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Chapter 5

Digital Discourse Analysis of Language Use under National Socialism: Methodological Reflections and Applications

German Summary: Dieses Kapitel lotet Möglichkeiten und Methoden aus, digitale Diskursanalysen nationalsozialistischer Quellentexte durchzuführen. Digitale Technologie wird dabei als heuristisches Werkzeug betrachtet, mit dem der Sprachgebrauch während des Nationalsozialismus im Rahmen größerer Quellenkorpora untersucht werden kann. In einem theoretischen Abschnitt wird grundsätzlich dafür plädiert, während des Analyseprozesses hermeneutisches Sinnverstehen mit breitflächigen korpusbasierten Abfragen zu kombinieren. Verdeutlicht wird diese Herangehensweise an zwei empirischen Beispielen: Anhand eines Korpus von Hitler- und Goebbels-Reden wird dem Auftauchen und der diskursiven Ausgestaltung des nationalsozialistischen Konzepts „Lebensraum“ nachgespürt. Schritt für Schritt wird offengelegt, welche Analysewege durch das Abfragen von Schlüsseltexten, Keywords, Konkordanzen und Kollokationen verfolgt werden können. Das zweite Beispiel zeigt anhand von Eingaben, die aus der Bevölkerung an Staats- und Parteinstanzen gerichtet wurden, wie solche Quellen mithilfe eines digitalen Tools manuell annotiert werden können, um sie danach auf Musterhaftigkeiten im Sprachgebrauch hin auswerten zu können.

1 Introduction

Researchers who investigate the way in which people under National Socialism used language, both spoken and written, to communicate in different situations are confronted with a vast and heterogenous mass of sources and data. Of course, management and evaluation of corpora have always been key requirements of the research process both in historiography and in linguistics. However, with new digital research tools and applications novel possibilities and challenges have arisen.¹ This is especially true for a thematic field that has been given

¹ See Andreas Fickers, “Update für die Hermeneutik. Geschichtswissenschaft auf dem Weg zur digitalen Forensik?,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 17, no. 1 (2020), accessed July 6, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok1765>.

attention since the early post-war years: from Victor Klemperer's *LTI*,² to Dolf Sternberger, Gerhard Storz and Wilhelm Süskind's *Wörterbuch des Unmenschen*,³ Cornelia Schmitz-Berning's *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*,⁴ and more recent research.⁵ While all these studies contributed to a deeper understanding of the lexicographic and rhetorical characteristics of National Socialist discourses, they seldomly were able to grasp the pragmatics of language use in different communicative situations by different actors during National Socialism. Moreover, for the most part they did not dispose over the technological means of digitally treating and analyzing larger text-corpora.

In the following article, we would like to present methods and strategies of analysis developed within the framework of the research project *Sprachliche Sozialgeschichte 1933 bis 1945* (Linguistic Social History 1933 to 1945), situated at the Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim. Broadly outlined, the aim of this project is to examine linguistic practices and patterns of language use of various actors during the Third Reich.⁶ Thus, it is taken into account that the German society of the years between 1933 and 1945 consisted of heterogeneous communities of practice, speaking, and writing under the specific discourse conditions of National Socialism.⁷ Also, it is argued that the specificities and characteristics of different media, texts types, and communicative situations

2 Victor Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen* [1947] (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2018).

3 Dolf Sternberger, Gerhard Storz, and Wilhelm E. Süskind, *Aus dem Wörterbuch des Unmenschen* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1957).

4 Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998).

5 See for example Utz Maas, "Als der Geist der Gemeinschaft eine Sprache fand". *Sprache im Nationalsozialismus, Versuch einer historischen Argumentationsanalyse* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984); Gerhard Bauer, *Sprache und Sprachlosigkeit im "Dritten Reich"* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1990); Christian A. Braun, *Nationalsozialistischer Sprachstil. Theoretischer Zugang und praktische Analysen auf der Grundlage einer pragmatisch-textlinguistisch orientierten Stilistik* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2007); Horst Dieter Schlosser, *Sprache unterm Hakenkreuz. Eine andere Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2013). For an enlarged overview over the research field, see Stefan Scholl, "Für eine Sprach- und Kommunikationsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus. Ein programmatischer Forschungsüberblick," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 59 (2019): 409–44.

6 See Heidrun Kämper, "Sprachliche Sozialgeschichte 1933 bis 1945 – ein Projekt-konzept," in *Sprachliche Sozialgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Heidrun Kämper and Britt-Marie Schuster (Bremen: Hempn Verlag, 2018), 9–25. We thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for funding the project.

7 See Geraldine Horan, "Er zog sich die "neue Sprache" des "Dritten Reiches" über wie ein Kleidungsstück": Communities of Practice and Performativity in National Socialist Discourse," *Linguistik Online* 30, no. 1 (2007): 57–80, accessed June 13, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.13092/lo.30.549>.

have to be analytically considered. A linguistic practice is conceived as both evidence and constituent of a social practice if it is in some way repeatable and recognizable by both the participants at the time of its processing and the analysts at a later stage. Therefore, it is not only necessary to hermeneutically reconstruct meanings in various media, for example different kinds of letters, diaries, and protocols, but also to identify possible overarching patterns of language use with the help of digital corpus technology. As we will argue, corpus technology can serve as a tool for *heuristic explorations of corpora* within the framework of digital discourse analysis. The aim here, to be clear, is not to treat digital possibilities and means of analysis as ends in themselves, but to look for ways to fit these possibilities and means into analytical processes according to the research question and the data at hand.

In the following sections, we will illustrate two methodological approaches paving the way through the digitally guided and/or assisted research process. The first case can be classified as a top-down approach and will show how corpus linguistics can be used for heuristic explorations within a digital discourse analysis based on a large number of texts (section 3). The second case takes rather the form of a bottom-up approach and highlights one specific way manual digital annotation can be applied to historical sources (section 4). Initially, though, we would like to briefly introduce the theoretical and methodological background of our approach (section 2).

2 Analysis of Historical Language Use in Its Societal and Political Context—Digital Discourse Analysis and Hermeneutics

In his introduction to discourse analysis within the field of history, Achim Landwehr summarizes the criticism brought against structuralist linguistics as follows: “Above all, Saussure’s preference for the *langue* over the *parole* as the object of linguistics led to a de-historicization, de-socialization and de-politicization of the study of language.”⁸ Even if he falls for the “Cours myth” which does

⁸ Achim Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, 2nd impr. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2009): 47 [all translations from German to English done by the authors]. Saussure is usually received in such a way that *langue* refers to structural aspects of language, while *parole* refers to the actual use of language. As a result of a reading of Saussure’s work, which Landwehr also reproduces here, a structuralist view of the *langue* dominated in linguistics (but see footnote 5), while linguistic currents towards the *parole* formed with the pragmatic turn from the 1960s onwards. If

not do justice to the authentic lectures of de Saussure,⁹ Landwehr justifiably suggests the need to examine historicity, sociality, and politicality with respect to their linguistic construction. A similar proposition has already been made by Dietrich Busse in his version of Historical Semantics that we loosely follow here.¹⁰

Historical Semantics according to Busse goes beyond a history of concepts and aims at a history of discourse which examines communicatively constructed realities by their linguistic means of constitution and unveils them by detailed discourse analysis.¹¹ Our approach is thus anchored in the premise that language and, more specifically, language use are constitutive for historical, political, and social realities. Such a language-focused view on history is primarily interested in the linguistic production of meaning and conceives “history of meaning as the history of communicatively constructed meaning.”¹² As such, Historical Seman-

one is inclined to conceive of the described, very roughly, as two sides, the research presented here is positioned on the pragmatic side of linguistics.

9 Ferdinand de Saussure’s main work, the *Cours de linguistique générale*—often conceived as the founding work of modern linguistics—was composed by Bally and Sechehaye who did not attend the original lectures, see Ludwig Jäger, “Mythos Cours. Saussures Sprachidee und die Gründungslegende des Strukturalismus,” in *Strukturalismus, heute: Brüche, Spuren, Kontinuitäten: Abhandlungen zur Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Martin Endres and Leonhard Herrmann (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2018), 11–28; on the criticism of de Saussure see Wolfgang Teubert, “Corpus Linguistics: An Alternative,” *semen* 27 (2009): 1–25, accessed July 3, 2020, doi: 10.4000/semen.8912.

10 See Dietrich Busse, *Historische Semantik. Analyse eines Programms* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987); Dietrich Busse and Wolfgang Teubert, “Ist Diskurs ein sprachwissenschaftliches Objekt? Zur Methodenfrage der historischen Semantik,” in *Begriffsgeschichte und Diskursgeschichte. Methodenfragen und Forschungsergebnisse der historischen Semantik*, ed. Dietrich Busse, Fritz Hermanns, and Wolfgang Teubert (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 10–28. We limit this discussion to Busse’s notion of Historical Semantics and Hermanns’s understanding of Linguistic Hermeneutics as starting points. However, the use of corpus linguistics as a heuristic tool for discourse analysis as applied in this work is practiced under various labels, such as Corpus Pragmatics (see Karin Aijmer and Christoph Rühlemann *Corpus Pragmatics: A Handbook* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015]; Ekkehard Felder, Marcus Müller, and Friedemann Vogel, *Korpuspragmatik: Thematische Korpora als Basis diskurslinguistischer Analysen* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012]) or Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS, see Alan Partington, Alison Duguid, and Charlotte Taylor, *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and Practice in Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)* [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013]). For a recent summary see the articles in Charlotte Taylor and Anna Marchi, *Corpus Approaches to Discourse: A Critical Review* (London: Routledge, 2018).

11 See Dietrich Busse, “Begriffsgeschichte oder Diskursgeschichte? Zu theoretischen Grundlagen und Methodenfragen einer historisch-semantischen Epistemologie,” in *Herausforderungen der Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. Carsten Dutt (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003), 17–38.

12 Busse, *Historische Semantik*, 105.

tics as the study of the changing meaning of words, concepts, and phrases through time has always been an empirical undertaking based on predefined corpora.¹³ The pragmatic approach of Historical Semantics¹⁴ we tend to follow here combines such an empiricism with analytical processes of hermeneutical understanding.

Quite commonly, hermeneutics is conceived as the “art of understanding.”¹⁵ Fritz Hermanns extends this notion by considering hermeneutics as a technique and method of linguistic analysis.¹⁶ He claims that language use is always a linguistic interplay—a language game in the Wittgensteinian sense¹⁷—of “giving something to understand” and “understanding.”¹⁸ Thus, meaning is at the heart of any interactive and communicative situation. As a consequence, this definition also directly affects the hermeneutical analysis of the constitution of meaning, since understanding is crucial not only for the first level of language use at the time of its processing, but also for investigations of the second level in which linguistic manifestations of meaning become textual data in the framework of

13 See Busse and Teubert, “Ist Diskurs”; Wolfgang Teubert, “Korpuslinguistik, Hermeneutik und die soziale Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit,” *Linguistik online* 28, no. 3 (2006), accessed July 3, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.13092/lo.28.610>; Gerd Fritz, “Historische Semantik – einige Schlaglichter,” *Jahrbuch für Germanistische Sprachgeschichte* 2 (2011): 1–19, accessed July 3, 2020, doi: 10.1515/9783110236620.1.

14 Fritz distinguishes two types of semantic theories that are advocated in Historical Semantics: cognitive and pragmatic semantics, see Fritz, “Historische Semantik,” 2ff.

15 See Fritz Hermanns, “Linguistische Hermeneutik. Überlegungen zur überfälligen Einrichtung eines in der Linguistik bislang fehlenden Teilfachs,” in *Der Sitz der Sprache im Leben: Beiträge zu einer kulturanalytischen Linguistik*, ed. Heidrun Kämper, Angelika Linke, and Martin Wengeler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 71.

16 See Hermanns, “Linguistische Hermeneutik,” 71ff.

17 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971 [1953]). In his *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (PU, “Philosophical Investigations”), Wittgenstein develops a theory of the use of language. He can be read as a pioneer of a praxeologically oriented linguistics based on pragmatics, which regards language as action and as always interwoven with certain activities (see PU 7). Accordingly, language games are to be understood as linguistic practices which on the one hand follow rules, but on the other hand alter them by linguistic regularity. Accordingly, linguistic practices are characterized by conventionality and comprehensibility as well as by flexibility and creativity.

18 See Hermanns, “Linguistische Hermeneutik,” 68. It is hard to translate the compound phrase “Zu-verstehen-Geben.” In everyday language it means that someone indicates or insinuates something. Here, however, Hermanns points out the more fundamental meaning that what is spoken or written must always be understood and therefore be rendered intelligible.

linguistic analysis.¹⁹ Even on this second level, understanding entails semiotic, social, and processual aspects which must be methodologically reflected upon. As a general premise, understanding must always be conceived as preliminary. For Hermanns, therefore, hermeneutics means the “searching and groping, rehearsing and revision-ready effort of understanding, always willing to let itself be corrected.”²⁰ While understanding is a cognitive process that is not directly accessible to us, explaining understanding is a communicative practice in itself and, following Hermanns, can be called interpreting. In discourse analysis, analytically relevant interpreting is thus a methodically guided and intersubjectively negotiated understanding. We argue that interpretation plays a crucial role at every stage of the research process and that the outcome of a digital discourse analysis is always determined by an interpretive, hermeneutic reflection of individual (micro)decisions on the path of analysis. In the following, we will illustrate these basic assumptions by focusing on two different ways to approach a digitally conducted discourse analysis. While the first part examines the concept of ‘*Lebensraum*’ in a corpus of National Socialist speeches, the second part will focus on letters of complaint and the potential which goes along with their digital annotation.

3 The Concept of ‘*Lebensraum*’ in National Socialist Speeches

Our initial research question is: How was the concept of ‘*Lebensraum*’ linguistically constructed under National Socialism by central spokespersons of the Nazi regime?²¹ We assume that National Socialist key concepts were explicitly constituted particularly in political speeches. Therefore, we choose these sources as an entry-point for the investigation of the linguistic construction of the concept of ‘*Lebensraum*.’ Again, this is a result of hermeneutic reflection. Referring back

¹⁹ See Alfred Schütz, “Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 51, no. 9 (1954): 257–73, who differentiates between construction of the first and second degree.

²⁰ Fritz Hermanns, “Diskurshermeneutik,” in *Diskurslinguistik nach Foucault. Theorie und Gegenstände*, ed. Ingo Warnke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 188.

²¹ The concept of ‘living space’ is only used here as an example. We therefore refrain from a deeper examination of the manifold historical-scientific literature on this topic, but see Karl Lange, “Der Terminus ‘Lebensraum’ in Hitlers ‘Mein Kampf,’” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 13, no. 4 (1965): 426–37; Ulrike Jureit, *Das Ordnen von Räumen. Territorium und Lebensraum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012).

to our preliminary remarks, we have to keep in mind that understanding and interpreting are fundamental principles in selecting data and building corpora:

Discursive relationships can only be ascertained once a criterion for corpus building has been established. Whatever this criterion may be, it presupposes knowledge of the content of the texts in question. From this point of view, corpus building alone presupposes an understanding of the texts. Corpus building, i. e. the constitution of a discursive unit as a prospective object of investigation in linguistics, is therefore based on acts of interpretation.²²

Concepts are established through conceptualization practices. By conceptualization we understand the context-dependent, discursive constitution of meaning in conversations and texts through lexical discourse elements.²³ We therefore hold that the lexical discourse elements of a concept must necessarily be analyzed in their discursive context, an assumption that will become methodologically important. As Nina Kalwa suggests, we have to zoom in and out of corpora and texts and oscillate between distant and close reading to comprehend the meaning of concepts and their linguistic constitution at different levels of granularity.²⁴ The adequate consideration of the binding of the lexical constitution of conceptual meaning to the co(n)texts of use is ensured in the presented analysis by a sequential combination of methods, which proceeds through the steps of keyword analysis, analysis of lexical dispersion, collocation analysis, to concordance analysis. Our corpus of speeches consists of about one thousand speeches from Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels held between 1925 and 1945 and contains about 1.6 million tokens.²⁵

22 Busse and Teubert, “Ist Diskurs,” 16.

23 See Heidrun Kämper, *Aspekte des Demokratiediskurses der späten 1960er Jahre: Konstellationen, Kontexte, Konzepte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012); Nina Kalwa, “Die Konstitution von Konzepten in Diskursen: Zoom als Methode der diskurslinguistischen Bedeutungsanalyse,” in *Sprach(kritik) kompetenz als Mittel demokratischer Willensbildung. Sprachliche In- und Exklusionsstrategien als gesellschaftliche Herausforderung*, ed. Jürgen Schiewe, Thomas Niehr, and Sandro M. Moraldo (Bremen: Hempfen Verlag, 2019).

24 Kalwa, “Die Konstitution.” Also see Silke Schwandt, “Digitale Methoden für die Historische Semantik. Auf den Spuren von Begriffen in digitalen Korpora,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 44 (2018): 107–34.

25 A *token* is the smallest unit of a corpus—e. g., words, numbers, abbreviations, or punctuation—depending on the tokenization method. Tokenization—i. e., identifying units of analysis—is thus part of the pre-processing of texts for corpus linguistic analyses. The speeches are taken from De Gruyter, *Nationalsozialismus, Holocaust, Widerstand und Exil 1933–1945. Deutsche Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert Online*. Online-Datenbank, accessed July 3, 2020, <https://www.degruyter.com/view/db/dghfo>.

3.1 Keywords

We start with a general view on the corpus in comparison to a reference corpus.²⁶ A statistical method from corpus linguistics to compare one corpus with another is the computing of *keywords*: “Keywords are words that are considerably more frequent in one corpus than in another corpus; we can therefore say that keywords are words that are typical of the corpus of interest compared to another corpus.”²⁷ Keywords are determined by calculating their *keyness*.²⁸ We use keyword analysis for an initial access to the lexical level of the corpus in order to explore its characteristics. This results in the following ten top-ranked keywords in Hitler’s and Goebbels’s speeches: *volk*, *muß*, *bewegung*, *deutsch*, *nation*, *heute*, *kampf*, *kraft*, *reich*, *führer*.

Unsurprisingly, in the speeches of the leading National Socialists Hitler and Goebbels, nouns such as ‘*Volk*’ (people), ‘*Nation*,’ ‘*Kampf*’ (fight), ‘*Kraft*’ (strength), ‘*Führer*,’ or ‘*Reich*’ are used predominantly. These words can be regarded as National Socialist banner words (*Fahnenwörter*). Banner words are words that express political attitudes, positions, values, or goals in a positive deontic way—that is, depicting them as desirable. The opposite of banner words are stigma words with negative deontic connotations.²⁹ The use of ‘*heute*’ (today) can be traced back to indexical references to time, which have a higher significance in a speech compared to texts that are less situationally bound. The frequent use of the verb ‘*müssen*’ (must) indicates that National Socialist speeches were primarily characterized by pressing appeals to act—that is, by deontological objectives.

The initial exploration provides us with important information for the further procedure. While the top ten list of keywords prevalent in the speeches already contains references to spatial vocabulary (‘*deutsch*,’ ‘*Reich*’), it does not yet

26 We use the corpus “*deu_news_2015*” from the project “*Deutscher Wortschatz*”; see Thomas Eckart and Uwe Quasthoff, “Statistical Corpus and Language Comparison on Comparable Corpora,” in *Building and Using Comparable Corpora*, ed. Serge Sharoff et al. (Berlin: Springer, 2013).

27 Vaclav Brezina, *Statistics in Corpus Linguistics: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 79 f.

28 For an overview, see Adam Kilgarriff, “Comparing Corpora,” *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 6, no. 1 (2001): 97–133.

29 See Fritz Hermanns, “Brisante Wörter. Zur lexikographischen Behandlung parteisprachlicher Wörter und Wendungen in Wörterbüchern der deutschen Gegenwartssprache,” in *Studien zur neuhochdeutschen Lexikographie II*, ed. Herbert Ernst Wiegand (Hildesheim: Olms, 1982), 87–108. In the Third Reich, for example, ‘*Nationalsozialismus*’ (National Socialism) was a banner word while ‘*Bolschewismus*’ (Bolshevism) was a stigma word.

seem very specific for the concept of ‘*Lebensraum*’ (which itself is not one of the top ten keywords). As a compound, ‘*Lebensraum*’ is determined by its head ‘-*raum*.’ Based on grammatical-morphological expertise, we consider ‘-*raum*.’ as potentially productive for other compounds. Therefore, in a next step, we filter the keyword list for compounds with ‘-*raum*.’ as partial component: *lebensraum* (frequency: 138), *raumnot* (19), *raummenge* (13), *raumerweiterung* (8), *raummäßig* (7), *raumfläche* (6). The filtering results in only a few compounds with ‘-*raum*.’ Especially ‘*Lebensraum*’ is often used as a term in speeches.

In the next step, we have to resolve the problem of unequal distribution. It can be assumed that speeches are thematically focused, which may lead to the fact that high word frequencies in quantitative analysis are caused by high occurrences in single texts, whereas in other texts words that occur with high frequency overall occur only rarely or not at all. The problem of unequal distribution of occurrences in corpora is addressed by dispersion measures.³⁰ We apply the measure DP_{norm} ,³¹ which relates word frequency to the corpus parts in which the words occur and thus indicates lexical dispersion, to our corpus. The measurement is normalized, which means that DP_{norm} takes a value between 0 and 1. The closer the value tends to 1, the more unequally distributed the expression is. If the value tends towards zero, the corresponding token is distributed more evenly (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Lexical dispersion of token with ‘-*raum*.’ in Hitler’s and Goebbels’s speeches.³²

Lexical dispersion: speeches		
lemma_POS	freq	DP_{norm}
raum_NN	258	0.700467
lebensraum_NN	138	0.827317
traum_NN	27	0.913512

³⁰ See Brezina, *Statistics*; Stefan Th. Gries, “Dispersions and Adjusted Frequencies in Corpora,” *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 13, no. 4 (2008), accessed July 3, 2020, doi: 10.1075/ijcl.13.4.02gri.

³¹ See Gries, “Dispersions.”

³² The tags shown represent the following classifications according to the Stuttgart Tübinger Tagset (STTS): ADJA—attributive adjective; ADJD—adjective used adverbially or predicate adjective; NN—Nouns; VVFIN—finite full verb; VVPP—past participle of full verb. See Anne Schiller, Simone Teufel, Christine Stöckert, and Christine Thielen, *Guidelines für das Tagging deutscher Textcorpora mit STTS (Kleines und großes Tagset)* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Universität Stuttgart and Universität Tübingen, 1999). Since Table 5.1 lists lemmata—i.e., uninflected basic forms of the words found—the entries of e.g. ‘*räumen_VVFIN*’ and ‘*räumen_VVPP*’ differ only with regard

Table 5.1: Lexical dispersion of token with ‘-raum-’ in Hitler’s and Goebbels’s speeches. (Continued)

Lexical dispersion: speeches		
zeitraum_NN	23	0.934898
träumen_VVFIN	28	0.937085
raummäßig_ADJD	6	0.956652
räumen_VVPP	7	0.958887
räumen_VVFIN	10	0.962282
räumlich_ADJD	7	0.965333
raumnot_NN	19	0.969091
räumen_VVINP	10	0.976266
aufräumen_VVPP	6	0.977371
aufräumen_VVINP	7	0.978836
raumfläche_NN	6	0.980187
räumlich_ADJA	6	0.980239
raummenge_NN	13	0.980922
raumerweiterung_NN	7	0.985525

We have added words with the umlaut diphthong (-*räum-*) to our search terms in order to cover further grammatical inflection forms. Words with the word stem ‘-*traum-*/-*träum-*’ (dream) do also appear in the results but are crossed out here. In addition, the tokens were annotated according to word class with part-of-speech tags, which are indicated by capital letters in Table 5.1. By doing so, we would just like to mention that in addition to a lexical and morphological orientated approach, grammatical classification could also serve as an analytical criterion. However, we continue to focus on the previously selected compounds and find that ‘*Lebensraum*’ is more evenly distributed than the words ‘*Raumnot*,’ ‘*Raummenge*,’ and ‘*Raumerweiterung*.’ The result of the lexical dispersion analysis indicates that the latter words occur only in some specific texts and not across the whole corpus like ‘*Lebensraum*.’ Accordingly, we zoom further into the corpus and search for relevant key texts.

The section of a concordance plot³³ shown in Figure 5.1 visualizes the occurrence of search terms in individual texts. It shows that the search term occurs remarkably often in one specific text. This text could thus be identified as a key text for our research focus. It is a speech by Hitler held at an assembly of

to the POS tags. Lemmatization is a method of corpus-linguistic preprocessing in order to summarize inflected word forms such as ‘*räumt*,’ ‘*räumen*,’ or ‘*geräumt*.’

33 The concordance plot was created with the software AntConc (<http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html>).

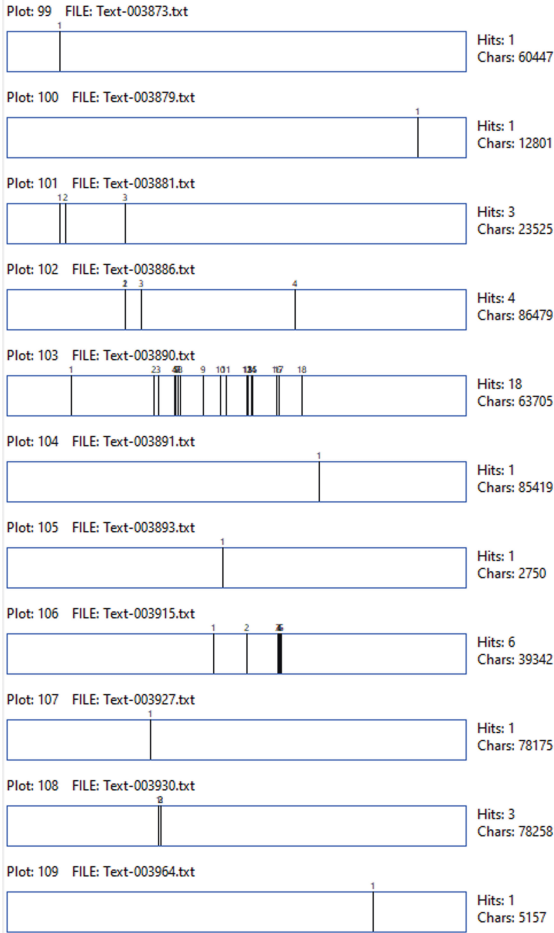


Figure 5.1: Concordance plot for words containing ‘-raum-/-räum-’. Graphic created by the authors.

the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) in Nuremberg on December 3, 1928. Let us take a short look at a key passage of this speech:

The German *Volk* is the typical *Raumvolk*, the Jewish *Volk* is the typical *spaceless Volk*. While the German *Volk* only knows one means of production *to gain soil*, the others are only the *bridge which submits to the process of making the production*. While the German *Volk* is composed of peasants and soldiers, the Jewish *Volk* is composed of merchants. Germans and Jews are two *Völker* who differ in their basic nature, one *Volk* of universal ability, the other always dependent on a second, or better third, who first lays the *ground* for the existence of this *Volkes*. Opposite to the German *Volk* as a *Volk full of space* is the Jewish

Volk as a *Volk* without space, opposite to the German *Volk* as a *Volk* of soldiers is the Jewish *Volk* as a *Volk* of traders. Our *Volk* can create culture out of primeval forests and deserts, but the other *Volk* can only go where there is already culture. Our *Volk* can therefore build culture itself, imaginative culture, the other more mechanical culture, our *Volk* do more philosophy, the other more mathematics. Our *Volk* is more state political, the other more economic. In short, we see how two *Völker* stand juxtaposed here, two *Völker* that are infinitely different.³⁴

Hitler's use of the concept '*Lebensraum*' here is inextricably linked with linguistic practices of inclusion and exclusion.³⁵ The Germans are represented by their semantic role³⁶ *agent* as an active, acting people while the 'others'—by means of an explicit othering—are depersonalized and reified as *patients*.³⁷ The '*Lebensraum*' concept is linked to another central concept of National Socialism, the concept of the '*Volk*.' Hitler used this connection for the up- or downgrading juxtaposition of Germans and Jews, which, by the way, is a dichotomizing opposition of de-

34 Our emphasis, translated from: "Das deutsche Volk ist das typische Raumvolk, das jüdische Volk ist das typische raumlose Volk. Während das deutsche Volk nur eine Produktionsmöglichkeit kennt, Boden zu gewinnen, bilden die anderen nur die Brücke, die den Prozeß der Herstellung der Produktion über sich ergehen lassen. Während das deutsche Volk sich aus dem Bauern- und Soldatentum zusammensetzt, setzt sich das jüdische Volk aus Händlern zusammen. Deutsche und Juden sind zwei Völker, die in ihrem Grundwesen auseinander gehen, das eine Volk von universaler Fähigkeit, das andere stets abhängig von einem zweiten oder besser dritten, der erst den Boden für die Existenzen dieses Volkes abgibt. Dem deutschen Volk als raumvollem Volk steht das jüdische Volk als raumloses, dem deutschen Volk als Soldatenvolk, steht das jüdische als Händlervolk gegenüber. Unser Volk kann aus Urwald und Wüsteneien Kultur schaffen, das andere Volk hingegen kann nur hingehen, wo sich bereits Kultur befindet. Unser Volk kann deshalb selbst Kultur aufbauen, phantasievolle, das andere mehr mechanische, unser Volk treibt mehr Philosophie, das andere mehr Mathematik. Unser Volk ist mehr staatspolitisch, das andere mehr wirtschaftspolitisch. Kurz und gut, wir sehen, wie hier zwei Völker nebeneinander stehen, die unendlich verschieden sind." (Hitler at an assembly of the NSDAP in Nuremberg on December 3, 1928 in: De Gruyter, *Nationalsozialismus*, Dokument-ID: HRSA-0536, accessed July 3, 2020, <http://db.saur.de/DGO/basicFullCitationView.jsf?documentId=HRSA-0536>).

35 See Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann et al., eds., *Der Ort der "Volksgemeinschaft" in der deutschen Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018); Michael Wildt, "Volksgemeinschaft: A Modern Perspective on National Socialist Society," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*, ed. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

36 Peter von Polenz, *Deutsche Satzsemantik: Grundbegriffe des Zwischen-den-Zeilen-Lesens* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985).

37 For a detailed analysis of such linguistic practices of exclusion in field post letters during the World War II, see Mark Dang-Anh, "Excluding Agency: Infrastructural and Interactional Practices of Exclusion in the National Socialist Dispositif of Field Post," *M/C Journal* 23 no. 6 (2020), accessed August 5, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.2725>.

nomination in itself. The linguistic observation leading to this interpretation is that the term ‘-raum-’ acquires conceptual meaning not only as a partial element of compounds, but also as a collocate of other words which we will discuss in more detail below.

3.2 Collocation

While the identification of keywords is one possible step towards zooming into texts and thus deepening the analysis, we are now taking a different approach and focus on collocations whose importance for corpus analyses was first recognized by John R. Firth.³⁸ Vaclav Brezina refers to collocations as “combinations of words that habitually co-occur in texts and corpora.”³⁹ The words that co-occur with a specific word, which is called a node in the context of collocation, are collocates.⁴⁰ Noah Bubenhofer emphasizes the statistical aspect of collocations, claiming that these associations of words can be measured and expressed as statistical significance.⁴¹ The distance or span around the node—that is, the number of tokens taken into account before or after the node, delimited by sentence boundaries—is defined by the analyst, which means that according to this definition, collocates do not have to be in close proximity, such as in narrower concepts which argue phraseologically or grammatically.⁴²

For our illustrative purposes, we will concentrate in the following on a specific collocate of the word stem ‘-raum-/-räum-’ (see Figure 5.2).

38 John R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics, 1934–51* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

39 Brezina, *Statistics*, 67.

40 John Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, 3rd impr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995), 115.

41 Noah Bubenhofer, “Kollokationen, n-Gramme, Mehrworteinheiten,” in *Handbuch Sprache in Politik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Kersten Sven Roth, Martin Wengeler, and Alexander Ziem (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 69; Brezina, *Statistics*, 67. The discussion about collocation measures cannot be elaborated here, see Stefan Evert, “Corpora and Collocations,” in *Corpus Linguistics: An International Handbook*, ed. Anke Lüdeling and Merja Kytö (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 1212–48.

42 See Bubenhofer, *Kollokationen*, 70.

specifies whether a collocation occurs predominantly to the left or right of the node or, if it is in the middle position, whether this relation is balanced. In several analysis cycles with different collocation measures, the collocation of ‘-raum-/räum-’ with ‘*Volkszähl*’ (population) proved to be conspicuously associative.

3.3 Concordance

Therefore, in a further step, we now zoom from the level of multi-word units or collocations into a more detailed analysis on the basis of collocation co-texts. Co-texts of search terms or, in this case, collocates can be explored in concordances. Concordances are “collection[s] of the occurrences of a word-form, each in its own textual environment. In its simplest form it is an index. Each word-form is indexed and a reference is given to the place of occurrence in a text.”⁴⁴ The quasi-standard for representing and examining concordances in corpus linguistics are keyword-in-context-lists (KWIC) in which the co-texts around the nodes are shown.⁴⁵

Figure 5.3 displays an excerpt from a KWIC-list for the node ‘-raum-’ co-occurring with the collocate ‘*Volkszähl*.’

At this point, it would be useful to annotate the individual lines of the KWIC-list systematically and thereby identify relevant evidence for the concept ‘*Lebensraum*’ in a qualitative analysis. However, for illustration purposes, at this point of the path we want to take another turn and obtain more insight into the usage of the collocates ‘-raum-’ and ‘*Volkszähl*’ by computing shared collocates. Shared collocates, which are marked by orange dots in Figure 5.4, allow a statement about the manner in which two words are used together.

Here, we concentrate on the shared collocate ‘*Mißverhältnis*’ (imbalance) as an example. Describing ‘living space’ (‘*Lebensraum*’) and population (‘*Volks-*

⁴⁴ Sinclair, *Corpus*, 32.

⁴⁵ The notion of ‘keywords in context’ is potentially subject to misconception. It is therefore important to point out two terminological details. On the one hand, keywords here refer to search terms—i.e., nodes, and not words determined by keyness analyses. On the other hand, the displayed words are co-texts in a narrower sense—i.e., the words that appear to the right and left of the nodes in texts, and not contexts in a broader sense. It should also be underlined, especially against the background of a discourse-hermeneutic analysis, that KWIC representations are not the only possible concordance depictions, but that concordances can and should also be considered and analyzed in larger scales. See Christopher Tribble, “What Are Concordances and How Are They Used?,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, ed. Anne O’Keeffe und Michael McCarthy (London: Routledge, 2010), 167–83.

KWIC: /'raum.]/'räum.]/i > mißverhältnis

Search /'raum.]/'räum.]/ Occurrences 7/784 (0.04) Texts 6/1,011 Corpus Reden_Hitler_Goebbels Context 10 Display Text

Index	File	Left	Node	Right
275	Text-003713.bd	die Technik damals in einem Mißverhältnis stand zur Größe des	Raumes	und daß die nördlichen Gebiete in der damaligen Zeit trostlose
290	Text-003738.bd	geändert wird. Deutschland kann einfach nicht leben, weil es keinen	Raum	hat und weil das Mißverhältnis zwischen Boden und Volkszahl noch
368	Text-003854.bd	natürlichen Entwicklung die Volkszahl eines Tages in Mißverhältnis geraten zur	Raummenge	Der Raum bleibt zurück, und die Zahl vermehrt sich. Wenn
369	Text-003854.bd	die Volkszahl eines Tages in Mißverhältnis geraten zur Raummenge. Der	Raum	bleibt zurück, und die Zahl vermehrt sich. Wenn aber bei
459	Text-003984.bd	qrkn bestehen drei Möglichkeiten, um das Mißverhältnis zu beseitigen. Mehr	Raum	weniger Menschen oder Exportwirtschaft. Der Vortragende lehnt die beiden letzten
863	Text-004380.bd	zwei Wege, um das bestehende Mißverhältnis zu beheben, entweder mehr	Raum	für ein Volk oder weniger Volk auf dem zur Verfügung
879	Text-004436.bd	zeigt er die Ursachen unserer Not und das Mißverhältnis zwischen	Raum	und Volkszahl und hier wieder die Sünden der heutigen Machthaber,

Figure 5.5: KWIC-list of node ‘-raum-/-räum-’ with collocate ‘Mißverhältnis,’ created with LancsBox by the authors.

KWIC: volkszähl > mißverhältnis

Search volkszähl Occurrences 10/180 (0.06) Texts 7/1,011 Corpus Reden_Hitler_Goebbels Context 10 Display Text

Index	File	Left	Node	Right
29	Text-003648.1	Die Handlungen jeder Regierung werden heute durch das Mißverhältnis zwischen	Volkszähl	und Bodenfläche bestimmt. Dieses Problem ist nicht zu lösen durch
41	Text-003673.1	ist, wenn sie ständig darauf bedacht ist, das Mißverhältnis zwischen	Volkszähl	und Bodenfläche zu korrigieren, führte bei der Regelung der Verhältnisse
66	Text-003738.1	keinen Raum hat und weil das Mißverhältnis zwischen Boden und	Volkszähl	noch immer wächst. Wer dieser Tatsache mit dem Pazifismus aus
67	Text-003738.1	Es ist denkbar, daß man dem Mißverhältnis zwischen Boden und	Volkszähl	dadurch zu entgegen versucht, daß man die Bevölkerungszunahme einschränkt. A
68	Text-003738.1	sich denken läßt. Man kann dem Mißverhältnis zwischen Bodenfläche und	Volkszähl	einmal dadurch begegnen, daß man sich neuen Boden sucht. Aber
100	Text-003770.1	Hebel am richtigen Ort ein, da, wo das Mißverhältnis zwischen	Volkszähl	und der Bodenfläche so horrend ist, und nächstes Jahr statt
123	Text-003854.1	bei jedem gesunden Volk wird bei der natürlichen Entwicklung die	Volkszähl	eines Tages in Mißverhältnis geraten zur Raummenge. Der Raum bleibt
126	Text-003854.1	soziale Not von heute zuschreiben? Dem Mißverhältnis unserer Grundfläche zur	Volkszähl	umgekehrt. Wir haben im letzten Jahrhundert langsam, infolge der
149	Text-003915.1	von Zeit zu Zeit in ein Mißverhältnis geraten zwischen seiner	Volkszähl	und seiner Ernährungsbasis, d. h., es treten hier Spannungen auf. In
179	Text-004436.1	die Ursachen unserer Not und das Mißverhältnis zwischen Raum und	Volkszähl	und hier wieder die Sünden der heutigen Machthaber, die aus

Figure 5.6: KWIC-list of node ‘Volkszähl’ with collocate ‘Mißverhältnis,’ created with LancsBox by the authors.

and ‘*Mißverhältnis*’ suggests that the concept of ‘living space’ is deeply founded upon a geometric-arithmetic reasoning.

At this point, though, we have to stop the exemplary description of research strategies that applied methods from corpus linguistics and combined them with insights from discourse hermeneutics. We wanted to show the potential of a digitally driven access to a considerably large corpus of texts (in this case speeches of Hitler and Goebbels). At diacritical points, we have taken certain research directions which have led to further methodological decisions. As we have seen, analytical parameters such as keywords, lexical dispersion, collocates, and concordances have enabled us to identify entry-points from which a qualitative analysis would have to follow. For the purpose of this first part, however, we have refrained from entering too much into qualitative analysis, although we have also generated hypotheses that would certainly require a deeper hermeneutical analysis. For example, we have argued that the concept of ‘*Lebensraum*’ was closely tied to other central concepts like ‘*Volk*’ and that it was crucially constituted by practices of inclusion and exclusion. On this basis, a predominantly geometrical-mathematical argumentation was carried out in National Socialist discourse according to which the conquest of space as a positive deontic goal was both morally legitimized and seemed to have become a mere matter of calculation. The main point of our remarks was, however, that methods from corpus linguistics may help us to identify both concept-constituting patterns and rele-

vant text passages for qualitative analysis when we hermeneutically navigate through the corpus in digital discourse analysis. By choosing different directions during the digitally driven research process, though, we as analysts are constantly responsible for taking adequate analytical decisions.

4 Analyzing Language in Letters of Complaint and Request

In this section we start from the opposite direction of digitally led research strategies that can be used to handle a large number of texts and thus examine language use during National Socialism. While the strategy described above consisted in zooming into and out of a corpus (and its single texts and passages) with the help of defined analytical parameters, we will now present a strategy which goes from text to text, makes use of a digital markup tool, and at the end produces a corpus which can then be analyzed according to self-defined annotations.

The thematic framework of this second part is a research project which examines letters of complaint and request that ‘ordinary people’ sent to public authorities and party officials during the pre-war years of the Third Reich.⁴⁶ In the scarce literature that exists on this phenomenon, especially compared to the period after 1945,⁴⁷ we are provided with interesting insights which serve as entry-points to our study. Thus, a local examination of letters sent to the *Kreisleitung* of the NSDAP in Eisenach has underlined the social implications of the ubiqui-

⁴⁶ We do not have the space here to elaborate too much on the research project, but for a first programmatic sketch and more literature on the subject see Stefan Scholl, “Für eine Sprach- und Kommunikationsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus”; Stefan Scholl, “Beschwerde- und Bittschreiben von Mannheimer Bürgern während des Nationalsozialismus: Eine Analyse alltags-sprachlicher Kollusion anhand von ausgewählten Beispielen,” *Sprachreport* 35, no. 4 (2019): 6–15, accessed July 6, 2020, <https://pub.ids-mannheim.de/laufend/sprachreport/pdf/sr19-4.pdf>.

⁴⁷ For the GDR and the FRG see Michaela Fenske, *Demokratie erschreiben. Bürgerbriefe und Petitionen als Medien politischer Kultur 1950–1974* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2013); Sabine Manke, *Brandt anfeuern. Das Misstrauensvotum 1972 in Bürgerbriefen an den Bundeskanzler. Ein kulturwissenschaftlicher Beitrag zu modernen Resonanz- und Korrespondenzphänomenen* (Marburg: Tectum, 2008); Harm Peer Zimmermann, “Lebenswelt und Politik. Bürgerbriefe an Helmut Schmidt,” in *Humane Orientierungswissenschaft. Was leisten Wissenschaftskulturen für das Verständnis menschlicher Lebenswelt*, ed. Peter Janich (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2008), 203–26; Ina Merkel, ed., “Wir sind doch nicht die Meckerecke der Nation”. *Briefe an das DDR-Fernsehen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998); Felix Mühlberg, *Bürger, Bitten und Behörden. Geschichte der Eingabe in der DDR* (Berlin: Karl Dietz, 2004).

tous use of the rhetoric of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁴⁸ In a similar vein, other contributors have recently pointed to the fact that quite a few people addressed the authorities rather self-confidently, creatively appropriating elements of National Socialist discourses in order to legitimate their claims.⁴⁹ However, the full scope and significance of this phenomenon within the structures of the National Socialist communicative space have still to be analyzed in depth. In our research project, the analytical focus is specifically laid on linguistic practices such as complaining, pleading, revolting, and appealing, as well as depictions of the self and of others that went along with these practices. Also, temporal dimensions of self-depictions (and depictions of others) as well as temporal aspects of relevant linguistic practices are taken into account. As we will see in the example below, very often, these different analytical layers overlapped in the letters.

Besides the bottom-up perspective that starts with a close reading and digital marking of single texts, in this case letters, the approach differs in two important points from the one described in the first section. On the one hand, we have to deal for the most part with non-digitized archival sources. Therefore, digitization, and for our purpose of analyzing language use it has to be an optical character recognition (OCR) digitization, is an integral element of the research process.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the analytical focus defined above goes beyond keywords or even concordances but aims at potentially more complex linguistic elements such as phrases, figures of speech, or whole lines of argumentation. Thus, digital tools which operate on the level of word units will not suffice, but we need a possibility to mark passages digitally in the first

48 John Connelly, “The Uses of the Volksgemeinschaft: Letters to the NSDAP Kreisleitung Eisenach, 1939–1940,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68 (1996): 899–930.

49 See for example Anette Blaschke, *Zwischen “Dorfgemeinschaft” und “Volksgemeinschaft”. Landbevölkerung und ländliche Lebenswelten im Nationalsozialismus* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018); Moritz Föllmer, “Wie kollektivistisch war der Nationalsozialismus? Zur Geschichte der Individualität zwischen Weimarer Republik und Nachkriegszeit,” in *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten. Der Nationalsozialismus in der Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Birthe Kundrus and Sybille Steinbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 34 f.; Florian Wimmer, *Die völkische Ordnung der Armut. Kommunale Sozialpolitik im nationalsozialistischen München* (Göttingen, Wallstein, 2014), 213–22. More specifically for the wartime period see Nicole Kramer, *Volksgenossinnen an der Heimatfront. Mobilisierung, Verhalten, Erinnerung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011); Birthe Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen. Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg: Wallstein, 1995).

50 As those who are familiar with the digitization of archival sources know, this is not a trivial point. Quite often, the documents are not easy (if at all) to scan with OCR. Also, a lot of the letters are written in *Sütterlin* which poses further problems for digital text recognition, even if the new program Transkribus (<https://transkribus.eu/Transkribus/>) is now available.

place, for example instances where letter-writers complain about the behavior of someone else, in order to make them digitally searchable in higher quantity at a later moment. Inversely to the strategy presented in the first part, thus, we have to first zoom deeply into single texts to then be able to zoom out of them and recognize patterns of language use.

An adequate tool for such an approach is CATMA.⁵¹ The main advantage of this program is that the user can build her or his own “tagset”—that is, a set of colored mark-ups that will be attributed to parts of a text, according to the research interest and the guiding criteria of analysis. Also, the tagset can be adjusted during the process of analysis, for example if it has to be enlarged or specified. In our case of linguistic practices of complaining, the following tagset has been established. As we will see, the different tags are rather vague, allowing for the fact that, for example the description of oneself as being an ideologically convinced National Socialist can be linguistically performed in different ways. Of course, the establishment of the tagset has already been an outcome of heuristic reflection and of presuppositions based on extensive study of sources as well as research interest. Concretely, we are looking for:

I. Constructions of Self and Others

I.1. Self-Descriptions

- National Socialist (party member, ‘old fighter’)
- Ideologically convinced
- Victim of others
- Has made sacrifices
- Former opponent, now converted
- Belonging to the community

I.2. Descriptions of Others

- Not truly believers
- Late-comers
- Opponents
- Enemies (Communists, Jews, Christians)

II. Temporal Dimensions

- World War I
- Early ‘*Kampfzeit*’
- Late ‘*Kampfzeit*’
- ‘*Systemzeit*’ / Weimar Republic
- Before the ‘*Machtergreifung*’

⁵¹ See <https://catma.de/>. The online based tool is free of charge after registration. On the homepage you will find a manual with further information. See also Jan Christoph Meister, “From TACT to CATMA or A Mindful Approach to Text Annotation and Analysis,” accessed July 6, 2020, http://jcmeister.de/downloads/texts/Meister_2020-TACT-to-CATMA.pdf.

- After the ‘*Machtergreifung*’
- Now / in the National Socialist era
- In the future

III. Linguistic Practices

- Speaking one’s mind
- Moaning about injustice
- Expressing lack of understanding
- Expressing indignation
- Asking provocative questions
- Making demands
- Referring to the ‘*Führer*’
- Referring to promises made
- Pointing to negative consequences
- Expressing loyalty or trust

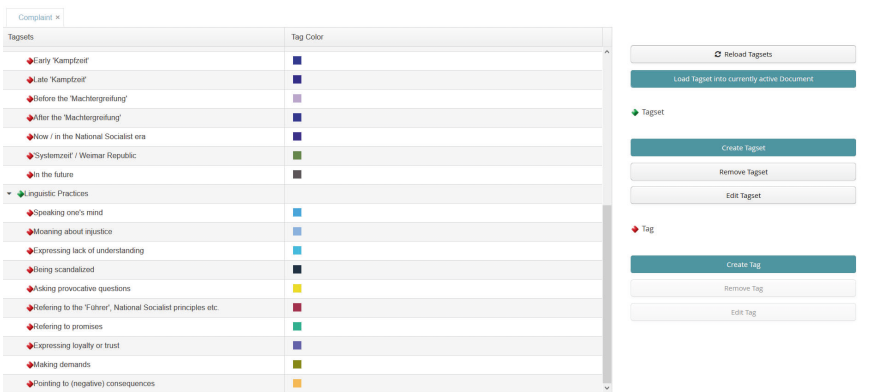


Figure 5.7: Screenshot of the tagset.

As can be seen in the screenshot (Figure 5.7), a different color, which can be chosen by the researcher, is assigned to each tag. The next step consists in tagging the digitized texts, which can be uploaded into the tool one by one.

For illustrative purposes, we have chosen one letter of complaint out of our corpus of texts in order to demonstrate the tagging process. In April 1937, Hertha B., a woman from Karlsruhe, wrote to Rudolf Heß, the deputy party leader (“*Stellvertreter des Führers*”):

Nach 6 Jahren langem hartem Existenzkampf von vielen Enttäuschungen niedergeschlagen, muss ich mich heute aus Not gedrungen an Sie wenden und Ihnen (ohne Wissen meines Mannes) das Schicksal eines alten Kämpfers schildern.

Mein Mann Mitgl. Nr. 128147 wurde im Jahre 1930 wegen seiner Parteizugehörigkeit von der Stadt Wiesbaden entlassen, und war volle 4 Jahre danach arbeitslos. Nach der Machtübernahme machte er [...] sein Anrecht auf seine alte Stellung als Leiter des städtischen Fuhrparks geltend, wurde aber von den Herren Parteigenossen (jüngerer Zugehörigkeit) abgelehnt. [...]

Im Jahre 1930 war mein Mann bei der Ausschreibung betreffend Ersetzung der Betriebsamtsmannstelle in Bremen unter den zahlreichen Bewerbern bereits gewählt, jedoch wurde nachträglich bei der Stadt Wiesbaden betr. seiner politischen Gesinnung nachgefragt und ihm daraufhin mitgeteilt: ‚man hat bei der Wahl des Kandidaten politische Gesichtspunkte nicht außer Betracht gelassen und ist also die Wahl auf einen anderen Bewerber gefallen.‘ Man könnte unmöglich einen nationalsozialistischen Betriebsleiter über eine rote Arbeiterschaft setzen.

Nachdem mein Mann auch nach der Machtübernahme überall abgewiesen wurde, kehrten wir in meine Heimatstadt Karlsruhe zurück und bauten uns da aus eigenen Kräften eine Sachverständigen-Praxis auf. Es sollten 2 Juden als Sachverständige für das Kraftfahrzeugwesen ausscheiden, jedoch nachdem einer davon Deutschland verlassen hat, wählt der andere Jude gegen meinen Mann. Dieser Vollblutjude behauptet (Kriegsteilnehmer) vollste Unterstützung seitens des Reiches zu haben (ich vermute aber nur seitens der örtlichen Regierung) und warnt, irgendetwas gegen ihn zu unternehmen. [...] Es ist nur sehr sonderbar, dass der Jude vollste Unterstützung bekommt und heute noch die beste Praxis hat, kein Wunder, wenn sogar die Adler-Vertretung ihn ausschließlich beschäftigt. [...]

Das größte Unrecht aber, das geschieht, ist, dass das Gericht bis vor kurzem ausschließlich einen pensionierten Beamten des Dampfkessel-Überwachungs-Vereins beschäftigte. Dieser Herr war seiner Zeit wegen seiner politischen Unzuverlässigkeit aus obigem Verein entlassen worden. Solche Volksgenossen werden unterstützt und finden gleich wieder Arbeit und ein alter Kämpfer wird vernichtet. [...] Ja, so geht es eben, wenn man nicht mit dem Gau-Obmann der DAF befreundet ist und keinerlei Beziehungen hat. [...] Es ist absolut kein Wunder, wenn man verbittert wird, aber nur zu gut zu verstehen, wenn man solche Enttäuschungen erleben muss. [...]

Unsere mit vieler Mühe ohne jegliche Hilfe aufgebaute Existenz wird durch gemeine Intrige wieder vernichtet. Aber einem alten Kämpfer kann man dies Alles ja bieten, er soll nur ruhig weiter kämpfen um sein Dasein, wenn es nur den Volksgenossen die seiner Zeit dem Kampf sehr fern standen, gut geht. Nur der Glaube an unseren Führer hielt uns aufrecht, da es aber immer noch keinen Lichtblick für uns gegeben hat, wende ich mich heute an Sie und bitte um Hilfe, d.h. um Untersuchung der hier herrschenden ungerechten Zustände. Ich hoffe, dass ein alter Kämpfer auch einmal das Recht hat auf Unterstützung und Gerechtigkeit.

Nach unserem Umzug von Frankfurt nach Karlsruhe sandte mein Mann auf Anforderung seinen NSK Ausweis nach Frankfurt, da die Papiere erneuert werden sollten. Jedoch bekam er dabei eine andere Nummer. Er hatte die Nummer 2886 und erhielt die Nummer 10172 (beim Eintritt im Jahre 1932?). Das geht doch nicht in Ordnung! Wer hat sich diese Nummer angeeignet? [...] Wozu gibt es denn Ortsgruppen, wenn sie sich nicht um die Angelegenheiten ihrer Mitglieder kümmern? [...]

Ich möchte absolut nicht als Nörglerin oder als Denunziantin angesehen werden, aber was zu viel ist, ist zu viel. 6 Jahre haben wir nun ohne jegliche Hilfe uns durchgerungen, uns endlich ein wenig emporgebracht und werden nun von Intrigen wieder niedergeschlagen.

Wir können uns nicht dauernd unterdrücken lassen, wir fordern Gerechtigkeit und hoffen, dass bald die Wahrheit siegen möge.⁵²

Despondent after 6 years of hard existential struggle full of disappointments, I today, from a position of great need have to reach out to you to tell you (without the knowledge of my husband) of the fight of an *alter Kämpfer* [lit., “old fighter,” term used for early Nazi supporters.] My husband, membership Nr. 128147, was dismissed in the year 1930 by the city of Wiesbaden due to his party membership, and was subsequently unemployed for 4 full years. After *Machtübernahme* [lit. “Seizure of power,” term used by Nazis to describe the moment when Hitler was appointed German Reich Chancellor in 1933], he asserted that he should regain his old position as director of the municipal vehicle fleet, but was rejected by the party comrades (younger memberships.) [...]

In the year 1930, my husband had already been elected amongst several other candidates for replacing the position of a municipal company’s representative [*Betriebsamtsmann*] in Bremen, but afterwards there was an inquiry at the city of Wiesbaden in regard to his political leanings and then he was told: “political aspects were not disregarded when choosing a candidate and thus another applicant was chosen.” It would be impossible to put a National Socialist company leader above a red labor force.

After my husband was rejected everywhere after *Machtübernahme* as well, we returned to my home city of Karlsruhe and, on our own, established an office for technical expertise. Two Jews were expected to leave their positions as experts for motor vehicles, but after one of them had left Germany, the other Jew rallied against my husband. This Jew of full blood [*Vollblutjude*] claimed (war participant) to have fullest support from the Reich (but I suspect this was only from the local government) and warns, to take any action against him. [...] It is just very strange, that this Jew received full support and still today has the best office running, no surprise, if even the Adler dealership employed him exclusively. [...]

The largest injustice, however, that is occurring, is that the court until recently exclusively employed a retired civil servant from the steam boiler inspection association. This gentleman had been in the past dismissed from the above-mentioned association due to political unreliability. Such people’s comrades [*Volksgenossen*] receive support and immediately find jobs again and an *alter Kämpfer* is destroyed. [...] Well, this is how it goes if you are not friends with the *Gau* chairman of the German Labor Front and have no networks. [...] It is absolutely no wonder that one turns bitter, but it is easily understood if one has to live through such disappointments. [...]

Our existence, built up with much effort and without any help, is now being destroyed again by mean-spirited intrigues. But everything can be thrown at an *alter Kämpfer*, he should just continue to fight for his existence, as long as all the people’s comrades, which in the past were distant from the fight, do well. It was only the belief in the Führer that held us up, but since there is still no ray of hope for us, I today turn to you and ask for help, i.e. for an investigation of the prevailing, unjust situation here. I hope that an *alter Kämpfer* once also has the right to receive support and justice. [...]

After we moved from Frankfurt to Karlsruhe, my husband sent his NSK passport to Frankfurt on request, as his papers were to be renewed. However, with this, he received

52 Hertha Bachmann (Karlsruhe) to Rudolf Hefß, April 4, 1937, *Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe*, 465c, 1022.

a different number. He used to have number 2886 and received the number 10172 (having entered in 1932?). That is not alright! Who appropriated this number? [...] What is the purpose of local party groups, if they don't take care of the matters of their members? [...]

I absolutely do not want to be considered a moaner or a denunciator, but what is too much is too much. We have now survived for 6 years without any help, have finally risen a little bit and now are beaten down again by intrigues. We cannot let ourselves to be continuously suppressed, we demand justice and hope, that the truth will soon win.

In her letter, she told the 'story' of her husband, an "old fighter" (*alter Kämpfer*), who had suffered from private and vocational discrimination during the Weimar Republic due to his political affiliation, but even after the Nazi seizure of power did not find an adequate job. After having founded a small expert office for steam boilers on their own, their business had been hampered by a "Jew," according to Hertha B. She claimed that the local administration supported this hampering, and that the local court gave job assignments exclusively to a person of dubious political reliability. In general, she criticized with quite a lot of sarcasm that 'old fighters' and long-time supporters of the 'movement' were disadvantaged vis-à-vis late-comers and people that had been hostile towards National Socialism before Hitler's coming to power. This, by the way, was a narrative quite widespread within the circles of 'old fighters.'⁵³ At the end of the letter, she claimed not to be a moaner (*Nörglerin*) or denouncer (*Denunziantin*), but that "enough is enough." She demanded "justice" and hoped for the victory of "truth."

While this short résumé of the letter may already be interesting, on the level of language use we want to go more into detail and analyze how Hertha B.'s complaint is linguistically structured, which discursive elements were used by her, and which linguistic practices were performed.⁵⁴ In order to do so, we have to manually annotate the text in several cycles with our previously constructed tagset (see Figures 5.8 and 5.9).

⁵³ See Bernd Stöver, *Volksgemeinschaft im Dritten Reich. Die Konsensbereitschaft der Deutschen aus der Sicht sozialistischer Exilberichte* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1993), 383–88; Christoph Schmidt, "Zu den Motiven 'alter Kämpfer' in der NSDAP," in *Die Reihen fast geschlossen. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Detlev Peukert and Jürgen Reulecke (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1981), 38–41.

⁵⁴ It is important to note that the term 'use' does not necessarily imply a cognitive or strategic intention here. Rather, we focus on the simple fact that certain types of words, phrases, and arguments were employed by someone. If the person did this intentionally, habitually, or just accidentally is another question. However, in the context of letters that were sent to public authorities and party organizations during the Third Reich, we can at least assume that the writers tried to present their case in a form and style that they sought was beneficial to their cause.

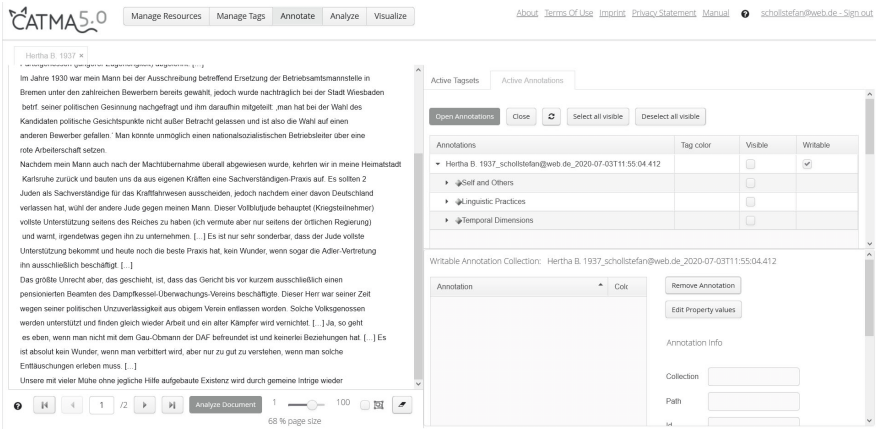


Figure 5.8: Screenshot of uploaded document (on the left) before annotation.

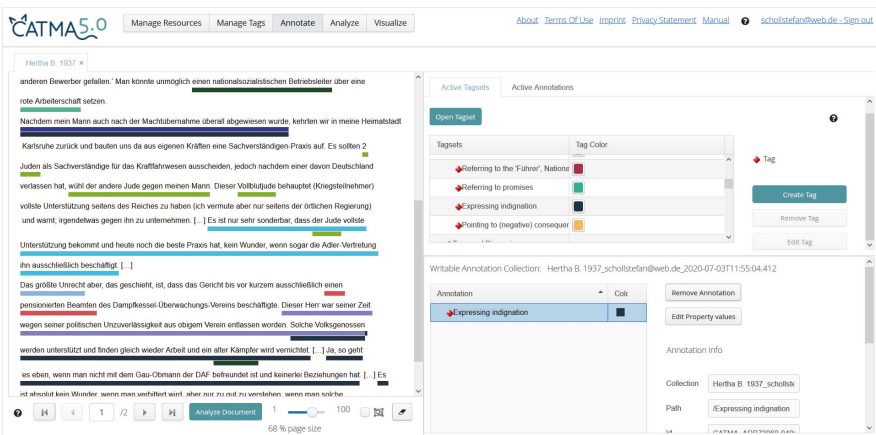


Figure 5.9: Screenshot of the annotation process.

As an outcome of the tagging process, we arrive at a document which is digitally annotated according to our analytical research criteria. As can be seen in Figure 5.9, different tags may overlap. For example, we have marked up the subclause “Nachdem mein Mann auch nach der Machtübernahme überall abgewiesen wurde” (After my husband got repelled everywhere even after the take-over of power) with a temporal tag (blue) as well with a tag that interprets this utterance as an expression of indignation (black). Similarly, in the sentence “Solche Volksgenossen werden unterstützt und finden gleich wieder Arbeit und ein alter Kämpfer wird vernichtet” (Such people’s comrades are supported and immedi-

ately find work and an old fighter is getting destroyed), we have tagged it as a whole as an expression of indignation, while “Solche Volksgenossen” can be seen as a pejorative description of the other—here, specifically, someone who was deemed to be politically unreliable, which, again, is only clarified in connection to the sentence before—and “alter Kämpfer” of course refers to her husband.

While the detailed and careful tagging already leads to close readings of texts, the full potential of the method unfolds only after having annotated a larger number of texts (in our case letters to the authorities) with the same tagset. Now, it is possible to formulate qualified research queries and apply them to the annotated texts. For example, we are now able to generate a list of all instances where letter-writers expressed their indignation of not having found an appropriate job after the Nazi’s seizure of power and combined this with a self-depiction as an ‘old fighter’ and a demarcation from people who were accused of not being true National Socialists. Complex patterns of language use can thus be detected much more easily than in ‘traditional’ serial reading. Or we can simply detect chronological peaks in the use of a certain linguistic practice that is not necessarily connected to single words, like ‘expressing indignation’ for example. In any case, this method allows for an accurate fitting of analytical criteria of language use defined in the tagset, the annotation of these criteria in single texts, and the possibility to recognize patterns of language use in a large corpus.

Since our research project is currently in the process of tagging letters one by one, we are not able yet to give a clear-cut overview of the results. However, we can already identify some outlines, some of which can also be found in our exemplary letter of Hertha B.: First, most of the letter-writers positioned themselves as ardent supporters of the National Socialist movement and its heterogeneous ideological offerings. At the same time, they often demarcated themselves from others that were characterized as not being true and convinced National Socialists. The temporal dimension—that is, for how long someone claimed to have been a National Socialist—played a major role. Also, it becomes apparent that many of those who complained about something did this by referring to National Socialist promises and ‘principles.’ A central trait of the linguistic interaction between ‘ordinary Germans’ and official authorities was the performance of belonging and adherence to National Socialism by appropriating specific patterns of National Socialist discourses—and thus co-constructed these discourses. More qualified and differentiated results will eventually be gained by using the method of digitized annotation.

To be sure, the procedure that we have presented in this second section is time-consuming and is best suited to texts of short or medium length. While speeches, books, or journal articles may be too long for a detailed serial manual annotation, different kinds of letters, administrative records (for example of the

Gestapo), or short reports may be better qualified for such a research method of analysis.

5 Conclusion

As should have become clear, by presenting our understanding of a digitally led study of language use during National Socialism we focused rather on the description of methodological decisions and research strategies than presenting a thoroughgoing analysis of specific concepts or linguistic practices. The empirical examples—the concept ‘*Lebensraum*’ in speeches of Hitler and Goebbels and the linguistic practice of complaining in letters to the authorities—served as illustrations for our methodological reflections. In general, researchers who want to study patterns of language use are dependent on large corpora of texts. Digital tools and methods can help (and sometimes guide) us here, because they enable us to detect, recognize, arrange, and visualize patterns that we would probably not always see by close reading.

In the first section, we zoomed in and out of the corpus and texts to varying levels of granularity by employing analytical parameters such as keyword, collocation, and concordance, thus combining methods from corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. As we have underlined, these parameters are not to be considered separately from each other, but rather as steps on a research path. Brought together, the partial results of individual evaluations always give rise to new possible search directions that can be pursued further.

In the second part, we presented a way to digitally annotate a corpus of texts with a self-defined tagset, which potentially leads to enhanced research options. The advantage here is that it allows us to look beyond the level of the lexical surface of texts, since the annotations can encompass more complex and uneven linguistic constructions.

However, as we tended to stress in our preliminary remarks, the use of digital tools and methods does not discharge the discourse analyst from the basic procedures of critical historical and linguistic investigation. Hence, we must bear in mind that we as researchers, through the composition of corpora, criteria of analysis, interpretations, search queries, and so on, constantly influence the way digital corpus technology provides us with results. Thus, hermeneutical understanding and interpreting are crucial elements that accompany digital discourse analysis.

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