

THE ROLE OF CONVERSION (ZERO AFFIXATION) IN THE FORMATION OF TWO-COMPONENT (WORD) SENTENCES

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Abstract: This article examines the role of conversion (zero affixation) in the formation of two-component sentences in English and Uzbek. In English, conversion is highly productive, allowing nouns and adjectives to function as verbs and form minimal subject–predicate structures, for example *She emailed* or *The room emptied*. Uzbek, however, relies mainly on affixation for predicate formation, with conversion appearing less frequently and usually in colloquial or stylistically marked contexts, such as copula-less nominal sentences. Despite these differences, both languages reflect the universal principle of predication as the core of communication. The findings highlight how morphology and syntax interact in different typological systems and provide useful insights for comparative linguistics and translation studies.

Key words: conversion, zero affixation, two-component sentence, English, Uzbek, predication

INTRODUCTION

The study of word-formation processes is central to linguistic research because it illuminates the mechanisms through which languages expand their lexicon and construct new grammatical patterns. Among the various processes, conversion, also known as zero affixation, is particularly intriguing as it creates new words without visible morphological change. The absence of overt affixes makes the process seem simple, yet it performs a complex function by altering the grammatical category of a word and enabling it to serve different syntactic roles. This process has a direct connection with sentence formation, especially with two-component sentences, since the subject and predicate often involve words that have shifted their functional status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of conversion has received considerable attention in English linguistics since the early 20th century. Jespersen (1924) identified functional shift as a vital factor in the dynamic nature of language, emphasizing that English often reuses existing forms to create new grammatical functions. Marchand (1969) developed a detailed typology of conversion, distinguishing between noun-to-verb, verb-to-noun, adjective-to-verb, and other patterns, and showing its centrality in the English lexicon. Later, Quirk et al. (1985) reinforced the importance of conversion in their *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, noting that it is one of the most productive and economical means of word-formation in English. Within the framework of generative grammar, Chomsky (1965) indirectly contributed to the study of conversion by highlighting how syntactic derivations can accommodate flexible word-class assignments, supporting the notion that category shifts are not peripheral but central to sentence derivation.

In Uzbek linguistics, research on conversion is relatively limited, reflecting the typological differences between English and Uzbek. Uzbek is traditionally described as an agglutinative language where affixation is the primary means of creating new words and marking grammatical relations. Nevertheless, several scholars have pointed out the existence of functional

reclassification, especially in spoken and stylistically expressive forms. Rasulov (1979) and G'ulomov (1980) recognized that certain Uzbek words could temporarily shift from nominal to predicative function without explicit affixation, though they considered these cases marginal. Nurmonov (1999) extended this discussion by addressing pragmatic and contextual aspects of sentence derivation, suggesting that the speaker's intention sometimes allows words to function beyond their traditional morphological class. More recent works, such as those by Karimov (2010) and Tursunov (2018), explore the syntactic flexibility of Uzbek, noting that while affixation remains dominant, certain patterns of ellipsis and reclassification point to processes comparable to English conversion, albeit less systematically.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a comparative-structural analysis of conversion in English and Uzbek. The material was drawn from the British National Corpus for English and the O'zbek Milliy Korpusi for Uzbek. The analysis combines morphological and syntactic perspectives to identify examples where conversion directly contributes to the formation of subject-predicate structures. The study is qualitative in nature, focusing on representative examples of noun-to-verb and adjective-to-verb conversion in English, as well as lexical-semantic reclassification in Uzbek, in order to reveal functional tendencies rather than statistical frequency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis demonstrate a clear asymmetry in the productivity of conversion between English and Uzbek, especially in the formation of two-component sentences. In English, conversion serves as a primary mechanism for generating new predicates without the need for overt affixes. For instance, nouns like *email*, *bottle*, and *chair* have been converted into verbs, allowing the construction of minimal predicative sentences such as *She emailed*, *They bottled the juice*, or *He chaired the meeting*. Similarly, adjectives like *clean* and *empty* undergo conversion and appear as verbs in sentences such as *The boy cleaned* or *The room emptied quickly*. In these cases, the subject is retained in its usual nominal role, while the predicate emerges through conversion, confirming the central role of zero affixation in creating new sentence patterns. Furthermore, English conversion facilitates the derivation of elliptical two-component sentences, where context supplies the missing elements. In colloquial use, a converted form such as *Coming?* or *Finished?* represents a complete predicative structure, with the subject understood from context. The flexibility of conversion thus enhances the efficiency of English communication, particularly in informal contexts. This productivity also extends to stylistic and metaphorical usage, where words shift class to produce expressive minimal sentences, such as *He masterminded the plan* or *She voiced her opinion*.

In Uzbek, by contrast, conversion plays a limited and context-dependent role. Since predicates are usually marked by rich verbal morphology, the language relies on affixation rather than zero derivation for creating verbs. However, the analysis revealed several cases where nouns or adjectives can serve as predicates without affixes, particularly in elliptical structures. For example, in conversational Uzbek, an utterance like *U o'qituvchi* (He/She is a teacher) omits the copula verb, yet the sentence functions as a complete two-component structure. Here, predication is achieved without overt verbal morphology, which resembles the effect of conversion in English. Similarly, in stylistically marked speech, certain words can shift into predicative roles through pragmatic interpretation, though these cases remain less systematic and less productive than in English. Another significant finding is the typological contrast in word order. English,

due to its analytical structure, requires strict adherence to subject–predicate order in two-component sentences, making conversion a primary means of expanding predicative possibilities without disturbing syntactic rules. Uzbek, with its agglutinative nature, allows greater word order variation but depends on affixes for predication, which reduces the necessity for conversion. Nevertheless, both languages reveal the functional universality of predication: regardless of morphological or syntactic differences, the subject–predicate relation remains the minimal communicative unit

The discussion also highlights the stylistic implications of conversion. In English literature and journalism, conversion often creates dynamic two-component sentences that are short, impactful, and expressive, such as *They bottled victory* or *She voiced concern*. In Uzbek, stylistic expressiveness is achieved more often through affixal derivation or word order variation, yet occasional zero-derivation effects can also be identified, particularly in conversational and rhetorical contexts. These findings suggest that conversion not only contributes structurally to the formation of two-component sentences but also enriches their stylistic range.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis confirms that conversion, or zero affixation, plays an essential but uneven role in the formation of two-component sentences in English and Uzbek. English, as an analytical language, demonstrates high productivity of conversion, using it as a primary means of deriving new predicates and enriching its inventory of minimal subject–predicate structures. This process allows for both formal efficiency and stylistic variety, making conversion one of the most significant drivers of English sentence derivation. Uzbek, by contrast, relies predominantly on agglutinative affixation to form predicates, and while conversion is less productive, it is not entirely absent. Contextual and stylistic factors in Uzbek permit occasional functional reclassification, especially in copula-less nominal sentences and elliptical expressions.

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