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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF NOUN-TO-VERB CONVERSION IN ENGLISH

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work, written using only solely the sources and literature

properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

České Budějovice, 5. května 2024

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Kristýna Marušková

Acknowledgement

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl prozkoumat sémantické rysy, které se přenáší z podstatných jmen na slovesa při konverzi v anglickém jazyce. Práce ke konverzi přistupuje netradičním způsobem, místo běžného pohledu směrem z původního slova na konvertované, v tomto případě se na konverzi pohlíží naopak, směrem z konvertovaného slova na původní. Při tom práce čerpá především z teorií Miloše Dokulila, Ray Jackendoffa & Jenny Audringové (2020a, b) a publikace Petra Kosa *Instantiating variables in schemas within Relational Morphology*. Práce obsahuje krátký popis teorie slovotvorných procesů, přehled několika přístupů ke konverzi, základní popis onomasiologie a teorií aplikovaných na výzkum – vztahové morfologie a Lakoffova ICM. Pro tuto práci byl vytvořen seznam dvojic slov, který byl následně analyzován a roztříděn do speciálně vytvořených kategorií. Zároveň byla tato slova v rámci kategorií zařazena do tematických skupin. Výsledky analýzy jsou graficky znázorněny a interpretovány.

Klíčová slova: onomasiologie, vztahová morfologie, ICM, slovotvorba, konverze, sémantický rys

Annotation

This bachelor's thesis aims to investigate the semantic features that are transferred from nouns to verbs during conversion in the English language. The work approaches the conversion unconventionally, instead of the usual view from the original word to the converted, in this case, the conversion is viewed in the opposite direction, from the converted word to the original. While doing so, the work draws primarily from the theories of Miloš Dokulil, Ray Jackendoff & Jenny Audring (2020a, b), and Petr Kos's publication *Instantiating Variables in Schemas within Relational Morphology*. The thesis contains a short description of the theory of word-formation processes, a brief explanation of conversion, an overview of several approaches to conversion, and a basic description of onomasiology and theories applied to my research. A list of word pairs was created for this work, which was subsequently analysed and classified into specially created categories. At the same time, these words were classified into thematic groups within the categories. The results of the analysis are graphically represented and interpreted.

Key words: onomasiology, relational morphology, ICM, word formation, conversion, semantic feature

List of contents

1   Introduction

Noun-to-verb conversion, a phenomenon where nouns are transformed into verbs, is a fascinating aspect of language that has garnered significant attention in the field of linguistics. This process plays a crucial role in enriching the lexicon of a language, allowing greater flexibility and expressiveness in communication. Despite its ubiquity in everyday language use, the mechanism and patterns underlying noun-to-verb conversion remain a subject of ongoing investigation.

However, the semantical relation between the original and final word class is not unambiguous and is to a certain extent unpredictable. Theoretically speaking, this relation can regard almost anything, but I suppose certain tendencies will arise, regarding both the semantic feature of conversion and the thematic groups within each category.

This study aims to delve into the intricacies of noun-to-verb conversion by exploring the semantic properties of word pairs consisting of nouns and their corresponding verb forms. By conducting a systematic analysis of these word pairs, I seek to uncover the underlying structural and semantic principles governing this linguistic process. Through empirical analysis and theoretical inquiry, I endeavour to shed light on the factors that influence the conversion of nouns to verbs, if there indeed are any tendencies to regularity, and I would like to elucidate the implications of these findings for a better understanding of language structure and usage.

In my thesis, I will first provide a short overview of the theory of word-formation processes. As conversion is one of the major word-creating devices, a explanatory section of conversion will follow. Then, I will provide an overview of different approaches to conversion, and next, I will focus on onomasiology, Miloš Dokulil's theory on it, and I will illustrate its role in my research. I will do so with relational morphology and with George Lakoff's Idealized

Cognitive Model. I shall follow with a description of how I collected and analysed a dataset of word pairs, and how I created categories into which were these word pairs sorted. Subsequently, I will present my findings regarding thematic groups within categories and provide any mention-worthy information that arose during my research. Finally, I will discuss the implications of my findings and propose directions for any future research in this area.

By unravelling the complexities of noun-to-verb conversion, this study aims to contribute to a further understanding of the fundamental processes underlying language evolution and usage. Through practical investigation and theoretical inquiry, I hope to extend the field of linguistics and provide valuable insights into the nature of linguistic creativity and innovation.

2 Word formation processes

Word formation allows us to enrich a language with new items, it is a process of creating new words while using what is already available in the range of grammatical resources within a certain language. These processes follow the rules of language called grammar (Cruz-Ferreira & Abraham, 2011).

I would like to start by explaining what a word is, as it seems important to mention it to understand the content of my thesis better, as well as I will be using this term frequently throughout. As Bauer (1983) says, in the linguistic sphere, it is often not completely clear what one refers to when using the word "word", and it has been a major discussion point for a long time. He also speaks of its many possible explanations among different languages. According to Crystal (2008), a word is "a unit of expression which has universal intuitive recognition by native speakers, in both spoken and written language". He states that these units are bounded either by spaces (in writing) or certain phonological clues such as pauses (in speech).

As I mentioned above, word formation processes are used to create new words while obeying certain grammatical rules, and based on these rules we distinguish different types of word formation processes. According to Cruz-Ferreira & Abraham (2011), we can separate them into two larger groups – major word formation processes, which include affixation, compounding, and conversion; and other word formation processes, which include backformation, clipping, acronymy, and blending.

3 Approaches to Conversion

In this section, I will delve into the multifaceted concept of conversion, a pivotal element of my research. Having the idea of the various approaches to conversion is essential as it sheds light on the diverse perspectives and methodologies that different scholars and practitioners employ. As it is not possible, nor necessary to describe every approach to conversion there is, this section provides only a brief description of the fundamental few, to provide context and a simple idea of the mechanisms and strategies that conversion can be viewed as. As it seems only right, this part of the bachelor thesis also includes an explanatory segment for conversion as a word-formation process.

3.1 Conversion

Bauer (1983) states, that "conversion is an extremely productive way of producing new words in English". Crystal (2008) refers to conversion as "a term used in the study of word formation to refer to the derivational process whereby an item comes to belong to a new word class without the addition of an affix". Quirk et. al. (1985) explain conversion as a derivational process, where a word of a certain word class is transformed into an item of a different word class without the use of an affix. He notes that conversion can also be referred to as a zero derivation, reflecting the notion of zero suffix. The difference between conversion, compounding, and affixation, as explained by Cruz-Ferreira & Abraham (2011), is that both compounding and affixation create new words by adding morphemes, while conversion happens solely by changing the part of speech, and because of that conversion enriches the lexicon with simple words, whereas compounding and affixation add complex items.

Simplified and summarized, conversion can be described as a way of creating a new word by changing its word class, but not its form.

What is also worth mentioning is, that "words produced by conversion are primarily nouns, adjectives, and verbs". Mainly deverbal nouns (nouns converted from verbs) and denominal verbs (verbs converted from nouns), which are the main points of my bachelor thesis. Other types of conversion are, for example, de-adjectival verbs (verbs converted from adjectives), or denominal adjectives (adjectives converted from nouns) (Quirk et. al., 1985).

Quirk et. al. (1985) also mention and speak of the direction of conversion, which was a problematic aspect of my analysis, which will be discussed later. It is stated that such difficulties arise because, in conversion, one does not have the addition of a suffix as a guide for distinguishing which item should be considered as the base and which as the derived one.

3.2   Laurie Bauer

Bauer (2005) states, that "conversion is the change in form class of a form without any corresponding change of form" and based on other statements about conversion deduces, that conversion is a relationship between lexical items or homophones, and it can also be a process in which one lexeme is derived from another. Simultaneously, said lexical items connected by conversion fall into different lexical categories. At the same time, he admits that all of the previous statements might be questioned and provides certain reasons why, as a way to introduce the problematics and main focus of his paper on the topic of conversion and the notion of lexical category.

In his review of the book *Approaches to Conversion/Zero-Derivation*, Hans-Jörg Schmid (2007) explains, that what Bauer is in his paper most focused on is bringing attention to the fact, that lexical categories are not simply clear-cut, but rather determined by form, function, and meaning.

The form can be understood as the presence of a derivational affix that is typical for a certain lexical category, but it is much more frequently depicted in terms of inflections – for instance, a word is a noun when it takes nominal inflections, such as number, case, gender, etc. The function is the word's syntactic use (for example, an adjective used in an attributive position), or their position in a sentence. As for meaning, it has been often used as a determiner for parts of speech, even so far it is used in schools to teach fundamental distinctions (for example, a noun is a naming word, an adjective is a describing word, etc). Even though they are quite inaccurate, these discussions of meaning and lexical categories have been made workable with prototypicality (Bauer, 2005).

What Bauer then debates is whether a change of form must necessarily mean a change of function and meaning. Meaning, that whether a lexical category is a single, unified concept or an aggregate of different characteristic values, introducing the labels full and partial conversion. This would mean that in partial conversion only a certain aspect (form, function, or meaning) could be converted, while in full conversion all of them would change. A problem with this theory may lie in infinitives. They are traditionally seen as an arrangement in which categories of nouns and verbs collide. Not being prototypical verbs or nouns, they still allow us to look for some criteria that show them acting either as verbs or as nouns. This means that a word might possess the form and function of more than one part of speech (Bauer, 2005).

Another proof of the ambiguity of lexical categories are positions of words in sentences. Bauer (1983) shows specifically the predicative position, saying that a word of any lexical category can be put in said position, therefore it is not unequivocally associated with a particular lexical category, meaning that a lexical category is not simply given by the syntactic tree. The function of the position does not impose the category. This again shows that some words are not

able to be a prototypical instance of a lexical category, concluding that lexical categories are not clean-cut boxes without overlap, their norms might conflict, and their features might be expected, but are not obligatory (Bauer, 2005).

In conclusion, Bauer (2005) says, that one of the steps on the way to understanding conversion is to cautiously consider what it means to change the grammatical category, as it is at least inexact to speak of conversion as simply a change from one lexical category to another. He supposes that it is not an instance of transferring one word from one category to a different one, but more of a change of the word, so that it no longer prototypically represents a certain word class. Overall, his approach is mainly morphological. He sees conversion as a morphological process, where a word changes its form class without any change of its form. He focuses on bringing attention to what a lexical category is and how it is important for conversion and also emphasizes the role of inflections and derivational affixes in determining the word's lexical category.

3.3   René Dirven

In his article *Conversion as a Conceptual Metonymy of Event Schemata* (1999), René Dirven explores the phenomenon of conversion primarily at the morphological level, focusing on its conceptual underpinnings and linguistic manifestations across various event schemata. Conversion, the process by which words change their grammatical category without affixation, is analysed through its application to verbs derived from nouns or adjectives.

Conversion is viewed as a linguistic strategy deeply rooted in metonymy, a cognitive process where a part stands for the whole or where entities are identified through contextual association rather than direct naming. This metonymic principle is pervasive across different

linguistic contexts, from everyday conversation to specialized domains like institutional settings (Dirven, 1999).

The discussion categorizes conversion within different event schemata, namely action, motion/location, and essive schemata. Each schema highlights how different semantic roles (agent, patient, instrument, manner, etc.) play a crucial role in forming converted verbs. For instance, verbs like *to fish* exemplify action schema conversions where the patient (*fish*) represents the entire action of catching fish (Ibid.).

Dirven also classifies conversion into five main classes, depending on which type of word was the verb derived from. These classes illustrate how nouns and adjectives can shift to verbs (Ibid.).

Metonymy in conversion serves to focus attention on salient aspects of a situation or action. For example, to nurse can refer to various actions related to caring, from tending to the sick to breastfeeding, highlighting the flexibility and abstraction inherent in converted verbs compared to their noun counterparts (Ibid.).

Dirven also explores why certain semantic roles are more prone to conversion than others. He suggests that roles typically associated with humans as agents or recipients (datives) are less likely to undergo conversion. This reluctance may stem from cognitive principles such as anthropocentrism, where humans are already focal points in communication and thus less suited for metonymic transformations that typically apply to non-human entities. He also argues that semantic constraints also influence the productivity of conversion. For instance, verbs derived from nouns like *to fish* are constrained by the experiential context in which they are used. They often depict actions related to their original contexts (e.g., catching fish), illustrating how linguistic forms retain connections to their conceptual origins even after conversion. Not only

17

that, but Dirven also delves into metaphorical extensions of conversion, where verbs like *to land* or *to ground* take on figurative meanings beyond their literal locative senses. These extensions demonstrate how metonymy operates not only in physical spaces but also in abstract domains, enriching language with nuanced expressions derived from concrete experiences (Ibid).

In conclusion, the approach to conversion presented here offers a nuanced exploration blending morphological and semantic perspectives. It highlights how English accommodates grammatical changes through conversion, categorizing verbs based on their semantic roles within event schemata. This approach, rooted in cognitive linguistics and underscored by metonymic principles, reveals the intricate ways in which language adapts to convey diverse meanings and conceptual relationships.

3.4 Sándor Martsa

According to his findings and research in his book *Conversion in English: A Cognitive Semantic Approach* (2013), Sándor Martsa's approach seeks to shed light on the morphosyntactic recategorization involved in conversion as a consequence of prior conceptual recategorization, which he posits is influenced by communicative needs.

Martsa argues that conversion is fundamentally a semantic derivation process rather than merely syntactic or morphological. He asserts that conceptual shifts underpin the transformation of words from one grammatical category to another. These shifts are motivated by metonymic mappings (where one element stands for another) and metaphoric mappings (where one element is perceived as being similar to another). He also contends that conversion exhibits directionality inherent in the conceptual mappings it embodies. This contrasts with those view that perceive conversion as a directionless or arbitrary process. He then also delves into those views that argue that conversion results in homonymy (where words share form but not meaning), Martsa opposes

it, and asks for recognition of intercategorial polysemy. This means that conversion pairs are semantically related, sharing underlying conceptual connections that justify their form-class shift (Ibid).

Martsa also expands on other approaches related to conceptual metonymies and metaphors to encompass various types of conversion in English. These mappings serve not only to explain the semantic relationships between converted forms but also to categorise them into meaningful classes based on shared semantic components (Ibid.).

As Martsa himself calls it, this approach can be classified as a cognitive semantic approach, as it emphasises how cognitive mechanisms such as conceptual metonymy and metaphor shape the morphological and semantic aspects of conversion (Ibid.). By focusing on how speakers conceptualise and categorise linguistic elements through these mechanisms, Martsa provides a framework that integrates cognitive linguistics with morphological analysis, offering insights into the dynamic nature of word formation in English.

In conclusion, Sándor Martsa's research underscores the importance of cognitive semantics in understanding conversion as a multifaceted linguistic phenomenon. His findings not only challenge traditional interpretations but also enrich our understanding of how language users navigate and manipulate linguistic structures to convey meaning effectively.

3.5   Pavol Štekauer

Štekauer's approach to conversion offers a unique perspective compared to Martsa, Dirven, and Bauer. While Martsa explores the reasons behind conversion, Dirven focuses on our understanding of them, and Bauer delves into their grammatical implications, Štekauer emphasizes how meanings drive words to change categories over time. His theory, popular in

Eastern Europe, also considers historical shifts in language as a way to understand why and how conversion occurs.

Štekauer thoroughly examines conversion, using various perspectives to uncover its complexities and limitations. He introduces an onomasiological model from Eastern European linguistics, proposing five stages where words shift categories like substance, action, quality, or circumstance, altering their word class, sound, and grammatical patterns (Valera, 2000).

He challenges prevailing ideas, like zero-derivation's role in marking inflectional or derivational differences. Štekauer criticizes Marchand's directionality criteria, suggesting semantic and formal analyses can yield opposite results depending on the viewpoint, questioning their strict application. Štekauer also explains why diachronic evidence is important, as it helps him differentiate genuine conversion from instances where word-class markers were lost over time. This nuanced view leads him to accept only some homograph pairs as true conversions, highlighting the difficulty in reconciling synchronic and diachronic perspectives (Valera, 2000).

His approach to conversion also explores how converted words often reflect basic aspects of their original meaning rather than situational nuances. Štekauer extends this analysis to proper names, arguing they convert similarly to common nouns (for example, Google – to google) (Ibid.).

However, he critiques where syntactic processes blur word-class boundaries, such as with adjectives acting as noun modifiers or phrases like *the poor*, which he sees as conversions rather than ellipsis (Ibid.).

Despite these insights, Štekauer's study is, according to Valera (2000), uneven. Some topics, like conversion's limits in syntax and the historical evolution of word-class markers,

receive less attention. Moreover, his use of onomasiological theory, though foundational, might

challenge readers unfamiliar with Eastern European linguistics.

4 Onomasiology

I have talked about different approaches to conversion. Still, the last one is the most important regarding my research, as it is the onomasiological view of conversion that I apply to analyse my data. In my research, conversion is a word formation process that uses existing lexemes, shifts their word class without changing their form, and does so to give a name to a concept that somehow relates to the meaning of the original word. What exactly is onomasiology, then?

František Čermák (2001) explains onomasiology as part of semantics and lexicology that studies meaning from the point of view of marking, that is, from the point of view of assigning form to initial meaning. The word itself comes from Greek *ὀνομάζω onomāzo*, which translates to 'to name', this comes back to *ὄνομα onoma*, which translates to 'name' (Wikipedia).

Onomasiology is the antinomy of semasiology. Semasiology studies meanings of a form of a word and is concerned with meanings, that are attached to a certain word. Onomasiology, on the other hand, is based on a concept and is concerned about how such a concept can be expressed (Kos & Kozubíková-Šandová, 2020). Traditionally, it is viewed as a "study of naming", and according to Mališ (1997), Dokulil's view of onomasiology only in the range of word formation is not precise, which is why he mentions the newer view of onomasiology as the "study of marking" created by Josef Filipec.

In onomasiology, there are two basic approaches, synchronic and diachronic. The difference between synchronic and diachronic onomasiology is that synchronic onomasiology is concerned with the origins of new names and the influence of the lexicon on this process of creating new names for concepts, whereas diachronic onomasiology is concerned with the evolution, and change of naming concepts in time (Kos & Kozubíková-Šandová, 2020). For my

bachelor thesis are most important the synchronic approaches of Miloš Dokulil (sourced from multiple sources) and Pavol Štekauer (2001).

4.1 Miloš Dokulil

As Fernandéz-Domínzuez (2019:3) writes, Dokulil is widely recognized as the pioneer of the onomasiological approach. He developed his ideas over the years in several publications (1962,1964, and 1968) and his work remains highly influential in modern word formation studies. His most prominent study is his complex distinction between synchronic and diachronic aspects of word formation, which has not only led many scholars to reevaluate Marchard's earlier works on this topic but also highlighted the importance of considering real-world contexts in onomasiology.

I would like to continue by explaining the basics of Dokulil's research of onomasiology and the naming process. The process of creating a new word starts with a concept of the real world one desires to name, such as an object or an idea. However, according to Dokulil, the naming process does not happen directly, he rather argues we tend to name our perception of the concept of our mind or consciousness. The organization of this information in our minds, which forms the foundation for the eventual naming, is referred to as onomasiological structure, which consists of two elements: onomasiological base and onomasiological mark (Kos & Kozubíková-Šandová, 2020).

As far as the onomasiological base is concerned, it is a certain conceptual class of varying generality, it can be a specific conceptual genus, but also a broadly general category. For example, for an animal, this onomasiological base can be as specific as songbirds, it can be a little more general like birds, or completely general like living beings (Kos & Kozubíková-

Šandová, 2020). As a specific example, I will provide the word *blackbird*, in this case, the onomasiological base is the right-hand part of the whole word – *bird*.

The onomasiological mark can be explained as a distinguishing feature, that differentiates the object of naming from other items of the same conceptual class. Unlike the onomasiological base, which is always simple, it can be either simple or complex. When simple, the feature is mainly static, usually expressed by an adjective, such as colour or taste (e.g. *blackbird*, *sweetpea*). With Dokulil's theory, even those cases of naming, which are based on an action, but other intentions are not further specified, are considered simple (e.g. *teacher*, *swimmer*, *diver*) (Kos & Kozubíková-Šandová, 2020).

Complex onomasiological marks are made of two constituents – determined and determining. This type of mark arises when an action calls for further details. In that case, the determined constituent is expressed by the action, and the determining constituent further develops the specification of the action (that might be time, result, or manner). An instance of a concept named using the complex mark is *anteater* (an animal that "eats ants"). The onomasiological base is expressed by the suffix -er, the determined constituent is *eat*, which is further specified by the determining constituent of the complex mark *ant*. The determining constituent might not be, however, always explicitly expressed, usually when the mark relates to a substance (Kos & Kozubíová-Šandová, 2020). Consider the word *essayist* (a person who writes essays) – the determined part of the mark remains unexpressed. Despite knowing an essayist is someone who writes essays, in theory, we may understand it as someone who reads or collects them, as this specifying aspect has been omitted in the naming process.

Dokulil also explains the division of three basic onomasiological categories, based on the relation between the onomasiological base and the onomasiological mark. These three categories

are, however, only a notional groundwork, as well as not important to my research, on which we may further build and form words. Therefore, the next step of the naming process is to express the structured content of our minds in a specific linguistic manner. It is important to select the derivational basis, i.e. the part of the onomasiological mark that will project in the actual name of the concept. After deciding on the onomasiological structure, the default word, and its form, the base is classified into the word formative type, which, as Dokulil states, is a result of the "abstraction of specific, word-formatively homogenous, words with a certain lexical meaning".

To summarize the process of creation of new words according to Dokulil, initially, there is an intention to name a concept in the mind of the speaker. This non-linguistic conceptualization is then factually structuralized regarding an onomasiological category, and structure, and then embedded into a certain word formative type. The word formation process is then finalised by setting the created word into a grammatical context – into a certain word class and a certain paradigm (Kos & Kozubíková-Šandová, 2020).

4.1.1   Dokulil's theory applied to my research

From the basic outline of Dokulil's work, we know that a certain word is a result of a speaker's mental need to identify and express an existing concept in the extra-linguistic world. The word formation process is not strictly a matter of morphology, as the creation of a word is initiated by the mental processing of an idea. The final form is then obtained by pairing the processed idea with a lexical model, either a single word or more frequently, a schema (which is later discussed in section 4) (Kos, in preparation).

Dokulil's theory includes an onomasiological structure, consisting of an onomasiological base and an onomasiological mark. If applied to my research, the concept to be named would vary, but the conceptualization of it would always regard the category it was put into. The

onomasiological base would be ACTION, as the conversion is always from noun to verb, therefore the base of the new word will always be an action. The onomasiological mark would be the corresponding noun.

However, my research was made using not only Dokulil's theory but mainly Petr Kos' publication, which was based mainly on Dokulil's onomasiological theory of word formation (1962) and Jackendoff & Audring's Relational Morphology (2020a,b). The latter is explained and discussed further in section 5.

5 Relational Morphology theory

Ray Jackendoff and Jenny Audring, the authors of relational morphology, call it an "interweaving of themes at three levels: morphology, the structure of the lexicon, and the place of language capacity in the human mind" (Jackendoff & Audring, 2020b). They explain relational morphology as an approach to the structure of words closely related to the construction grammar, as it also situates "the rules of grammar in an extended lexicon", beside words and multiword utterances like idioms, or collocations, and syntactic construction that bear meaning. The goal of RM is to integrate morphology with the rest of the language and the rest of the mind (Jackendoff & Audring, 2020a). Petr Kos states, that within RM theory, the lexicon comprises not only individual lexemes but also schemas. Within groups of words that are similar or somewhat the same, these patterns show parallelisms that manifest as constants (such as suffixes), and for dissimilar words, they manifest as variables. Such schemas possess two roles – relational and generative. The former role ensures the schema provides the lexicon with a structure, and in the latter, the schema supplies templates for word formation and inflection. A new lexeme or a form of it is established by incorporating the schema's varying aspects with a preexisting lexeme acquired from the lexicon.

In their work, Jackendoff & Audring (2020b) provide structures of words based on their older theory of Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff, 2002). This structure of words shows 3 different features of words: phonological, morphosyntactic, and semantic. To illustrate such structure, a picture from Jackendoff and Audring (2020-lexicon) is shown below, where they draw the structure of the word *piggish*.

Semantics: a. PIG$_1$ b. [LIKE (PIG$_1$); SLOPPY, GREEDY]$_6$
Morphosyntax: N$_1$ [$_A$ N$_1$ aff$_7$]$_6$
Phonology: /pɪg/$_1$ /pɪg$_1$ ɪʃ$_7$ /$_6$

Picture 1: Structure of the word *piggish* by Jackendoff and Audring (2020b)

Kos describes this structure by saying, that the word *piggish* manifests two types of meaning on the semantic level – one intertwined with the schema for -ish words (i.e. like (something)) (i.e. structural meaning), and the other is the meaning of the word in synonyms (i.e. lexical meaning). According to Jackendoff & Audring (2020b), "these are the idiosyncratic parts of the word meanings".

5.1   Relational morphology applied in my research

As explained in Petr Kos' publication *Instantiating Variables in Schemas within Relational Morphology* a schema is an approximate equivalent to Dokulil's word-formation schema. In both of these theories, the two roles of the schemas – relational (correlates to the functionally structural aspect of Dokulil's terminology), and generative (correlates to the genetic aspect of Dokulil's terminology) complement each other in a way, where the lexicon is an indispensable element for creation, or re-creation of terms, while the generative function either enriches the lexicon with new terms, or reincorporates the constant, but less recurring terms.

Above, I have mentioned the structures of words according to Jackendoff & Audring. For my research, the words that have been selected as fit for my dataset could be installed into the following structure:

Semantics: ACTION WHICH (IS ASSOCIATED WITH (X_x))

Morphology: [$_v$N$_x$]$_z$

Phonology: …… $_x$

Table 4: Structure of words for the analysed dataset

6   Idealized Cognitive Model within the naming process

The Idealized Cognitive Model, or ICM for short, is a name for structures, by which we organize our knowledge. Lakoff (1987) argues, that "category structures and prototype effects are by-products of that categorization", and each ICM puts minds into structural order. As Kos puts it, the lexical meaning is an abstract combination of concepts properties, which comes from the mind of the speaker. They are idealized in that way, that they involve a certain amount of abstraction, as they go through perception and conceptualization (Kos' publication). Simply put, ICM is a phenomenon, in which we organize our knowledge through the conceptualization of a concept in order to name it. It is a set of local and global features of a concept, that can be involved in its name.

I would like to illustrate a specific example (the verb *to hammer*), inspired by the one in Kos' publication, but not in a graphical illustration. The global feature, or the selected category, of all the words in my dataset, is ACTION, as in noun-to-verb conversion all concepts to be named are actions (verbs). The local features are what distinguishes the object of naming from others in the same category. For the verb *to hammer*, the local features may be anything we associate with the concept of what the verb stands for (the motion of a hand holding a hammer): nails, connection of materials, hand pounding, building something, holding a hammer, etc. From all these local features we select one and alongside the global feature use it in the onomasiological structure, either directly or indirectly (through a metaphor or metonymy), through conceptualization and categorization (Kos, in preparation).

To fully set the practical part of my bachelor thesis into context, I also need to mention Kos' illustration of the naming process. He divides it into two main parts: conceptualization and linguistic coding. Conceptualization includes the onomasiological structure and ICM, which are

preceded by the extra-linguistic reality, and it is part of the naming process that is the most important to my thesis. The linguistic coding includes available schemas (such as noun-noun compounds), lexical expressions of variables, selected schemas, the process of unification and the new word, which is transported into the lexicon, where it either stays or not.

From all I've mentioned above, the conceptualization part of my work could be simplified into a "concept of an action, which is named through a local feature, which happens to be a noun that has a specific function/use/position, while the form of the local feature remains unchanged". This function/use/position of the noun within the naming process of the concept of the verb is the main focus of the following section of my bachelor thesis and the analysis of my dataset.

Before I begin the description of the practical section of my bachelor thesis, a summary and conclusion are necessary. By synthesizing Dokulil's onomasiological theory, Kos' relational and generative schemas, and Jackendoff & Audring's ICMs, my research provides a view on the noun-to-verb conversion process. These theoretical insights will guide the practical analysis, demonstrating how cognitive and linguistic factors jointly contribute to word formation. This approach may not only deepen the understanding of conversion but may also highlight the dynamic nature of the lexicon in reflecting and shaping our conceptual world. While combining fundamental aspects of the aforementioned theories, I aim to shed light on the mechanics that shape the way individuals name the world around them.

7 Data collection

To perform my analysis, I had to acquire a large enough sample of nouns convertible to verbs. Initially, I tried to see if using linguistic corpora would be the right method, but I was proved wrong very quickly. The criteria according to which I intended to select my sample words were so broad that the corpus could not process such a large amount of material and evaluated my request as erroneous. Therefore, I resorted to another method. I adopted an intuitive approach, by spontaneously brainstorming, where I observed my surroundings and identified everyday objects and concepts, identifying their names, and deliberating on whether it could be converted into a verb. For a fair amount of such words, I was sure, however, if I was not, I looked up a certain noun in a dictionary to see if it could be used as a verb without change of form and, therefore, converted to a verb. While this method allowed me to rapidly generate some sort of a sample, it was not quite large enough, and I soon realized its limitations. It lacked a certain linguistic approach, academic professionalism, and consistency. To get rid of this concern, I shifted towards a more structured and systematic approach to data collection.

Recognizing the importance of the usage of a comprehensive and diverse dataset, I turned to online articles as a rich source of linguistic material. To be specific, I chose to visit CNN Digital, an online news channel, randomly clicking on different articles, that caught my attention. Articles on CNN Digital ended up being my primary and only source for extracting data for my further use (a list of articles used can be found in the appendices). By meticulously reading through these articles, I went on to identify any noun and evaluate its potential to be converted to a verb. For that, I used various dictionaries, however, mostly Merriam-Webster online dictionary, Wiktionary, or Cambridge Dictionary, also online. Into an existing Excel sheet containing word pairs (noun-verb) collected using my previous method, I began to write down

newly acquired data, going on until I amassed a sufficiently large and diverse sample size, compromising approximately 320 noun-verb pairs. This ensured the inclusion of a wide range of lexical items of various thematic contexts.

7.1 Conversion ambiguity

One of the challenges I encountered during collecting a sample lies in the inherent ambiguity regarding the direction of conversion. Many times, I found a noun that also functioned as a verb, indicating it indeed is a word suitable for my sample, however, not always was I able to determine whether said word was an instance of a noun-to-verb conversion or whether the noun was converted from a verb. I figured this ambiguity stems from the fluid nature of language evolution and there might be no way for me to verify the direction of conversion. So, to simplify the matter, I chose to pick only words I was able to determine myself. When deciding whether to use a given word or not, I looked up the definition of the verb and if it contained a noun that I assumed the verb was converted from, therefore it was a case of noun-to-verb conversion, and I added that word pair to my sample. Despite this challenge, thanks to employing a systematic approach, I was able to collect as many suitable words as needed.

8 Data processing

Following the systematic collection of data, I progressed to data processing and analysis, a phase, where the previously acquired raw information began to reveal patterns and structures. My first step was organizing the data in the Excel sheet alphabetically to create a structured framework for my analysis. To further structuralize the data, I went on to match each word pair with a corresponding definition of a verb so that further analysis was made easier, and I was not faced with instant re-looking up of definitions or any other confounding influence while doing the analysis.

My goal was to create new categories in which each word pair could be inserted, creating these categories based on the role of the noun in the verb's definition, therefore basically identifying what semantic aspect of the noun is the conversion based on and how the noun and verb semantically relate. With some certainty, I suspected that I would be able to put several pairs into one category, ergo I expected patterns to arise in further examination of the data. I decided to go pair by pair, one after another, either creating a new category or categorizing the pair into an existing one. In the process of categorizing specific word pairs into an already existing category, I inclined towards a comparative approach, putting the considered pair in comparison with those already allocated in said category. This method enabled me to observe discernible patterns and similarities in the dataset, as well as aiding me through the evaluative process of whether the pair should be included in a certain category or not. On several occasions throughout the analysis, a challenging word pair appeared, prompting me to either go back and reevaluate my choices or juxtapose certain words against one another. Additionally, encountering such complexities made me seek word pairs of a similar nature, whether it was a word in my dataset or a completely lexical item. At times, the categorization of word pairs did not occur immediately, as certain instances presented notable challenges. Consequently, I chose to postpone classification, anticipating the emergence of analogous word pairs that could facilitate the decision-making process or inform the creation of new categories.

Ultimately, 17 distinct categories were delineated, each representing a different facet of semantic aspect in noun-to-verb conversion contained in my dataset.
Previously I spoke of the problem of uncertainty regarding the direction of conversion and how I decided to deal with this in the phase of data collection. While processing this data, creating categories, and sorting word pairs, I again got faced with this problem, now in a slightly different

matter. Certain word pairs were not so hard to categorize, for example "hammer – to hammer" or "fork – to fork", both nouns fall into the semantic category of tools, and both were converted to verbs based on the semantic aspect of "using as an instrument", therefore I put them into a category called "instrument". However, during the evaluation of other word pairs categorization was not so clear. For example, the word pair "snow – to snow". The definition of the verb is "to cover or fall as snow", applying the condition mentioned previously this is a word pair suitable for my sample, however, when I encountered this word pair during my analysis, I was not quite sure in which category to put it. Not even after comparing it with the word pair "hail – to hail", which is undoubtedly systematically very similar.

9 Categories

Each category is accompanied by a list of nouns of the word pair that belong to it. At the same time, these words are divided into thematic groups, which are the subject of a later section, but they are listed in one place for the purpose of clearer organization of the entire thesis, and they can be returned to again if necessary.

9.1 Result

As I mentioned above, I chose to sort out my sample according to the noun's role in the verb's definition, to see which semantic aspect the conversion is based on. My first category ended up being the category "Result", as the meaning of the noun carries the role of what is a result of the verb.

For example, "account – to account" (definition: "to furnish a justifying analysis or explanation"). The noun "account", which is a "justifying analysis or explanation" stands as the result of the verb "to account".

This category may seem quite ambiguous regarding the direction of conversion as if something is a result of something it must be at the end of an action/verb, therefore it seems all these nouns were converted from verbs, not vice versa. However, by looking at other word pairs included in this category, we will be shown, that it is not quite like that. Take into consideration word pairs such as "berry – to berry" (definition: "to bear or produce berries") or "blossom – to blossom" (definition: "to bloom or develop blossoms"), here these nouns stand for objects of nature and I assume these verbs were created to describe processes that lead to these objects, therefore it would be a case of noun-to-verb conversion. Other examples of such objects of nature include "bud – to bud", "flower – to flower", "grass – to grass", or "leaf – to leaf". Word

pairs of other thematic groups in this category are "code – to code", "critique – to critique", "damage – to damage" or "picture – to picture".

List of content: *account, code, document, damage, match, plan, plot, post, profile, question, sample, sentence, scheme, structure, tone, video, wound* (non-material concept); *berry, blossom, branch, bud, flower, grass, hill, leaf, light, root, sprout, stem, plant* (natural phenomenon); *bridge, roof, shock* (building/structure); *bubble, echo, steam, hiccup* (physical phenomenon); *comment, critique* (abstract concept – statement); *guilt, interest, love, shock* (abstract concept – feeling); *district, part, segment, team, group* (unit); *milk* (food); *newspaper, picture, target* (object); *nose* (body part); *spot* (location)

9.2 Means of

In the category "means of" I included word pairs, where the noun's role represents entities used as tools or instruments, or mainly means to accomplish an action or achieve a certain purpose. When sorting word pairs into this particular category I was often faced with the dilemma of whether this word pair belongs in this category or whether I should include it in the following one "instrument". In most cases, I opted for my comparative method, comparing the considered word pair with ones I already included, asking myself "Which category's word pairs is this one most similar to?". I also debated whether the key to sorting these word pairs is intentionality, however, I decided not to take this aspect into account, as it was not a foolproof decision-making device. In the end, my main method ended up being extremely simple. I ended up asking "Is this noun used as an instrument or as a means of something?". This questioning combined with my comparative method helped me to carry out my final decision.

Mostly, these nouns denote objects or body parts that are employed as a medium or mechanism for carrying out tasks or functions. For example, "butter – to butter", butter is used as

a means of adding flavour (similarly to "salt – to salt", "sauce – to sauce", or "orange – to orange") or as a non-stick agent; "leg – to leg", here, the leg is used as a means of transportation (similarly to "jet – to jet", or "wheel – to wheel"), "medicine – to medicine" is used as a means of cure (similar to "drug – to drug") or "text – to text" is used as a means of communication (similarly to "fax – to fax", "phone – to phone", "mouth – to mouth", or "mail – to mail").

List of content: *backpack, carpet, clock, crown, drug, fax, flag, jet, lace, mail, medicine, phone, skateboard, stove, tile, wardrobe, wheel, wire, stone* (object); *blood, body, hand, knee, leg, paw, finger, mouth* (body part); *cloud, seed, soil, water* (natural phenomenon); *colour, email, message, number, poll, reason, request, step, text, tone, word* (non-material concept); *pressure, steam* (physical phenomenon); *plaster, steel* (material); police (occupation); *bread, butter, candy, egg, honey, ice, orange, pepper, salt, sauce, sugar* (food)

9.3   Instrument

The focal point of this category revolves around word pairs where the noun serves as an instrument. This category encompasses a diverse array of noun-verb in which the nouns possess instrumental qualities, facilitating or enabling the execution of specific actions using that specific tool or utensil. These nouns undergo conversion to verbs that signify the utilization of these instruments, therefore the vast majority of these nouns stand for tools or utensils, for example, "awl – to awl", "brush – to brush", "plane – to plane", "spoon – to spoon", or "knife – to knife". Eventually, we can also find some instances of nouns that stand for body parts, such as "elbow – to elbow", "thumb – to thumb" or "toe – to toe".

Again, I struggled with determining between this category and the latter one. Decisions were fairly easy with nouns that stand for tools and utensils, and words of other thematic groups were slightly more difficult to determine, to do so, I once more opted for the comparative and

questioning method mentioned in the previous category and many words were reevaluated and re-categorized.

List of content: *awl, brush, clamp, claw, drill, file, fork, hammer, chisel, iron, jack, knife, level, pan, plane, rake, sand, saw, screw, shovel, spade, spoon, trowel, wrench* (tool); *bar, button, curtain, dress, chain, key, lace, pin, scope, screen, stone, thread, towel, wall, xerox* (object); *ear, elbow, eye, shoulder, thumb, toe, wrist* (body part); *concrete* (material); *flour,* wine (food); *willow* (natural phenomenon)

9.4   Removal

Unlike the previous categories, which consisted of more than forty words each, this is the first one to have less than ten words. This category consists of words, where the definition of the verbs suggests a removal of the noun, meaning that the role of the noun in the verb's definition is to be removed. For example, words like "bark – to bark", "gut – to gut", or "juice – to juice".

List of content: *bark, seed* (natural phenomenon); *bone, gut, skin* (body part)

9.5   Metaphor based on appearance

This category consists of only two word pairs. Word pair "cup – to cup" (definition: "to curve the hand into the shape of a cup" and "rice – to rice" (definition: "to press through a sieve, as in preparing food", i.e. to make look like rice). Both nouns in these word pairs stand as a reference for what they look like, the verb stands for an action on which's end we have something looking like the noun.

List of content: *cup* (object); *rice* (food)

9.6   Metaphor based on behaviour

A category quite similar to the latter one, however here the noun does not carry a reference to appearance but rather a reference to behaviour. We can observe instances of noun-

to-verb conversion where the action described by the verb metaphorically reflects or imitates the behaviour or characteristic associated with the corresponding noun. I would argue it is therefore very logical, that the vast majority of the nouns fall into the thematic group of animals. Simply put, the verb means "to act like/to have traits like the noun". As an example, I might mention word pairs such as "ant – to ant", "hare – to hare", "snake – to snake", or "worm – to worm". Not only words of this thematic group are included in this category, but few are also in the thematic group of furniture (object), such as "chair – to chair", "mirror – to mirror", and "pillow – to pillow". There is also the word pair "dust – to dust", which also appears in the category of Removal, however, both verbs carry a different definition and, therefore, fall into different categories, as the role of the noun changes with the definition. My sample consists of a few of these words, and they are the ones I found very interesting.

List of content: *ant, beetle, buffalo, crab, dog, fox, hare, monkey, parrot, snake, worm* (animal); *cloud, stem, thorn* (natural phenomenon); *dust, chair, mirror, pillow, thread, track* (object)

9.7 Obtaining

This very small category, consisting of only four words, three of which fall into the thematic category of animals, we encounter instances of conversion, where the action denoted by the verb involves acquiring, obtaining, or gaining, and the noun has the role of something that is to be obtained or earned. At the end of the action represented by the verb, the executor has obtained the concept represented by the noun. The thematic group of animals is represented by the word pairs "fish – to fish", or "clam – to clam", which can also be simultaneously placed into a thematic group of foods, as these animals are often obtained to be eaten. One word pair belongs to the thematic group of abstract concepts, which is "experience – to experience".

List of content: *clam, fish, mouse* (animal); *experience* (non-material concept)

9.8 Symbolism

This distinct category emerged through a process of iterative refinement, characterized by extensive re-evaluations and subsequent re-categorizations of lexical items. Initially, I intended to assimilate the words within this category into one of the pre-existing categories associated with metaphors; however, upon further brainstorming, I opted to delineate a new category to accommodate the unique nature of these words. What distinguishes these words is, that it transcends mere superficial similarities and instead manifest through more nuanced thought processes of evaluation. Unlike categories related to metaphors, which were created based on simple similarity of appearance or behaviour, the semantic linkage in this category is based on the evaluation of several similar aspects and above all symbolism. It is not a similarity of behaviour or appearance of a noun whose characteristic feature has been transferred to a verb, but a similarity of how the executor behaves towards the noun. See the word pair "cherry – to cherry" (definition: "informal, meaning to pick the best or most desirable items"). The semantic aspect transferred during conversion is "to do like as you do with cherries (noun)", it relates to behaviour, but not like it does with metaphor. There, the semantic aspect transferred is "to do/act as (noun) does". The word pair "sky – to sky" (definition: "to hit (a ball) high into the air", i.e. to hit the ball like it would touch the sky), again refers to how the executor behaves towards the noun and based on that employs symbolism.

List of content: *cherry, sky* (natural phenomenon); *face* (body part)

9.9 Resulting form

This category has been created for word pairs, in which the noun's role is the final form of an action denoted by the corresponding verb. That might be by appearance, texture, or form.

In these instances, the conversion process captures the transformative nature of the action, culminating in the emergence or manifestation of a distinct form or state embodied by the noun. Each word pair within this category elucidates the concept of causality, wherein the verb initiates a sequence of events leading to the realization or attainment of the noun's particular form or state. This category reflects the dynamic interplay between action and outcome represented by the noun.

List of content: *cake, jelly, pickle, toast* (food); *apple, rose, stump* (natural phenomenon)

9.10 Consuming

This category only consists of one word pair – "coffee – to coffee". Of the word pairs from the thematic group of foods I encountered during my data collection and processing, only this one directly related to consumption.

List of content: *coffee* (food)

9.11 Storage location

The current category was created to hold all word pairs, in which the role of the noun in the verb's definition is a place of storage. This means, that the concept expressed by the noun stands for a place or an object intended for storage and the verb expresses an action at the end of which there is something preserved somewhere expressed by the corresponding noun. Most of the nouns in word pairs in this category fall into the thematic group of objects, more specifically hollow objects or containers that have the ability to be filled, either with material elements such as foods, liquids, or other objects, or with abstract elements such as words, for example "index – to index" or "book – to book". I chose the word location for the name of this category considering word pairs like "cabinet – to cabinet", "fence – to fence", or "pen – to pen".

41

List of content: *bag, bed, bin, book, bottle, box, cabinet, case, fence, glass, jar, paper, pen* (object); *database, index, register* (non-material concept)

9.12 Goal location

Even though both this and the previous category are related to location, unlike the words in the previous one, the location aspect in this one is not connected with storage, but rather to being a final location, somewhere the executor intends for something or someone to end up at the end of the action expressed by the verb. Logically, many of the nouns in the word pairs belong to the thematic group of places, more specifically certain buildings, rooms, or locations. For example, "floor – to floor", "chamber – to chamber", or "jail – to jail". There are also objects and furniture, for example, "couch – to couch", "shelf – to shelf", or "plate – to plate".

List of content: *back, center, floor, front, chamber, jail, place, shop* (location); *couch, frame, plate, plot, pocket, shelf, table* (object); *program* (non-material concept)

9.13 Causing factor

This category of three items consists of word pairs, where the noun in the verb's definition signifies a causal factor or influence, while the corresponding verb denotes the state of being under the influence or impact of this factor. The conversion process captures the notion of causation. The verb, simply put, means "to be under the influence of (noun)", and although the definition of the verb might not be the same, with all these three instances of my sample in this category, they can all relate to previously mentioned meaning.

List of content: *age, stress, sun* (non-material concept)

9.14 Performed activity

The category of "performed activity" encompasses word pairs, in which the noun denotes a specific activity or action, while the corresponding verb signifies the act of performing or

carrying out that activity. These word pairs capture the essence of action verbs by encapsulating the notion of engaging in or executing a particular task, pursuit, or endeavor represented by the noun. Through conversion, the noun is transformed into a verb to denote the performance or execution of the associated activity.

Here I applied my decision-making method of examining the verb's definition, as well as the comparative method, comparing similar words with each other to see, if they are suitable for this category and if they really are instances of noun-to-verb conversion.

List of content: *autopsy, campaign, debate, hiccup, holiday, interview, jet, murder, party, race, weekend, exchange, care, cause, discourse, figure, tour* (action/process)

9.15 Providing

All nouns in word pairs in this category fall into the thematic group of objects, specifically objects or concepts that can be given or provided, not only concrete but also abstract concepts. These nouns represent entities or ideas, that can be offered, supplied, or furnished to someone or something else. Within this category, the corresponding verbs denote the act of providing or furnishing the noun to someone or something, thereby facilitating the transfer or delivery of the associated object or concept. Many times, we can assign the (noun) to something or someone, therefore we provide them with said (noun). For example, in "number – to number", here we do not give someone a concrete concept, we assign them a number. The same instances of this case are "name – to name", "value – to value", or even "seat – to seat" where we still assign something, however, it is a concrete concept, unlike the other examples. Instances of providing a concrete concept are "certificate – to certificate", "ticket – to ticket", or "arm – to arm".

List of content: *arm, certificate, fuel, lid, medal, panel, seat, ticket* (object); *counsel, detail, evidence, home, label, motive, name, number, side, source, term, time, value, company* (non-material concept); *house* (building/structure); *man* (human)

9.16 Possession

This category consists of only a single word pair. The word pair "cost – to cost" might seem similar to the previous category, however, I felt a certain difference. The verb in this verb pair does not denote the action of providing, it stands for already having. Simply put, "to cost" means to already possess a cost, not to assign it to something or someone, therefore I decided to create a special category for this word pair.

List of content: *cost* (non-material concept)

9.17 Typical agent

Initially, most of the word pairs of this category were put into a now-defunct category called "execution of". However, I was again faced with re-evaluation and brainstormed, as I felt the name of the category did not feel correct. Also, when I compared these word pairs with other word pairs, which are now included in the category "performed activity", they did not look systematically quite the same, so after a piece of advice from my professor, I created this category and called it "typical agent".

In this category, I included word pairs, where the noun stands for a name of a profession or a person with a specific set of behaviour determined by a specific action. In these word pairs, the noun stands for what was mentioned above and the verb denotes the action of behaving like said person denoted by the noun. The best explanation will be with an example. Take the word "nurse – to nurse" (definition: "to act or serve as a nurse", i.e. provide/take care for/of someone"), as we see in the definition, the word means to act as a nurse. That means a person

does not need to work as a nurse or be a certified nurse, the verb means to only act as one. Another example is the word pair "godfather – to godfather" (definition: "to act as godfather to", i.e. to fund, support or inspire), again, one does not have to be (a man who sponsors a person at baptism), the verb only means to act like one. Other examples are "judge – to judge", "mother – to mother", or "star – to star".

List of content*: godfather, judge, mother, nurse, parent, star, tailor* (person with certain behaviour)

9.18 Excluded word pairs

During analysing word pairs obtained during the collection process, I encountered nouns, that I initially included in my dataset, however after comparing them with other words, and carefully analysing them I decided they not only do not fit into any of the existing categories, but I am not certain about their fit for my dataset. When I applied my decision-making conditions, they passed, however, after further analysis and sorting of my data, I chose not to include them directly in my analysis, but to speak of them in a special paragraph dedicated to the word pairs I excluded, as I felt some of them were still relevant to my topic.

List of content: *answer, appeal, contact, copy, hail, issue, prospect, snow, view*

10 Categorical conclusion

In the subsequent sections, I decided to describe the conclusions drawn from my analysis, supplementing each section with graphical representations illustrating the distribution of thematic groups of the category. Additionally, I will highlight any notable findings or intriguing observations I made, and I find them worth mentioning,

10.1 Result

Result

- Non-material concept
- Natural phenomenon
- Building/Structure
- Physical phenomenon
- Abstract concept - feeling
- Unit
- Food
- Object
- Body part
- Location

35%
24%
9%
7%
7%
6%
6%
2%
2%
2%
2%
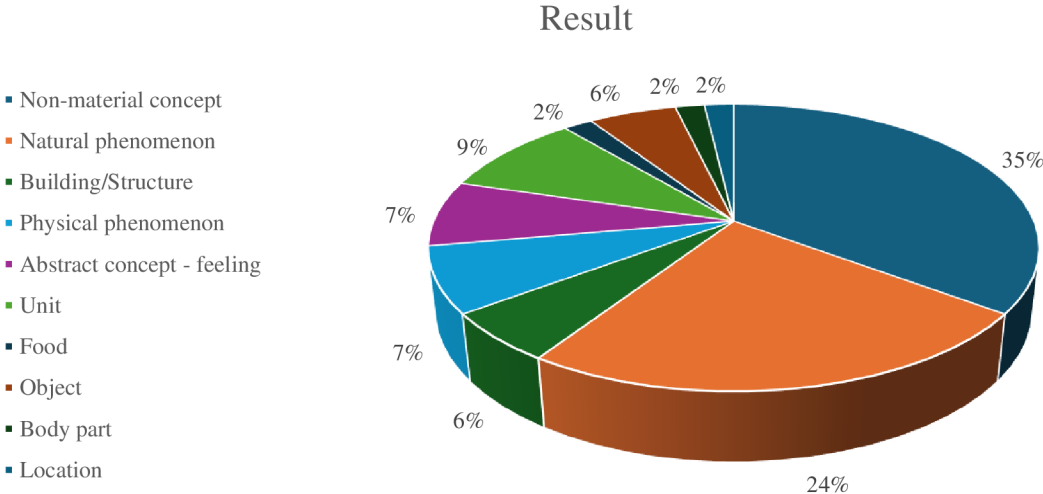
Graph 1: Distribution of thematic groups in the Result category

In the graph, it is easily visible that the largest thematic group represented is non-material concepts. This thematic category includes nouns, which are names for non-material concepts, things that cannot be touched and do not have a material form but can still be seen and are usually names for more complex concepts, such as the noun *plot*. *A plot* can be, for example, what happens in a book or a movie, a series of events experienced by characters, therefore quite a complex concept represented by the word *plot*. Word pairs with nouns of similar nature were put into this thematic group, all the words in this category can be seen in the list of content (section 8.1).

Another heavily represented thematic group is a natural phenomenon – nouns, which stand for names for phenomena related to nature. For example, word pairs *blossom – to blossom*, *hill – to hill*, or *sprout – to sprout*.

Other groups do not reach over 10%; however, all of the thematic groups include nouns, that stand for resulting concepts, something formed or created. All are at the end of a process or action represented by the corresponding converted noun.

10.2 Means of
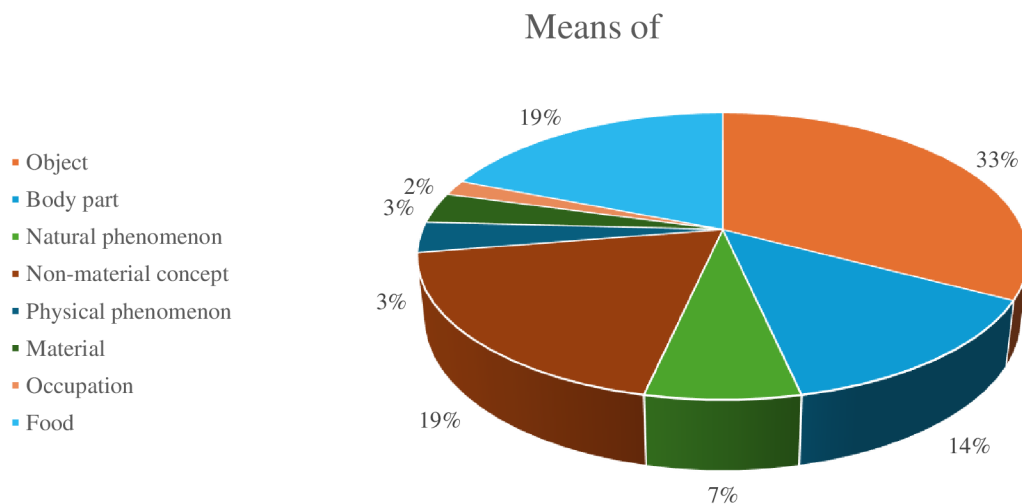
Graph 2: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Means of* category

The majority of nouns in word pairs of the *Means of* category fall into the thematic group of objects, meaning that 33% of these nouns are names for concrete concepts, items such as *backpack*, *clock*, *crown*, *medicine*, or *wheel*. The two second-largest groups are food (19%) and non-material concepts (19%), third largest is body parts (14%), followed by natural phenomena (7%), physical phenomena, and materials (both 3%). The least represented group is occupations (2%).

From the nature of the most represented thematic groups, it is clear, that the nouns in word pairs in the category *Means of* are usually names for concepts used as a means of a certain

purpose, such as travel, communication, the addition of flavour, or change of state. Representative of the latter can be the word pair *medicine – to medicine* (to treat with medicine, i.e. take medicine to feel better), or *tile – to tile* (to cover with tiles, i.e. use tiles to make something look better or different).

Mind the word pair *police – to police*. It is the only word pair in this category, in which the noun stands for a name of occupation, all other words of a similar nature are included in the category *Typical agent*, where the semantic feature on which the conversion takes place is "to act like a NOUN". Here, obviously, is the semantic feature different – to use as a means of control, to be more specific, to control, regulate, or keep in order by use of police. I found this slight irregularity quite intriguing.

10.3 Instrument
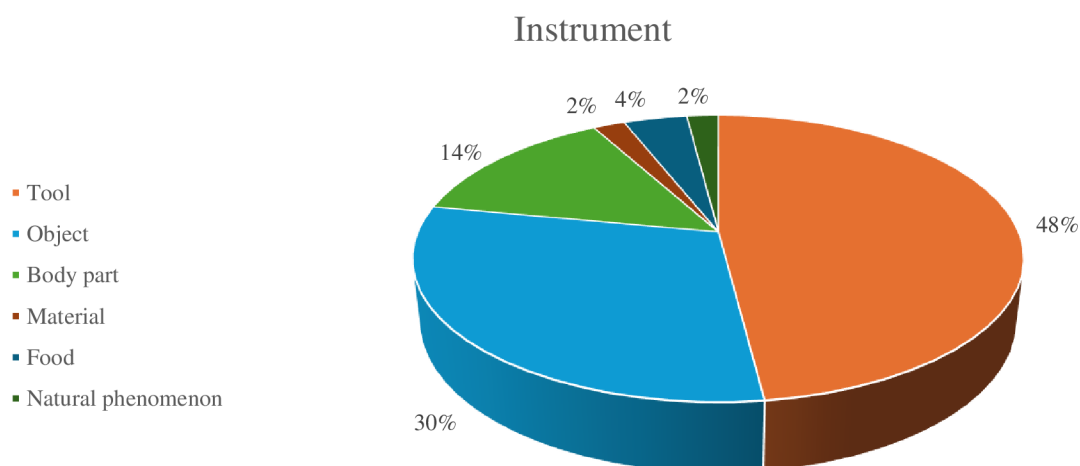
Graph 3: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Instrument* category

The most represented thematic group in this category is tools, taking up 48% of the whole set of word pairs. It is only natural, as tools are intended to be used as instruments. The second largest group is objects, which is also not surprising, as the concrete nature of such items makes them easy to be used as instruments.

Other thematic groups are less represented; however, they also have a concrete form, which allows us to use them as instruments. Body parts by 14%, food by 4%, materials, and natural phenomena both by 2%.

10.4 Removal
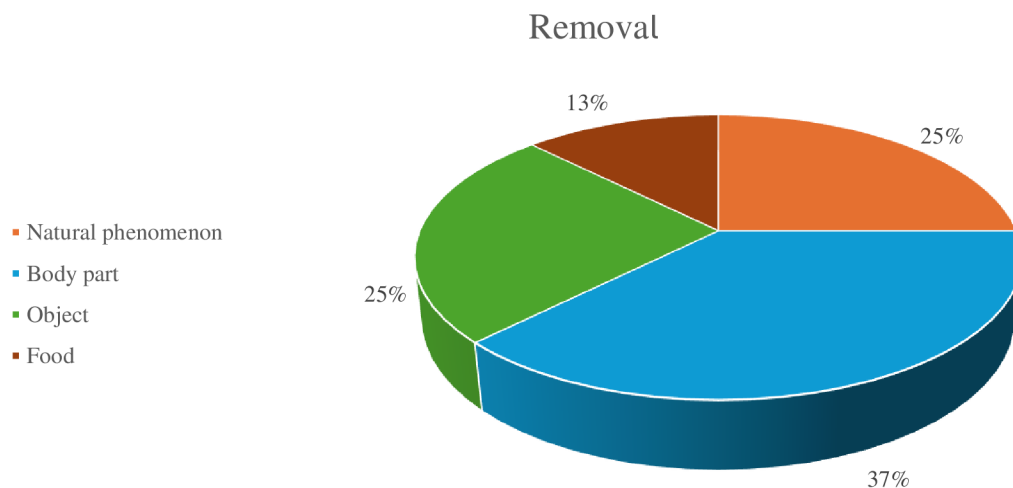
Removal

Graph 4: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Removal* category

As seen on the graph, the most prominently represented thematic group in the category called *Removal* are body parts with 37%, then followed by groups of objects and natural phenomena, both with 25%, and last, there is the thematic group of food with 13%.

What I found interesting about this category, is that usually when naming a concept that regards removal, we usually do so by using a prefix. Here, that does not happen, and the removal of the noun is rather represented by the corresponding noun created by conversion.

10.5 Metaphor based on appearance

Metaphor based on appearance

- Object
- Food

50%   50%
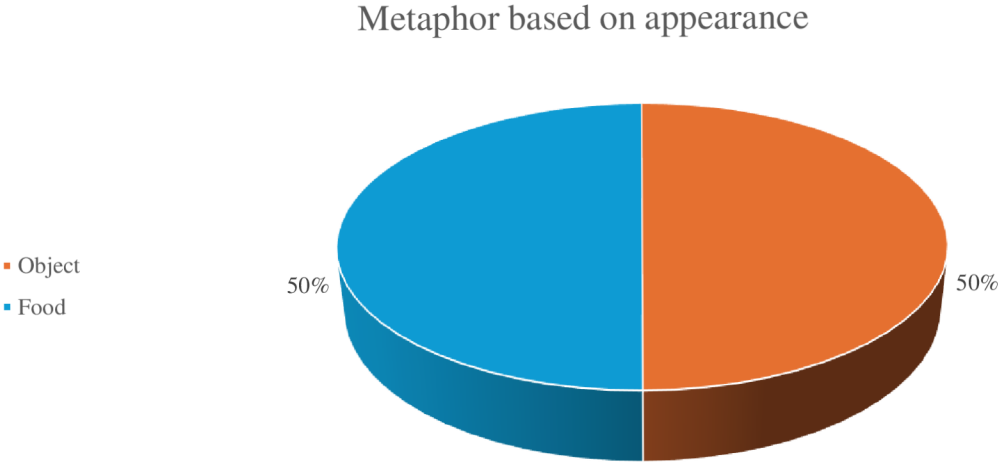
Graph 5: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Metaphor based on appearance* category

This short category is represented only by two words, each from a different category, therefore each thematic group is represented as 50% of the whole. These two categories are objects and food.

10.6 Metaphor based on behaviour

Metaphor based on behaviour

- Animal
- Natural phenomenon
- Object
- Body part

9%

27%

50%

14%
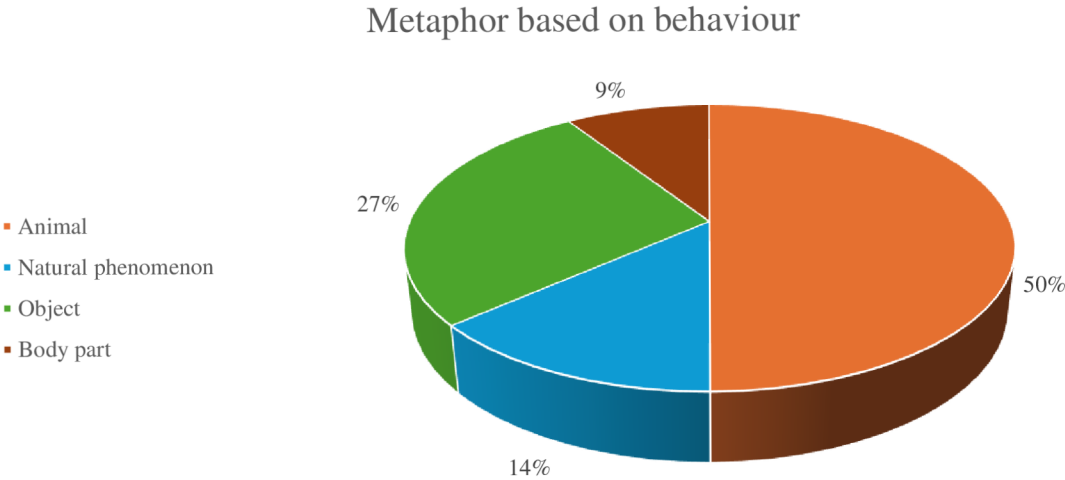
Graph 6: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Metaphor based on behaviour* category

As it is obvious from the graph, 50% of the nouns in word pairs in the category called *Metaphor based on behaviour* fall into the thematic group of animals, which could be stated as quite obvious, as people tend to compare themselves to animals very often. Certain behavioural features of animals are taken and function as a semantic feature, on which base the conversion happens for words in this category.

10.7 Obtaining
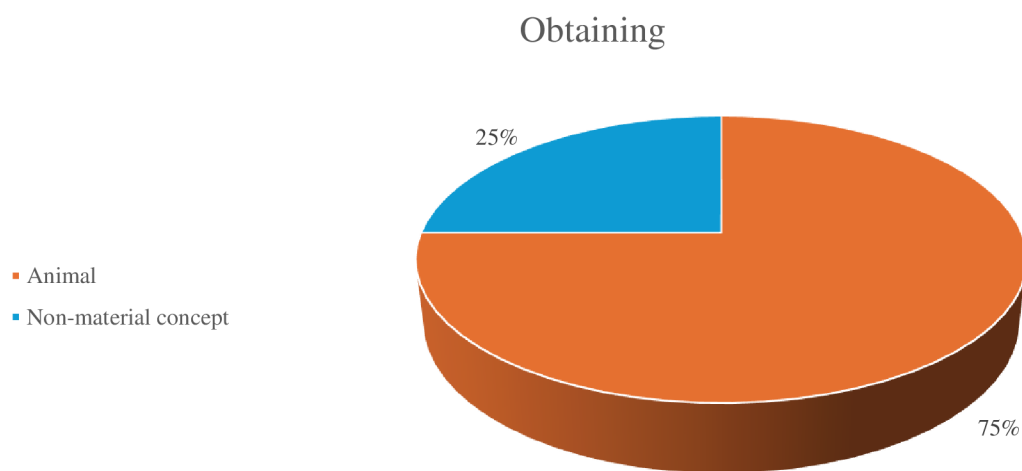
Graph 7: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Obtaining* category

In this category, two thematic groups are represented – animals and non-material concepts. Animals are 75% of the nouns in the word pairs in this category, and non-material concepts are 25%. All the nouns are names for concepts that are gained after a certain action represented by the verb.

10.8 Symbolism
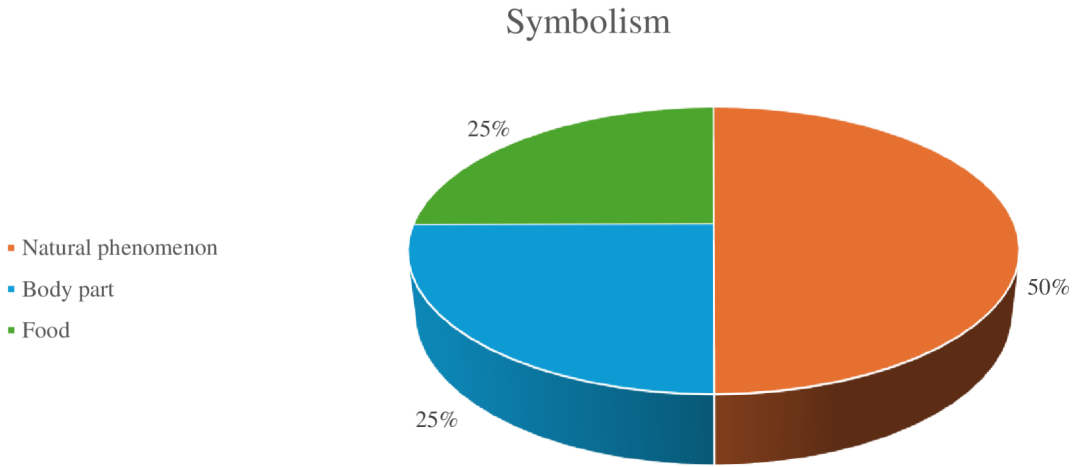
Symbolism

Graph 8: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Symbolism* category

Three thematic groups are represented in this category. Natural phenomena by 50%, body parts by 25%, and food also by 25%.

10.9 Resulting form
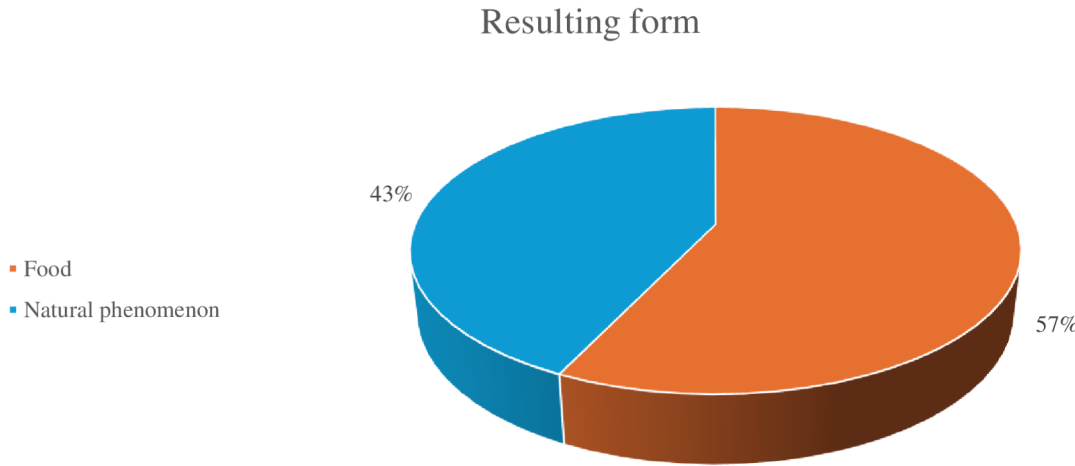
Resulting form

Graph 9: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Resulting form* category

Nouns in both thematic groups – food represented by 57%, and natural phenomena represented by 43%; are intertwined in a certain way. They possess a certain quality or rather

form, that can be recreated or achieved through a specific action. By executing these actions denoted by the verb in a word pair, we achieve something, which possesses said qualities of a concept named by the noun in the word pair. For example, in the word pair *toast – to toast* (to brown with heat, as in toasting) the noun *toast* stands for something browned with heat, usually a slice of bread, and the verb *to toast* (via definition) means to give something those qualities using the same technique.

10.10 Consuming
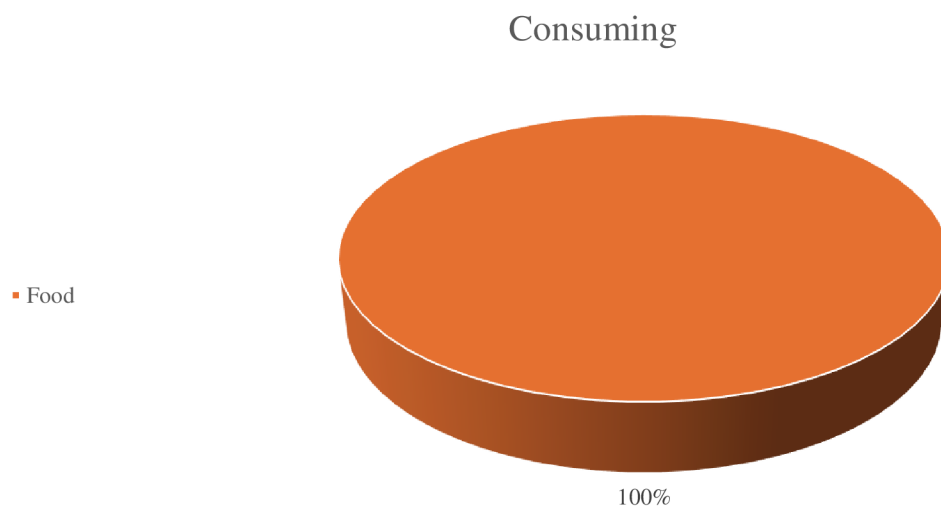
Graph 10: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Consuming* category

As this category only consists of one word, it is obvious it is represented by only one thematic group – food.

10.11 Storage location
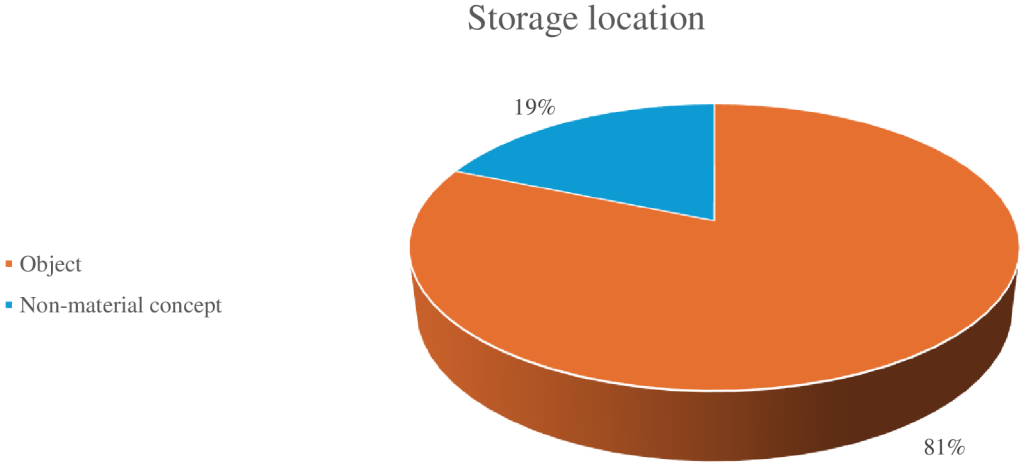
Storage location

Graph 11: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Storage location* category

The category *Storage location* is 81% represented by the thematic group of objects, more specifically mostly furniture and hollow household objects mainly intended for storage of concrete items. On the other hand, non-material concepts take up 19%, and these nouns are names for concepts that store non-material or abstract items, such as data or names, for example, the noun *database*.
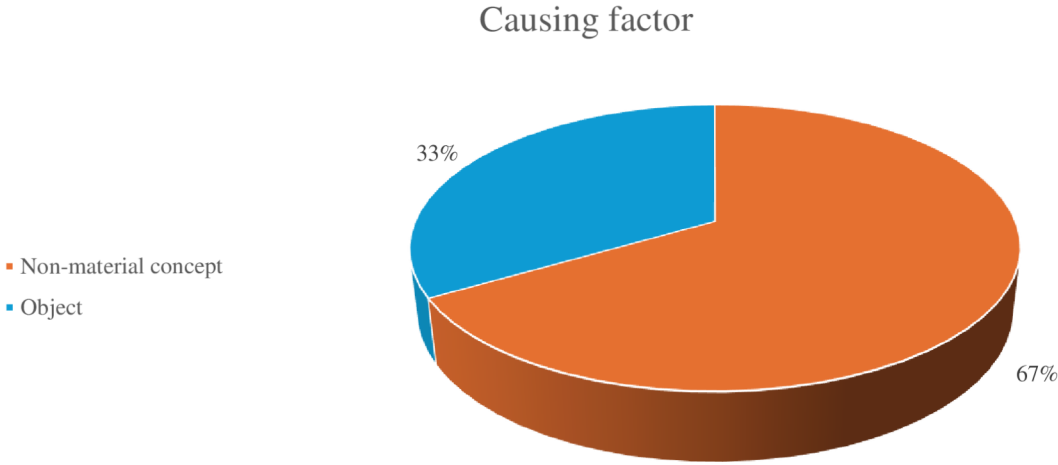
10.12 Goal location
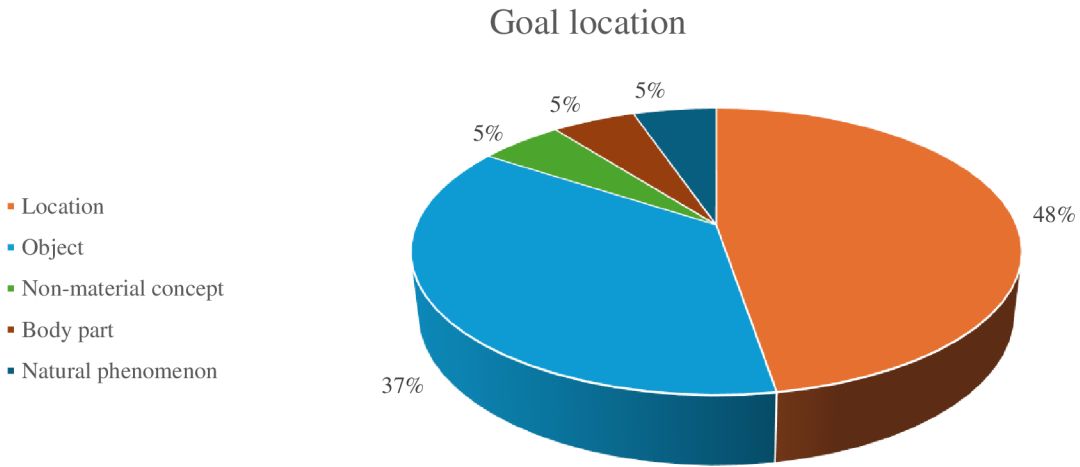
Goal location

Graph 12: Distribution of thematic groups in the Goal location category

As this category consists of word pairs, where the verb represents an action of getting someone or something to a certain location and the noun stands for said location, it is no surprise that 45% of the nouns in these word pairs fall into the thematic group of locations. This group is then followed by the group of objects, represented by 37%, and the rest of the thematic groups (non-material concepts, body parts, and natural phenomena) are fairly and equally represented by 5%.
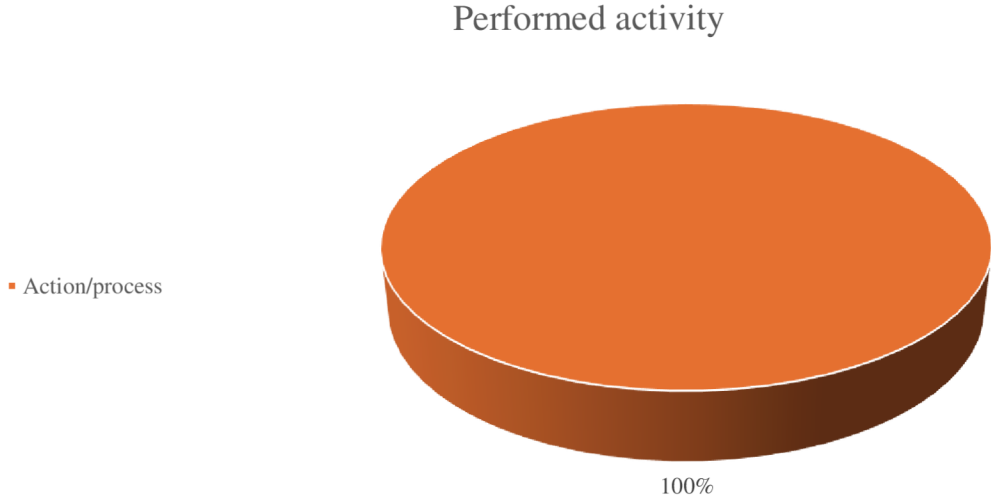
10.13 Causing factor

Causing factor

Graph 13: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Goal location* category

This category has only three word pairs in it, therefore 2 nouns in word pairs stand for the 67% that represent the thematic group of non-material concepts, and 33% is one noun from the thematic group of objects.

10.14 Performed activity

Performed activity

Graph 14: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Performed activity* category

Despite the fact, that the current category does not consist of only one word, but rather 18, the distribution of thematic groups is completely uniform – the whole 100% stands for the thematic group of actions or processes. These nouns are all essentially names for concepts, that can be performed, executed, or spent (in a matter of spending time), and therefore the corresponding verb describes exactly that.

10.15 Providing
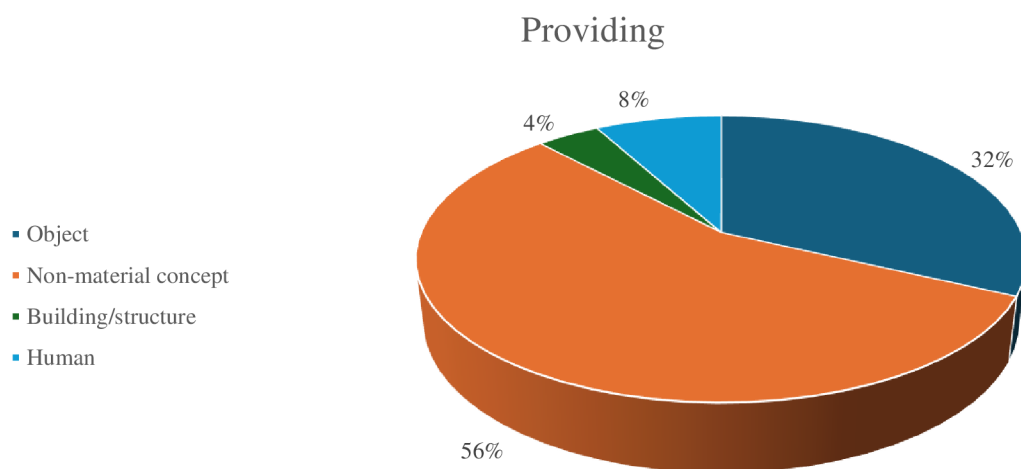
Graph 15: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Providing* category

Although there are four thematic groups represented in this category – non-material concepts at 56%, objects at 32%, human (concepts) at 8%, and buildings or structures at 4%; they all have a common nature, that being, all the nouns in word pairs included in the category Providing are names for concepts, that one can give or provide to something or someone.

What I found intriguing was the noun *house*, in the word pair *house – to house* (to provide shelter or accommodation, i.e. provide someone with a house/housing). Although I included it in the thematic group of building or structures, as the noun itself indeed is a name for a building/structure concept, if I were to take into account the whole idea of the word pair, I might sort it into the thematic group of non-material concepts, because when one houses

someone, they do not literally provide them with the building, but rather with the complex set of concepts a house stands for.

10.16 Possession

Possesion

- Non-material concept

100%
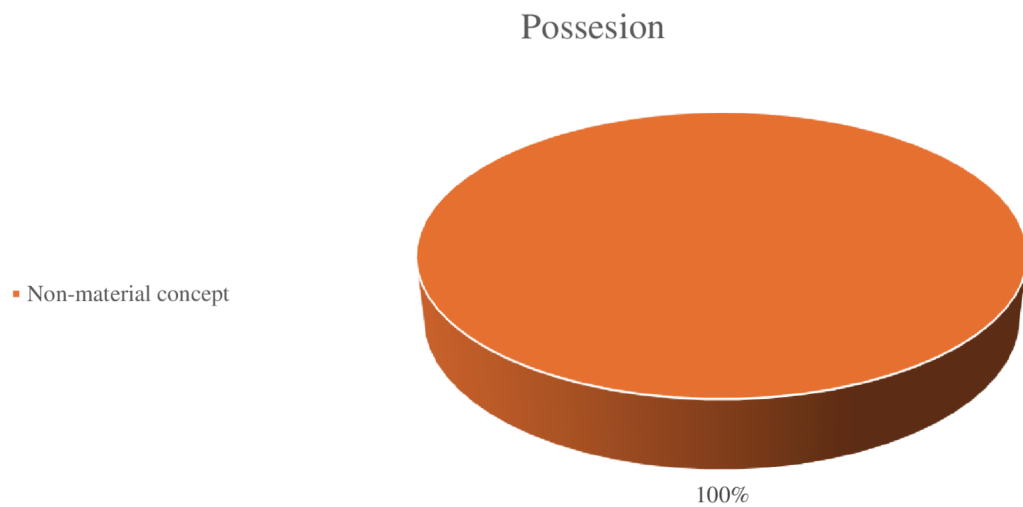
Graph 16: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Possession* category

Similarly to the category called *Consuming*, this one too only consists of one word, and therefore the distribution of the thematic groups is not diverse at all. The thematic group of non-material concepts is represented by 100%.

10.17 Typical agent

Typical agent

■ Person with certain behaviour

100%
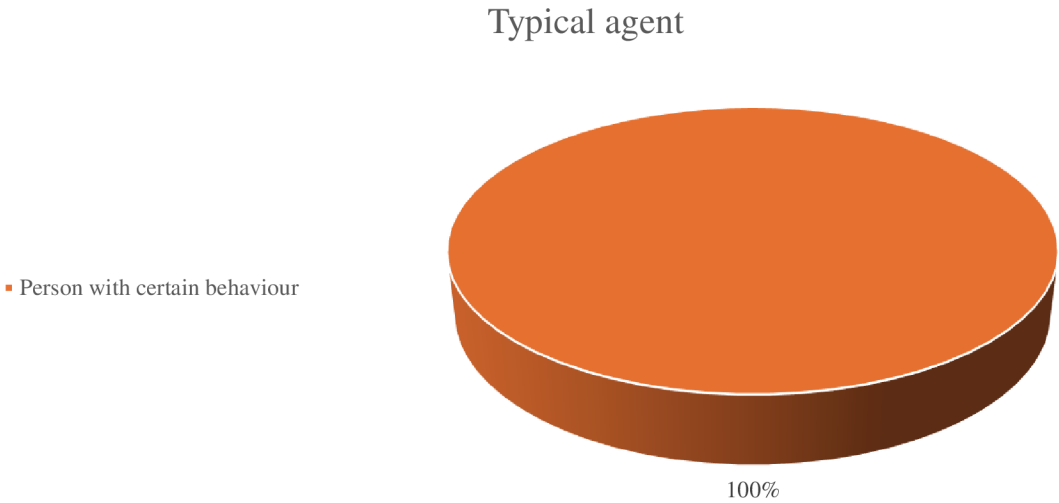
Graph 17: Distribution of thematic groups in the *Typical agent* category

As this category was retrospectively created specifically for word pairs of this nature, there is only one thematic group represented and it is also specifically created for this category. Previously, there were nouns, which were also names for people, I sorted those into thematic groups called *Human*. The difference is that those nouns, unlike the ones in the current category and group, are not names for concepts, that stand for a person with a specific set of behavioural features, but simply for any human being (for example, *man* or *people*).

10.18 Excluded word pairs

As these word pairs were not included in the analysed dataset, they were not sorted into groups nor thematic groups, and therefore they do not to be graphically illustrated.

They are, however, worth mentioning as examples of words that were excluded during the analysing phase.

11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has endeavoured to shed light on the process of noun-to-verb conversion through the analysis of a diverse set of word pairs. By categorizing these pairs based on the role of the noun in the definition of the corresponding verb, I have identified certain patterns and regularities, for example, that mostly used semantic features during conceptualization within noun-to-verb conversion might be the noun standing as a result of the verb, or it functions as an instrument. Also, the thematic group and nature of the word play a role in the category, as specific thematic groups were more represented than others in specific categories.

Through analysis and drawing upon established theoretical frameworks in onomasiology and morphology, I have partially uncovered the multifaceted nature of noun-to-verb conversion, highlighting its complexity and variability/regularity across different thematic groups.

The categorization process led to the identification of 17 distinct categories, each representing a unique aspect of the conversion process and offering valuable insights into the semantic shifts that occur during conversion, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between nouns and verbs in the English language.

Furthermore, this thesis opens up avenues for further exploration and investigation into the mechanisms underlying conversion. Future studies could delve deeper into specific types of conversion, examine variations or explore cognitive processes involved in lexical innovation and creativity.

By looking at conversion from a different perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of the dynamic nature of English, or any other language and highlights the importance of linguistics.

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