

Structural and Functional Relations between Text Models

Ján Findra

The paper presents a theory of modeling based on the idea that a text model is a social text structure reflecting generalized features of specific texts. A text model results from the tension between oppositions, including individual – social, concrete – abstract, unique - general, variant – invariant. The text model thus represents an optimal abstraction level and ideally indicates the possible existence of actual texts independent of their individual characteristics. The text model is defined by a set of non-verbal features (properties) and their synchronically stable configuration as well as by a fixed structure of both verbal and non-verbal means of expression (stylemes). The actual (specific) text uniquely synchronizes the social and the individual, the variant and the invariant. Since a text is of a bilateral nature at both system and speech levels the text-formation process is structured within a complex model (the model of models) which encompasses deep text organization models (coherence) and surface text organization models (cohesion). A special position is assumed by genre. As a ‘terminal’ model genre directly conditions the actual text form, the intersection of the invariant and the invariant.

Key words: text, text-formation process, model, analogic model, genre model, variant, invariant, communication competence, communication sphere, styleme

Because linguists recognize that language is a complex system of systems, there have been several attempts in the history of linguistics to analyze language as an object of modeling. In these, the model as an ideal object was expected to more or less adequately represent the structure of language as a real object. Furthermore, rules for each model’s operation in speech were examined. Since it was not possible to model language as a whole, as a complex system, modeling focused on some partial aspects of individual language subsystems, their elements and constituents. While the most frequent object of modeling was the phonological system (e.g. phonemes and syllables), models of the morphological subsystem were also developed (e.g., grammatical categories and word classes). Syntactic models mostly represented the relations between sentence members and sentences. In addition to modeling formal relations between elements of individual language subsystems, linguists attempted to develop semantic models (cf. Horecký 2003). This effort naturally resulted in attempts to develop text models of structuring for the text-formation activity of language users at a generalized abstract level.

In this paper, we will introduce text models (text structure models) employed in the *Stylistics of Slovak* (Findra 2004). These models represent an attempt to ideally structure the text-formation process that, from the point of view of an expedient, is the functional basis for the formation of an actual, meaningful text. The genesis of these text models will be outlined and, at the same time, the hierarchy of structural and functional relations between them will be indicated.

My understanding of text models was first presented at the 1st Sociolinguistic Conference in Banská Bystrica (Findra 1991). In principle, I discussed analogy-based models (Horecký 2003) aimed at the identification of the relative agreement of properties characteristic of several areas. However, these models were not true text models. They confined themselves to the modeling of generalized procedures in the formation of actual texts, notably, at the intersection of a set of nonverbal properties, bound by a binary opposition, and controlling the motion along the social-individual axis. What matters are the

oppositions oral-written, private-public, formal-informal, prepared-spontaneous, dialogue-monologue. These binary oppositions serve as a more detailed classification of communication spheres, on the one hand, and indicate text models, on the other. Within the scope of common everyday as well as nationwide communication spheres, their intersection identifies eight different text invariants considered as a model for the generation of actual texts in various spheres of social communication (Findra 1991). From this, it can be assumed that both fundamental text invariant and actual text are generated on the intersection of non-verbal factors bound by binary opposition. These factors determine the nature of a specific communication situation.

From the methodological point of view, one can show that socially (typologically) diverse texts falling within one and the same model are generated in the process of communication activity of a speech community. These texts feature individual modifications. Furthermore, it can be postulated that both potential and actual texts are bound to particular communication sphere.

My earlier work assumed that a text model is a social text structure reflecting general features of specific texts. Thus, a text model as a fundamental element of a model system is also constructed under the influence of the oppositions individual – social, concrete – abstract, unique – general, variant – invariant. As a result, a text model represents an optimal level of abstraction and ideally reflects all possible texts – either actually existing or potentially generated in the future – independent of any individual characteristics. From the point of view of the object-model relation, a text model is adequate if it reflects relevant typological properties of an object. It is reliable if it corresponds with the behaviour of the original within specific limits under all conditions of its behaviour (Horecký, 2003).

In this case, the most typical objects of modeling are texts. The texts result from discourse activity of speakers/writers and are used for sending information to listeners/readers. The process of modeling concentrates on the examination and analysis of relatively identical actual texts as complex formations which are produced in relatively identical communication situations. The analysis makes it possible to identify generalized rules which predetermining these formations. In this sense, an invariant text model not only reproduces, but also ideally represents the dynamic structure of the original.

By implication, text models as social (ideal) model structures are abstracted from individual texts in the modeling process. Synchronically, these models are paradigmatic invariants. They are relatively (synchronically) stable and therefore can serve a speaker/writer as a model for the production of an actual text. Certainly, a listener/reader can also identify the text model used by the speaker/writer in producing a particular text. This may be accounted for by the fact that the same idea of a model-based text structure is a part of the communication competence of both communicants who, when needed, can actualize it intuitively or consciously.

Thus, I conceive of a text as a social and, at the same time, individual entity. In fact, the differentiation concerns the *emic – etic* text axis (Mistrík 1997), the text model (text structure model) – its actual, individual realization (actual text), the invariant – variant opposition. The social – individual tension is bidirectional. From the genetic point of view, the model is a generalized, ideal ‘picture’ of relatively identical specific texts. On the other hand, the text model is a pattern for possible texts. Therefore it aims to leave its most faithful imprint on specific texts generated by speakers/writers in relatively identical communication conditions. The text model is not only defined by a set of non-verbal properties and their synchronically stable configuration, but is also characterized by a fixed way of structuring both verbal and non-verbal stylemes.

Stylemes form a paradigmatic stock. During the actual text formation a speaker/writer retrieves them from the stock in order to uniquely synchronize the social and the individual in

the specific text, because the original cannot be identical with the model (Horecký 2003). An actual text is not a faithful copy of the text model because it uniquely, individually reflects the relation between a subjective realization (application) of the socially conditioned. In other words, the actual text is meaningful, cultural and cultivated if the social, the invariant and the model-based do not overwhelm the individual and the variant, and if the subjective does not ignore the objective.

The distinction between the potential and the actual texts means that this category should be viewed in the langue – parole relation. A potential text is a system category of langue, an actual text belongs in parole, and is considered to be a closed textual whole (Findra 2004). It should be emphasized that, from the point of view of structuring a text model, text is a bilateral unit in terms of both langue and parole. By implication, a single model is insufficient to capture resulting text. Two text models seem to be adequate for the system level. One model type functions as an invariant framework for a deep text organization; the other type functions as an invariant framework for a surface text organization. The text model of deep, content-related and thematic text organization is the technique of composition; at a lower classification level, it is the literary composition. The text model used for the surface, linguistic-compositional text organization is the functional linguistic style (Findra 2003b). Each of these text models is defined by a set of properties characterizing them unambiguously at the level of both langue and parole (cf. Findra 2004).

An analysis of any text situation shows, however, that text models of deep and surface text organization are not reflected directly in actual text. Between an actual text and these models, there is genre that directly conditions the resulting text: the effect of the invariant on the variant (Findra 2003a). To put it differently, genre is a filter determining the role of the technique of composition (and also literary composition) and the functional linguistic style as invariant models in deep (coherence) and surface (cohesion) organization, shaping the actual text. From this it follows that the text-formation process cannot be captured by a single model. Consequently, it was necessary to construct a complex model (a model of models, Horecký 2003) whose individual constituents of actual and potential texts are represented by separate models. Then, any system-based and functional relations between these models can be modeled in the complex model (see below).

From the theoretical and methodological points of view as well as from the viewpoint of the application of text models to specific speech situations, attention should be paid to systemic and functional relations between the individual models of the complex model.

The deep and the surface text organization models are superordinate to genre models. They are the most general and most abstract model structures. Genre as a model is at a lower level of abstraction and generalization. Its structurally subordinate relation to the superordinate models means that genre occurs on the intersection of these most abstract and most general model structures. In this sense, genre is a hybrid text model, and represents a contamination of higher model structures. The relation of subordination also exists between the models of deep and surface text organization. The surface text organization model is subordinate to the deep text organization model because the surface level reflects the situation in its internal structure.

From the functional point of view, the relation between the individual text models of the complex model is reversed. Invariant requirements of the deep and the surface text organization models can only be met through genre. Genre, as a ‘terminal’ model structure, is an invariant functional space through which the technique of composition (and the corresponding literary composition) and the functional linguistic style take part in the deep and surface level formation and in the unique shaping of the actual text. In addition, they interact at the level of genre, which enables them to implement their essential features. It is perhaps this immediate contact between the genre model and the actual model on the

synchronic axis that exposes genre to functional modifications and changes due to the pressure of individually produced actual texts. In spite of this fact, it may be concluded that the genre model is synchronically fixed; any dynamic changes take place on the diachronic axis.

This is another piece of evidence that the tension due to the oppositions concrete – model, individual – collective, subjective – social, invariant – variant is permanent. If it were not for this tension the life of language and the life of text would be boring.

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*Prof. PhDr. Dr.h.c. Ján Findra, DrSc.
Katedra slovenského jazyka a literatúry
Fakulta humanitných vied
Univerzita Mateja Bela
Tajovského 40
97401 Banská Bystrica
Findra@fhv.umb.sk*

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