

Preface

This monograph examines derivational networks in 40 European languages. It combines a new theoretical perspective on the complexity of derivational processes in various languages with an examination of their typological characteristics. For that purpose, a new methodological approach has been introduced, including a number of parameters: the saturation value, the maximum derivational capacity, the maximum and average number of orders of derivation, and typical combinations of semantic categories and their blocking effects.

The point of departure for the theoretical considerations is the concept of the derivational paradigm that derives from the established concept of the inflectional paradigm. Recent decades witness to the fact that the original bias against derivational paradigms has been overcome and that this concept has already found its firm place in morphological investigations. Nevertheless, it appears that this monodimensional concept cannot provide us with a comprehensive picture of the complexity and diversity of derivational relations. This observation is reflected in the relevant literature in the use of a bidimensional concept of derivational nest or family. Still, this level of description is not sufficient either because it disregards the semantic aspect of derivational relations. Therefore, in this book, we introduce a tridimensional system of a derivational network that – in capturing the complexity of derivational relations – combines the ‘vertical’, paradigmatic dimension (all direct derivatives from a base word), the ‘horizontal’ dimension (all successive, linear derivatives from a base word), and the semantic dimension (semantic categories defining each derivational step).

Typologically, the research aims to identify the systematicity and regularity in developing derivational networks in the examined sample of languages and in individual language genera and/or families. This is supported by considerations about the role of word-classes, morphological types, and the differences and similarities between word-formation systems of the languages belonging to the same genus/family.

We wish to express our thanks to the dozens of morphologists who represent the sample languages in the individual language-specific chapters. This monograph would not have come into existence without their expertise and extensive cooperation. As a result, we can provide a picture of derivational networks in

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individual languages, language genera, and European languages as a whole (with the limitations stemming from the sample of languages).

The volume does not and cannot provide a complete picture of this topic in spite of its wide scope. However, it introduces a method that can be applied to other languages and other sample words selected by other criteria, for example, lexical fields.