

THE TREATMENT OF CONVERSION IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN LEXICOGRAPHY: PERSPECTIVES AND PROPOSALS

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Abstract

In Romanian linguistics, conversion is the word-formation process by which a new word is created from an existing one through a change in word class while retaining the same form. Conversion results in partial and etymological homonymy. In a broader sense, conversion encompasses various types of morpho-semantic evolutions within the same word class, triggered by internal factors or external models. Additionally, through antonomasia or the lexico-semantic specialization of morphological variants, certain word forms eventually become distinct words that can be considered internal or mixed etymological doublets. This article outlines the main types of conversion, focusing on specific cases and providing structural and etymological explanations. It also examines how conversion is represented in major Romanian academic dictionaries (DEX, DEXI, DOOM, DELR), considering the type of dictionary and the lexicological perspectives of the authors.

Keywords: *conversion, homonymy, derivation, linguistic calque, etymological doublet*

Résumé

Dans la linguistique roumaine, la conversion est le processus de formation de mots par lequel un nouveau mot est formé à partir d'un ancien, par le changement de classe de mots et la conservation de la même forme. La conversion aboutit à une homonymie partielle et étymologique. Dans un sens plus large, la conversion englobe divers types d'évolutions morphosémantiques, au sein d'une même classe de mots, déclenchées par des facteurs internes ou des modèles externes. En outre, par antonomase ou spécialisation lexico-sémantique des variantes morphologiques, certaines formes de mots finissent par devenir des mots distincts qui peuvent être considérés comme des doublets étymologiques internes ou mixtes. Cet article présente les principaux types de conversion, en mettant l'accent sur certains cas spécifiques et en fournissant des explications structurelles et étymologiques. En outre, il examine comment la conversion est reflétée dans les principaux

dictionnaires académiques roumains (DEX, DEXI, DOOM, DELR), en tenant compte du type de dictionnaire et des perspectives lexicologiques des auteurs.

Mots-clés: *conversion, homonymie, dérivation, calque linguistique, doublet étymologique*

I. Conversion. General considerations

Conversion represents the internal method, non-derivative by definition, of changing (more or less regularly) the lexico-grammatical category of a linguistic unit or of morphosemantic specialization within the same part of speech, resulting in the enrichment of the vocabulary with a new lexical unit¹, which is in a partial homonymic relationship with its direct/immediate internal source (ELR 2001, s.v., DSL 1997/2001 s.v., GALR 2005, GBLR 2016, DTG 2023). Conversion is, in many cases, regular and productive (for example, the nominalization of adjectives, participles, or most interjections, and to a lesser extent, the nominalization of numerals, adverbs, and pronouns), but it can also be accidental, contextually dependent, and intentional². The more or less regular nature of various forms of conversion can serve as an argument in their lexicographic treatment: either in the same entry or in separate entries.

In this study, I will primarily consider internal creations, which will be supplemented, to strengthen the argument, with both inherited Latin models and those (especially) Romance models transposed into Romanian through lexico-grammatical calques (Moroianu 2002: 377-388). The concept of linguistic unit to which I refer in defining the phenomenon is explained by the fact that, from a broader perspective, conversion concerns not only lexical units (appellatives or proper names) but also the transformation of affixal and affixoidal³ morphemes into words,

¹ In a more general sense, I also include onomastic units here (anthroponyms, toponyms, hydronyms, etc.).

² I add to these the conventional nature of conversion (for example, the nominalization through metalanguage of any part of speech).

³ Among the best-known examples of prefixes, I cite here *(un) ex / ex-ul* [(an) *ex* / the *ex*] (noun, masculine, calque from English *ex*): „Obsesia *ex*-ului: cauze și tratament” [“The obsession for the *ex*: causes and treatment”] is the title of an article published on June 1, 2013, at <https://adevarul.ro/stil-de-viata/viata-de-cuplu/obsesia-ex-ului-cauze-si-tratament-1442238.html>, accessed on 04.09.2023; „Legătura cu *ex-ul* este o problemă majoră a cuplurilor. În ziua de azi foarte multe persoane preferă să întrețină, mai profund sau doar de suprafață, o relație cu *ex-ul*” [The connection with the *ex* is a major issue for couples. Nowadays, many people prefer to maintain, either more deeply or superficially, a relationship with their *ex*], article published on February 18, 2022, at <https://www.avantaje.ro/articol/legatura-cu-ex-ul-intre-placerea-vinovata-si-patologie-tu-unde-te-incadrezi>, accessed on 04.09.2023; „EX-ul meu avea un obicei foarte enervant. Respiratie!” [My *ex* had a very annoying habit. Breathing!]

thus being a particular type of “lexicalization” (DTG 2023 s.v.). Also in the direction of lexicalization—seen in the broad sense of creating new lexical units—are the particular forms of conversion within the same part of speech, achieved 1) either through antonomasia (the transition from proper names to common names)⁴, 2) or through onomasticization (the transition from common names to proper names) (Tomescu 2007: 405-410)⁵, 3) or through the lexico-semantic specialization of certain grammatical variations, initially manifested in the functioning of the same word, and which, over time, became distinctive markers between two different lexical units (Avram 1958: 315-336, Moroianu 2005: 209-218).

In Romanian linguistics, there is a relatively high degree of conceptual unity regarding the forms of conversion, starting from the traditional variant of changing the lexico-grammatical category of a lexical unit and extending to the broader variant of any non-derivative modification with lexical, stylistic, and functional purposes. However, in contemporary European linguistics, conversion is an open subject, of great interest and controversy, often discussed in parallel with the so-called zero-suffix derivation (Bauer-Valera 2005: 7-16).⁶

(<https://tendintemoda.ro/citate-pentru-a-trece-pestes-despartirea/>, accessed on 04.09.2023) etc.; adjectives *pro* and *contra*, obtained through conversion from the corresponding prefixes and often used together, especially in the construction *pro* and *con* arguments (see website titles like https://www.didactic.ro/materiale-didactice/74085_argumente-pro-si-contra-2, <https://stratos.ro/energia-nucleara-argumente-pro-si-contra-asupra-unei-solutii-energetice-controversate/> etc.), but also separately („Argumente pro pentru o vacanta cu copiii la mare, in extrasezon” [*Pro* arguments for a vacation with children at the seaside, in off-season, material published at <https://travelplanner.ro/blog/argumente-vacanta-cu-copiii-la-mare-in-extrasezon/>) etc. Nominalized suffixes are exceptional cases, generally citing -ism, plural -isms (FCLR III 1989: 10, Stoichițoiu Ichim 2006: 306-307), -escu, in the phrase Mr. Escu, a well-known play by Tudor Mușatescu, Ica (through truncation followed by conversion, from feminine proper names derived with the suffix -ica: Florica, Tănțica, Vasilica, Viorica, etc.), Uța (also through truncation and conversion, from Getuța, Măriuța, Vetuța, etc.). For much more numerous examples of lexicalized prefixoids, see Stoichițoiu Ichim 2006: 305-306: *bio* adj., adv., *eco* adj. și adv., *cripto* adj., *etno* adj., *macro* și *micro*, adj. și adv., *mini* și *maxi* adj. și s.f., *hidro* adj., *termo* adj. etc.

⁴ See ‘lexicalised’ examples like: (un) *adonis*, (un) *atlas*, (un) *amfitrion*, (un) *apolo*, (o) *caiafă*, (un) *donjuan*, (un) *donquijote*, (un) *harpagon*, (o) *iudă*, (un) *mecena*, (un) *mitică*, (un) *păcală* etc.; (un) *ohm*, (un) *pascal*, (un) *watt* etc., considered distinct units in DOOM³ s.v.

⁵ By onomasticization, the author understands “a subtype of lexico-grammatical conversion” consisting of the creation of semantic and grammatical differences between the base-appellative and its resulting proper noun, which could even lead to the delexicalization of the latter (see, for example, family names like *Cârciumaru*, *Ciobanu*, *Geamănu*, *Grasu*, *Lungu*, *Moraru*, *Trocaru*, *Trandafir*, *Vîfor*, *Vizitiu* etc. or given names like *Brândușa*, *Bujor*, *Crenguța*, *Dalia*, *Garofița*, *Lăcrămioara*, etc.).

⁶ A concise (bibliographic) overview is provided by Ana Maria Thornton in the introduction to the chapter dedicated to conversion in Italian in *La formazione delle parole in italiano*

II. A Romance Perspective on the Phenomenon of Conversion in Romanian

One of the authors who has given significant attention to this particular form of lexical enrichment in the Romanian language is Maria Grossmann (2016: 2747-2749 and 2022). She reviews, with examples, the main perspectives on conversion and specific cases. The author opts for the term "nominal conversion" for nominalization, under which she categorizes the following types:

1. Denominal: Gender-marking realized by inflectional class change, without any overt word-formational suffix, can be considered merely a noun-to-noun conversion (in many studies on Romanian morphology, it is described as suffixation or back-formation: Hristea 1965: 385-388, Hristea 1984: 80-81): *prieten* → *prietenă*, *șahist* → *șahistă*; *mânz* → *mânză*; *coafez* ← *coafeză*; *pisic* ← *pisică*; *cais* ← *caisă*, *portocal* ← *portocală*, etc.⁷

2. Deadjectival: Adjective-to-noun conversion (Pană Dindelegan, 2003; Suci, 2009). Transcategorization due to ellipsis: (limba) *franceză*, (medicament) *diuretic*, (tren) *accelerat/personal/rapid*, etc.

3. Deverbal: The most productive type consists of the conversion of the supine into a neuter noun: *băut*(ul), *coborât*(ul)/*urcat*(ul), *fumat*(ul), *mers*(ul), *pescuit*(ul), etc.; *agonisită* (feminine noun), *băută* (feminine noun), *zisă* (feminine

(Grossman and Rainer 2004: 499-554). The author reviews the main viewpoints, with a focus on the relationship with the "zero suffix," opting for the following methodological approach: "In questo volume, si è scelto di non ipotizzare mai l'esistenza di affissi zero, e di descrivere tutti i fenomeni di derivazione senza affissi espliciti secondo l'ipotesi della conversion" (idem, p. 502). The following are still considered conversions: both (1) lexical-semantic changes within the same part of speech (antonomasia, but also examples such as *statistica* / *statistico*, *la mela* / *il melo*, Albiano [toponym] / Albiani [ethnic group], etc.), and (2) transitions from adjective to noun ([*strada*] *statale*, [campionato] *regionale*; *italiano* / *l'italiano*, *francese* / *il francese*, etc.; *bello* / *il bello*, *politico* / *il politico*, *rosso* / *il rosso*, etc.), (3) from verb to noun (*affacciare* / *l'affaccio*, *borseggiare* / *il borseggio*, *utilizzare* / *l'utilizzo*, etc.; *conquistare* / *la conquista*, *consegnare* / *la consegna*, etc.; *bonificare* / *la bonifica*, *classificare* / *la classifica*, etc.), (4) from adverb to noun (*adagio* / *l'adagio*, *presto* / *il presto*, etc.), (5) from noun to adjective (*parola chiave*), (6) from verb to adjective (*ragazzo educato*), (7) from adverb to adjective (*l'allora premier*). Conversion that results in verbs is discussed by Maria Grossman (p. 534-546), who reviews (1) denominal verbs. (*alleluia* / *alleluiare*, *bollino* / *bollinare*, *contrabbanda* / *contrabbandare*, *ficcanaso* / *ficcanasare*, *parcheggio* / *parcheggiare*, *volantino* / *volantinare* etc., (2) deadjectival verbs (*attivo* / *attivare*, *imbecile* / *imbecilire*, *oggettivo* / *oggettivare*, *stupido* / *stupidire*, *ubriaco* / *ubriacare*, *vuoto* / *vuotare*, etc.

⁷ To illustrate the second type, see also *camerist* < *cameristă*, *gravid* s.m. < *gravidă*, *prostituat* s.m. < *prostituată*, *stripteuz* s.m. < *stripteuză* etc. Or masculine proper names derived from the feminine (Adelin < Adelina, Alin < Alina, Brânduș < Brândușa, Catrin < Catrina, Lilian < Liliana, Mădălin < Mădălina, Mălin < Mălina, etc.).

noun) (participle or supine?). The formation of action nouns, with concrete meaning extensions, by conversion of the verbal root is largely unproductive.

In addition to the “classic” types recognized as such in Romanian linguistics, Maria Grossmann includes in the “deverbal” conversion category two productive patterns, at least in Old Romanian. These are the regressive “neuter” derivatives such as *câștig* < *câștiga* (to win), *înot* < *înota* (to swim), *leșin* < *leșina* (to faint), etc., and those traditionally considered regressive as well⁸, such as *ceartă* < *certa* (to scold), *goană* < *goni* (to chase), *pază* < *păzi* (to guard), etc. (Hristea 1984: 90-91, FCLR IV 2015: 23).⁹

Regardless of the discussions surrounding derivation or zero suffixation, the analogical model is inherited from Latin both in the case of conversion through regression and in that of conversion through ellipsis. Both phenomena have, however, taken on particular proportions from Old Romanian to the present day, especially in the latter case (Suciu 2009: 170-174), which currently experiences a notable resurgence in everyday speech. Examples include: *automat*, -ă (adj.) and (pistol) *automat* (neuter noun) (a calque from Russian *автомат*); (mașină cu schimbare de viteză) *automată* (feminine noun)¹⁰; *blindat*, -ă (adj.) vs (vehicul) *blindat* (neuter noun), a calque from French (véhicule militaire) *blindé*; *european*, -ă (adj.) vs (campionate) *europene(le)* (f.n. [feminine noun]); *extern*, -ă (adj.) vs

⁸ However, these do not follow the principle of regression, as their results, by adding the suffix -ă, are at least the same as their own internal bases.

⁹ According to Mariei Grossmann, ‘deverbal’ conversion is on the same level as ‘verbal’ conversion, as seen in examples like *bișnițări* < *bișnițar*; *nedreptăți* < *nedreptate*; (se) *cuminți* < *cuminte*; *dascăli* < *dascăli*; *dușmăni* < *dușman*, etc., both being opposite aspects of the same grammatical process. Considering deverbal nouns like *câștig* < *câștiga*, *ceartă* < *certa*, and post-adjectival verbs (*albătri* < *albastru*, *curăța* < *curat*, *mări* < *mare*, etc.), post-substantival verbs (*flutura* < *fluture*, *găuri* < *gaură*, *grăpa* < *grapă*, *pipera* < *piper*, etc.), post-interjectional verbs (*sictiri* < *sictir*) or post-onomatopoeic verbs (*ciripi* < *cirip*, *cotcodăci* < *cotcodac*, etc.) as special derivations is still dominant in Romanian linguistics (Philippide 1894: 223, Densusianu 1938: 313-316, Ivănescu 1965: 36, Purdela 1970: 10, Vasiliu, în FCLR III 1989: 24-25). An exception is Zugun 1972: 436-443, who argues that “these verbs (...) were formed by conversion and that the suffixes -i and -a have only grammatical value” (p. 436), and that “just as *flutura*, *găuri*, *grebla*, etc. were formed by converting the corresponding names (more precisely, the corresponding homonymous nominal stems) into verbs, so too the nouns *auz*, *cuget*, *laudă*, *licăr*, *rugă*, *simț*, etc. were formed by converting the corresponding verbs (more precisely, the homonymous verbal grammatical stems) into nouns” (p. 441). An intermediate position, which we tend to lean towards, is that of Alf Lombard (1954-1955: 263, 514, 837, 838), who calls the suffixes -a and -i “lexico-grammatical”, which leaves open the classification of words obtained in this way as either derivation or conversion.

¹⁰ By antonymic attraction to (mașină) *automată* (‘automatic car’), (mașină) *manual* (‘manual car’, feminine noun) and „mașină cu schimbare manuală a vitezei” (‘manual gear-change car’) also emerged.

(Ministerul Afacerilor) *Externe(le)* (feminine plural noun); *intern*, -ă (adj.) vs (elev, student, angajat, medic etc.) *intern* (m.n. [masculine noun]) and (Ministerul Afacerilor) *Interne(le)* (feminine plural noun); *mondial*, -ă (adj.) vs (campionate) *mondiale(le)* (feminine plural noun); *congelat*, -ă (adj.) vs (produse) *congelate* (feminine plural noun); *rutier*, -ă (adj.) vs (Poliția) *Rutieră* (feminine singular noun); *șenilat*, -ă (adj.) vs (vehicule) *șenilate* (feminine plural noun), a calque from French (véhicule) *chenille* (masculine noun) etc. Among the best-known examples of nouns inherited from Latin as such through conversion by ellipsis are: feminine nouns: *albină* < (musca) *alvina*, *arșiță* < Latin **arsīcia* (calor), *căldare* < *caldaria* (olla), *ficat* < (jecur) *ficatum*, *găinaț* < (stercus) *gallinaceum*, *iarnă* < *hiberna* (tempora), *ie* < (vestis) *linea*, *miază* < *media* [dies], *nuia* < (vitis) *novella*, *sănătoare* < sanatoria (herba), *turtă* < *torta* (panis), as well as masculine nouns: *orb* < Latin *orbis* (oculis), *piersic* < (melus) *persicus*, *văr* < (consobrinus) *verus*, etc.

The second important type of conversion reviewed by Maria Grossmann is the adjectivization of the participle, considered to be

“the most productive pattern, well documented in Old Romanian and in other Romance languages” (Pană Dindelegan, 2003; Niculescu & Mîrzea Vasile, 2017).

This type of conversion is regular in Romanian and usually results from an exclusively internal process, involving the elision of the governing noun and the subsequent lexicalization of the previously contextually acquired adjectival value (syntactic). A similar phenomenon of adjectivization (though much rarer, and often involving nominalization of animate beings) has occurred with verbs in the gerund form. Literary examples include forms such as *bătând*, -ă (beating), *crescând*, -ă (growing), *lăcrimând*, -ă (weeping), *lâncezind*, -ă (languishing), *mirosind*, -ă (smelling), *murind*, -ă (dying), *plângând*, -ă (crying), *sângerând*, -ă (bleeding), *surâzând*, -ă (smiling), *șovăind*, -ă (hesitating), *șchiopătând*, -ă (limping), *tremurând*, -ă (trembling), *zăcând*, -ă (lying). The difference is that this phenomenon belongs to the modern era and is due to a similar lexico-grammatical calque following a prior French model (Hristea 1967: 253-276, Iordan LRA: 430-431).

“The use with adjectival function of names of flowers, fruit, animals, minerals, and so on to metonymically denote their typical colour is quite recent. Examples include calque models from other languages and belong to the fashion lexicon ([rochie] *fistic*, [fustă] *somon*, etc.). Other simplex nouns, such as (concert) *marfă*, adverbs (*bărbat bine*), and interjections (persoană) *tralala*, etc., can sporadically function as noun modifiers.”

After a detailed presentation of “verbal” conversion (for which see above, footnote 9), whose model “has similarities to those of other Romance languages”, Maria Grossmann concludes the series of regular conversions in Romanian with “adverbial” conversion:

“The most productive pattern of adverb formation, well documented in Old Romanian, is the conversion of the masculine singular form of an adjective” (Mîrzea Vasile, 2012, 2013; Mîrzea Vasile & Croitor, 2017). Examples include: *cântă frumos*, am informat *telefonic*, citește *curgător*, *eminescian* vorbind, salută *cald*, se îmbracă *ciudat*, etc.; beat *crișă*, supărat *foc*, prost *grămadă*, doarme *tun*, supărat *dunăre*, etc.”

III. Lexicological Issues of Conversion in the Romanian Language. Lexicographical Implications

As observed from the description above, the classification of conversion in Romanian is generally similar to that in other Romance languages, except for its relationship with regressive and immediate derivation (which, in the case of motion, can be achieved both regressively and progressively). Although the preference for conversion is known from other languages, Romanian researchers (even contemporary ones) have not, at least until now, changed this “traditional” approach.

One of the major and objective difficulties lies in the relationship with progressive derivation “when a formation with an affix belongs to two parts of speech without being able to prove the origin of one from the other (...)” (FC I, 1970: IX). In cases such as *cărător* (carrier), *deschizător* (opener), *-toare*, *semănător* (sower), etc., we must refer to the etymological criterion (both formal and semantic), due to the homonymy of the Latin suffixes: adj./anim. noun (+agentive *-tor/-toare* “the one who carries”) and adj./n.n [neuter noun]/fem. noun inanimate (+instrumental *-tor/-toare* “with which one carries”). Regardless of the initial morphological quality (adjectival or nominal) of the base, we can consider the results of derivation (or conversion) as different, taking into account the direct origin and the different semantics of the two Romanian suffixes *-tor* (Lat. *-torius*, *-ia*, respectively Lat. *-torium*, *-ia*) (Moroianu 2013: 207-218). In these cases, lexicographical treatment prudently opts—almost unanimously—for recording a single entry word, with a double or triple lexico-grammatical value (from adjective to noun).¹¹

¹¹ “For example, *cărător*, *-oare* is analyzed (adj., subst.) and considered in the DA [Dictionary of the Romanian Academy], s.v., as “the verbal adjective of *căra* [to carry], partially substantivized” and is analysed in a single entry (I. Adj., m. n., f. n. (...); II. Subst. 1. m. n. „butoi de cărat prune și în care acestea sunt lăsate să fermenteze” [‘a barrel for carrying plums in which they are left to ferment’]; 2. f. n. „butoi cu care se cară strugurii

Internal lexical homonymy does not present conceptual problems in Romanian lexicology (Băcilă 2007); rather, it is interpreted differently from a lexicographical standpoint. Since conversion is a process of lexical enrichment, its results should be considered, from a lexicological status perspective, as different words belonging to different lexico-grammatical categories. These words are interpretable based on the context in which they appear, making them internal homonyms by definition, though partially so: *birmaneză* (can refer to both a person and an animal), *înghețată* (adjective and noun), *scurtă* (adjective and noun), *adânc* (adjective, adverb, and noun), *larg* (adjective, adverb, noun), *mărunt* (adjective, adverb, noun/masculine noun), *politic* (adjective, adverb, noun), *fost*, *-ă* (adjective and noun)¹² etc.

The issue of internal homonymy can be resolved, in my view, from a lexicological standpoint by employing direct/immediate etymology, using both formal and semantic arguments. Conversion adheres to the theoretical criterion of “One word/one linguistic unit – one direct etymon”, even though the criterion of multiple etymologies (simultaneous or successive) must also be considered. For example: the masculine noun *bun* (‘grandfather’) was substantivized through ellipsis from *bun* (adjective) in the phrase (tată) *bun* (‘good father’). The feminine noun *bună* (‘grandmother’) has two possible explanations: it could be substantivized from *bună* (adjective) in the phrase (mamă) *bună* (‘good mother’), or it could be derived directly/immediately from *bun* (masculine noun) with the gender suffix *-ă*. In the case of the inherited word *drept* (‘straight/right’), the following partial homonyms (internal and mixed) have emerged: *drept* (adjective), *dreaptă* (adjective, feminine form), *drept* (adverb), *drept* (preposition), *drept*, *-uri* (neuter noun, e.g., ‘a right’),

mustuiți acasă” [‘a barrel used to carry crushed grapes home’] (adopted also in the MDA [Dictionary of Modern Romanian]). A partial exception to this lexicographic convention is the DELR [Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language] (s.v. *căra* vb.), where the words in question are treated as independent members of the lexical family, distinguishing between animate (*cărător*¹, *-oăre*¹ adj., m.n., f. n. „(persoană) care cară, hamal; femeie care cară apă pentru ritualul slobozirii apei, în cadrul înmormântării”) [‘a person who carries, a porter; a woman who carries water for the ritual of water release during a funeral’] and inanimate (*cărătoăre*² f.n. „butoi pentru căratul strugurilor” [‘a barrel for carrying grapes’], *cărător*² n. n. „butoi în care se pun prune ca să fermenteze” [‘a barrel in which plums are placed to ferment’]). The only dictionary that treats all these units as separate entries is the DOOM³, s.v., listing them as follows: *cărătoare*¹ (barrel) (pop.) f. n., *cărătoare*² (person) (pop.) f. n., *cărător*¹ (barrel) (pop.) n. n., *cărător*² (person) (pop.) m. n. However, the adjective form is missing from DOOM³, probably considered obsolete.

¹² Probably a calque from English (my) *ex*, obtained through truncation followed by conversion and, therefore, lexicalization from analyzable structures such as *ex-wife*, *ex-husband*, etc. (https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ex&ref=searchbar_searchhint).

(linie, mână) *dreaptă* (feminine noun, e.g., ‘a straight line’ or ‘right hand’).¹³ The differences related to the transition from one part of speech to another, or to the specializations within the same lexical-grammatical category, are further complemented by semantic differences that move towards specialization, determined by the internal or external linguistic context (in the case of lexical-grammatical calques).¹⁴

In all these cases, both explanatory and etymological dictionaries consider, by lexicographical convention, a single entry. This treatment of conversion is natural and justified when the external etymon possesses a dual morphological quality (mainly adjective and noun(s), where both have external etymons or are created from one another in the source language): *afrodiziac*, *celular*, *titular*, *voluntar*, *vegetarian*, etc. Similarly to the treatment of internal or mixed conversion, all of these are listed under the same entry, with dual grammatical membership, following the criterion of European and Romanian lexicographical tradition, dictated by both linguistic and extralinguistic reasons.

However, there is an oscillating approach in the various editions of the DEX concerning examples of external conversion in the series adj. (with a general meaning) vs f.n. (with a specialized meaning), primarily the names of sciences: *aritmetică*, *botanică*, *critică*, *dialectică*, *fizică*, *informatică*, *lingvistică*, *logică*, *matematică*, *mecanică*, etc. Introduced into Romanian either simultaneously or successively from external sources, these are lexical borrowings with direct etymons different from those of their corresponding adjectives¹⁵. However, since they can be

¹³ See also, through the same lexico-semantic calque, the proper noun *Drept* [Law] as a singularia tantum noun (referring to the Faculty of Law).

¹⁴ The line of demarcation is often debatable between internal creations through conversion, lexico-grammatical calques, and borrowings (see, for example, intern, -ă, borrowed with both adjectival meanings (‘interior’) and nominal meanings ([medical] intern, [student] intern) from Fr. intern, Lat. internus, to which is added intern, -ă m.n. and f.n. ‘one who does professional training under the supervision of experienced staff in a company’, which is more likely explained by borrowing from the English intern, itself a specialization of the same French etymon, originally from Latin).

¹⁵ See, for example, *aritmetic*¹ adj. ‘referitor la numere, la aritmetică’ [pertaining to numbers, to arithmetic] (from Neo-Latin *arithmeticus*, Fr. *arithmétique*, It. *aritmetico*), *aritmetic*² m.n. (archaic) ‘aritmecian’ [arithmetician] (from < Ukrainian Slavonic, Pol. *arytmetyk*, Neo-Latin *arithmeticus*) and *aritmetică* f.n. (from Neo-Latin *arimetica* (< Gr. ἀριθμητική [τέχνη] ‘(arta, meșteșugul) numerelor’, [‘the art of numbers’], a substantivized form of the feminine adjective ἀριθμητικός ‘pertaining to numbers’), Fr. *arithmétique*); *botanic*¹ adj. ‘care ține de studiul plantelor’ [pertaining to the study of plants] (from Fr. *botanique* < Gr. βοτανικός ‘care ține de plante, de ierburii; priceput la plante, la remediile pe bază de plante’ [pertaining to plants, to herbs; skilled in plants, in herbal remedies]), *botanic*² m.n. (archaic) ‘botanist’ (< Ger. *Botaniker* < Lat. *botanicus*) and *botanică* f.n. ‘știința care se ocupă cu studiul plantelor’ [the science that studies plants] (from Neo-Latin *botanica*, Fr. *botanique*

categorized within a regular and prolific pattern, equally popular and cultivated, and are considered to have an evident and regular semantic relationship, they can, by convention, be listed either in a single entry (together with the corresponding adjectives) or in separate entries, provided that their treatment remains consistent. Conversely, examples such as *capitală*, *maximă*, *morală*, *ofensivă*, *secundă*, etc., which are borrowings treated lexicographically as homonyms – a treatment also present in European lexicography – are rightly handled differently, with the valid argument of particular semantic developments¹⁶.

Nouns and adjectives derived from various inflected forms of bases (generally verbal, without adjectival counterparts) and lexicalized as such are correctly treated as different units, even at the lexicographical level: *crescând*, -ă (adj.)/*descrescând*, -ă (adj.), *intrând* (n.)/*ieșind* (n.), *născând*, -ă (adj.), *subtrăgând*, -ă (adj.) (archaic, math.) ‘subtractive’, *șezând*, -ă (adj.), along with all neuter abstracts derived from supines (at least in DEX and DEXI), as well as all examples that are unquestionably unproblematic from an etymological standpoint. On the other hand, the criterion of lexicalization is not consistently followed in our explanatory dictionaries, even when there are no difficulties in etymological interpretation or when lexico-semantic specialization is evident. Except for some particular cases (e.g., *aniversară* f.n. or *canadiană* f.n., the latter considered a direct borrowing), some older or newer words, like *alimentară* (feminine noun) (from

(< Gr. βοτανική [τέχνη]) ‘the science/art of medicinal plants’); *dialectic*¹ adj. ‘care țin de dialectică, conform cu principiile dialecticii’ [pertaining to dialectics, in accordance with the principles of dialectics] (from Neo-Latin *dialecticus*, Gr. Neo-Latin διαλεκτικός, later (in philosophy) Ger. *dialektisch*, Fr. *dialectique*), *dialectic*² m.n. (archaic, rare) ‘dialectician’ [dialectician] (from Neo-Latin *dialecticus*) and *dialectică* f.n. (historical; philosophical) (from Neo-Latin *dialectica* (< Gr.), Gr. Neo-Latin διαλεκτική [τέχνη], substantivization of the adjective διαλεκτικός ‘pertaining to discussion, conversation’), Ger. *Dialektik*, Fr. *dialectique*.

Examples of this type are treated, for instance, in DELR [*Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*], s.v., as different lexical units.

¹⁶ In some cases, a third loanword, a neuter noun, is added to the relationship between the adjective and the feminine noun, with a unique direct etymology that is not included in the multiple etymology of the adjectival base: *capital*¹, -ă adj., f.n. ‘de primă importanță, de căpetenie; (despre pedepse) cu moartea (cu capul); (despre litere) majusculă’ [of primary importance, chief; (about punishments) by death (by beheading); (about letters) uppercase] (from Neo-Latin *capitalis*, Fr. *capital*), *capital*² n.n. ‘a avea, bani investiți într-o afacere’ [wealth, money invested in a business] (from Ger. *Kapital*, Fr. *capital* (< It., Medieval Lat. *Capitale* ‘partea principală a unei sume datorate, excluzând dobânda’ [the principal part of a sum owed, excluding interest] < It. *capitale*, Lat. *capitalis*) and *capitală* f.n. ‘oraș de reședință’ [residence city] (from Fr. [*ville*] *capitale*).

prăvălie alimentară), blândă (feminine noun) (from *boală* or *bubă blândă*)¹⁷, roșie (feminine noun) (from *pătălăgea roșie*), scurtă (feminine noun) (from *haină scurtă*), vânătă (feminine noun) (from *pătălăgea vânătă*), etc., are currently treated alongside the base adjectives, despite their undeniable lexicalization.

It is evident that there cannot be an exact correlation between lexicographical principles and lexicological ones, primarily due to the dynamic nature of language, or, as in this case, due the fact that there is a relatively great freedom to shift from one lexico-grammatical category to another in the process of communication, facilitated by the grammatical structure of the language and the communicative intent of speakers. The clearest example is that all words can be substantivized, entire classes of adjectives can be substantivized or adverbialized, different words can contextually acquire adjectival or verbal value, etc.

The lexicographical treatment of conversion – understood in a broad sense – is one of the aspects that demonstrates and confirms the conventional nature of establishing the status of a dictionary entry in general-use explanatory dictionaries. From this perspective, the headword or dictionary entry does not equate with the concept of ‘word’ from a lexicological (lexico-semantic and etymological) point of view. A general-use explanatory dictionary is not intended to resolve lexicological issues such as the relationship between polysemy and homonymy/paronymy, but aims to review the ‘basic’ lexical units, with a lexico-grammatical category considered original and primary, to which, depending on various criteria, other categories and grammatical values derived regularly or incidentally from it are added.

This lexicographical ‘policy’ is objectively justified from both linguistic and extralinguistic perspectives. Linguistically, it addresses issues such as etymological difficulties, challenges in establishing lexical boundaries, and creating semantic correlations, as well as the dynamic nature of language. Extralinguistically, the policy is especially supported by considerations of convenience, which in turn provide structural advantages for dictionary consultation. Readers find it easier to navigate a single dictionary entry, even if other linguistic criteria—whether etymological, semantic, or grammatical—might suggest treating them as separate units (internal or external partial homonyms)¹⁸.

¹⁷ The word is separated from its corresponding adjective in DA, DLRLC, DLRM, DELR and, of course, in DOOM³, s.v.

¹⁸ Similar treatments characterize all European explanatory lexicographical works, among which I mention the representative French dictionaries (primarily *Le Robert* and *Larousse*) or the Italian ones (*Zingarelli*, *Garzanti*, *Devoto-Oli*, *Treccani*). I do not discuss English lexicography here, given the structural differences between Romance and Germanic languages, despite the significant lexical interferences between the two language families.

The dictionary that consistently adheres to lexicological criteria is the DOOM (*Dicționarul ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române* [The Orthographic, Orthoepic, and Morphological Dictionary of the Romanian Language]), which, due to its normative nature, makes homonymic distinctions where justified and possible:

- a) adj. and n. n. or m. n.: *abortiv*¹ adj. and *abortiv*² n.n., pl. *abortive*, *abraziv*¹ adj. and *!abraziv*² m.n., pl. *abrazivi*, *abrupt*¹ m.adj. and *abrupt*² n. n., pl. *abrupturi*, *absolut*¹ adj. and *absolut*² n. n., pl. *absoluturi*, *abstract*¹ adj. and *abstract*² s. n., (elemente [elements]) pl. *abstracte* etc. (similarly, *amical*, *amplificator*, *angro*, *animal*, adj.and n. n. derived with -tor, -toare); *acid*¹ adj. and *acid*² m. n., pl. *acizi* (similarly, *aditiv*, *adjuvant*, *alergen*, *ameliorator*, names of coulours etc.)¹⁹;
- b) adj. and f. n.: *aeronautic* și *aeronautică*, *aerostatic* and *aerostatică*, *afgan* and *afgană*, *africat* and *africă*, *agonistic* and *agonistică*, *agrotehnic* and *agrotehnică*, *alternativ* and *alternativă*, *anecdotic* and *anecdotică*, *antiaerian* și *antiaeriană* etc.;
- c) mixed situations: adj., adv., n. n./m. n., f.n.: *acaju*¹ invar. adj. (unghii ~), *acaju*² (arboare) m. n., art. *acajuul*; pl. *acaju* and *acaju*³ (culoare) n. n., art. *acajuul*; + *accelerat*¹ m. adj., pl. *accelerați*; f. *accelerață*, pl. *accelerate*, + *accelerat*² adv. and *accelerat*³ n. n., pl. *accelerate*; *adânc*¹ m., f. adj. *adâncă*; pl. m. and f. *adânci*, + *adânc*² adv. and *adânc*³ n. n., pl. *adâncuri*; *amar*¹ adj., + *amar*² interj. (*Vai și-~ de el!*), + *amar*³ (rar) adv. (*Suferă ~.*) and *amar*⁴ n. n., pl. *amaruri* (*atâta ~ de vreme*); *fizic* adj., *fizic* n.n., *fizică* n. f. etc.;
- d) m. n and n. n.: *acordor*¹ (instrument) n. n., pl. *acordoare* și *acordor*² (persoană [person]) m. n., pl. *acordori*, *acumulator*¹ (auto) m. n., pl. *acumulatori* and *acumulator*² (in other domains) n. n., pl. *acumuloare* (similarly, *afișor*, *ajutor*, *alcool*, *alunel*(ul) etc.);
- e) n.n. and f. n.: *agat* and *agată*, *batist* and *batistă*, *franj* and *franjă*, *grup* and *grupă* etc.;
- f) interj. and n.n.: *adiu*¹ interj. and *adiu*² n. n. (*spectacol de ~*, *a-și lua ~*), *alou*¹ (apel telefonic) n. n., art. *aloul* (desp. -lo-ul), pl. *alouri* and *!alou*² interj. (similarly, *amin* intej. and *amin* n.n. etc.);
- g) noun and adverb: *bocnă*¹ (pop., fam.) adv. (a fi/a se face/a îngheta ~), + *bocnă*² (reg.; old) f. n., *foc*² n. n., pl. *focuri*, + *foc*¹ (fam.) adv. (supărat ~/- de supărat), *glonț*² n. n., pl. *gloante*, + *glonț*¹ (fam.) adv. (a fugi [to run]~), *pușcă*² f. n., G.-D. art. *puștii*; pl. *puști*, + *pușcă*¹ (fam.) adv. (gol ~) etc.;

¹⁹ However, adjectives and their corresponding masculine and feminine animate forms are not treated separately (*ales*, *ales*(ul) and *aleasa*, *amărât*, *amărât*(ul) and *amărâta* etc.

- h) antonomasia: *amor* and *Amor*, *antantă* and *Antanta*, *brașoave* and *Brașov*, *dunăre* and *Dunăre*, *harpagon* and *Harpagon* etc.

Conclusions

From a lexicological perspective, conversion is an internal and mixed process of lexical-semantic enrichment through non-derivative means. This process regularly or accidentally, historically or contextually, facilitates the transition from one lexical-grammatical category to another (in the narrow sense) and/or the shift from one grammatical category to another or from one word class to another within the same part of speech (in the broader sense).

In the case of general-use explanatory dictionaries, the treatment of conversion outcomes must be based on the following premises:

a) Consistency in either considering all identical or similar situations as separate entries or treating various lexical-grammatical values under the same headword;

b) Differentiation between the “lexicalization” of certain conversions (as certified by usage) and the purely contextual nature of others (in the latter case, indicated by notes such as “adjectivized”, “substantivized”, “adverbialized”, etc.);

c) Consideration of the etymological criterion as a necessary complementary element to correlate the various “morphological values” within the same dictionary entry with etymological information, adhering to the principle of direct etymology. For example, at least in the case of borrowed feminine nouns denoting the names of sciences, and assuming the debatable inclusion of these nouns within the same entry as the corresponding adjectives, it is necessary to explicitly indicate the external substantive model in the etymological section. This recommendation also applies to lexical-grammatical specializations resulting from lexical-grammatical calques, where it is similarly advisable to indicate in the etymological section, next to the substantive value, the external model that influenced it: *drept*, *dreaptă* adj., adv., m.n., f.n., n.n. „(despre traiectorii, linii) fără curburi sau cotituri, (despre obiecte) cu forma caracterizată prin linii drepte; (ca s.f.) linie dreaptă; aflat în poziție verticală; (ca adv., pe lângă complementele de loc și timp) chiar, exact; conform normelor eticii, corect, just; (despre persoane) care respectă normele eticii, corect; (înv., despre rude) de sânge; (ca s.n.) totalitatea normelor juridice, știință care studiază normele juridice; (ca s.n.) putere, prerogativă recunoscută legal (unei persoane, unei instituții); (ca s.n., înv.) dreptate (azi, în loc. *pe drept* „în mod corect, justificat”); (despre părți ale corpului, față de axul vertical de simetrie) așezat în partea opusă inimii, (p. ext.) aflat în partea spațiului care corespunde părții drepte a unui observator, (ca s.f.) mâna aflată în partea opusă inimii, (ca s.m.) piciorul aflat în partea opusă inimii; (ca s.f.) orientare politică conservatoare, (spec.) orientare politică care susține libertatea economică și proprietatea privată, limitarea intervenției statului și a redistribuirii câștigurilor prin intervenția statului; (înv., despre complementele) direct;

prep. care exprimă atribuirea unei calități, unei funcții, unui rol; prep. care indică poziționarea în fața cuiva sau a ceva; (înv., azi în expr. *drept care*) prep. cauzală și finală; (înv.) prep care indică opoziția față de cineva sau de ceva” [regarding trajectories, lines) without curves or turns, (about objects) with a shape characterized by straight lines; (as f.n.) straight line; positioned vertically; (as adv., with locative and temporal complements) exactly, precisely; conforming to ethical norms, correct, just; (about people) who adhere to ethical norms, correct; (old, about relatives) blood-related; (as n.n.) the entirety of legal norms, the science that studies legal norms; (as n.n.) legally recognized power or prerogative (of a person or institution); (as n.n., old) justice (today in the expression *pe drept* ‘rightfully’); (about body parts, relative to the vertical axis of symmetry) placed on the opposite side of the heart, (by extension) located in the spatial area corresponding to the right side of an observer, (as f.n.) the hand on the side opposite the heart, (as m.n.) the leg on the side opposite the heart; (as f.n.) conservative political orientation, (specifically) political orientation advocating economic freedom and private property, limiting state intervention and redistributing gains through state intervention; (old, about complements) directly; prep. expressing the attribution of a quality, role, or function; prep. indicating positioning in front of someone or something; (old, now in the expression *drept care*) causal and final prep.; (old) prep. indicating opposition to someone or something]. Lat. *dērectus* = *directus*. As an adv., possibly also from Lat. *directō*. With the meanings “the set of norms; legal science”, after Fr. *droit*, It. *diritto*. In the political sense, after Fr. *droite*. In the linguistic sense, after Lat. (complementum) *directum*.²⁰ A similar treatment should also apply to transitions from one grammatical category to another (for example, from neuter to masculine) within the same part of speech (see examples like *baschet* [basketball] as both neuter and masculine, *tenis* [tennis], neuter, masculine, etc.)

In a nutshell, from my point of view, internal and mixed conversion can be considered, without reservation, a creator of internal etymological doublets, partial homonyms, and, in cases that may lead to potential confusion, etymological paronyms. The relevant principle is that of different direct etymology (understood to include different external etymons belonging to the same lexical family)²¹.

²⁰ See DELR, III, letter D, part 2, DO-DY (forthcoming). Regardless of the option of the dictionary editors, which in turn depends on the type of dictionary being referenced, the consistency with which identical situations are treated is important: for example, in *DEX 2016*, *conținut* n.n. [neuter noun] is an entry word (see *conține*, without any additional information), while *ilustrată* appears as a f.n. [feminine noun], s.v. *ilustrat*, -ă adj. (with an undifferentiated reference: cf. Fr. *illustré*).

²¹ For reservations regarding the evaluation of homonymy and paronymy resulting from conversion based on the etymological criterion, see a discussion in Valera&Ruz (2020: 3-6). Starting from the idea that the process of conversion is a dynamic phenomenon situated at the intersection of morphology, syntax, and lexical semantics, the two authors argue for

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11. DOOM³ = Ioana Vintilă Rădulescu (coord.), *Dicționarul ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române*. Academia Română. Institutul de lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti”, 2021. 3rd Edition, revised and completed.
12. DȘL = Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu, Cristina Călărașu, Liliana Ionescu Ruxăndoiu, Mihaela Mancaș, Gabriela Pană Dindelegan, *Dicționar de științe ale limbii*, București, Nemira, 2001.

focusing the analysis more on the lexico-morphological relationships established between words rather than on the type of formal outcomes (homonyms or paronyms): “Use of a relationship-oriented rather than an output-oriented approach to conversion, where processes and relationships are clearly separated, may contribute to the identification and separation of the range of formations that meet the profile of the definition of conversion in English” (p. 20).

- 13.DTG = Gabriela Pană Dindelegan, Rodica Zafiu, Adina Dragomirescu, Alexandru Nicolae, Adnana Boioc Apintei, *Dicționar de termeni gramaticali și concepte lingvistice conexe*, București, Univers Enciclopedic, 2023.
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