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[Review of: L. Bauer, S. Valera (2005) Approaches to Conversation/Zero-derivation]

Don, J.

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BOOK REVIEW

Review of Bauer, Laurie and Salvador Valera (eds.) (2005) *Approaches to Conversion/Zero-derivation*, Waxmann: Münster. (175 pp with author index and subject index)

Jan Don

The papers collected in this volume were partly presented by invited speakers at a symposium on conversion/zero-derivation in Hungary, May 2002. In addition, the editors have collected some papers by scholars who could not attend this meeting but wanted to contribute to this volume. The resulting volume contains 6 papers by Laurie Bauer, Dieter Kastovsky, Ferenc Kiefer, Stela Manova and Wolfgang Dressler, Martin Neef and Doris Schönefeld, and an introduction by the editors.

Although the theme of the collection seems restricted enough, the papers approach the topic in such different ways that it is not always easy to locate common ground or even shared opinions. On the one hand this may be seen as a positive sign that the field is flourishing in such a way that there are many different paths of gaining insight in a particular phenomenon; on the other hand, it may also indicate that the field is not quite coherent and that there is a certain lack of *communis opinio* about what the interesting issues are and where to look for further insight in the topics discussed.

One of the less interesting differences among scholars is terminological. Almost all authors start out by saying something about the terminology they apply to refer to their topic and also the editors of the volume did not opt for a single term, but used the double phrase ''zero-derivation/conversion'' to give the collection an appropriate flag. Although uninteresting in itself, these terminological differences already indicate differences in opinion and it may also say something about the level of understanding of the phenomena involved.

However, despite the differences in approach and opinion, there are some points that seem to be shared by most (if not all) of the contributors. Overlooking the contributions, we may detect different types of phenomena that all share the most minimal definition of conversion/zero-derivation, i.e. ''two morphological items with the same form that are somehow related''. (Neef, p. 103–104)

J. Don (✉)
Amsterdam University, Amsterdam,
The Netherlands
e-mail: j.don@uva.nl

The first type of phenomenon can be illustrated by the following examples from English, Hungarian, and German:

(1) (Kastovsky, p. 33)
    saw$_N$ →   saw$_V$
    swim$_V$ →   swim$_N$
    clean$_A$ →   clean$_V$
(2) (Kiefer, p. 55)
    kutya$_N$ →   kutya$_A$ 'dog'   'doggy'
(3) (Neef, p. 116–117)
    einig →   einigen   'united'   'to unite'
    offenbar →   offenbaren   'obvious'   'to reveal'

In all these cases a new lexeme is formed on the basis of an existing lexeme (with a different category). It seems that most (if not all) contributors consider these cases to be examples of conversion.

Less convergence exists about the phenomenon in which a particular inflected form can be used in another category (again without any formal change). Well-known is the case in which participles (present or past) can be used as adjectives without any change in their form. Not all authors consider this a case of conversion. Neef for example argues that the same lexeme may have exponents in different categories. Present participles in German can only be used as adjectives. Yet, Neef considers these participles as belonging to the same lexeme as the verbal forms. So, here we have a case in which an inflectional form has a different category but does not involve the formation of a new lexeme as in the examples (1)–(3). Therefore, Neef does not analyze them as cases of conversion. Similar cases are discussed by Bauer in his contribution, in which he looks into infinitival nominalizations in a range of European languages. Applying Neef's analysis to these cases, we would have to say that they do not involve conversion since the infinitives are word forms belonging to the same lexeme to which also the 'purely' verbal forms belong. Some of the cases discussed by Kiefer and by Manova and Dressler under the heading of conversion also involve the change of word-class of particular word-forms that belong to the paradigm of a lexeme (participles).

Another central topic of discussion involves the need for zero-affixes. Followers of Marchand (such as Kastovsky) have pointed out that conversion should be considered zero-derivation. The arguments rest on the assumption that the results of word-formation have to be analyzable both semantically and formally as syntagmas involving a determinatum (head) and a determinant (modifier) whose order is language-specific. This syntagma-principle is given the status of an axioma and if applied to formations such as *oil* 'put oil on something', *clean* 'make clean' etc. the only conclusion can be that these formations must involve a zero. Schönefeld correctly points out that Marchand speaks of zero-derivation in case there are *parallel* cases of overt derivation. However, she also points to the observation made by Stekauer (1996) (and we may add by Lieber (1992)) that conversion does *not* seem to behave like derivation if we take into account the semantics of converted forms. Briefly, the argument is that the output of conversion can be parallelled with *different* overt affixes and not with a single one. Following the logic of the Marchandians, we should have to say that there are multiple zero-affixes, which does

not seem an attractive step to make. So, on the one hand zero's seem to do a good job since they offer a means to express the parallelism with affixation; on the other hand, this parallelism forces us to the rather questionable assumption of multiple zero's.

It is interesting to see that Neef's contribution seems to steer clear from this dilemma. Neef takes serious the idea that the output of conversion is not semantically uniform in any sense and therefore concludes that it cannot be a single morphological category. In his framework of Word Design this implies that there can be no constraints that are specific for conversion, since constraints are always connected to a specific morphological category. His contribution is a case-study of German verb-forming conversion which indeed shows that no constraints seem to apply in this case.

In some contributions it is also pointed out that there are several phenomena that superficially may look like conversion but that, on closer inspection, really aren't. It is not always made explicit why such phenomena are not considered as true cases of conversion but again the common understanding seems to be that conversion crucially involves word-formation, or more precise: lexeme-formation. Therefore, cases like *the poor*$_N$ (from *poor*$_A$) are dismissed since 'they usually do not adopt the properties of genuine derivatives' (Kastovsky, p. 35). Or, in discussing cases like *stone wall* and *gold ring*, Schönefeld, asks whether the modifying nouns are converted to adjectives. She remarks (Schönefeld, p. 135) "[...] they cannot be considered cases of conversion, for the *resulting* words do not exhibit all the paradigmatic forms and syntactic functions an adjective can usually have [...]". Bauer suggests that we may conclude from such observations that the familiar labels such as N, V and A might be too coarse to be able to properly characterize the far more detailed and fine-grained distinctions in the behaviour of linguistic forms. Looking into infinitival nominalizations in a range of European languages, he distinguishes nine different grades (or shades) of 'nominality' which cannot justifiably be described by just applying the labels N and V. Bauer draws a lesson from this: in looking at conversion we should consider what a change in lexical category exactly means. We need to state which properties the converted form loses that it originally had, and what other properties it gains, rather than just state that it has become a noun, an adjective or a verb.

Schönefeld also takes a gradient view on the change in category. However, in her contribution this gradience follows from the assumption that the unmarked change of word-class involves metonymy. Her contribution is inspired by work of Kövecses and Radden (1998) and Radden and Kövecses (1999). Schönefeld assumes that cognitive metonymy plays an important role in the way we conceptualize the world around us, and that this is reflected in the structure of language. She claims that conversion always involves metonymy while overt morphological marking does not. The central idea of metonymy is that 'the vehicle and target conflate'. So, the vehicle, i.e. the word which is used metonymically, brings us to the target, i.e. the intended reference, by simply conflating with that target. Linguistically, this conflation of vehicle and target is conversion. This idea has some interesting consequences. For example, the case of unmarked change of word-class (i.e. conversion) is just a special case of metonymy involving two different types of categories (things, events, etc.), while in Schönefeld's view examples like (4) which involve a change of subclass of nouns also is a case of metonymy (and therefore formally unmarked) (p. 152):

(4)   a fox is a wild animal   fox = [N count]
      something is made of fox   fox = [N mass]

Of course, it is far from possible to do justice to all the contributions in this inter-
esting collection of articles within the limits of this brief review. I started with the
question whether it might be that the views are so wide-branching that it would
become impossible to actually learn something. However, I would like to conclude
on a more positive note. I think this volume shows that by confronting and bringing
together different perspectives on the same linguistic problem, we gain insights that
otherwise would have remained hidden much longer.

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