

Lexicographic Document Templates: Text Genre Conventions in Corporate Lexicography

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Communicators do not only need conventional lexicographic data offering assistance on the lexical and syntactic levels. Communicators also need information on text genre conventions offering assistance on the textual level. What good is it to correct terminology and equivalent constructions on the lexical and syntactic levels, if the text produced by the communicator does not adhere to the text genre conventions of the text genre in question? This challenge is addressed in this paper, which discusses a theoretical and practical proposal for converging text genre conventions and conventional lexicographic data in a corporate lexicographic reference work. The theoretical solution proposed is based on an eclectic convergence of theoretical considerations on corporate lexicography, internet lexicography and genre analysis. This theoretical triangulation has resulted in what is referred to as lexicographic document templates. Lexicographic document templates are necessary in a corporate context, because they supply the user with the “missing link” in effective corporate communication. The concept of lexicographic document templates has been incorporated in the search facility of the corporate lexicographic reference work, which means that the user performs a combined search for a lemma and a text type in the look-up process. In addition to the conventional lexicographic data offered in the lexicographic article, the user now also has access to lexicographic document templates offering a typical example of the text genre in question and also essential text genre-related information such as information on the communicative purpose, move structure and rhetorical features of the text genre. The concept of lexicographic document templates has been implemented in practice in the corporate lexicographic reference work ZooLex at Copenhagen Zoo, and experts as well as non-experts appreciate the added value of information on text genre conventions in connection with conventional lexicographic data.

1. Introduction and problem

Employees in most companies and organizations are faced with a number of challenges when working with highly specialized texts. First, they have cognitive and communicative lexicographic demands, because very often they both need to learn more about the subject area in question, and they also need a host of communicative data to be able to communicate satisfactorily. Second, they often also need clear and easy-to-use guidelines on the communicative purpose of the text, the conventions or the move-structure of the text and some examples of typical rhetorical features used in the text. In other words—what good is conventional lexicographic data on the lexical and syntactical levels if the text produced by the employee does not adhere to the most basic text conventions of the text genre in question? A text which appears “translated” or does not read well does not support the company’s image and is simply bad for business.

This challenge has so far not been addressed in lexicography, but this article outlines a number of theoretical considerations on how basic text genre conventions can be offered to the potential dictionary user in addition to the conventional lexicographic article. The solution developed is called lexicographic document templates, which are accessible from the lexicographic article in the corporate dictionaries ZooLeks at Copenhagen Zoo and FagerbergLex at Fagerberg A/S. Lexicographic document templates offer the potential user guidelines on the text genre in question such as the communicative purpose, the move-structure and a listing of the most typical rhetorical features of the text genre.

On the basis of a detailed analysis of a large number of documents from the two companies Copenhagen Zoo and Fagerberg A/S it became clear that something had to be done about texts which appear “translated” or otherwise stand out. On the basis of a company analysis, interviews, documents analyzed and a user profile analysis, it became clear that potential users of the corporate dictionaries ZooLeks and FagerbergLex, not only needed conventional communicative and cognitive lexicographic data, but also very much text genre related data to be able to produce satisfactory texts. The overall problem of this article is based on the challenge identified in the two companies and is formulated as follows: How can an engineer’s text genre related needs in connection with L2 production be satisfied in online corporate dictionaries?

2. Theoretical basis

The development of the lexicographic document template model was based on a number of relevant theoretical considerations on lexicography, cf. Tarp (2006), corporate lexicography, cf. Simonsen (2002) and (2007), and genre analysis, cf. Swales (1990). The theory development was prompted by a problem identified in the two companies, but the model can easily be used in conventional lexicographic projects as well.

Tarp (2006: 100) discusses lexicographic functions and defines a lexicographic function as follows: “A lexicographic function is the satisfaction of specific types of lexicographically relevant needs that a specific type of potential user may have in a specific type of extra-lexicographic situation” (my translation and underlining). Tarp (2006: 104) also discusses “...communicative lexicographic functions...” and “...cognitive lexicographic functions...” (my translation), which are lexicographic functions designed to support the potential user’s demands for communicative data and cognitive data. Many potential users of the two corporate dictionaries ZooLeks and FagerbergLex need text genre data, and in line with Vecchi (2007), who makes a strong case for “pragmaterminologie” in a corporate context, I argue that the provision of text genre data from within the lexicographic article is very important in a corporate context as it satisfies a specific type of corporate lexicographically relevant need.

The concept of corporate lexicography is here defined as “the type of function-based lexicographic considerations and solutions applied in a specific company or organization in accordance with the organization and corporate culture of this company”. Corporate lexicography thus focuses not only on meeting the lexicographic demands of the potential user, but also on meeting the demands of the company as an economic entity. As argued above, the lexicographic document template satisfies a specific type of lexicographically relevant need, but it also satisfies the need of the company to be able to produce effective corporate communication, because texts that adhere to the conventions of the text in question support the branding efforts of the company.

Finally, the very important theoretical contributions on the importance of genre and genre analysis discussed by for example Swales (1990) are also very important for this discussion. The Swalesian genre model, outlined in Swales (1990), discusses three important elements; the communicative purpose of the text, the move-structure of the text and finally the rhetorical strategies used in the text. As will appear later, the Swalesian genre model and considerations on style in technical documents are in fact incorporated in the prototypical document, which the user may access from within the lexicographic article.

The lexicographic document template model shown in figure 1 below illustrates how a potential user is able to launch a combined search for a lemma and a text genre.

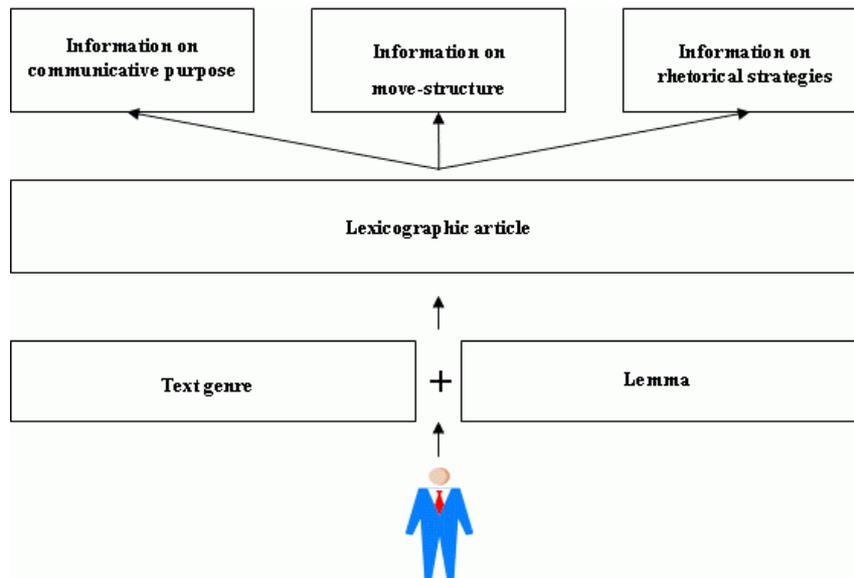


Figure 1. Lexicographic Document Template Model

The search window, which is not shown here, features a conventional search field and a drop-down list where the user selects the text genre in question. The lexicographic document template model illustrates how the user gets access to a conventional lexicographic article and a specially selected and lexicographically tagged, prototypical text, which outlines the communicative purpose of the text genre, the move-structure of the text and the typical rhetorical features used in the text genre.

3. Lexicographic and text genre data

So why not give the people what they want and offer help on text genre conventions in the corporate dictionary? The lexicographic document template model was implemented in practice in two corporate dictionaries, but for the purpose of this article only screen dumps from FagerbergLex and only screen dumps illustrating the lexicographic document template model will be discussed. For a detailed discussion of how the user's need for communicative lexicographic data is satisfied in a corporate context, cf. Simonsen (2007). However, let us now discuss the added value of lexicographic document templates in corporate dictionaries. The situation is as follows: an engineer consults FagerbergLex and looks up the word *pakbrillebolt* (gland bolt) combined with the text genre *manual* and the search result window shown in figure 2 appears.

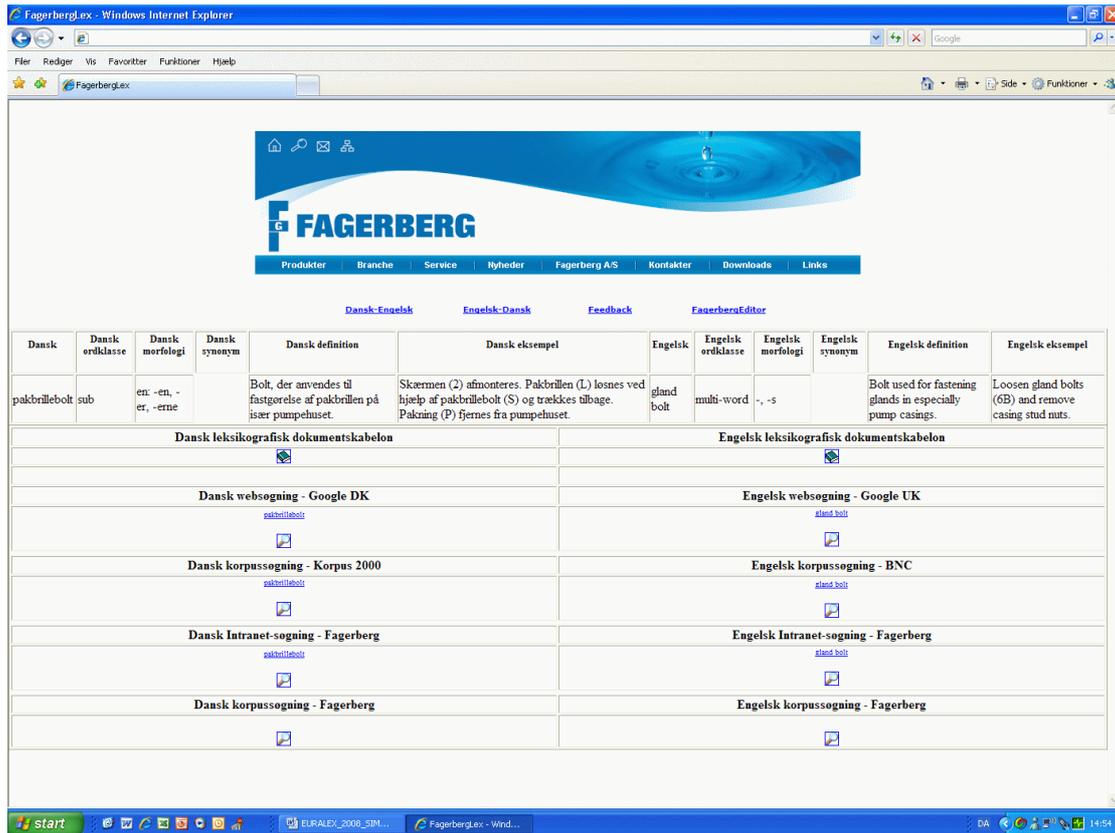


Figure 2. FagerbergLex Search Result Window

The characteristics of the user situation which is the basis of figure 2 above are listed in figure 3 below.

Text genre	Technical manual
Task	L2 production
User type	Engineer
Functions	Small need for cognitive lexicographic data Large need for communicative lexicographic data Large need for text genre data

Figure 3. Text genre, task, user type and functions

Let us now take a look at how the user's needs are satisfied. First, the engineer's need for cognitive lexicographic data is relatively small, because being an engineer he knows what the lemma *pakbrillebolt* means. Second, the engineer's need for communicative lexicographic data is large, because he is not a language expert, but as already mentioned the provision of the communicative lexicographic data will not be discussed here. Third, the engineer's need for text genre data is large. The manual that he is producing must contain installation, operating and maintenance instructions, and he therefore needs text genre related data and a prototypical manual. To access the text genre data the engineer clicks the book icon in Figure 2 and the window shown in figure 4 appears.

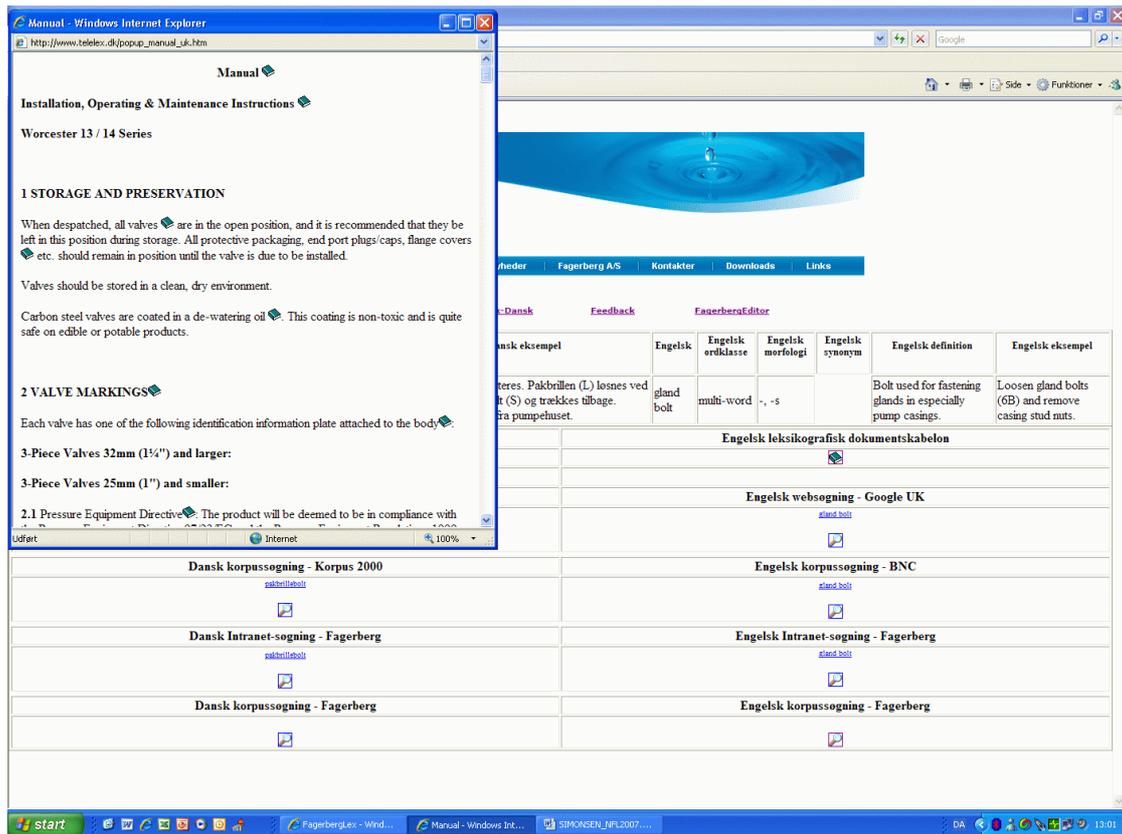


Figure 4. Lexicographic Document Template

As will appear from figure 4 above, the lexicographic document template features a prototypical example of a set of installation, operating and maintenance instructions in the left hand side of the screen dump. The dictionary icons in the lexicographic document template indicate specially selected lemmata of interest for the text genre. All the corporate user now has to do to look up these lemmata in the corporate dictionary is to click the book icon in the lexicographic document template. This feature means that the user sees the corporate dictionary and the lexicographic document template as one integrated tool.

If the corporate user scrolls down, the text genre data developed and formulated by the corporate lexicographer appear at the bottom of the lexicographic document template, as will appear from figure 5 below.

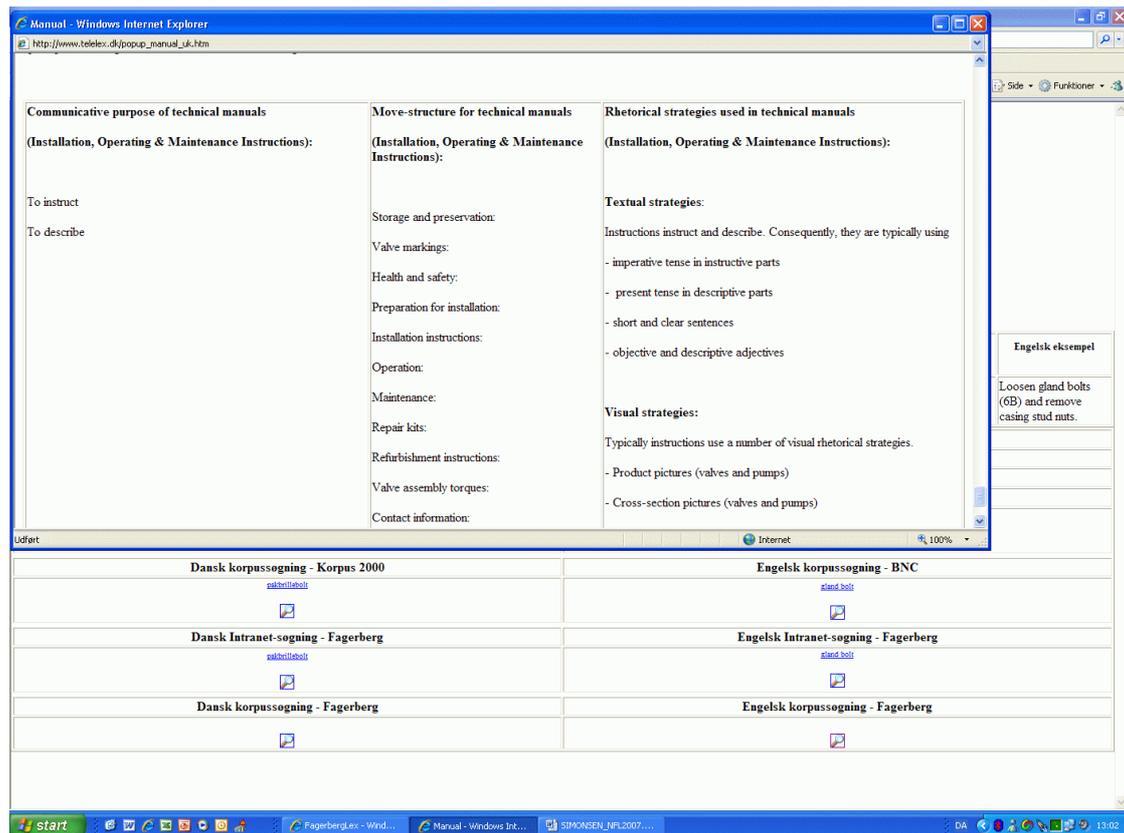


Figure 5. Lexicographic Document Template

Here the engineer gets an overview of the communicative purpose of technical manuals, the move-structure of technical manuals and finally typical rhetorical strategies used in technical manuals and his corporate lexicographic and text genre related needs are now satisfied, which means that he can now write a satisfactory text on *pakbrillebolt*.

In conclusion, it is argued that text genre data are quite relevant in corporate dictionaries, because corporate lexicography as a special sub-discipline of lexicography is highly *integrated*, *situational* and *socially-constructed*. This view is, at least partly, in line with de Vecchi (2007), who makes a strong case for *pragmaterminologie*.

In corporate lexicography the text, the user and the company play a crucial role, and it is important to realize that corporate terms cannot in any way be detached from their context, and that they are dependent on and constructed by the task at hand, by the corporate user and the corporate environment, cf. for example Simonsen (2002) for a detailed discussion of corporate lexicography as a sub-discipline of lexicography.

4. Conclusion

This article offered a brief discussion of how text genre related needs of the corporate user in connection with for example L2 production can be satisfied. The article presented the lexicographic document templates model and one potential corporate lexicographic use situation was discussed by means of the corporate dictionary FagerbergLex. On the basis of the design and development of this corporate dictionary, I argue that the lexicographic document template model is a step in the right direction, because the corporate user at Fagerberg A/S now is in a position to not only access and use the right terminology and syntactical constructions but also to produce a text, which adheres to the most basic conventions of the text genre in question.

This article is thus a contribution to the ongoing discussion of lexicographic functions and corporate lexicography and offers a theoretical and practical framework for how text genre

data can be integrated and presented in online corporate dictionaries. The proposal discussed here can no doubt also be used in conventional online or electronic dictionaries and is thus highly relevant for general lexicographic research and practice. Further research and development are, however, needed, but why not give the people what they want and need and offer text genre related data in online corporate dictionaries?

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