

RUSSIAN DERIVATOLOGY: CORRELATION OF APPROACHES AND DIRECTIONS

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive overview of approaches and directions in Russian word-formation research (derivatology) from the mid-20th to early 21st century. It examines structural-semantic, onomasiological, paradigmatic, field-based, and cognitive models of derivational analysis, emphasizing their theoretical foundations and methodological implications. Special attention is given to the interpretation of derived words as units of knowledge representation and to the interplay between cognitive and communicative factors in word formation. The study highlights how paradigmatic concepts such as the word-formation field and semantic-derivational category facilitate the integration of morphological, semantic, and conceptual dimensions. Finally, the article argues for an integrative cognitive-communicative approach, demonstrating that word formation functions not only as a mechanism of linguistic categorization but also as a dynamic interface between the speaker's cognitive structures and discourse practices. This perspective provides a framework for future international research in Russian derivatology and its comparative alignment with Western word-formation theories.

Keywords: derivatology; word formation; derived word; cognitive linguistics; nomination; onomasiology; semasiology; semantic-derivational category; derivational category; word-formation field.

Russian derivatology, which emerged as an independent branch of national linguistics in the 1940s and 1950s, primarily through the pioneering work of V. V. Vinogradov [Vinogradov 1951, 1952, 1975], has developed a variety of approaches and directions in word-formation research. This article offers a comprehensive overview of these developments, presenting the theoretical foundations and methodological frameworks that define modern Russian word-formation studies.

From the perspective of analyzing word-formation units, two principal approaches can be distinguished: the *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* approaches.

The syntagmatic approach focuses on the relationships between the base and the derived form, the morphemic structure of words, and the analysis of derivational meanings. In contrast, the paradigmatic approach examines larger conceptual-categorical units, such as derivational methods and derivational categories.

Outcomes of paradigmatic analyses include such constructs as the *word-formation nest* (*slovoobrazovatel'noe gnezdo*) and the *word-formation field* (*slovoobrazovatel'noe pole*).

The Russian tradition has combined these structural analyses with both *onomasiological* and *semasiological* perspectives.

In onomasiology, inspired by the work of Czech linguists such as M. Dokulil and J. Kuharž, the focus is on the process of naming: how a base concept (the “designatum”) is complemented by a distinguishing feature (the “designator”) in derivational processes [Dokulil 1962].

Semasiology, by contrast, studies the semantic structure of established lexical units and their transformations [Toropcev 1974:7].

This study further examines the evolution of Russian word-formation theory under the influence of *cognitive linguistics*, highlighting derived words as units of knowledge storage, retrieval, and conceptualization [Kubryakova 1981, 1988; Babina 2003; Evseeva 2012; Araeva 1994]. Finally, the interplay between *cognitive* and *communicative factors* in derivation is

explored, emphasizing how new words are both conceptual constructs and functional elements in discourse [Golev 2011].

By tracing the development from structural-semantic models to cognitive-communicative perspectives, this article situates Russian derivatology in a broader international context, providing points of comparison with Western theories of word formation.

The emergence of derivatology as a distinct field in Russian linguistics was closely tied to the systematic study of word-formation processes, a research trajectory championed by V. V. Vinogradov.

In his seminal works, Vinogradov outlined the principles for identifying derivational units, classifying morphemes, and analyzing the relationship between bases and their derivatives [Vinogradov 1951, 1952, 1975]. His contributions laid the groundwork for subsequent structural and semantic analyses, and his theoretical frameworks continue to underpin contemporary Russian research.

Early Russian derivatologists distinguished themselves by their attention to both *morphemic structure* and the *functional-semantic value of derivational morphemes*. For example, studies focused on the ways suffixes and prefixes encode derivational meaning and participate in systematic patterns of word formation.

These investigations led to the development of models that allowed scholars to group derived words according to shared structural and semantic features, forming the basis for *derivational fields* (*slovoobrazovatel'noe pole*) and *word-formation nests* (*slovoobrazovatel'noe gnezdo*).

Parallel to structural-semantic approaches, Russian linguists began exploring *conceptual* and *categorical dimensions* of derivation.

Researchers such as E. S. Kubryakova and O. G. Revzina introduced frameworks for correlating derivational meanings with grammatical categories, providing a model for understanding how derived forms organize knowledge and reflect the cognitive activities of speakers [Kubryakova 1978; Revzina 1969].

In this respect, Russian derivatology anticipated elements of what would later become central to *cognitive linguistics*, including the treatment of words as conceptual units embedded in cognitive structures.

The consolidation of derivatology as an independent discipline also involved methodological innovations. Scholars introduced *field-based analyses*, allowing systematic study of derivational patterns across semantic domains, and formalized concepts such as *derivational categories*, which structured word-formation processes according to underlying conceptual principles [Klobukov 2015, 2016].

These developments not only enriched Russian theoretical frameworks but also provided a bridge to international word-formation research, facilitating comparative studies and the integration of Russian insights into broader typological and cognitive models.

Russian word-formation studies distinguish between *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* methods of analyzing derivational units.

The syntagmatic approach examines *relationships between the base and derived forms*, emphasizing morphemic structure and the derivational meaning encoded by affixes. This method focuses on *linear sequences of morphemes* and the transformations that occur during derivation. Within this framework, derived words are considered in direct relation to their bases, allowing researchers to identify rules of morphological combination and semantic modification.

Syntagmatic analysis aligns closely with *onomasiological principles*, in which the derivational process is interpreted as the addition of a distinguishing semantic feature (designator) to a conceptual base (designatum) [Dokulil 1962].

This perspective enables scholars to classify derivational relations as **modification**, **mutation**, or **transposition**, reflecting different ways in which derivational features interact with base meanings.

In contrast, the paradigmatic approach examines *larger derivational systems*, focusing on *derivational categories* and *methods*. Here, the unit of analysis is no longer a single base-derivative pair but the *system of relationships among derivatives* sharing a conceptual or morphological pattern. Constructs such as the *word-formation nest* and *word-formation field* emerge as central analytical tools, allowing scholars to map the internal organization of derivational classes and their semantic cohesion [Revzina 1969; Klobukov 2016].

The paradigmatic approach also intersects with *semasiological analysis*, which considers the evolution and distribution of meanings within lexical units, thereby connecting morphosyntactic structures with semantic networks [Toropcev 1974:7]. By integrating syntagmatic and paradigmatic perspectives, Russian derivatology provides a dual framework for understanding both the linear derivational process and the systemic organization of derived words within the lexicon.

In Russian derivatology, the *onomasiological* and *semasiological* directions represent two complementary perspectives on word formation, each addressing different aspects of the relationship between meaning and form.

The onomasiological approach, rooted in the work of Czech linguists such as M. Dokulil and J. Kuharž [Dokulil 1962], focuses on the process of *naming* (nomination). In derivational terms, it examines how a *base concept* (*onomasiological basis* or *designatum*) is combined with a *distinguishing feature* (*designator*) to create a derived lexical item.

This approach allows researchers to identify fundamental types of derivational relations: **modification**, **mutation**, and **transposition**, which describe how new words arise from the interaction between base meaning and added semantic feature.

In the Russian context, the onomasiological approach has been further developed to analyze *word-formation categories* and *semantic types* of derivation.

For instance, E. S. Kubryakova [1978] demonstrated how derivational meaning correlates with grammatical categories, emphasizing that derived words not only inherit general semantic values but also reflect typical patterns of conceptual connections within the language. Her work highlighted the *double reference* of derived words: to the external world (their lexical meaning) and to the system of the language itself (the source and structure of this meaning).

This dual reference provides a cognitive dimension, bridging morphological analysis with conceptual representation.

By contrast, the *semasiological* direction examines *existing lexical items* and their semantic structures. Instead of focusing on the creation process, semasiology investigates how meanings evolve within the lexicon and how derivational forms interact within semantic networks [Toropcev 1974:7].

In Russian derivatology, semasiological analyses often complement onomasiological research, particularly when exploring *paradigmatic relations* among words sharing morphological and semantic properties.

While onomasiology answers the question “**how is a concept expressed through a derived word?**,” semasiology addresses “**how does the meaning of a word relate to other words and change within the system?**”

Together, these approaches form a *methodological dyad* that allows Russian scholars to capture both the *processual* and *systemic* aspects of word formation.

The Russian onomasiological approach aligns with international theories of lexical nomination, offering a unique integration of *morphological*, *semantic*, and *conceptual dimensions*.

Unlike some Western models, which often focus on *semantic mapping* or purely cognitive categorization, Russian derivatology emphasizes the *structural-semantic correlates of derivational processes*, providing a framework that connects *morpheme-level analysis* with *larger conceptual systems*. This comparative perspective has been particularly productive in exploring *semantic derivational categories* (*semantiko-slovoobrazovatel'naya kategoriya*) and

word-formation fields (*slovoobrazovatel'noe pole*), which integrate derivational methods under a shared conceptual or thematic umbrella [Klobukov 2016].

By situating derived words within both cognitive and morphological networks, Russian derivatology offers a model that is highly compatible with contemporary *cognitive-linguistic approaches*, while retaining a rigorous structural foundation.

The development of *field-based approaches* in Russian derivatology represented a significant methodological innovation, allowing researchers to study derived words not only as individual units but as members of *structured semantic-morphological systems*. This approach was first systematically proposed by O. G. Revzina [1969] and was applied to the analysis of derivational patterns related to the semantic domains of *agentivity*, *abstractness*, and *objects*.

The concept of the *word-formation field* (*slovoobrazovatel'noe pole*) can be understood as a set of derivational morphemes — most commonly suffixes — that *share the property of producing derived words with a similar semantic function or derivational meaning* [Revzina 1969:10].

For example, a suffix cluster forming agent nouns (e.g., *-ник*, *-тель*, *-ист*) can be analyzed as a field, since each morpheme contributes to the expression of the same general semantic category: the performer of an action.

E. V. Klobukov [2016:36] extended this concept by emphasizing that a word-formation field integrates *all derivational categories whose derivational meaning is anchored in a shared conceptual base or general concept*.

In other words, the field represents a *system of derivational units organized around a common notion*, linking morphology, semantics, and conceptual structure.

For example, the field of nouns denoting *professionals or social roles* brings together multiple derivational types, each encoding nuances of agentivity, social function, or abstraction.

For anglophone readers, it is important to note that the Russian term *slovoobrazovatel'noe pole* differs from the generic English “derivational class.”

While the latter often refers to a set of morphologically related words, the Russian concept *emphasizes systemic cohesion, semantic coordination, and the interplay of derivational methods* within a field organized around a central concept.

A further theoretical advancement in Russian derivatology is the notion of the *semantic-derivational category* (*semantiko-slovoobrazovatel'naya kategoriya*), introduced into Russian linguistic terminology in the 1990s [Kad'kalova 1991; Koryakovtseva 1998; Petrukhina 2001]. This category represents a *complex unit formed by a group of derivational types based on semantic unity*, i.e., a shared conceptualization of a fragment of extralinguistic reality.

The semantic-derivational category allows researchers to *systematize derivational processes across different morphological and semantic types*, revealing underlying principles of lexical categorization.

For instance, categories such as *agent*, *object*, or *abstract quality* consolidate different suffixal derivational patterns that converge on the same conceptual function. By doing so, semantic-derivational categories integrate *onomasiological*, *paradigmatic*, and *morpho-semantic dimensions*, providing a robust framework for cross-linguistic comparison and cognitive analysis.

The interrelation between *word-formation fields* and *semantic-derivational categories* lies at the core of Russian derivatology's systemic approach.

A field can be seen as a *morphologically organized cluster*, while a semantic-derivational category provides the *conceptual anchor* for that cluster. This duality allows scholars to trace both *morphological consistency* and *semantic cohesion*, thereby linking formal patterns with meaning-based generalizations.

For example, a word-formation field consisting of the suffixes *-ник*, *-тель*, and *-ист* is conceptually anchored in the semantic-derivational category of *agents or role-holders*. The category defines the *conceptual content*, while the field specifies *derivational options* and

formal realizations. This distinction is particularly important in Russian studies, as it allows the systematic description of derivational productivity, morphological constraints, and semantic specialization simultaneously [Klobukov 2015; Klobukov & Shakar 2016; Shakar 2016].

One of the major tasks in this line of research is the **creation of a typology of semantic-derivational fields**, which can unify derivational methods for different onomasiological categories.

Typological studies include the categorization of **agents, objects, abstract entities, and personal attributes**, mapping out **which derivational types contribute to which conceptual categories**. Such analyses are instrumental in understanding not only morphological productivity but also **semantic organization and cognitive categorization** in the Russian lexicon.

By combining **field-based and semantic-derivational approaches**, Russian derivatologists provide a **multi-layered analytical framework**.

This framework integrates **morphology, semantics, conceptual categorization, and cognitive patterns**, enabling both the description of derivational systems and predictive generalizations about word-formation possibilities in Russian.

Furthermore, it allows meaningful comparison with Western approaches to derivation, particularly in cognitive and typological linguistics, while preserving the specificity of Russian morphosyntactic patterns.

The emergence of **cognitive approaches** in Russian derivatology marked a significant shift from purely structural or semantic analyses to the study of derived words as **units of knowledge representation**.

Influenced by the broader movement toward **anthropocentric** and **cognitive paradigms** in linguistics, Russian researchers began to treat derivation not merely as a morphological or lexical process, but as a **mechanism for organizing and structuring conceptual knowledge** [Kubryakova 1988:142; Alefirenko 2006:47].

Under the cognitive framework, derived words are conceptualized as **cognitive units** that participate in processes of **knowledge storage, retrieval, and generation** [Kubryakova 1981; Babina 2003; Evseeva 2012; Araeva 1994].

E. S. Kubryakova emphasizes the property of **double reference** in derived words:

1. **Reference to the external world**, reflecting the word's individual lexical meaning.
2. **Reference to the linguistic system**, indicating the source of the meaning and the way it exists within the system of secondary nomination.

This dual reference allows derivatologists to trace correlations between **derived words** and **cognitive structures**, revealing how morphological and semantic processes interact with conceptual organization [Kubryakova 2004:59].

Earlier structural-semantic models, such as **word-formation nests** and **fields**, provided detailed descriptions of morphological patterns and semantic relations [Revzina 1969; Klobukov 2016].

Cognitive derivatology extends these models by integrating **mental representations** and **conceptual structures**, using frameworks borrowed from **frame semantics, slot theory, and propositional analysis** [Araeva 1994; Kosyreva 2008; Evseeva 2000; Zhukova 2002].

Derived words are thus interpreted as **cognitive operators**, each encoding not only formal and semantic information but also reflecting the **speaker's conceptualization of the world**.

This perspective aligns with international cognitive-linguistic approaches, such as Langacker's Cognitive Grammar [Langacker 1987], Fillmore's Frame Semantics [Fillmore 1982], and construction-based approaches to derivation, while preserving the rigorous morphological insights characteristic of Russian research.

Within this framework, larger units of analysis emerge, including **word-formation types** and **word-formation nests**, which are treated as **cognitive schemas** integrating multiple derived forms.

For example, a *derivational type* for agent nouns represents a *conceptual frame* in which the role of the agent, the action performed, and the relevant morphological markers are systematically encoded. Word-formation nests, in turn, represent *families of related types*, showing patterns of cognitive categorization across related semantic domains [Demidenko 2007; Osadchiy 2007; Shabalina 2008].

This cognitive perspective allows researchers to identify not only *morphological productivity* but also *patterns of conceptual mapping* in word formation, showing how speakers organize knowledge and categorize the world through derivational processes.

Cognitive derivatology in Russia often employs *propositional-frame modeling*, in which derived words are analyzed as *structured propositions* containing predicates (actions or properties) and associated actants (participants or arguments) [Arutyunova 1971; Shmeleva 1994].

This approach reveals *the logical structure of derivational meaning*, linking morphemes, lexical units, and conceptual roles.

By integrating frame-based representations with *onomasiological* and *paradigmatic perspectives*, researchers can describe *derivational constraints*, *semantic potential*, and *cognitive schemas* simultaneously.

For example, the word-formation field of agent nouns encodes not only morphological options (e.g., suffixes) but also *conceptual expectations* about the role, action, or social function of the agent.

Russian cognitive derivatology demonstrates how *structural*, *semantic*, and *cognitive dimensions* of word formation can be unified within a single analytical framework.

It provides a model for studying derivational systems that is simultaneously:

- **Morphologically precise**, describing formal patterns;
- **Semantically coherent**, grouping related meanings;
- **Cognitively informed**, revealing underlying conceptual structures;
- **Cross-linguistically relevant**, offering points of comparison with Western cognitive

and typological approaches to derivation.

This integration makes Russian derivatology particularly valuable for *comparative cognitive linguistics*, as it combines rigorous formal analysis with detailed modeling of *conceptual categorization* and *cognitive representation*.

In Russian derivatology, *lexical functioning* (*leksicheskoe funktsionirovanie*) refers to the degree to which derived words are actively used in the language and participate in discourse. N. D. Golev [2011] emphasizes the importance of *frequency analysis* in understanding derivational productivity, arguing that the *need for word formation resides in the lexicon*, and its implementation is governed by the *laws of lexical functioning*.

In other words, derivational innovations are *shaped by actual language use*, including frequency, combinatorial possibilities, and stylistic distribution.

Using corpus-based approaches and search engines (e.g., Yandex, Rambler), Golev quantifies *the “lexicality” of derived words*, assessing how frequently they occur and how productive different derivational paradigms are in real discourse.

This methodology allows researchers to identify *morphological patterns that are communicatively salient*, distinguishing between rare innovations and widely established derivational norms.

Golev posits that the *communicative function of language* takes priority over cognitive factors at all linguistic levels, including word formation:

“The communicative determinant of language at all levels, including derivational, makes the impact of cognitive factors largely indirect, while the communicative factor is primary” [Golev 2011:30].

This perspective highlights the *role of language as a tool for effective communication*, emphasizing how derivational processes are shaped by discourse needs. However, Russian

cognitive derivatologists argue that *communication* and *cognition cannot be entirely separated*. The production of new derived words reflects *cognitive structures*, conceptual categorization, and individual speaker experience, which only manifest in discourse practices.

Modern Russian derivatology seeks to integrate *cognitive* and *communicative perspectives*, recognizing that:

1. **Cognitive factors** determine the conceptual structure of the derived word, guiding which derivational models are possible.
2. **Communicative factors** determine how and how often derived words are used in discourse.

This integration allows for a *holistic understanding of word formation*: new words are not only *conceptual categories* but also *pragmatic tools*, whose usage patterns reflect social, stylistic, and discourse constraints. The derived word becomes a *dynamic interface* between the speaker's cognitive system and communicative context [Alefirenko 2006:47; Kubryakova 2004:59].

By combining cognitive and communicative perspectives, Russian scholars can:

- Track **derivational productivity** across semantic domains;
- Identify **high-frequency paradigms** that shape the lexicon;
- Model **cognitive schemas** underlying derivational patterns;
- Explain **innovations and lexical gaps** in terms of both conceptual need and communicative relevance.

This approach resonates with international *corpus-based cognitive linguistics* and *usage-based models*, providing robust methods for analyzing derivational phenomena in natural discourse.

The theoretical synthesis emerging from Russian research emphasizes that *word formation is simultaneously a cognitive and communicative process*.

Derived words are not merely morphological structures; they are:

- **Conceptual units**, representing structured knowledge;
- **Semantic operators**, encoding conceptual categories;
- **Discourse elements**, functioning in communication according to frequency, style, and pragmatics.

Thus, the integration of *structural*, *semantic*, *cognitive*, and *communicative factors* provides a comprehensive framework for studying Russian word formation, offering insights for cross-linguistic comparison and for *international research in derivational typology* and *cognitive morphology*.

This article has traced the development of **Russian word-formation studies (derivatology)** from the mid-20th century to the present, highlighting the evolution of methodological approaches from structural-semantic models to *cognitive* and *communicative frameworks*. Initially, Russian derivatology relied heavily on *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic analyses*, focusing on the relationships between base and derived words and the classification of derivational units into categories, nests, and fields [Vinogradov 1951, 1952, 1975; Revzina 1969; Klobukov 2016].

Subsequent *onomasiological* and *semasiological directions* allowed scholars to investigate *nomination processes* and *semantic organization*, bridging the gap between derivational morphology and conceptual categorization [Dokulil 1962; Toropcev 1974; Kubryakova 1978]. The introduction of *field-based* and *semantic-derivational approaches* further integrated *morphological*, *semantic*, and *conceptual dimensions*, enabling the study of derivational clusters as *structured cognitive systems* [Klobukov 2015; Klobukov & Shakar 2016].

The shift to *cognitive derivatology* emphasized that derived words are not mere formal units, but *representations of knowledge*, encoding conceptual categories and reflecting the speaker's mental structures [Kubryakova 1981, 1988; Babina 2003; Araeva 1994]. Finally, the incorporation of *communicative factors* highlighted the role of *lexical frequency*, *discourse*

relevance, and *pragmatic function*, demonstrating that word formation is a *dynamic interface between cognition and communication* [Golev 2011; Alefirenko 2006].

Overall, Russian derivatology exemplifies a *systematic integration of structural, semantic, cognitive, and communicative dimensions*, offering a model that is both morphologically rigorous and conceptually rich.

This framework is particularly relevant for *comparative and international studies*, as it provides tools for analyzing *derivational systems across languages*, linking formal structure, semantic organization, and cognitive representation in a coherent theoretical paradigm.

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