

How to come into discourse: **a diachronic corpus analysis of deverbal nominalizations**

The increasing use of nominalizations in the recent history of German has been repeatedly emphasized in the literature and often described in the context of a general tendency towards the *Nominalstil* (e.g. Eggers 1962, Möslein 1981, Khadijeva 2017). In this regard, the textual function of information condensation (Lipka 1987) has been assumed to be the driving force behind this tendency. The question remains open why this tendency becomes apparent only in the 18th century, even though most word formation patterns have existed since the oldest periods of German. Moreover, it is still unclear why nominalizations are also to be found in more complex structures that cannot be considered condensing, especially in verbonominal constructions (*Funktionsverbgefüge*, cf. eg. Seifert 2004; Kamber 2008; Harm 2021). The present study aims at a better understanding of the role of deverbal nominalizations at the level of text and discourse. It reports the results of a corpus study based on data from the 16th to the 19th century (www.deutschestextarchiv.de). Expanding the focus from extensively studied *ung-*nominalizations (*Betrachtung* ‘contemplation’, *Auswechslung* ‘replacement’, *Entwicklung* ‘development’; see Demske 2000, Hartmann 2016) to all types of deverbal nominalizations, including implicit derivations (*Betrieb* ‘operation’) and conversions (*Erscheinen* ‘appearance’), the study looks at their behavior in particular syntagmatic environments, namely in constructions following the pattern [*in* ‘in(to)’ N_{DEV} *kommen* ‘come’], as in (1)–(2):

- (1) *Es **kommt** aber noch ein zweiter Gegenstand **in Betrachtung**.* (von Clausewitz, 1834)
‘However, a second issue comes into consideration.’
- (2) *Dieser Ofen **kam** 1726 **in Betrieb**.* (Beck, 1897)
‘This furnace came into operation in 1726.’

The study is guided by two general hypotheses:

1. The textual function of nominalizations is not limited to information condensation. In addition, it comprises other functions such as focus, topicality and the maintenance of argument structures in non-narrative texts.
2. The textual function of nominalizations is not achieved in isolation, by using a newly coined word. Instead, they have first to be integrated into a particular syntagmatic configuration.

It will be argued that textual functions arise via a complex interplay between the construction and the nominalization itself. Over time, certain patterns conventionalize and become more or less independent from the original syntactic configurations, what has been the case for the present-day Light verb constructions, such as *in Betracht kommen*. More generally, the contribution is meant as a plea for a constructional-based approach, which is seen as bridging discourse-pragmatic distributional patterns and morphosyntactic regularities in mutual dependence.

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