

The Nordic Languages

An International Handbook of the History
of the North Germanic Languages

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27. Nordic language history and research on types of texts

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1. Introduction

The concept of *type of text*, *text type* or *genre* is not a scholarly term with a fixed and broadly accepted definition; the English terminology in particular is somewhat inadequate compared to the German *Textsorte*, *Texttyp*, *Textform* and *Gattung*. But most people would agree that a list of text types would contain items like the following: anecdotes, comedies, descriptions (scientific or technical), editorials, essays, instructions, jokes, leading articles, legends, laws, minutes, narratives, new stories, novels, reviews, sagas, short stories, tales, and tragedies. In a general text theory, it is possible to define text type as a shared generic type which constitutes and determines common interpretations of a particular text.

2. Text

In traditional grammars and language history, neither text nor text type are defined concepts because they involve both a theory of speech acts and of textual connection, coherence and cohesion between sentences, which are normally not part of grammar.

In modern international and Scandinavian text linguistic research and writing pedagogy many attempts have been made to define the concept of a text (Beaugrande/Dressler 1981; Berge 1988; Brandt/Koch/Rosengren 1981; Enkvist 1974; Fossetøl 1980; 1983; Gradenwitz 1983; Gülich/Raible 1972; Hirsch 1967; Jacobsen 1960; Källgren 1979; Larsson 1979; Lundqvist 1980; 1983; Tøgeby 1993; Werlich 1976).

The most comprehensive definition of a text is Beaugrande and Dressler's, according to which a text is defined as a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality: (1) cohesion, the way in which words are mutually connected within a sequence; (2) coherence, the ways in which the components of the textual world (concepts and relations) are mutually accessible and relevant; (3) intentionality, the text producer's attitude that the

set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fulfilling the producer's intentions; (4) acceptability, the receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text of some use or relevance to the receiver; (5) informativity, the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown/certain; (6) situationality, the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence; (7) intertextuality, the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts. All other attempts to define text types contain some of these seven standards.

3. History of text types

The issue of text types is not dealt with in a theoretical way in the standard works on Nordic historical linguistics (Brøndum-Nielsen 1928–1973; Haugen 1976; Karker 1990; 1993; Skard 1967–1979; Wessén 1941–1956).

3.1. Skautrup

In Skautrup's culturally based history of language (1944–68), the textual sources from the eldest periods (200–1750) are divided into text types such as: runic inscriptions, law texts and legal documents, professional literature (medical texts), religious texts (legends, translations of the Bible), historical texts (chronicles, sagas), and poetical works (ballads). For later periods other text types are added to the list: the press, many types of professional literature, and many types of poetical works.

Obviously the criterion for the subdivision of texts is primarily situationality and intertextuality; text types are defined as texts that fit into the situation in which they are used. The criteria for the typology, however, are not made explicit, and the function of the text types and their stylistic features are not discussed. Nevertheless, many stylistic features are mentioned in the description of the texts: syntactic patterns, vocabulary, frequency of morphological forms, types of coherence (e.g. casuistic law texts).

3.2. Diderichsen

The most genuine treatment of text typology in Nordic language history is Diderichsen's

so-called *History of Danish prose* (1968). This work is a proper history of prose style, the first five chapters of which were published posthumously, and the rest, chapters VI–XV, are only known as mimeographs.

3.2.1. Classical rhetoric

In the first chapter Diderichsen sets up the system of text types developed in antiquity, taking the Aristotelian distinction between poetry (poesis) and speech (logos) as basic. Speech (including historiography and political speeches) is the art of persuasion (peitho) and deals with what really happened or what we intend to do, while poetry is the art of imitation (mimesis) and deals with what could happen possibly, probably and necessarily.

Speech is in classical rhetoric divided into three *genera*: the forensic speech of the courtroom, (forum), the deliberative speech in the senate, and the epideictic speech used at celebrations and festive occasions.

The distinction between speech and poetry is similar to the modern distinction between imaginative literature (fiction, drama and poetry, literary texts, poetic texts) and non-fiction (the English terminology is troublesome because *fiction* is not the opposite of *non-fiction*, but only one kind of non-fiction). Utterances in imaginative literature are not meant to be sincere or true, while in non-fiction any utterance should follow the Gricean maxim: "be sincere!", which means that a statement and its presuppositions have to be true, and a promise must be kept etc. (Grice 1975).

3.2.2. History of prose

Chapters II–XV of Diderichsen's *History of Danish prose* describe how several types of written texts have developed and crystallized as fixed forms of prose texts or prose genres in Denmark. From this point of view, text types are historically specific habits and conventions for textual structuring. Through the Middle Ages, many text types originated and developed in the institutions of the state, the church and chivalry.

One chapter is devoted to each text type or historical style: (II) Language of the law and style of the chancellery (departmental style), (III) Translations of the Bible (legends), (IV) Sermons, (V) Proverbs, (VI) Profane prose tales (chronicles, translations of European romances and novellas, translations of sagas,

(VII) Epistles (letters, diplomas and missives), (VIII) Autobiographical reminiscences, (IX) French court style and English domestic prose (verse drama, epistle, essay, philosophical tale), (X) Holberg's prose, (XI) Sentimental prose, (XII) Danish prose of the fine arts, (XIIIa) Ewald's prose, (XIIIb) Jens Baggesen, (XIV) National and popular styles.

Diderichsen's description of the text types is primarily stylistic, i.e. deals with all seven standards of textuality, with the emphasis on cohesion and coherence. Each text type is characterized by the most significant stylistic traits, such as:

text composition (e.g. epistles are composed of a salutatio 'greeting', exordium 'introduction', captatio benevolentiae 'good will', narratio 'the story', petitio 'appeal', conclusio 'conclusion');

syntactic patterns (hypotaxis, parataxis, polysyndesis, asyndesis, Latin syntactic constructions);

word order (inversion, German word order with final finite verb, law of growing elements);

vocabulary (native words and loanwords and borrowing from Latin, German, French, English);

narrator type (omniscient narrator, free indirect discourse, vision avec, vision par derriere);

figures of speech (gradation, apostrophe, alliteration and metaphor, allegory, metonymy, synecdoche, litotes, sarcasm, satire).

3.3. History of types of imaginative literature

3.3.1. Imaginative literature defined

An explanatory definition of fictional text is given in modern text linguistics: a text in which the situation discussed stands in a principle alternative relationship to the accepted version of the real world (Beaugrande/Dressler 1981, 185). The fictional text world is a metaphor for the real world of the interpreters, while in non-fiction the text world stands in a metonymic relation to the real world, i.e. the text world is part of the real world (Kock 1979).

3.3.2. Types of imaginative literature

Imaginative literary texts are traditionally divided into three kinds or genres (German:

Gattung): poetry (poems, song lyrics), drama (whether in prose or verse), and fiction (novels, short stories, epics). The criterion for this division from Aristotle and Plato up to Goethe and modern times has been the manner of representation (or imitation): in poetry it is a first-person monologue by the poet's persona; in drama it is the third-person characters who speak with each other; and in fiction (novels, short stories, epics) there is a mixture of narration by the first-person narrator to the second-person addressee and dialogue between third-person characters. To these three kinds one can add very short imaginative text forms that are primarily oral and do not fall into any of the other categories: anecdotes, jokes, riddles, nursery rhymes.

IMA- GINA- TIVE LITE- RA- TURE	POETRY	first-person monologue	odes, elegies, songs, hymns, folk ballads
	DRAMA	third-person dialogue	tragedies, comedies, satires, musicals, farces
	FICTION	mix of message from narrator to the addressee and dialogue of third-persons	novels, short stories, myths, sagas, folk tales, legends
	SHORT FORMS	primarily oral and very short	nursery rhymes, jokes, witticisms, riddles, proverbs, anecdotes

Histories of literature and rhetoric (Albeck/Jansen 1964; Dahlerup 1998; Fafner 1982; Friis 1945; Jansen 1944–1958) take the genres of imaginative literature for granted. They all describe the texts in chronological order grouped together under headlines such as: law texts, chronicles, ballads, love songs, proverbs, and in most histories of literature subtle subdivisions are made for each genre, primarily on historical grounds, e.g., ballads are subdivided into ballads of chivalry, historical ballads, ballads about magic, ballads about giants, and younger ballads.

4. Theory of text types

4.1. Text types as generic types

In traditional grammars, literary history and language history *text type* is not defined but taken for granted. The definition of text type

is discussed in works on the theory of literature, and in works on text linguistics and pragmatics.

In general, two texts belong to the same type or category if they both have the traits that define the type. Text types are acquired types, that is, they are type ideas which derive from previous experience. All types are vague because they subsume a large number of particular instances. Type is a concept of the same degree of abstraction as the Kantian modes of perception: time, space, and causality (Hirsch 1967).

But texts are not classified in the same way that physical entities are. Texts do not exist through time the way stones, carnivores, or colours do. Texts are events in time, like a play, or an episode, interpreted in common ways by many people perceiving them and participating in them, and cannot be described or defined by necessary and sufficient conditions (Clark 1996). The concept of text type is in fact the bridge between the particularity of the utterance act and the sociality of interpretation during the process of reading and listening. Text types are tools for the interpreters and the communicator used in the process of communication, and thus part of the system of rules and conventions which make communication possible (Johansen 1970).

4.2. Text types and the hermeneutic circle

Text types play a crucial role in the interpretation of a particular text. Often, which type the actual text is meant to be an instantiation of is indicated in the beginning of a text by labels such as *Instructions* or *Novel*. The interpreters' notion of the type of meaning they confront will influence their understanding of details and the interpreters' preliminary generic conception of the text is constitutive of everything that they subsequently understand in the text. This is what is called the hermeneutic circle of interdependence of parts and whole: the whole can be understood only through its parts, but the parts can be understood only through the whole (Hirsch 1967).

This generic conception is apparently not stable but varies during the process of interpretation. At first there is a vague and preliminary awareness of the text type, and the interpreters have a feeling that the text will satisfy (meet) their inclinations; with further reading, as understanding proceeds, the text type becomes more explicit, the range of expectations to the text becomes narrower, and

the text functions as an interpretation of the interpreter's own bent (Wentzel 1981).

The only way we can understand the functional relationship of an early part of a text to the whole, before we have completed it, is by means of a generic conception that is broad enough to be perceived at the beginning of the interpretation and narrow enough to determine the meaning of all the parts. Text type is that sense of the whole by means of which an interpreter can correctly understand any part of it. Interpreters reason that if the meaning of the whole is of a certain type, then a particular detail carries a certain implication. The text type is always construed, i.e. guessed, and is in many cases not given (Hirsch 1967).

Text type is the bridge between the particular utterance act and the interpreters' common understanding, and the communicator knows that the type of meaning must be grounded in a type of usage, since it is only from traits of usage: headlines, types of reference, vocabulary range, relevance structuring, syntactical patterns, formulaic expressions, and so on, that the interpreter can work out the speakers' type of meaning. Text type is a structural necessity for communication.

4.3. Criteria for classification

A text type is thus defined as a shared generic type which constitutes and determines common interpretations of a particular text. As shared generic types, they constitute broad heuristic type concepts (text groups) when first approaching a text. These groups, law, teaching, negotiation and discussion are defined by the type of social relation between the communicator and the interpreter: symmetrical or asymmetrical power or knowledge (Wentzel 1981).

	power	knowledge
asymmetrical	law	teaching
symmetrical	negotiation	discussion

After a text has been read, it functions as a new texture of connections between traits of usage and types of purpose and intention. In the end, any text has a unique meaning, which is understood only because the interpreters recognize analogies to other texts and subsume the new text under previously known types in a process of the same kind as interpretation of metaphors. The preliminary text type group is based on loose family resem-

blance. The members are grouped together as a convenient prototype of conceptualization, but there is no single specific traits common to them all. There are also no clear and firm boundaries between the larger text type classifications.

A text type can be defined as a shared system of conventions. Text type conventions are properties rather than rules. All the elements of a text type point to the same controlling idea of the communicator's intention or purpose. To be consistent, all traits have to point to the same broad text type, to be congruent and to belong to the same style; otherwise the text is experienced as odd and incoherent (Werlich 1975; 1976).

4.4. Text types and speech acts

The term *text* is ambiguous in relation to the term *speech act*; in some cases one speech act constitutes a whole text that is composed of many sentences; e. g. the novel *War and Peace* can be said to be one single speech act or utterance act. In other cases we may say that a text is composed by many speech acts; a business letter may comprise several different illocutionary types: a date, a greeting, statements of fact, possibly an agreement, a greeting and a signature. This is an area which requires further study (Brandt/Koch/Rosengren 1981; Koch/Rosengren/Schonebohm 1978).

Since text types are the generic types of the speaker's purpose, it is natural to take the function of a text as the most important criterion for text classification. Attempts have been made to classify texts as speech acts. Speech acts have been classified by J. R. Searle (1976) as representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations; by J. Habermas (1976) as communicatives, constatives, representatives, regulatives and institutional speech acts; and R. Jakobson (1960) differentiates between the emotive, referential, poetic, phatic, metalinguistic and conative functions of the speech act or text.

None of these classifications, however, are well suited to characterizing texts, because speech acts normally are one-sentence texts, whereas text types are defined as determining common interpretations of subsequent sentences in a long text if, because of the textual traits at the beginning, the text is construed as belonging to a particular type. Texts do not contain many sentences belonging to the same speech act type, such as commissives or institutional speech acts. But in a long text, one

sentence may be the core sentence which all the other sentences support. In a business letter, the agreement about some trade transactions may be the core function of the text, and all the other sentences have a supporting function in relation to this purpose or goal (Koch/Rosengren/Schonebohm 1978; 1979; 1980).

5. Classification of texts

5.1. Classification of non-fictional texts

Text could be classified according to the illocutionary force of their core sentences as informative text types (with constatives dominating), regulative text types (with directives, commissives or regulatives dominating) and declarative text types (with declarations, communicatives and institutional speech acts dominating).

If the semantic centre, the conceptual relations between propositions, the global pattern of organization of the text, and stylistic traits are taken as criteria for the classification of texts, we have three general text groups: descriptive, narrative and argumentative (Beaugrande/Dressler 1981):

TEXT GROUP	DESCRIPTIVE	NARRATIVE	ARGUMENTATIVE
SEMANTIC CENTRES	objects, situations	actions, events	beliefs, ideas
CONCEPTUAL RELATIONS	attributes, states, instances, specifications	cause, reason, purpose, enablement, time proximity	reason, significance, volition, value, opposition
STYLISTIC TRAITS	modifiers	subordinations	emphasis, insistence, reoccurrence, parallelism, paraphrase
GLOBAL PATTERN	frame	schema	plan

This taxonomy is unsatisfactory because text types such as law, instruction, and advertisement do not seem to be subsumed under any of the text groups.

If type of cognitive process and type of core sentence are taken as criteria, we have a more satisfactory division into five text groups: de-

scription, narration, exposition, argumentation and instruction (Werlich 1975; 1976):

TEXT GROUP	COGNITIVE PROCESS	CORE SENTENCE TYPES	TEXT TYPES
DESCRIPTION	perception of phenomena in space	phenomenon-registering sentences	expressionistic and technical description
NARRATION	perception of phenomena in time	action-recording sentences	story, narrative, news story, report, chronicle, annals
EXPOSITION	comprehension	phenomenon-identifying sentences; phenomenon-linking sentences	essay, explication, textbook, definition, minutes, text interpretation
ARGUMENTATION	judging	quality-attributing sentences	comment, scientific paper
INSTRUCTION	planning	action-demanding sentences	law, rule, agreement, directive

The most obvious disadvantage with this taxonomy is that widespread text types such as advertisements (commercials) are not represented in the system. The reason for this is that commercials do not have a standard set of sincerity expectations and purpose-signaling traits: they look like descriptions, but are instructions or argumentation.

When text types are seen in a procedural perspective, the mutual expectations and background knowledge of the interlocutors are important criteria for classification of texts. These expectations are very accurately dealt with in the framework of Harder and Kock's theory of presupposition failure (1976).

Deception is, according to this theory, defined by a situation where the presupposition of the utterance does not belong to the background knowledge of the speaker, while the interpreters assume that it does, and the speaker knows that they do; the presupposition does belong to background assumptions of the interpreters, the speakers know that, and that is what the interpreters believe.

Bullying is the name of a sincere speech act in which the speaker is showing non-solidarity, but does not care either whether he is caught in doing it; and he means no fun. An

example is the well-known question: *When did you stop beating your wife?*

It is a consequence of the theory of presupposition failure that advertisements and commercials are treated as a kind of deception or bullying (Togeby 1993, 687 ff.).

5.2. Classification of all texts

An outline of a taxonomy of text types for all texts collected from all the quoted literature could be the following:

	MODE OF SINCERITY EXPECTATIONS	MODE OF REPRESENTATION	TEXT TYPES
TEXT	PRESUPPOSITION FAILURE	BULLYING	commercials
		IRONY	making fun, politeness
		DECEPTION	advertisement, commercial
IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE		DRAMA	tragedy, comedy, parody, travesty, play, cabaret
		POETRY	poem, song, lyrics, hymn
		FICTION	novel, short story, story, myth, legend, folk tale
		SHORT FORMS	nursery rhyme, joke, witticism, riddle, proverb
NON-FICTION		DESCRIPTIVE	word picture, expressionistic description, technical description
		NARRATIVE	narrative, report: news story, reportage, minutes, chronicle, annals, history book
		EXPOSITIVE	essay, definition (encyclopedia), explication (text-book), summary, text interpretation
		ARGUMENTATIVE	political speech, manifesto, comment, leading article, review, scientific paper
		INSTRUCTIVE	instruction: recipe, direction, rule, regulation law

6. Literature (a selection)

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Ole Togeby, Århus (Denmark)

28. Nordic language history and phraseology/idiomatics

1. Introduction
2. Definitions
3. Historical phraseology
4. Synchronic phraseology
5. Literature (a selection)

1. Introduction

Following a steady growth of scholarly interest over the past twenty years, phraseology has now become a major field of theoretical and applied research for Western linguists as it has been, since the 1940s, for scholars in the former Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe. Research on phraseology of the modern Scandinavian languages, however, is

still at its beginning. Traces of a developing interest in phraseology are best visible in the appearance of several phraseology-related dictionaries since the mid-1960s (for Swedish: Bendz (1965), Johannisson/Ljunggren (1966), Allén (1975), Holm (1975), Schottmann/Petersson (1989); for Icelandic: Halldórsson (1991); for Danish: Bruun (1978), Røder (1998); Toftgaard Andersen (1998); for Norwegian: Møter Erichsen (1996)). Studies investigating modern phraseology are still few, and studies that investigate historical phraseology are even fewer. Moreover, in many phraseology studies a synchronic viewpoint is combined with an interest in historical aspects. In order to point out what is missing in research