verb, and the least common was the adjective conversion.

Through conversion, the learners cannot only evaluate the syntactic skill but also can integrate new terms and concepts. On the other hand, by learning word conversion, the learners can recognize the value of expanding their knowledge. Learning word conversion means learning how to construct a sentence by using a different part of speech without changing the base word. This way helps the learners in enhancing their vocabulary knowledge because the more they try to convert the word into another part of speech, the more they will memorize so many new words and also become more familiar with them. It can be concluded that learning a language is not so much about being familiar with a set of sentences as it is about becoming familiar enough with a linguistic system to be able to construct sentences. Some previous studies showed that conversion is a kind of word formation that is very useful in EFL contexts, such as in improving vocabulary, grammar, and language skills; however, this study aimed to add knowledge in this field.

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