

ENGLISH NOUNS

Using extensive data from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, this groundbreaking book shows that the syntactic patterns in which English nominalizations can be found and the range of possible readings they can express are very different from what has been claimed in past theoretical treatments and, therefore, that previous treatments cannot be correct. Lieber argues that the relationship between form and meaning in the nominalization processes of English is virtually never one-to-one, but rather forms a complex web that can be likened to a derivational ecosystem. Using the Lexical Semantic Framework (LSF), she develops an analysis that captures the interrelatedness and context dependence of nominal readings and suggests that the key to the behavior of nominalizations is that their underlying semantic representations are underspecified in specific ways and that their ultimate interpretation must be fixed in context using processes available within LSF.

ROCHELLE LIEBER is Professor of Linguistics at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) where she teaches a wide range of courses on theoretical linguistics and the English language. She is the recipient of the Carpenter Professorship (2016) and the Lindberg Award for the Outstanding Teacher and Scholar in Liberal Arts (2013) at UNH, and the Bloomfield Award given by the Linguistic Society of America for the *Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology* (with Laurie Bauer and Ingo Plag, 2015). She is the author of four monographs and over fifty articles and book chapters on morphology and related topics and is the coeditor of three handbooks on morphology.

ENGLISH NOUNS
THE ECOLOGY OF NOMINALIZATION

ROCHELLE LIEBER
University of New Hampshire



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-16137-5 – English Nouns
Rochelle Lieber
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107161375

© Cambridge University Press 2016

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2016

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lieber, Rochelle, 1954– author.

English nouns : the ecology of nominalization / Rochelle Lieber.

Cambridge University Press : Cambridge, [2016] | Includes

bibliographical references and index.

LCCN 2016015473 | ISBN 9781107161375 (Hardback) |

ISBN 9781316613870 (Paperback)

LCSH: English language – Nouns. | English language – Nominals. |

English language – Grammar.

LCC PE1205 .L53 2016 | DDC 425/.54–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016015473>

ISBN 978-1-107-16137-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

	<i>List of Figures</i>	Page	vii
	<i>List of Tables</i>		viii
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>		ix
	Part I Preliminaries		1
1	Introduction		3
2	Terminology and Methodology		15
2.1	Terminology		15
2.2	Methodology		25
	Part II Data		29
3	Event/Result Nominalizations		31
3.1	Previous Claims		31
3.2	Nineteen Questions		34
3.3	Adding It All Up		53
4	Nominalizations as a Derivational Ecosystem		56
4.1	The Derivational Ecosystem		56
4.2	Forms and Readings		59
4.3	Inanimate Patient Nouns		76
4.4	Conclusion		88
	Part III Nominalization in LSF		91
5	A Lexical Semantic Approach to Nominalization: The Basics		93
5.1	Recap of LSF		94
5.2	E versus R Skeletons: A First Pass		100

vi *Contents*

6	The Eventive Reading	105
6.1	ATK Nominalizations with the Eventive Reading	106
6.2	<i>-ing</i> Nominalizations	110
6.3	Conversion Nouns	111
6.4	A Note on Simplex Nouns	112
6.5	Conclusion	114
7	Referential Readings	117
7.1	Basic Skeletons	120
7.2	Referential Readings for ATK, <i>-ing</i> , and Conversion Ns	121
7.3	Personal and Participant Nominalizations	128
7.4	Abstract Nominalizations	134
7.5	Collectives	136
7.6	Underpopulated Habitats	142
7.7	Modal and Evaluative Elements of Affixal Meaning	146
7.8	Conclusion	151
8	Nominalization and Compounding in LSF	153
8.1	Claims	154
8.2	The Corpus Data	155
8.3	The LSF Analysis	162
8.4	Conclusions and Loose Ends	174
9	Nouns in the Wild	179
	<i>References</i>	186
	<i>Index</i>	192

Figures

4.1	Habitats and their occupants	<i>Page</i>	73
4.2	P for <i>-ables</i> and <i>-ives</i>		83

Tables

3.1	Ungrammaticality of nominalizations from Grimshaw (1990)	<i>Page</i>	35
4.1	Affixes, bases, and potential readings		60
4.2	Attested readings of affixes		63
4.3	Affixes with inanimate patient readings		78
4.4	Forms in <i>-ives</i> and <i>-ables</i>		80
7.1	Affixes, bases, and potential readings		118

Acknowledgments

I've always been mystified by nominalizations. Ever since I read 'Remarks on Nominalizations' (Chomsky 1970) as an undergraduate, I've been intrigued by the intricacies of eventive nominalizations in English, but I never felt that I could get a handle on them. I avoided them in my scholarly work for as long as I could. So I thank Chiara Melloni for coming to work with me in the summer of 2006 and for showing me just how much I didn't understand about nominalizations. Inadvertently she set me off on this project. I am also grateful to Laurie Bauer and Ingo Plag, with whom I spent three pleasant years working on *The Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology*; they trusted me to write the first drafts of the three nominalization chapters and thereby gave me the opportunity to wallow in corpus data until I began to get a grip on the data. By the time we finished that book, I felt that I understood the many ways in which nominalizations could be polysemous, but I was still confused about the larger syntactic configurations in which nominalizations could be found and about the relationship between syntactic context and polysemy. I therefore thank the University of New Hampshire for a sabbatical in the spring of 2015 that finally gave me the time to explore the syntactic side of nominalizations, to let the pieces fall into place, and ultimately to write this book. I thank my new colleague Sean Madigan for reading the first half of the manuscript. And I thank Ingo (again) and his team – Lea Kawaletz and Marios Andreou – for reading a nearly complete draft of the book and commenting on it extensively. It is very much better for all of their careful attention. Thanks finally to David and the furry kids for being there through all.