

**Personal name compounding in German**  
**On the relationship between productivity and pragmatic functions across discourse**  
**domains and text types**

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This paper examines German personal name compounds (PN compounds) by comparing their productivity with regard to external and structural factors (cf. Plag 2006). PN compounds are determinative compounds with a personal name as a second element and a lexical unit as a modifier (*Helikopter-Cem*). In contrast to compounds with a proper name as a first element (*Merkel-Besuch*, cf. Schlücker 2017, 2020), they have received little attention in the literature. So far, they have been cursorily mentioned as an unproductive word-formation pattern that bears an evaluative text function (cf. Wildgen 1981, Kürschner 2020).

By drawing on the newspapers from the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo)<sup>1</sup>, the blog corpus of the German Digital Dictionary (DWDS)<sup>2</sup> and Twitter<sup>3</sup>, we test the hypothesis that the productivity of PN compounds depends on textual, discursive, and structural factors. Although productivity measures proposed by Baayen (2009) depend on the corpus size and pose a problem, especially for Twitter data, we consider the type frequency (cf. Baayen 2009: 901) a first step towards measuring the productivity of PN compounds.

A corpus of 450 types, retrieved from the list of 60 names from three discourse domains (politics, sports and celebrities), has been annotated in *Maxqda* for external (discourse domain and text types) and structural properties (the semantics of a modifier and the co-occurrence of other lexemes in the context) that may influence their productivity. The text types include newspapers, blogs and tweets (tweets are similar to journal articles or volume contributions, cf. Hausendorf et al. 2017: 174). Furthermore, the data yields eventive, partitive and qualifying readings that emerge from different aspects of extralinguistic knowledge about the name bearer. Whereas eventive readings refer to a social event where the name bearer participates (*Helikopter-Cem*), partitive readings evoke the knowledge about the membership of a name

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cosmas2.ids-mannheim.de/cosmas2-web/faces/home.xhtml> We searched for all newspaper corpora within Archive W-public - all public corpora of Archive W.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dwds.de/d/korpora/blogs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/>

bearer to some entity (*Polenklose*). Qualifying readings comprise a property of a name bearer (*Brillen-Dobrindt*).

The analysis indicates that eventive readings comprising the names of politicians are generally more frequent than attestations with the names of celebrities and sportspeople. Furthermore, eventive and qualitative readings are more frequent in tweets and blogs, whereas the number of types in partitive readings is higher in newspapers. These findings can be explained by taking a closer look at the text function of PN compounds. Partitive readings usually bear a reference function, whereas eventive and qualitative readings do not primarily refer to the name bearer but contribute to evaluating his actions or decisions. It is, therefore, no surprise that evaluative readings are more frequent in social media than in newspapers. Regarding the linguistic context, PN compounds are usually not used meta linguistically, and they often co-occur in the same context. The analysis sheds new light on the productivity of PN compounds and their functions in different text types and domains.

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