

Word-formation types
Definition, identification, classification

Andreas Nolda
Szegedi Tudományegyetem
Német Nyelvészeti Tanszék

The demarcation of word-formation types is a classical problem of word-formation theory. There are at least five subproblems to be distinguished:

1. How can “word formation” and “word-formation product” be defined in a universal way?
2. How can word-formation products be identified in individual languages and distinguished from other constructions, such as syntactic phrases?
3. How can terms for word-formation types like “compounding” and “derivation” as well as subtypes thereof be defined in a universal way?
4. How can word-formation types be identified in a given language?
5. How can the word-formation types in a language be hierarchically arranged into sub- and cross-classifications?

In this talk I shall argue that the problem of defining word-formation types can be solved in a reasonable way given a solution for the problem of defining “word formation” and “word-formation product”; a solution of the problem of identifying word-formation products, however, is not required. To this end, I shall discuss suitable universal criteria for selected word-formation types. On the example of German, I shall show how those word-formation types can, in principle, be identified and hierarchically classified.