

In many languages, including Swedish, there exist homophonous verb-noun pairs that seem to be related to the same underlying concept, as exemplified below for Swedish:

- (1)
- a. pussa<sub>verb</sub> - en puss<sub>noun</sub> ('kiss') (Impact)
  - b. cykla<sub>verb</sub> - en cykel<sub>noun</sub> ('bike') (Instrument)
  - c. kvittra<sub>verb</sub> - (ett) kvitter<sub>noun</sub> ('chirp') (Sound)
  - d. stapla<sub>verb</sub> - stapla<sub>noun</sub> ('pile') (Result)
  - e. misshandla<sub>verb</sub> - misshandel<sub>noun</sub> ('manhandle/assault') (Event)

This talk investigates noun-verb-conversion in Swedish, with focus on the following questions:

1. What are the possible semantic relations between the verb and the corresponding noun, and to what extent is the interpretation of the noun predictable given the meaning and syntactic behavior of the verb?
2. To what extent is noun-verb conversion a productive process? (here focusing mainly on Swedish)
3. What is the division of labour between the lexicon and the syntax, i.e., could verb-noun-conversion be captured as (i) a lexical process, (ii) a syntactic process, or (iii) should we treat sense-related, homophonous verbs and nouns as independent lexical entries with no formal relation between them.

I argue for the following answers:

1. The semantic relation between the verb and corresponding noun is in most cases transparent and predictable, taking the argument/event structure of the verb as the starting point.
2. Noun-verb conversion is a somewhat productive process in Swedish, though there is always some process of "coining" involved, or more specifically - morphosyntactic and/or semantic features must be added to an already existing root: either information about gender/declension class is added to verbal root, or event/argument structure information is added to a nominal root. In other words, lexical items that can surface either as nouns or verbs, need to carry explicit marking about this in the lexicon.
3. One and the same lexical entry can be targeted in both nominal and verbal contexts. Lexical entries contain a set of features of which only a subset need to enter the syntax.

I will in the talk also lay out the basics of the so called Nanosyntax program, as been developed during the last years at the University of Tromsø/CASTL (instigated by M. Starke). I will show that Nanosyntax provides better tools for explaining the nature of noun-verb conversion (and different types of either valency or category changing operation in general) than other theories dealing with similar issues (I will explicitly discuss Distributed Morphology, Pustejovsky's Generative Lexicon and Hale and Keyser's writings on the relations between lexical category and argument structure).