# FUNCTIONAL SHIFT AND DIRECTIONALITY

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## Abstract

Functional shift is characterized by a changeless form, new function, new word-class and a new meaning. This changeless form of a word being converted poses a lot of problems to language users since one may be faced with a situation to determine which word is derived from the other. In other words, which of the pair is a derivative and which is the root or base? This paper sets out to investigate the directionality of functional shift pairs with the intention of finding out the best criterion one can use to determine the directionality of the functional shift pairs. The study adopts diachronic and synchronic approach for the investigation.

**Keywords**: Functional Shift, Directionality, Diachronic & Synchronic Approach

## Introduction

Functional shift according to Crystal is "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" (114). According to Finegan, the term functional shift is viewed as when a word belonging to one category is converted to another category without any changes to the formof the word (57). Here, one's attention is drawn to the changeless form of the word so converted.One of the questions that may arise is: "Since both the roots and the derivatives have the same forms in functional shift, how then can one determine which word is the root and which word is the derivative? Consequently, the issue of directionality comes up. What then is directionality? "Directionality according to Crystal describes the relationship between two senses of a lexical item, when one can be shown to be derived from the other, as in the case of violin (the instrument) and violin (the player – as in She is first violin) [147]. Simply put, directionality has to do with discovering which functional shift pair is the original form (base form) and which one is the derivative. According to Bram, there are six approaches to directionality:
1. Formal characteristic-based
2. Intuition-based
3. Date-based
4. Level order-based

5. Non significant direction- based
6. Mixture-based
   (74)

Marchand similarly outlined his criteria as follow:
i.     The Semantic Dependence
ii.    The Range of Usage
iii.   The Semantic Range
iv.    Phonetic Shape
       (242-252)
Plag further suggests four strategies for determining directionality and they include:
i.     Historical
ii.    Semantic
iii.   Formal
iv.    Frequential
       (108-111)


Several studies prove that these approaches to greater extent attempt to discover directionality of functional shift pairs.  However, this present study tries to use different lexical data to test the validity of these approaches. The data are purposefully selected from the works of three European writers: Dickens, Wilde and Shakespeare and two African writers: Soyinka and Chukwu. The findings thereof will help us realise the approach with the greatest validity rate.

**Formal Characteristic-Based**
This approach is based on using formal criterion to determine directionality as there are features that distinguish words from one part of speech from the other. For instance, when we pick a word '**slap'** (Verb), and try to convert it to a noun, as in: '**I gave her a slap**'; the phrase – 'a slap' is therefore a noun phrase and not a verb phrase because the word 'slap' is preceded by the form-word attributed to noun; that is the indefinite article 'a'. It is obvious that nouns are preceded by the definite article 'the' or indefinite article 'a' and pluralized by the suffix '-s'.  This implies that other word-classes also have their own formal characteristics peculiar to their own word-classes. So, formal criterion is one of the ways of determining directionality.

**Intuition – Based**
This approach advocates that directionality of functional shift pairs can be decided through intuition which is similar to reflection. For instance, in a word like 'head' used in expressions like: **'Our heads are heavy', and 'He heads the department';** one's intuition or knowledge of the English language should enable them decipher which word is derived from which. Although this

may work perfectly for native speakers of English and advanced users of English, it might be difficult for average users of English because many rarely used words or even widely used ones may prove difficult for them to trace the directionality of functional shift pairs.

**Date-Based**

Date-based approach uses the date of attestation to discover directionality. The word with the earliest date of attestation is seen as the base form and the ones with later dates are seen as the derivatives. This would have been the best method of determining directionality but sometimes, historical facts behind the etymology of some words may be lost or not properly documented. Consequently, some dates of attestation may not be clear or exact. Some other times, the functional shift pairs tend to have the same year of attestation. Our data analysis on directionality in chapter four will either prove us wrong in this issue or uphold our hypothesis.

**Level Order-Based**

This approach involves the interaction or interface between morphology and phonology. Here, stress patterns are used to show directionality of functional shift pairs. In determining directionality of noun to verb conversion and verb to noun conversion, it is believed that in level 1 or stratum 1 which is **verb to noun** functional shift, the pair has stress shift (non-neutral). For instance, we have the following:

**Verb ⟶ Noun Functional shift**
to con'vert ⟶ the 'convert
to re'cord ⟶ the 'record
to trans'fer ⟶ the 'transfer

We also have level 2 or stratum 2 which is noun to verb functional shift, the pair has no stress shift (neutral). For instance, we have the following:
**Noun ⟶ Verb Functional shift**
the 'advocate ⟶ to 'advocate
the 'patent ⟶ to 'patent
the 'pattern ⟶ to 'pattern

Kiparsky's 1982 generalization that verb to noun functional shift which is zero-derivation accompanied by stress shift and takes place at level 1 is not unproblematic because Myers noted counter examples as thus:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| acc'ord V N | acc'ount V N | appr'oach V N |
| ass'ent V N | adv'ance V N | att'ack V N |
| att'ent V N | dec'ay V N | cem'ent V N |
| conc'ern V N | am'ount V N | def'eat V N |
| disp'ute V N | pres'erve V N | disg'uise V N |

rel'ease V N       patr'ol V N       supp'ort V N
 (Myers 59)

Similarly, Bram gave other instances to counter Kiparsky's generalization as thus: adv'ance, comm'and, des'ign, disc'ard, dis'play, em'brace, la'ment, re'ject, re'main, stam'pede, su'pply and sur'round (86).

**Non-Significant Direction - Based**
This approach regards directionality as less important and focuses on identifying stress and/or
sound pattern, and investigates the phonological differences. Therefore, this criterion will not be useful for this study and will be discarded.

**Mixture – Based**
This approach involves combining two or more operations of valid approaches together and uses them to measure directionality. For instance, we can combine date-based approach with level order-based approach etc.

The truth is that all these criteria attempt to answer the question of directionality of functional shift pairs in English. We can now test some of these criteria to ascertain their levels of validity in determining the directionality of the functional shift pairs in English.

**Analysis to Discover Directionality of Functional Shift Pairs**
We should remember that directionality of functional shift pairs is simply discovering which of the word, is the base form and which is the derivative? For this analysis, four (4) criteria will be used:
i.  Attestation Date
ii.  Semantic Range
iii. Semantic Dependence
iv. The mixture of the above criteria

The data for this analysis are selected randomly from the works of five authors earlier mentioned in the work. The data therefore, include words that underwent the process of functional shift as used in those texts. The words are clearly slated in the data table below and they serve as the data for analysis:

## Data Table

| Better | blind | carpet | Cement | Chance | chase | chronicle | dirty | doctor | dumb |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------|
| Eye | fail | Fancy | Father | Feast | ferret | husband | make | paper | panic(k) |
| Queen | Safe | Salary | Shame | Slap | smoke | treasure | wet | womb | |

The above words on the data table were chosen as:

| S/N | FUNCTIONAL SHIFT PATTERN | WORD | NOUN | VERB *INTRASITIVE* *TRASITIVE* | | ADJECTIVE | SEQUENCE ACCORDING TO DATE OF ATTESTATION |
|-----|--------------------------|------|------|---------|---------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Adjective to Verb | Better | | 1300 | 1384 | 883 | A-Vi-Vt |
| 2 | Adjective to Verb | Blind | | 1305 | 1300 | 1000 | A-Vt-Vi |
| 3 | Noun to Verb | Carpet | 1345 | - | 1626 | | N=Vt |
| 4 | Noun to Verb | Cement | 1300 | 1677 | 1340 | | N-Vt-Vi |
| 5 | Noun to Verb | Chance | 1297 | 1393 | 1859 | | N-Vi-Vt |
| 6 | Noun to Verb | Chase | 1297 | 1375 | 1314 | | N-Vt-Vi |
| 7 | Noun to Verb | chronicle | 1303 | - | 1414 | | N-Vt |
| 8 | Adjective to Verb | Dirty | | 1864 | 1591 | 1530 | A-Vt-Vi |
| 9 | Noun to Verb | Doctor | 1400 | 1865 | 1737 | | N-Vt-Vi |
| 10 | Adjective to Verb | Dumb | | 1300 | 1608 | 1000 | A-Vi-Vt |
| 11 | Noun to Verb | Eye | 700 | 1606 | 1566 | | N-Vt-Vi |
| 12 | Verb to Noun | Fail | 1297 | 1225 | 1325 | | Vi-N-Vt |
| 13 | Noun to Verb | Fancy | 1471 | - | 1646 | | N-Vt |
| 14 | Noun to verb | Father | 825 | - | 1400 | | N-Vt |
| 15 | Noun to Verb | Feast | 1200 | 1300 | 1340 | | N-Vi-Vt |
| 16 | Noun to Verb | Ferret | 1398 | 1450 | 1483 | | N-Vi-Vt |
| 17 | Noun to Verb | husband | 1290 | - | 1565 | | N-Vt |
| 18 | Verb to Noun | Make | 1325 | 1387 | 700 | | Vt-N-Vi |
| 19 | Noun to Verb | Paper | 1341 | - | 1594 | | N-Vt |
| 20 | Noun to Verb | panic(k) | 1640 | 1910 | 1827 | | N-Vt-Vi |
| 21 | Adjective to Verb | Safe | | - | 1602 | 1297 | A-Vt |
| 22 | Noun to Verb | Salary | 1377 | - | 1477 | | N-Vt |
| 23 | Noun to | Shame | 725 | 897 | 897 | | N-Vi/Vt |

| | Verb | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Verb to Noun | Slap | 1648 | 1796 | 1632 | | Vt-N-Vi |
| 25 | Noun to Verb | Smoke | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | | N-Vi/Vt |
| 26 | Noun to Verb | treasure | 1154 | - | 1382 | | N-Vt |
| 27 | Adjective to Verb | Wet | | 1310 | 950 | 888 | A-Vt-Vi |

1. From the work of Dickens - **doctor, paper, fancy and carpet** (35-45).
2. From the work of Soyinka - **wet, dirty, feast, fail, father, husband, slap, chance** and **smoke** (1-52).
3. From the work of Wilde – **chronicle** (1146-1161),
4. From the work of Shakespeare - **safe, eye** and **dumb** (1.V.50-I.iii 97).
5. From the work of Chukwu - **treasure, cement, chase, blind, panic(k), ferret, salary, make** and **better** (63-119).

Now, to measure directionality, the date of attestation is used as the first criterion.

**Date of Attestation in Measuring Directionality**

(*Oxford English Dictionary*)

In the above table, attestation dates for the functional shift pairs and the sequence of the functional shifts are listed, showing evidences of directionality. The criterion is highly valid for determining directionality. However, in one or two instances, we noted that some functional shift pairs have the same attestation date such as words like **smoke** and **shame.** Theword **smoke** has its noun, intransitive verb and transitive verb attestation date as the year 1000. Although the word **shame** recorded a difference in the year of attestation as noun and verb, the date for its intransitive and transitive attestation is the same. Apart from these minor challenges, attestation date criterion proved a near perfect approach.

**Semantic Range in Measuring Directionality**
For this criterion, the researcher made use of Oxford English Dictionary. After the analysis, the findings reveal that:
1. Some converted words tend to have more semantic range than the source, like the word **smoke.**
2. Some other times, the bases will have an equal semantic range with their derivatives, like the words: **panic**(**k**), **slap** and  **chronicle**
3. Words like **blind, cement, chronicle, dirty, doctor, dumb, eye, fail, father, paper, shame, treasure wet,** etc, actually prove that the base

forms of words suppose to have more semantic range than the derivatives.

Sometimes, functional shift items can be completely independent of their bases for them to become obsolete. Marchand notes that the word **stimulant** became independent of its adjective base and had now become a full-fledged noun to the extent that some speakers do not even realise that it was converted from an adjective (Marchand, 361). From these observations, semantic range criterion tried to some extent in discovering directionality. Though it is less in validity compared to the date of attestation.

**Semantic Dependence in Measuring Directionality**
The contexts where the words in the data table appear in the selected texts chosen for the study reveal that there exists an extension of meaning from the roots to the derivatives; and this depicts the inherent characteristic of a functional shift process. The study therefore shows that the semantic dependence criterion proved 100% accurate and has a high level of validity rate. The reason behind it remains that the functional shift pairs share a semantic relationship. In this, the derivative adopts at least one range of meanings from its base or root where it is derived from. Based on this, the semantic dependence criterion proves a hundred percent excellence in validity. Therefore, all the words in the data table have semantic relations with their bases or roots. Apart from the words **wet** and **safe** that has no entry for verb, all others show evidence of semantic dependence. Therefore, there is the possibility of the word **wet** as a verb (derivative) to have semantic relationship with the base or root (adjective) it is derived from; same applies to the word **safe**. This assertion is made based on the fact that there is an evidence of semantic relation where the words, **wet** and **safe,** are used. The extract: "*Will guru morin wet my throat?"* (Soyinka,16). "*And that which most with you should safe my going/Is Fulvia's death"* (Shakespeare, I.iii.55).  The verb use of the words, **wet** and *safe,* from the excerpts show that they have semantic relationship with their adjective bases.

**The Mixture – Based**
The mixture-based approach as noted earlier, involves the combination of two or more operations of valid approaches together and uses them in measuring directionality. In this study, to arrive at a more valid generalization of all the results, we have to compare all the criteria used in the study in order to discover words and functional shift patterns that pass the test of all the criteria used. We have seen that these criteria taken individually, actually measure directionality to some extent. However, we must arrive at a concrete generalization by combining all the criteria together to see if our analytical tools for this study are justifiable. So, we can now combine the following:

i. Date of Attestation
ii. Semantic Range
iii. Semantic Dependence
iv. Mixture Criterion

## Comparison of all the criteria used

| S/N | WORD | FUNCTIONAL SHIFT PATTERN | TEST FOR ATTESTATION DATE | TEST FOR SEMANTIC RANGE | TEST FOR SEMANTIC DEPENDENCE | MIXTURE CRITERION GRADE (3/3) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | better | A > V | pass | fail | Pass | 2/3 |
| 2 | blind | A > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 3 | carpet | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 4 | cement | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 5 | chance | N > V | pass | fail | Pass | 2/3 |
| 6 | chase | N > V | pass | equal | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 7 | chronicle | N > V | pass | equal | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 8 | dirty | A > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 9 | doctor | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 10 | dumb | A > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 11 | Eye | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 12 | Fail | V > N | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 13 | fancy | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 14 | father | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 15 | feast | N > V | pass | equal | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 16 | ferret | N > V | pass | pass | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 17 | husband | N > V | pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 18 | make | V > N | pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 19 | paper | N > V | pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 20 | panic(k) | N > V | pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 21 | safe | A > V | pass | No verb entry | No verb entry | ? |
| 22 | salary | N > V | pass | equal | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 23 | shame | N > V | pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 24 | slap | V > N | pass | equal | Pass | 2.5/3 |
| 25 | smoke | N > V | Fail | Fail | Pass | 1/3 |
| 26 | treasure | N > V | Pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |
| 27 | wet | A > V | Pass | Pass | Pass | 3/3 |

From above table, the following words and their functional shift patterns pass the test of all the criteria. The words include: **blind**, **carpet**, **cement**, **dirty**, **doctor**, **dumb**, **eye**, **fail**, **fancy**, **father**, **husband**, **make**, **paper**, **panic (k)**, **shame**, **treasure and wet**

## Conclusion
In all the analytical tools employed in determining directionality of functional shift pairs, it is worthy to note that they all address the issue of directionality of functional shift pairs though with varied validity rate. However, the semantic dependence tops all other criteria, followed by the date of attestation. Therefore, directionality of functional shift pairs can actually be measured.

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