

Adverbs or adjectives – Modification of idioms

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Creating new forms and meanings is a necessary process in communication to express feelings, ideas, etc. in a specific context. The most obvious step is to modify existing forms and meanings by adding attributes, such as adjectives or adverbs. This step is much more difficult, if forms have a figurative meaning, e.g. idioms. Hence, idioms vary in their ability to undergo modification: In general, adverbs are fine, adjectives are less common, and some idioms do not undergo modification processes. The talk sketches a modification typology for idioms and focusses the question: Is there a correlation between the structure of the idiom and its modification type? To answer this question, 950 modified occurrences of VP-idioms in a German web corpus were analyzed towards template and preference for adverbs or adjectives. The results show a correlation between modification type and underlying structure of idioms.