THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUAL-FORM ADVERBS: LATE/ LATELY

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ABSTRACT. A dual-form adverb is understood here as an item which derives from an elementary adjective and which presents two different forms. One of these is formally identical with the elementary adjective, while the other form has been created, apparently, by means of derivation, that is, by adding the suffix -ly to the elementary adjective. An illustrative example of a dual-form adverb is late (adv.), and lately (adv.), from late (elementary adjective) (Nevalainen 1994a: 249). This paper tries to clarify the origin of these adverbial forms by carrying out a thorough analysis of the word-formation processes related to their appearance, namely conversion and derivation.

KEY WORDS: dual-form adverb, conversion, derivation, historical evolution.

RESUMEN. Una doble forma adverbial se puede definir como un adverbio que deriva de un adjetivo elemental y que presenta dos variantes. Una de estas variantes es formalmente idéntica al adjetivo elemental del que deriva, mientras que la otra forma adverbial ha sido creada aparentemente por medio de un proceso de derivación, es decir, añadiéndole el sufijo -ly al adjetivo elemental. Un ilustrativo ejemplo de una doble forma adverbial es late/lately, en la que ambas variantes adverbiales derivan del adjetivo elemental late (Nevalainen 1994a: 249). Este artículo pretende clarificar el origen de estas dobles formas adverbiales a través de un exhaustivo análisis de los procesos de formación de palabras implicados en su aparición: conversión y derivación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: doble forma adverbial, conversión, derivación, evolución histórica.

1. INTRODUCTION

By dual-form adverb I refer to an item derived from an elementary adjective (Ungerer 1988: 31) which presents two adverbial variants, namely the suffixless and the suffixed forms, e.g. slow/slowly, short/shortly (Nevalainen 1994a: 248-249). The aim of this paper is clarifying the origin of these adverbial forms by studying the word-formation processes involved in their development, namely conversion and derivation.

Therefore, the first section (section 2) is devoted to the analysis of the word-formation processes that give rise to both the suffixed and the suffixless adverbial forms, namely conversion and derivation. Section 3 presents a graphic representation of the information depicted in the previous sections applied to the dual-form adverb late/lately. Finally, the last part of this paper, section 4, provides the conclusions drawn from this research.

2. WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF DUAL-FORM ADVERBS

2.1. Conversion

This section will explain the appearance of the suffixless form of dual-form adverbs and those aspects related to its development. Therefore, conversion is one of the word-formation processes which are relevant here.

Conversion is defined by Quirk et al. (1985: 1558) as a “derivational process whereby an item is adapted or converted to a new word class without the addition of an affix.”

Historically speaking, this word-formation process is thought to be related to the weakening of unstressed vowels to schwa and its subsequent fall in English (Jespersen 1972: 153). In OE new adverbs were formed by adding the suffix –e to adjectives, e.g. hard (adj.).
and hard-e (adv.). However, in late OE unstressed vowels began to suffer a process of levelling and weakening to schwa. During ME schwa fell, thus causing the formal identification between the adjective and the adverb, e.g. hard (adj.) and hard (adv.). At the same time, this homomorphy, which was the result of a chain of phonological changes which included the levelling to /ə/ of unstressed vowels, the weakening of this /ə/ to schwa and its subsequent loss,\(^2\) was reinterpreted as the outcome of a process of conversion at later individual stages. This interpretation was easily carried out due to the semantic connection existing between the adjective and the adverb, since, as Marchand (1969: 11) points out, “there is no derivational connection between words if they have no semantic features in common.” Therefore, speakers assumed this homomorphy as conversion from adjectives to adverbs, and eventually they applied this process to other adjectives, by means of analogical extension, to obtain new adverbs. The following example illustrates how the existence of hard (adj.) and hard (adv.) is understood as the outcome of conversion, and how conversion is applied to a more recent adjective, clean, to form a new adverb, clean.

(1) a. hard (adj. OE heard): hard (adv. OE heard + -e) (OED s.vv. hard, adj., hard, adv.)

b. clean (adj. OE clæne): clean (adv. from the adjective) (OED s.vv. clean, adj., clean, adv.)

Thus, according to what has been said, two types of homomorphic pairs can be distinguished: (a) those resulting from the process that I have called historical evolution, and (b) those resulting from the application of conversion by means of a false analogy with type (a). Moreover, type (a) is also sustained by the fact that one of the main characteristics of conversion is that it starts with one single form and it ends with two, not the other way round. Therefore, the homomorphic pairs of type (a) could never be the outcome of conversion. Nevertheless, distinguishing between these two types of homomorphy is one of the first problems which arise when these formally identical words are studied.

A second problem related to these pairs of homomorphic words, adjective and adverb, created by conversion is discerning which one derives from the other. So far, it has been assumed that adverbs are derived from adjectives, though conversion in the opposite direction would also be possible: an adjective derived from an adverb (the adjective near derives from the comparative form of the adverb nigh (OED s.v. near, adv\(^2\))). Thus, determining directionality is one of the most interesting and complicated problems of conversion. This is a controversial issue which has been discussed by several authors who have proposed different criteria. Some of these criteria have been analyzed by Balteiro (2004: 286ff), who has applied them to her study. On the one hand, she deals with two diachronic criteria, namely etymology and dates of first records, and, on the other, she analyzes synchronic criteria such as the following:

(a) Semantic dependence
(b) Restriction of usage
(c) Semantic range
(d) Semantic pattern
(e) Morphological type
(f) Stress
(g) Principle of relative markedness
(h) Phonetic shape

The data in the present study will mainly be subjected to the etymological criterion, which is essential to identify conversion. The dates of first records will also be taken into account, though with great caution. The remaining criteria, not being really determining, will be used only when these two diachronic criteria are not conclusive enough.
2.2. Derivation

Besides conversion, other processes of word-formation are involved in the development of dual-form adverbs. As seen in the previous section, conversion has been used to explain the appearance of the suffixless adverbial forms. Now derivation, more specifically suffixation, will be used to justify the development of the suffixed forms.

One of the most productive adverbial suffixes in PDE is –ly (Quirk at al. 1985: 438ff), which is precisely involved in the creation of dual-form adverbs. However, the analysis of this adverbial suffix shows the existence of a homomorphic adjectival counterpart which gives rise to a new hypothesis to explain the origin of the suffixed form of dual-form adverbs, namely conversion with an adjective in –ly.

The history of the adverbial suffix –ly begins in OE. At this stage one of the most productive adjectival suffixes was –lic, e.g. winterly. Adjectives ending in –lic added the suffix –e to form adverbs, so –lic + -e became a very common combination which occurred in adverbs. –lice was soon reinterpreted as an adverbial suffix and came to be used as such with other adjectives. Moreover, in the course of time, both suffixes, the adjectival -lic and the adverbial –lice, became formally identical due to historical evolution, thus becoming –ly. Therefore, these two suffixes are related etymologically and are formally identical. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) refers to adjectival –ly as –ly¹, and to adverbial –ly as –ly².

An interesting question which arises here concerns the productivity¹ potential of adjectival –ly in post-OE times, that is, is the OE adjectival –ly suffix still productive from ME onwards, and therefore could the adverbs in –ly be the product of conversion with the corresponding adjective?

The method which I have used to measure the productivity of adjectival -ly¹ is looking for the type frequency of this suffix from 1200 onwards, taking into account only those adjectives which do not present a homomorphic adverb in order to avoid possible cases of conversion which would erroneously alter the results. This quantitative measure has been criticized, because it takes into account all the types, even those created during the productive period of the affix (Plag 1999: 22, 23; 2003: 52), which may not correspond to the period under analysis. Therefore, a high type frequency could also be the result of the productivity of that affix in past stages. In view of this potential handicap, I only took into account neologisms formed from 1200 onwards, as mentioned above. Along with the aforementioned criticism of the quantitative measure, the use of the OED to carry out this search could also be the object of criticism because, according to Plag (1999: 99), the entries of this dictionary are collected from an unspecified sample and there is some inconsistency in the sampling of individual forms. However, Plag also recognizes that these disadvantages are not strong enough to disregard the use of the OED in productivity studies. Moreover, this author defends its use considering that it offers thorough and complete information on all the words of the language and, hence, on the development of the vocabulary of English (Plag 1999: 97; 2003: 52).¹

The results of my measurement of productivity are provided in Table 1 below. As can be seen adjectival -ly¹ is still productive from ME onwards in the pattern noun + -ly¹ = adjective (72.13%), whereas the pattern adjective + -ly¹ = adjective is less frequent (16.12%), thus less productive.⁵
366 adjs. in -ly¹ without homomorphic adv. after 1200
72.13% from a noun (264 items), e.g. *citizenly*.
16.12% from an adj. (59 items), e.g. *cautiously*.
9.01% from a doubtful word-class (33 items), e.g. *weeply* (weep n. or v.).
2.73% from other word-classes (10 items), e.g. *chokely* (from a verb), *forthly* (from an adverb).

Table 1. Productivity of adjectival -ly¹ from ME onwards.

The productivity of -ly¹ after ME leaves the door open for a new hypothesis to explain the origin of the suffixed form of dual-form adverbs, namely conversion with an adjective in -ly¹. Thus this adjective in -ly¹ would be an intermediate step between the elementary adjective and the suffixed adverbial form. In order to prove this hypothesis, the *OED* was, once again, used. Contrary to the measurement of the productivity of the suffix -ly¹ discussed above, in which homomorphic pairs were disregarded, this hypothesis is based on the relation between homomorphic items as regards conversion and directionality. A total of 468 homomorphic pairs which seem to have originated in a process of conversion after ME were found in the *OED*. After analyzing them, taking into account etymology and the dates of first records, the results are showed in Table 2:

| 468 –ly adjs. with a corresponding homomorphic –ly adv. | 45.63% of the –ly adjectives derive from their homomorphic adverbs, e.g. *stilly* (214 items). |
| 38.65% of these forms have the adjective as the original form, e.g. *behovely* (181 items). |
| 15.46% represent those doubtful cases in which the same date is found for both the adjective and the adverb, e.g. *whitely* (73 items). |

Table 2. Conversion between adjectives and adverbs in –ly.

The high proportion of forms which have their origin in –ly adjectives (38.65%) demonstrates that the hypothesis according to which some suffixed forms of dual-form adverbs could have their origin in a homomorphic adjective rather than in the elementary adjective proper is feasible. According to this, both forms of dual-form adverbs can derive directly from the elementary adjective by means of conversion and derivation respectively, or an intermediate step can be found between the elementary adjective and the suffixed adverbial form, namely an adjective in –ly. This adjectival form would give rise to the suffixed adverbial form by means of conversion.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE DUAL-FORM ADVERB LATE/LATELY AND OF THE ITEMS RELATED TO IT

On the basis of the information provided by the *OED*, I have represented in Figure 1 below the different steps that the dual-form adverb *late/ lately* and the items related to it, *late* (adj.) and *lately* (adj.), have followed in their development.
Thus, according to the OED, *late* (adj.) has its origins in OE *læt* (*OED s.v. late, adj.*) and it occurred for the first time in 897 (example (2)). This adjective presents a range of meanings with a clear temporal reference. On the other hand, the adverb *late* has its origins in OE *læt, lat-e* (*OED s.v. late, adv.*) and the date of its first record is 1000 (example (3)). This adverb derives from the elementary adjective *late* by adding the OE adverbial suffix –e (movement marked in Figure 1 by the blue arrow number 1 which goes from *late* (adj.) to *late* (adv.)). In the course of time, both items become formally identical due to the process I have labelled historical evolution. Therefore, no process of conversion is involved in the appearance of *late* (adv.). As regards semantics, *late* (adv.) took its meaning from the elementary adjective *late*; hence its senses also show a clear temporal reference.

(2) *Eft wæs unraed, nalas elnes læt* (*Beowulf* 1529) (*OED s.v. late, adj.1.*).

(3) *Late on ñeare* (1000 *O.E. Chron.* an. 867 (Parker MS.)) (*OED s.v. late, adv.2.a.*).

On the other hand, the adverb *lately* has its origins in OE *lætlice* (*OED s.v. lately, adv.*), its pattern of formation being the adjective *late* plus –ly² (the origin is indicated in the figure by means of the blue arrow number 2). It is recorded for the first time in 1000 (example (4)). This adverb took its meanings from the elementary adjective *late* and, thus, a clear temporal reference is present. As regards the adjective *lately*, the OED considers that this form is the result of adding –ly¹ to the elementary adjective *late* (*OED s.v. lately, adj.*). The date of the first record of this adjective is 1400 (example (5)) (blue arrow number 3 in the figure).

(4) *Da andswarode he him lættlice* (1000 *Life of Guthlac* xx. (1848) 80/12) (*OED s.v. lately, adv.1.*).

(5) *He, þat yn goynge, haus his paas large and latly, welfare shall folwe him yn all his werkys* (1400 tr. *Secreta Secret.*, Gov. Lordsh.117) (*OED s.v. lately, adv.1.*).

However, I do not agree with the OED in considering *lately* (adj.) a –ly¹ derivation. I consider the adjective *lately* to be the result of a process of conversion with the adverb *lately*, which appeared four hundred years earlier. The following arguments support my hypothesis of conversion (this hypothesis is showed in the figure by means of a yellow arrow which goes from *lately* (adv.) to *lately* (adj.)):
(i) The adverb *lately* (1000) is recorded four hundred years earlier than the adjective *lately* (1400). So late an appearance of the adjective with respect to the adverb seems to be related not to -ly\(^1\), but to -ly\(^2\), as the result of a process of conversion. Moreover, it is not likely that the language used a different pattern of formation to create a new item which presents a homomorphic counterpart which appeared long before the new one, and with which the new item is related etymologically.

(ii) Synchronic criteria can also be applied to *lately* (adv.) and *lately* (adj.). In this connection, semantic dependence can be observed if the time reference implied in the two only meanings of *lately* (adj.), ‘slow’ and ‘recent’, is taken into account.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this paper has been the analysis of all the possible origins of dual-form adverbs. Therefore, two word-formation processes, namely conversion and derivation, have been used to explain the development of these adverbial forms. Conversion with the elementary adjective has usually been considered the origin of the suffixless form of dual-form adverbs. However, the formal overlap between the elementary adjective and the unsuffixed adverbial form can also be explained by means of a chain of phonological changes which I have subsumed under the label ‘historical evolution’.

On the other hand, the appearance of the suffixed form of dual-form adverbs is explained by means of derivation since most of these suffixed adverbs are created by adding –ly\(^2\) to the elementary adjective. Nevertheless, another possibility to explain the origin of this adverbial form is presented: conversion with an adjective in –ly\(^1\). The analysis of the productivity of the adjectival suffix –ly\(^1\) has shown that this suffix is still productive from ME onwards. Therefore, the hypothesis according to which the suffixed adverbial form may have its origin in a process of conversion with its homomorphic adjective is feasible, since a 38.65% of these adverbs present the adjective as the original form.

As regards the dual-form adverb *late/lately*, the appearance of the suffixed form is explained by means of derivation, whereas the suffixless form is the result of historical evolution. Contrary to the *OED*, I point out conversion with the adverb *lately* as the origin of the suffixed adjective *lately*, since the former appeared four hundred years earlier than its adjectival homomorphic counterpart.

NOTES

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2. From now on, I will refer to this chain of phonological changes as historical evolution.

3. According to Plag (2003: 44), productivity is understood as the property of an affix to be used to coin new complex words.

4. Other authors such as Sebastian Hoffmann (2004) or Christian Mair (2004: 123-125) also analyze and defend respectively the possibility of using the OED as a historical corpus.

5. The remaining 2.73% and 9.01% correspond, respectively, to those -ly items derived from word-classes other than nouns and adjectives, and to those formations in which the category of the base admits several interpretations.
REFERENCES
