

TITLE Main morphological formal means 3: Approaches to conversion

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## 1. Overview

Conversion is described in word-formation as a process whereby word-class change takes place without any accompanying variation in the form, so one and the same phonological and orthographic representation of the word displays morphological, syntactic and semantic properties of two word-classes (cf. Bauer [2003, 38]; for an overview of theoretical positions on the process and of alternative analyses, cf. Valera [2015]). In Spanish word-formation, conversion is defined in line with this characterization (cf. Pena [1991, 103]), except that the formal identity may hold between word-classes and also between word-*subclasses*.

The concept of conversion thus relies on two conditions: formal identity and word-(sub)class change. Both conditions have been applied dissimilarly to a range of profiles in the literature, considering how conversion has been described across languages: from cases without word-class change to cases without formal identity accompanying word-class change (for a review of conversion and how these interpretations relate to a sample of Indo-European languages, cf. Valera [2015]). This chapter takes the conditions of formal identity and word-class change as a reference for the delineation of the main types of conversion that have been considered in Spanish (section 2), for alternative approaches (section 3) and for some of the open questions regarding conversion in Spanish (section 4). The chapter closes with a conclusion (section 5).

## 2. Types

The main cases that have been described as conversion are presented in this section by word-class for easier reading, but also for the substantial differences between them (cf. their specific approaches and controversies in sections 3 and 4). Thus, a case of conversion has been posited for the following, by contrast with noun or verb formation by derivation (see Resnik [this volume] and Batiukova [this volume], for these other processes):

i) Noun/verb:

a. Noun-to-verb, as in Rainer (1993, 237-238 and 2016, 2634-2636):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *almacén*<sup>2</sup> > *almacenar*  
'storehaus' 'to store'  
(2) *piloto* > *pilotar*  
'pilot' 'to pilot'

b. Verb-to-noun, as in Rainer (1993, 212 and 2016, 2636):<sup>3</sup>

- (3) *controlar* > *control*  
'to control' 'control'  
(4) *pescar* > *pesca*  
'to fish' 'fishing'

Conversion displays considerable polysemanticity in both directions (see Gutiérrez Rubio [this volume]). For denominal verbs, the literature has described semantic categories such as CAUSATIVE, EFFECTIVE,<sup>4</sup> INSTRUMENTAL, LOCATIVE, ORNATIVE, PERFORMATIVE, PRIVATIVE, RESULTATIVE, among others, as noted at least as early as in Alemany Bolufer (1920: 138-139; cf. also Rainer [1993, 237-239]). For deverbal nouns, a number of semantic categories have been listed too, e.g. ACTION, AGENT, SPACE LOCATION, TIME LOCATION, etc. (cf., among others, Alemany Bolufer [1920, 3-4], or Alvar Ezquerro [2015, 55-57]). Their semantic range may be widened under the influence of the context for specification of a basic general meaning (cf. Rainer [1993, 237-239]), and of several types of extension of the meaning of the base verb and its arguments (cf. Rainer [1993, 213-215]).

In denominal verbs and deverbal nouns, conversion is in competition with other processes for the expression of the same semantic category, especially with affixation (cf. Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999], Serrano-Dolader [1999] and Fábregas [2016]). Thus, in noun-to-verb derivation, the category ORNATIVE or the category INSTRUMENTAL can also be expressed by affixation of *-ear* and by circumfixation of *a-[noun]-(e)ar*, among others (cf. Rainer [1993, 238] and [2016, 2634]; cf. also Lázaro Carreter [1980b, 75 et passim]; Varela Ortega [1990: 12]). In verb-to-noun derivation, the categories EVENT or RESULT can be expressed by conversion<sup>5</sup> but also by affixation of *-ción*, *-zón*, *-m(i)ento*, or *-dura*, among others (cf. Alemany Bolufer [1920, 3-5]; Varela Ortega [1990, 12]; Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999, 4516-4517]; or Alvar Ezquerro [2015, 57]). The choice of one or the other resource for the expression of a given semantic category is heavily influenced by domain, by register and by dialectal variation. The latter stands out for the sharp contrast that may obtain between American and European Spanish as regards not just the frequency, but also the acceptability of formations in each variety (cf. in this regard cf. Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999, 4514, 4517-4518, 4550]).

ii) Adjective/noun:

a. Adjective-to-noun, as in Rainer (1993, 221-222 and 2016, 2635):

- (5) *ancho* > (*el*) *ancho*  
'broad' '(the) breadth'  
(6) *exterior* > (*el*) *exterior*  
'outer' '(the) outside'

b. Noun-to-adjective, as in Rainer (2016, 2636):<sup>6</sup>

- (7) *violeta* > *violeta*  
 ‘violet’ ‘purple’
- (8) *matemática* > *matemático*  
 ‘mathematics’ ‘mathematical’

As in noun/verb conversion, a case for polysemanticity and a long list of affixes in competition with conversion have been cited in the literature (cf. Rainer [1993, 221-222, 225, 228]; cf. also Rainer [1999], Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999], and Fábregas [2016]).

iii) Adjective/verb:

a. Adjective-to-verb, as in Rainer (1993, 235, 237) and (2016, 2636):

- (9) *enfermo* > *enfermar*  
 ‘sick’ ‘become sick’
- (10) *mejor* > *mejorar*  
 ‘better’ ‘become or make better’

b. Verb-to-adjective (cf. section 4):

- (11) *consistente (en)* > *consistente*  
 ‘consisting (in/of)’ ‘consistent’
- (12) *mirado* > *mirado*  
 ‘looked’ ‘considerate’

Again, polysemanticity has been recorded in the literature, as well as competition with other processes, like various types of affixation for the expression of the same semantic category, e.g. *en*-[adjective]-*ecer* for the expression of the semantic category INCHOATIVE (cf. Alemany Bolufer [1920, 4, 136, 139]; Rainer [1993, 237]; cf. also Rainer [1999] and Serrano-Dolader [1999]).

iv) Adjective/adverb:

a. Adjective-to-adverb, as in Rainer (2016, 2635):

- (13) *alto* > (*hablar*) *alto*  
 ‘high; loud’ ‘(speak) loud’
- (14) *feo* > *feo* (e.g. [...] *la gata* [...] *lo arañaba bien feo* [...]).<sup>7</sup>  
 ‘ugly’ ‘badly’ ‘[...] the cat [...] scratched him quite badly [...].’

b. Adverb-to-adjective, as in Rainer (2016, 2636):

- (15) *después* > *después* (e.g. *Yo* [...] *sé lo difícil que es el día después*).<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘afterwards’ ‘following’ ‘I [...] know how difficult the following day is’
- (16) *entonces* > (*el*) *entonces* (*presidente*)  
 ‘then’ ‘(the) then (president)’

Conversion has also been described in less productive cases, e.g.:

i) Adverb-to-verb (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 140; Serrano-Dolader 1999, 4686):

- (17) *atrás* > *atrasar* (e.g. [...] *atrasar la edad de jubilación no es buena medida*).<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘back’ ‘delay’ ‘[...] it is not a good decision to delay retirement age’.

ii) Adverb-to-noun (cf. Menéndez Pidal [1977, 224]):

- (18) *mal* > *mal* (e.g. *Pero mi padre no tenía aquel mal* [...]).<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘wrongly; not well’ ‘disease’ ‘But my father didn’t have that disease [...].’

iii) Conjunction-to-noun (cf. Menéndez Pidal [1977, 224]):

(19) *pero* > *pero* (e.g. *Pero, y hay muchos peros en este mundo, ¿no le parece a usted que [...]?*)<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘but’ ‘cavil’ ‘But, and there are many buts in this world, don’t you think that [...]’

iv) Locution-to-noun:

(20) *sin embargo* > *sin embargo* (e.g. [...] *su vida estaba llena de sin embargos, [...].*)<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘however’ ‘objection’ ‘[...] her life was full of howevers, [...]’

v) Interjection-to-noun (cf. Menéndez Pidal [1977, 224]):

(21) *oh* > *oh* (e.g. [...] *el confinado [...] recoge los ¡ohs! y ¡ahs! de admiración [...].*)<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘oh!’ (interjection) ‘oh!’ ‘[...] the prisoner [...] receives the ohs! and ahs! of praise [...]’

### 3. Analytical approaches

#### 3.1. Nouns and adjectives, and verbs

Conversion is dissimilarly acknowledged in Spanish word-formation. Word-class changing word-formation in the major word-classes, as in the types reviewed in section 2, has been interpreted according to two major standpoints: in one of them, affixation (and additional processes, like substitution and subtraction, cf. Pena [1999, 4336-4338]) is maximized to the detriment of conversion; in the other, conversion is maximized to the detriment of affixation.

These opposite standpoints result in part from the influence of different descriptive traditions, as can be seen from the contrast of a number of references and as is also noted in the literature (cf. Pena [1991, 103]). The descriptive tradition of Romance languages usually views the cases that are discussed in this chapter as the result of other processes than conversion, notably suffixation, whereas the tradition that is in line with the description of Germanic languages views most of the same cases as conversion, as in Rainer (1993) and (2016) (cf. also Pena [1991, 103-104] and [1999, 4336-4337]; for various views of conversion and derivational zeroes in the most widespread Romance languages, cf. Floricic [2016] for French, Thornton [2004]<sup>8</sup> for Italian, Rio-Torto et al. [2016] for Portuguese, and Grossmann [2016] for Romanian). This is as a consequence of a conceptual position too: if conversion is viewed as word-class change with *strict* formal identity, i.e. as in word-based conversion, as is frequent in English, then conversion occurs rather marginally in Spanish. This view can be found, e.g. in Varela Ortega (2009, 41) (cf. similarly Zacarías Ponce de León [2016], to cite one of the many possible sources about American Spanish): ‘[...] en *sal* [‘salt’] > *sal-ar* [‘to add salt’] [...] lo que se ha añadido a la base nominal para convertirla en verbo son solo los morfemas propios de la nueva categoría: la vocal del tema (-a-) y la desinencia verbal (-r del infinitivo [...]). Nos encontramos aquí [...] con formaciones que comprenden la adjunción de cierto material morfológico por lo que no pueden considerarse casos de simple conversión.’ This approach diverts the description to a range of theoretical positions that may certainly use the term and the concept *conversion* for certain profiles,<sup>9</sup> but not, or not always, for the type of examples shown

in section 2, i.e. not for e.g. noun/verb derivation, where the bulk of this type of formations occurs (cf. Pena [1991, 105]).

The most widespread approach to the types described in section 2 in other terms than conversion is, thus, guided by the lack of formal identity between the related words: the word-class change with associated formal contrast is typically interpreted as addition by suffixation and, therefore, affixation is maximized at the cost of conversion (cf. Alemany Bolufer [1920, 4, 136, 139]; Alvar Ezquerro [2015, 66]; Pena [1991, 103-104] and [1999, 4332, 4336-4338]), e.g.:

i) In denominal verbs:

(22) *almidón* > *almidonar* (cf. (1) and Pena [1991, 103])  
'starch' 'to starch'

ii) In deverbal nouns:

(23) *abonar* > *abono*  
'fertilise' 'fertiliser'

iii) In deverbal adjectives:

(24) *desnudar* > *desnudo*  
'undress' 'naked'

iv) In deadjectival verbs:

(25) *igual* > *igualar*  
'equal' 'to equalise'

These derivatives are thus said to consist of two components: '[...] uno que expresa una idea general y abstracta, y otro que precisa y concreta dicha idea, denotando a la vez, no solo la categoría gramatical de la palabra nueva, sino también la significación que ha de tener dentro de dicha categoría' (Alemany Bolufer [1920, 1]). These two components are termed 'root' (*radical*) and suffix. In this view, unlike in the interpretation as conversion, endings like infinitival *-ar* for *alfombra* 'carpet' > *alfombrar* 'to fit with a carpet', or like nominal *-a* for *cazar* 'to hunt' > *caza* 'hunting' qualify as suffixation (cf. also Alemany Bolufer [1920, 137-141]). This position is clearly reminiscent of Whorf's (1945) approach to word-classes as a surface feature that substantiates or actualizes one of the possible cognitive categories that can be related to a given lexeme, thus preempting the very notion of conversion as a dynamic process.

The type of suffixation used in the denominal and deadjectival verbs above has been called 'sufijación simple', 'inmediata' or 'impropia' (cf. Alemany Bolufer [1920, 147]; Menéndez Pidal [1977, 324-325]; Serrano-Dolader [1999, 4685-4689]; Alvar Ezquerro [2015, 66]): it affixes the verbal ending to a base and its only effect is the grammatical change (Pena [1993, 233], quoted in Serrano-Dolader [1999, 4688]). By contrast, in 'sufijación [...] mediata', an affix with additional attributes to word-class change is appended, like *-ear* in *campear* 'come out to graze; come out to fight; stand out' (Serrano-Dolader 1999, 4685-4689; Alvar Ezquerro 2015, 66). In the case of deverbal nouns, the suffixes *-a*, *-e*, *-o* are added (Alvar Ezquerro 2015, 66; cf. also Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999, 4515-4518, 4549-4550, 4584-4588]).

Affixation can also be viewed in these cases as by a zero suffix (for a review, cf. Pena [1991, 107-109] and [2012]; cf. also Thornton [2004] and Dahl and Fábregas [2017]). This is a much less frequent approach in Spanish word-formation, where the zero suffix should follow the thematic vowel, as in *planta* 'plant' > *planta-Ø-r* 'to plant' or as in *dudar* 'to doubt' > *duda-Ø*

‘doubt’ (Pena 1991, 108). The existence of zero morphs has been accepted in a number of references (e.g. in Varela Ortega [1990, 95]), and has been used as a descriptive device both in inflectional and in derivational morphology, but not without difficulties, especially in the latter (for a review, cf. Pena [1991, 106-108] and [1999, 4355-4356]).

The derivation between nouns or adjectives and verbs has also been described as ‘formas temáticas’ or ‘formaciones temáticas’, i.e. non-affixal derivation<sup>10</sup> that operates on the root plus the thematic vowel (see Zacarías Ponce de León [this volume] and Camus [this volume]), as in *marcha* ‘march’ vs. *marchar* ‘to march’ (cf. Varela Ortega [2009, 31-32]; cf. also [1990, 59] for denominal *agua* ‘water’ > *agu-a-r* ‘to add water’ and for deadjectival verbs, like *mejor* ‘better’ > *mejor-a-r* ‘to improve’, and [1990, 81] for ‘postverbal derivatives’, as in *costar* ‘to cost’ > *costa, coste, costo* ‘cost’; cf. also Menéndez Pidal [1977, 232-233]). In these formations, Varela Ortega (2009, 32) disregards the (dis)similarity between the thematic vowels of the base and the derivative, in that the formal variation does not entail separate processes, as evidenced in the latter example with three different vowels (-a, -e, -o): all are considered thematic formations.

In other approaches, e.g. in Pena (1991, 1999), the alteration in the thematic vowels entails substantial differences. Against the traditional view of these formations in Romance languages, based on the word-class of the derivative (i.e. noun or verb, cf. Pena [1991, 104]), Pena (1991) arranges these formations by process according to the variation that the theme vowel may undergo, such that suffixation is supplemented with three additional processes. This is based on the relevance of the theme as ‘[...] una unidad necesaria en el análisis morfológico del español [...]’ (Pena 1999, 4308), and as ‘[...] la unidad básica en la descripción de la flexión y de la formación de palabras en español [...]’ (Pena 1999, 4317). Thus, the formation of the word-classes noun, verb and adjective can be interpreted as affixation, but also as the following (cf. Pena [1991, 103-104] and [1999, 4331-4332, 4336-4338]), according to the change operated on the base, especially as regards the thematic vowel:

i) Substitution of an element of the base (‘sustitución’):

a. In deverbal nouns:

(26) *cesar* > *cese*  
 ‘to fire’ ‘firing’

b. In denominal verbs:

(27) *alambre* > *alambrar*  
 ‘wire’ ‘to fence or fit with (barb)wire’

c. In deadjectival verbs:

(28) *aparente* > *aparentar*  
 ‘apparent; seeming’ ‘pretend’

ii) Subtraction of an element of the base (‘sustracción’):

a. In deverbal nouns:

(29) *controlar* > *control*  
 ‘to control’ ‘control’

b. In denominal verbs (cf. Serrano-Dolader [1999, 4689]):

(30) *dificultad* > *dificultar*  
 ‘difficulty’ ‘make difficult’

c. In deverbal adjectives:

- (31) *cansar* > *canso*  
 ‘to tire out’ ‘tired out’

This approach considers conversion as the fourth additional process alongside affixation, subtraction and substitution, but conversion is here limited to where no formal change occurs in the base, specifically in the thematic vowel (Pena 1999, 4338):

iii) Conversion of the base (‘conversión’):

a. In deverbal nouns:

- (32) *ayudar* > *ayuda*  
 ‘to help’ ‘help’

b. In denominal verbs:

- (33) *lija* > *lijar*  
 ‘sandpaper’ ‘to sand’

It is worth noting that the condition of formal identity is applied differently above and in the standard description of conversion, e.g. in English: the cases of substitution presented here are listed alongside cases that are typically described as conversion with formal change in English, either by voicing or by stress shift (cf. Pena [1991, 98-100]). In other languages, conversion is described in this line too, even if more systematic variation is involved than just voicing and stress shift as in English: if some formal contrast between the source and the derivative obtains in the process that operates word-class change but the formal contrast relies on the inflectional potential of the new word-class, then this has also been viewed as conversion, as in root-based conversion. The principle is that the process is the same, except that the morphological model of some languages allows conversion to manifest as complete formal identity, i.e. word-based conversion, whereas the morphological model of other languages imposes some formal contrast by incorporation of inflectional<sup>11</sup> matter of the new word-class (for a review, cf. Valera [2014]). Thus, not only pairs like *alfombra* ‘carpet’ > *alfombrar* ‘to fit with a carpet’ qualify as conversion (cf. Rainer [1993, 238]) but also *cesar* ‘to fire’ > *cese* ‘firing’ (cf. Rainer [2016, 2636]). This approach maximizes conversion at the cost of affixation, and reportedly occurs productively in Spanish (cf. Rainer [2016, 2635]). This view of conversion does not change the fact that affixation remains ‘[...] by far the most important technique of word-formation in Spanish’ (Rainer [2016, 2625]; cf. similarly Pena [1999, 4338] and Varela Ortega [2009, 41], despite the different interpretation of conversion of each author), conversion following compounding in importance too.

A number of other approaches have been put forward in word-formation theory to circumvent the difficulties inherent in the description of conversion (cf. Pena [1993, 109-110] for a review). However, to the best of our knowledge, they have not been applied to Spanish to a degree where they can be said to have developed the theory with obvious advantages to the ones reviewed above.

### 3.2. Nouns and adjectives

The separate categorization of such closely connected word-classes as noun and adjective leads to questions that could be presented in section 4, but which are outlined here for convenience.

Whether the examples of this type cited in section 2 actually involve conversion or not is partly a matter of interpretation and partly a matter of the case at issue (cf. section 4). Although

the literature records instances of ‘sustantivos [...] convertidos en adjetivos’, (cf. Menéndez Pidal [1977, 225]), the most relevant cases are with regard to the opposite direction, i.e. adjective-to-noun.

There are other cases where the same affix is considered to be added to bases to form one word-class, e.g. *-ista* to form nouns, *-ivo* to form adjectives, or *-izo* to form adjectives (cf. Alemany Bolufer [1920, 91-100], to cite the earliest reference). However, the respective lists of formations of these suffixes also contain adjectives like *optimista* ‘optimist’, or nouns like *ejecutivo* ‘executive’ and *paliza* ‘beating’ within the respective lists, i.e. adjectives that have become nominalized (‘sustantivado’). Other times, the same suffix is considered to form two different word-classes, e.g. *-(t)orio/a* to form adjectives and substantives, like *respiratorio* ‘respiratory’ from *respirar* ‘breathe’ and *recordatorio* ‘reminder’ from *recordar* ‘remind’, respectively (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 119-120; cf. Santiago Lacuesta and Bustos Gisbert [1999, 4570-4573]).

As Luján (1980, 117) notes, some of these cases have been described as ‘adjetivos sustantivados’ (cf. Lenz [1952], quoted in Luján [1980, 117]; for a review, cf. also Lázaro Carreter [1980a, 33 et passim]). This wording is not entirely clear as regards word-class identity and word-class change, but it is taken here as implying transfer from the word-class adjective to the word-class noun. This is the case where nominalized adjectives that result from ellipsis of the nominal head (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, 486) become lexicalized so they no longer allow retrieval of a head noun, as in *(un) roto* ‘(a) hole, tear’, now recategorized as an entity rather than as a quality as evidenced by a number of tests (cf. Briz Gómez [1989], quoted in Gutiérrez Ordóñez [1994, 486-488]; cf. also Briz Gómez [1990] and [1992]). This entails formal identity and word-class change, and therefore qualifies as conversion, even if it is as the result of a syntactic process (i.e. what is usually described in other languages as syntactic conversion; cf. Plag [2003, 115-116]; Gaeta [2013, 154]).

The position that examples like *(el) exterior* ‘(the) outside’ have become nouns is countered in a number of approaches. For Pena (1991, 105), most of these formations can be interpreted as the result of syntactic processes or are actually the result of word-class indeterminacy or fuzzy boundaries, and proposes not to consider them as conversions, but as recategorization (‘recategorización’).

Based on a number of tests, Luján (1980, 117-120) argues that they remain adjectives, even if combined with a pronoun, i.e. they are adjectives that come from reduced, restrictive relative clauses such that, e.g. the example *(el) exterior* comes from *el que es exterior* ‘the one that is outside’ (Luján 1980, 117-127; cf. also 141-151 and 210 et passim; for a discussion leading also to the word-class of other words, specifically *el/los, la/las* or *lo* ‘the’, cf. also Bello [1847]; Alarcos Llorach [1972]; Lázaro Carreter [1980a]; Garrido Medina [1986]; Trujillo [1987]; Molina Redondo [1991]).

The view held by Luján has also been reassessed with a thorough review of classical references and contested, among others, by Gutiérrez Ordóñez (1994), specifically in favour of a third approach: what Luján considers adjectives is redimensioned by Gutiérrez Ordóñez (1994, 491-492; cf. also Iglesias Bango [1986] and Bosque [1989], quoted therein) so what forms the noun is the exocentric phrase consisting of both the article and the adjective, as in Gutiérrez Ordóñez’s (1994: 485) ‘transposition’: ‘[...] *construcciones exocéntricas* en las que ninguno de los dos elementos asume la función de núcleo’ (emphasis as in the original). Thus,



neither the article nor the adjective become converted, and it is the entire group that results in a nominal item (cf. the examples by Briz Gómez [1989] described by Bosque [1989], both quoted in Gutiérrez Ordóñez [1994, 495]; for a detailed review of the concept of transposition, cf. Gutiérrez Ordóñez [1991]; cf. also Lapesa [2000c]).

### 3.3. *Adjectives and adverbs*

Two cases are discussed in relation with these word-classes. The former consists in conversion of adjectives into adverbs as signaled by the lack of gender or number inflection, as in *hablar alto* ‘to speak loud’, where *alto* does not inflect regardless of the gender and number of the subject but no counterpart with the suffix *-mente* is possible (Luján 1980, 154-155; Rainer 2016, 2636). The latter case and, in general, the alternation of forms with and without *-mente*, often under the heavy influence of register and/or mode (informal register and spoken language favour the forms that are formally identical to the potential adjectival bases) has been discussed in extenso, among others, by Luján (1980) and especially by Hummel (2000, 2012 and 2014), with special attention to the contrast between American and European Spanish, and to forms outside clause level, like modifiers of adjectives or adverbs and discourse markers.

It is, however, unclear whether the underlying process is conversion, or not. Luján (1980, 156) refers to the group of adverbs that are formally identical with adjectives as ‘homónimos’ (in other passages as ‘homófonos’, Luján [1980, 154-156]) in their unmarked form, i.e. ending in *-o* (e.g. *alto*, *despacio*) or *-e* (e.g. *horrible* ‘badly’, *fuerte* ‘badly; strongly’) and without access to number inflection and, where applicable (i.e. for the ending in *-o*), gender inflection. It is also unclear whether this is meant as literal homonymy or just as formal identity in this source. More important, it is undecided, in general, whether the interpretation of homonymy entails the assumption of a given word-formation process or not: while a case for grammatical homonymy has been raised for conversion in Spanish (Pena 1991, 110-111), it is not widely accepted whether the members of the word-pairs that can be described as conversion hold a relation of homonymy (cf. Valera and Ruz [2020], on the relationship resulting between lexemes derived by conversion).

Regardless of the relationship, Hummel (2012, 3) explicitly rejects an analysis as conversion of *La mujer rápida* ‘The fast-moving woman’ compared with *La mujer corre rápido* ‘The woman runs fast’. Hummel’s approach is a monocategorial system that retains the two items, *rápida* ‘fast-moving’ and *rápido* ‘fast’, within the same category: ‘[...] la distinción de adjetivo y adverbio no se hace al nivel de la categoría formal, sino en la sintaxis’ (Hummel 2012, 2). For other cases, where adverbs may perform functions typically associated with different word-classes, Hummel has also appealed to concepts like polyfunctionality within one category, e.g. as regards words like *solamente* ‘only’ or *realmente* ‘really’ (Hummel 2012, 275), where both conversion and word-class change are rejected, or as regards words like *demasiado* ‘too (many/much)’ in *demasiado bonito* ‘too nice’, *demasiado bien* ‘too well’, *demasiadas casas* ‘too many houses’ and *hablar demasiado* ‘speak too much’ (Hummel 2012, 91, 365-369), where a type of grammaticalization (actually ‘paradigmatización’) is proposed, such that several functions fall within the scope of one category or functional group, in this case the category quantifier.

#### 4. Controversies

As in other languages, the definition, the types and the approaches to conversion raise a number of questions that have been debated for decades, and still are. Leaving aside the adequacy of each approach to specific cases, this section reviews some of the difficult areas related with conversion in Spanish.

The first of these areas concerns the very definition, in fact the actual reach, of conversion, and arises from the applicability of conversion in the change of word-*subclass*: '[...] cambia alguno de los rasgos inherentes dentro de una misma clase de palabra' (Pena 1991, 104-105; cf. also [1999, 4336-4337]). This position leads to a description as conversion of pairs where the contrast is with regard to gender (e.g. *líder*-fem 'female leader' vs. *líder*-masc 'male leader') or entails a different (albeit still related) meaning than in the base (e.g. *castaño* 'chestnut tree' vs. *castaña* 'chestnut', as in Rainer [1993, 197]; cf. also Rainer [2016, 2635]). This point, acknowledged also in conversion in other languages (e.g. in English as secondary word-class conversion), has hardly been echoed in the literature for a number of reasons: for what it entails as regards conversion as a word-formation process or not, for what it entails as potentially extensible (i.e. a variety of rather heterogeneous cases, like gender or countability in nouns, adjectives with a relational vs. a descriptive content, or with a gradable vs. a non-gradable meaning, etc.), and for the availability of alternative descriptions in terms of e.g. type coercion or syntactic alternations (for a review, cf. Valera [2015]).

Another point arisen from the definition of conversion insofar as a dynamic process is the difficulty in establishing the directionality of the process. The references establish directionality on semantic dependency, so the direction is noun-to-verb in *lija* 'sandpaper' vs. *lijar* 'to sand', because the verb means *usar la lija* 'use sandpaper' and therefore its meaning relies on the existence of the related noun. By contrast, the direction is verb-to-noun in *gobierno* '(action of) ruling; governing; government' vs. *gobernar* 'to rule; to govern', because the former means *acción o efecto de gobernar* 'action or effect of governing', as is mainly the case in this type (cf. Varela Ortega [2009, 43]; cf. Pena [1991, 105-107] for a review of the criterion of semantic dependency; cf. also Rainer [1993, 212] and [2016, 2636] on action nouns; cf. Serrano-Dolader [1999, 4686] for the use of strictly synchronic criteria for the assessment of directionality). Directionality is however not always so evident, especially if the members of the pair do not adjust themselves to this or other semantic patterns described in the literature, or when other word-classes are involved. Other criteria that have been proposed, like the frequency of use, the distribution, and the number of senses of the members of the conversion pair, are not discussed to the same degree of detail in the literature on conversion in Spanish.

The next question is the contrast between morphological conversion<sup>12</sup> (meaning a morphological process of word-formation), vs. syntactic conversion (meaning a syntactic process that may result in the lexicalization of a given usage of a word as a new word(class) and, therefore, in the existence of two formally identical words that are semantically related and that belong to two different word-classes). Syntactic conversion is usually separated from morphological conversion, e.g. in nominalization of infinitives, as noted by Rainer (2016, 2636), even if they may also become lexicalized (e.g. *deberes* 'duties' from *deber* 'must; cf. also Menéndez Pidal [1977, 224]), in the interface between adjectives and nouns, where the noun (*el ancho*) 'breadth' from the adjective *ancho* 'broad' is taken as an instance of real

conversion by contrast with *zoológico* ‘zoo’ from *parque zoológico* ‘zoological park’, a case of ellipsis of a superordinate noun (Rainer 2016, 2635-2366), or when the adverb takes prenominal position, as in *el entonces presidente* ‘the then president’ (because the word in question retains the adverbial function in the basic structure and does not become lexicalized as an adjective, Rainer [2016, 2636]).

To take a much discussed issue, the contrast between conversion (e.g. *pescar* ‘fishing’ vs. *pesca* ‘to fish’) and nominalization of verbal infinitives (*el haber bebido Juan tanta cerveza* ‘John’s drinking so much beer’) is also based on the grounds that the latter retain verbal dependents. Some cases can be referred back to syntactic processes where the words in question are not lexicalized as a new word-class. In other cases, it may be difficult to draw the line between morphological and lexicalized syntactic conversion, esp. considering the difficulty in establishing degrees of lexicalization. Degrees of nominalization have been described for the so-called ‘*infinitivos sustantivados*’, according to the verbal properties the form in question retains, ranging from the most verbal-like type ‘*infinitivo factivo*’, through the ‘*infinitivo modal*’ and the ‘*nombrador derivado*’ (Varela Ortega 1990, 139-141; for a thorough review, cf. Lapesa [2000a] and [2000b]).

Thus, conversion in Spanish finds difficulties for the description of infinitives and participles as in other languages. Varela Ortega (1990, 71) refers to these as ‘*formaciones híbridas*’, ‘[...] incluidas en el paradigma verbal pero cercanas a otras clases léxicas como el nombre en el caso del infinitivo, el adjetivo en el del participio, y el adverbio en el del gerundio.’<sup>13</sup>

Regarding participles, the formations in *-ante* and its allomorphs, originally forms of the present participle, are recorded as affixes for formation of deverbal nouns, as in the noun *descendiente* ‘descendant’ from the verb *descender* ‘descend’ (Rainer 2016, 2629-2630) but also as affixes for deverbal derivation of active adjectives, as in *deprimente* ‘dispiriting’ from *deprimir* ‘dispirit’, that are glossed as ‘that Vs’ and therefore form the so-called pure active adjectives (Rainer 2016, 2633). Little remains of the original verbal meaning: ‘[...] en castellano son muy pocos los nombres con este sufijo [*-ante, -(i)ente*] que conservan la significación participial, por *haber tomado* los demás, la de adjetivo o la de sustantivo. [...] Los adjetivos [...] denotan a la vez que la idea del verbo se ha *convertido* en cualidad más o menos permanente en el nombre a quien se refiere el adjetivo [...]’ (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 23, my emphasis). Also, the formations with the suffix *-ando/a*, have been recorded as ‘*adjetivos verbales*’ since Alemany Bolufer (1920, 19): ‘[h]emos convertido [algunos] en sustantivos’ e.g. *examinando* ‘exam candidate’. The use of the term *convert* in quotations like the above, most probably not meant as the derivational process at issue here, recalls that a need has been felt for the description of a process whereby word-class change takes place without formal change also with regard to participles.

Besides the cases of adjectives and nouns in *-ante* and its allomorphs and in *-ando/a*, where syntactic processes may lead to usages that become lexicalized, there is the case of the so-called passive adjectives<sup>14</sup>: ‘[...] usados como adjetivos y luego como sustantivos’ (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 10; cf. similarly Menéndez Pidal [1977, 225]). Various positions can be attested in this regard, where probably the strongest claim for conversion is by Rainer (2016, 2633: ‘[p]assive adjectives are past participles and should probably be considered cases of conversion (*asfaltado* [covered with asphalt])’. Other positions consider these formations with a polysemous affix (e.g. they can also have a dispositional meaning, as in *atrevido* ‘daring’,

Rainer [2016, 2633]), or are interpretations according to thematic or grammatical criteria. Some of these do not clear out completely whether these passive adjectives have undergone conversion or not (cf. the overview in Varela Ortega [1990, 151-152]).

## 5. Conclusions

Two properties stand out in the description of conversion in Spanish word-formation, as regards the defining conditions for conversion to apply, namely formal identity and word-class change.

The first trait is that, unlike in other languages, the two defining conditions are applied with substantial differences: formal identity is taken as a strict requirement, and this to the extent that what in other languages is described as root-based conversion, in Spanish is described traditionally as suffixation plus other additional processes, because the form changes as the word-class changes. By contrast, word-class change is not a strict requirement, and word-subclass or secondary word-class change may qualify as conversion.

The second trait is that, despite the various theoretical approaches, the cases that can be described as conversion in Spanish pose very similar descriptive difficulties as other languages do, from the identification of directionality to the separation between morphological and syntactic conversion, or the position of participial units in the process of conversion.

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<sup>1</sup> For verbalization, cf. chapter 17 of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise specified, examples are from the sources cited, and glosses are according to the University of Granada *English/Spanish Online Dictionary* (A. Lozano 2000, <https://lexis.ugr.es>, last accessed 31/01/2020).

<sup>3</sup> For nominalization, cf. chapter 15 of this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Meaning the production of the base noun, i.e. 'produce N' or, as in the source reference, 'x hervorbringen' (Rainer 1993, 239).

<sup>5</sup> Under the term 'suffixation' in the original source (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 4), as explained below.

<sup>6</sup> For adjectivalization, cf. chapter 16 of this volume.

<sup>7</sup> Example taken from the CREA Corpus (*Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*), Real Academia Española, <<http://www.rae.es>> (last accessed 23/01/2020).

<sup>8</sup> This reference kindly pointed out to me by Jesús Pena.

<sup>9</sup> Thus, e.g. Alvar Ezquerro (2015, 66, emphasis as in the original): 'Los cambios de categoría que no necesitan de sufijos (lo hizo *rápido*, habla *fatal*, la *cervecera* [fábrica *cervecera*] produce millones de litros, etc.) no son objeto del análisis que venimos realizando.', i.e. these examples do not belong in a description of word-formation by compounding (including prefixation and shortening), derivation (suffixation and interfixation) or parasynthesis (prefixation and suffixation).

<sup>10</sup> The affixal nature of thematic formations is unclear and has been revised over time (cf. Varela Ortega [1990] vs. [2009]).

<sup>11</sup> For a review of the inflectional or derivational nature of, e.g. infinitive or participial endings, that is relevant for the description of Spanish too, cf. Fleischer (1982) and Haspelmath (1996).

<sup>12</sup> '[R]eal [cases of] conversion' in Rainer (2016, 2635-2636).

<sup>13</sup> For infinitives and participles, cf. chapter 40 of this volume.

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<sup>14</sup> These are different from affixation with *-ado/a*, described as a suffix to form nouns and adjectives (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 8-9) in that passive participles denote ‘[...] la acción y efecto del verbo [...]’ (Alemany Bolufer 1920, 10).