



ABOUT WORD CONVERSION IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Annotation. *This article is about word conversion in Chinese and English languages. The issue of word categorization and their classification into a specific class is one of the most complex and contradictory in the Chinese language. Conversion, or the phenomenon of the transition of one part of speech into another, appears to be constant for languages with a developed morphological system and occasional for languages where it is absent, such as Chinese. From a linguistic perspective, the question of what constitutes the result of conversion is quite complex. In English, on the other hand, there has not been a complete loss of morphology, but there has been a gradual development of conversion (and consequently, conversional homonymy, or the ambiguity of words in terms of part-of-speech functionality) against the backdrop of the breakdown of the morphological system: the dropping of endings, disappearance of personal and case forms, etc.*

Key words: *conversion, transposition, word categorization, linguistics, Chinese language, English.*

As we know, English is predominantly analytical, while Chinese is isolating, with virtually absent morphology¹. The gradual transition from analysis to isolation characterizes the historical development of the Chinese language. This means that many linguistic processes occurring in modern English presumably took place in the development of Chinese².

The issue of word categorization and their classification into a specific class is one of the most complex and contradictory in the Chinese language.

In linguistics, parts of speech are generally understood as a class of words in a language that share common syntactic, morphological, and semantic features³.

In the consideration of classical theories of parts of speech, there are predominantly two directions of classification: structural or grammatical, and functional. The absolute majority of classifications of parts of speech presupposes their division into content words and function words. Thus, any classification ultimately implies a component of functionality, and we find it justified to adhere to this approach as a priority.

The necessity of defining parts of speech and the approach to classification is due to the fact that any distribution of language units into groups based on common categorical features allows not only determining the features of language functioning but also revealing more fully the categories of thought, the representation of reality in language.

¹ Симатова С. А., Дондоков Д. Д. Новый подход Юань Юйлиня к выделению частей речи в китайском языке и его практическое применение. – М., 2016. – С. 87.

² Зограф И. Т. История изолирующего языка с иероглифической письменностью: методы изучения. – М.: ЛКИ, 2016. – С. 43.

³ Курдюмов В. А. Курс китайского языка: теоретическая грамматика. – М.: «Цитадель-Трейд», 2006. – С. 132.



Presumably, the parts of speech themselves reflect certain common cognitive categories. The phenomenon of the transition of parts of speech from one to another also appears to be quite well-studied; however, as V. V. Shigurov notes, often only the most obvious cases are subjected to investigation⁴.

V. A. Kurdyumov characterizes the meanings of parts of speech as derived from syntactic positions, and in Indo-European languages, this has a diachronic nature, while in Chinese, it is synchronous⁵.

N. I. Meshchaninov considers the semantic content and syntactic meaning as the basis for distinguishing lexical units in parts of speech⁶.

Conversion, or the phenomenon of the transition of one part of speech into another, appears to be constant for languages with a developed morphological system and occasional for languages where it is absent, such as Chinese. From a linguistic perspective, the question of what constitutes the result of conversion is quite complex.

According to the classification of L. V. Malakhovsky, conversional homonyms belong to purely grammatical ones, differing in grammatical meanings but identical in lexical ones. Let's analyze the following examples from English and Chinese languages⁷.

Examples in English:

1) Practice [noun – verb]:

I need to *practice* more / Our *practice* is almost over

2) Fish [noun – verb]:

I caught a big *fish* / Let's go *fishing* / This *fish* is tasty / They have gone *fishing* / He *fished* through all his pockets

3) Cry [noun – verb]:

The *cry* could be heard from afar / She was *crying*⁸.

Examples in Chinese:

1) 在 zài [preposition – verb]

他在北京 tā zài běijīng – He is in Beijing

我住在北京 wǒ zhù zài běijīng – I live in Beijing

長沙乃在二萬五千戶耳 zhǎngshā nǎi zài èr wàn wǔqiān hù ěr – In Changsha have 25,000 households

2) 衣 yī [noun – verb]:

我的衣不稱身 wǒ de yī bù chèn shēn – clothes don't fit.

衣敗絮 yī bài xù – to be dressed in rags⁹.

In the Chinese language, the main idea is as follows: it is impossible to determine the part of speech in isolation, but there is a gradation based on the frequency of use of a word in a particular form. The possibility of identifying parts of speech based on the frequency of

⁴ Шигуров В. В. Прономинализация как тип ступенчатой транспозиции языковых единиц в системе частей речи: теория транспозиционной грамматики русского языка. – М.: «Инфра-М», 2015. – С. 160.

⁵ Курдюмов В. А. Курс китайского языка: теоретическая грамматика. – М., 2006. – С. 231.

⁶ Мещанинов Н. И. Члены предложения и части речи. – Л.: «Наука», 1978. – С. 121.

⁷ Малаховский Л. В. Теория лексической и грамматической омонимии. – Л.: «Наука», 1990. – 248 с.

⁸ Мюллер В. К. Новый англо-русский словарь. – М., 2003. – 946 с.



use in a particular functional paradigm with the potential for changes seems questionable. The feature of the Chinese language imposes certain limitations: there is a complete absence of morphological components for distinguishing parts of speech¹⁰. In English, on the other hand, there has not been a complete loss of morphology, but there has been a gradual development of conversion (and consequently, conversional homonymy, or the ambiguity of words in terms of part-of-speech functionality) against the backdrop of the breakdown of the morphological system: the dropping of endings, disappearance of personal and case forms, etc.

Н. Степанова analyzes cases in which, based on existing models, there is the possibility of "incorrect" usage of units as other parts of speech. In particular, the following example is provided¹¹:

爱玛出生在伦敦郊区，她和现在的丈夫福兰克在地铁上一见钟情并闪电结婚。 Ài mǎ chūshēng zài lúndūn jiāoqū, tā hé xiànzài de zhàngfū fú lán kè zài dìtiě shàng yījiànzhōngqíng bìng shǎndiàn jiéhūn. Ai Ma was born in the suburbs of London, and she and her current husband, Fu Lanke, fell in love on the subway, marrying instantly.

The word 闪电 (shǎndiàn) has two primary meanings: "lightning" and "instantaneous", as well as additional meanings such as "to flash". According to the author, in this context, the use of the lexical unit "instantaneously", i.e., as an adverb, is considered "incorrect".

In a similar context, V. A. Kurdyumov's theory becomes interesting, suggesting considering "routes, ranges, and positions" instead of directly addressing parts of speech. A "route" is any possible transition, far from the norm. A "range" denotes the most stable transitions, and a "position" is the specific context in which a word is used¹².

According to N. I. Meshchaninov, the system of breaking down a sentence into parts and the vocabulary into parts of speech does not raise questions, although it requires clarification in specific languages¹³.

L. V. Malakhovsky's classification, defining conversional homonyms, is not entirely applicable to the Chinese language: the concept of the grammatical category of a part of speech essentially signifies its place in a sentence. Therefore, the boundary between conversional homonymy and, in a word, is fundamentally unattainable.

As shown by the analysis of some cases in the English language, this precision is not always possible in other languages, indicating the need for further study and clarification of the characteristics of part-of-speech transitions in languages. Undoubtedly, the assertion that parts of speech and words are not perceived outside of syntax, as well as the idea that the syntactic structure of utterances is primary, are not new. However, a revision of the approach and a shift of focus from the features of parts of speech to positions in the

⁹ Китайский словарь и переводчик Джунга [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://www.zhonga.ru>

¹⁰ Курдюмов В. А. Курс китайского языка: теоретическая грамматика. – М., 2006. – С. 196

¹¹ Степанова М.-А. Н. Окказиональный частеречный переход в современном китайском языке. – М., 2013. – С. 25.

¹² Курдюмов В. А. Курс китайского языка: теоретическая грамматика. – М.: Цитадель-Трейд, 2006. – С. 231.

¹³ Мещанинов Н. И. Члены предложения и части речи. – Л.: «Наука», 1978. – С. 89.



sentence and semantic potential will allow for a more precise understanding not only of word characteristics but also of the laws of language.

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