

## Lexicography in the Nordic countries: traditions and recent developments

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### Abstract

This paper provides (i) a brief history of Nordic lexicography, (ii) some examples of Nordic dictionaries from the 20th century, and (iii) an account of lexicographic cooperation between the Nordic countries since 1990.

The first Nordic – Swedish and Danish – dictionaries appeared in the 16th century. Almost all 16th- and 17th-century dictionaries were Latin-related; two of them were Icelandic. In the 18th century, Swedish and Danish bilingual dictionaries with English, French and German as the foreign language began to appear. The first monolingual Nordic dictionaries were published in the mid-19th century, when very important Finnish, Norwegian and Icelandic dictionaries appeared.

Several kinds of modern Nordic dictionaries are accounted for: historical dictionaries, contemporary bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, LSP dictionaries, combinatory dictionaries, and frequency dictionaries.

In 1991, a Nordic Association of Lexicography was founded. Two of the most important results of lexicographic cooperation between the Nordic countries are a dictionary of lexicographic terms and a journal, *LexicoNordica*.

### Introduction

The geographical concept of 'Norden' (the Nordic countries) includes five countries: Sweden, Denmark (with Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Norway, Finland, and Iceland. In these countries, many different languages are spoken. Eight of these languages have long enjoyed official status, namely Swedish, Danish, Norwegian (with two varieties, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*), Icelandic, Faroese, Finnish, Sami, and Greenlandic. The biggest of these languages, Swedish, is spoken by about 9 million people; Danish, Finnish and Norwegian by 5–6 million; Icelandic by almost 300,000, and each of the remaining languages by fewer than 100,000 people. Thus, we are dealing with relatively small language communities, a fact that has obvious implications for the possibilities of publishing houses to invest money in dictionary projects on a larger scale.

But even in very small language communities excellent dictionaries are produced. There are certain reasons for this. Proportionally, dictionaries intended for small communities often sell better than dictionaries aimed at larger communities – there are good Nordic examples in, e.g., Iceland and the Faroe Islands. In such communities, buying a dictionary of one's own language may be felt as something like an act of patriotism. Further, when markets are nonetheless insufficiently large, they are often compensated for by official funds, academies and the like. And finally, there are probably, in small language communities, a fair number

of people so passionately committed to their language that they may devote almost all their spare time to dictionary work, even when unpaid. In due course, we will see some examples of this.

So, dictionaries of small language communities may deserve some more attention than they actually get – also from lexicographers belonging to other, and larger, language communities. Admittedly, there are linguistic barriers. But I would claim that it is quite possible to see the basic, and perhaps innovative, ideas of a dictionary even with only a rudimentary knowledge of the language described by the dictionary. Needless to say, this argument is valid not only for the Nordic languages but for several other languages represented in this volume.

The rest of this paper is structured in the following way. First, I will give a very brief historical survey of Nordic lexicography, from about 1500 up to about 1900. Then I will provide some examples of – what are in my opinion – important 20th century Nordic dictionaries, at least two from each of the five Nordic countries. For reasons of space, I will have to confine myself to the five ‘biggest’ languages. Finally, I will account for lexicographic cooperation between the Nordic countries, starting on a larger scale in the early 1990s and so far resulting, e.g., in a Nordic (and English-French-German) dictionary of lexicographic terms and a Nordic Journal of lexicography (*LexicoNordica*).

### **Nordic lexicography 1500–1900 – a brief survey**

The history of Nordic lexicography – however, with the exception of Finnish lexicography – has been accounted for in two monographs, [Haugen 1984] and [Jacoby 1990]. Some surveys treating national traditions – or parts of them – are [Holm & Jonsson 1990] and [Hannesdóttir 1998] for Swedish, [Hjort 1990] for Danish, [Gundersen 1990] for Norwegian, [Korhonen & Schnellbach-Kopra 1991] and [Romppanen 2001] for Finnish, and [Pétursson 1990], for Icelandic and Faroese. Besides, a lot of research has been done, perhaps especially in Sweden, concerning more limited older periods or individual dictionaries. The thematic section of *LexicoNordica* 7 (2000) is devoted to the history of Nordic lexicography.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, only Sweden and Denmark existed as fully independent nations. Finland belonged to Sweden till 1809 (and then to Russia till 1918), Norway belonged to Denmark till 1814 and was then forced to enter a loose union with Sweden till 1905. Iceland belonged to Denmark till 1944 (but from 1918, there was just a loose union between the two countries). Only Swedish, Danish and – although to a somewhat limited degree – Icelandic had status as official languages until the early 19th century. Only then was Finnish fully recognized as a written language, and Norwegian was re-established. Therefore, the history of Nordic lexicography before 1800, or even somewhat later, is, to a large extent, dominated by Danish and Swedish dictionaries.

This history starts in the 16th century, when two bilingual Swedish and six bilingual Danish dictionaries were published. All these dictionaries were Latin-related and relatively small. Some of them were ordered according to subject areas rather than alphabetically. Among these dictionaries we find, even at this early stage, two dictionaries with Danish and

Swedish, respectively, as the source language. Interestingly, all the Danish dictionaries have been reedited, in facsimile print, in the 1970s to 90s; cf. [Jørgensen 2000].

In the 17th century, the first Nordic dictionaries with reasonable lexical coverage – containing at least 15 to 20 thousand lemmas – appeared. The most important ones were still bilingual and Latin-related, e.g. the Swedish so-called *Lexicon Lincopense* ([Gothus 1640]) and the Danish *Aurora latinitatis* ([Bang 1638]). The Swedish dictionary contains a Swedish index, representing a reasonably exhaustive Swedish lemma list, about 8000 words (cf. [Johansson 1997]). In some – mainly Latin-Swedish – 17th century dictionaries, Finnish was already represented as a tertiary language. The newly awakened interest in Icelandic, especially old Icelandic, during this century, resulted in the publication of two Icelandic-Latin dictionaries.

In the 18th century, the first relatively comprehensive bilingual Swedish and Danish dictionaries with English, French or German as the foreign language appeared. For instance, the first English-Swedish dictionary, written by the clergyman and future bishop J. Serenius, was published in 1734 ([Serenius 1734]). Incidentally, most of the early dictionary writers in the Nordic countries seem to have been clergymen. To a large extent, Serenius's dictionary was based on a famous English-French dictionary by A. Boyer (cf. [Rogström 1997]). In most cases, the French equivalents in Boyer's dictionary were simply translated into Swedish – a popular method employed in several older Nordic dictionaries. The first exhaustive English-Danish dictionary, [Bertelsen 1754], was published shortly after Serenius's work. (But as early as 1678, a small English-Danish dictionary had appeared.) The earliest good dictionaries with French and German as the foreign language were Danish, [Aphelen 1754] and [Aphelen 1764], respectively.

In the mid-18th century, the first Finnish-(Latin-)Swedish dictionary was published, written by D. Juslenius, another clergyman ([Juslenius 1745]). It comprised about 16,000 lemmas. A great deal of work was done in Icelandic lexicography as well, but with two exceptions (we will soon return to one of them), these efforts never got beyond the manuscript stage. Some glossaries or small dictionaries of Norwegian dialects – heralding the establishment of one of the modern varieties of Standard Norwegian – were published in the 18th century or slightly later, the most important of them – published in 1802 – comprising some 7,000 lemmas (cf. [Vikør 2000]).

At the beginning of the 19th century, none of the Nordic languages had yet got a lexicographic description in a monolingual – defining – dictionary. For Swedish and Danish, however, one of the conditions for the achievement of this goal had been fulfilled, namely the establishment of exhaustive lemmalists. The largest bilingual dictionaries with Swedish or Danish as source languages comprised considerably more than 30,000 lemmas. As for Swedish, the most important contributions in this respect were a Swedish-Latin dictionary by A. Sahlstedt [1773] and a Swedish-German dictionary by J.G.P. Möller [1790]. Especially the coverage of the Swedish vocabulary in Möller's dictionary is quite respectable. Möller was a German from Sweden's Pomeranian provinces who had learnt Swedish as a second language. His contrastive perspective yielded excellent results; in his dictionary probably about 10,000 Swedish words that had not appeared before in Swedish

dictionaries were recorded. Möller was also one of the first Nordic lexicographers to make great efforts to include technical terms from many different areas in his dictionary (cf. [Malmgren 1992]).

Finally the first monolingual – defining – Nordic dictionary appeared, C. Molbech's *Dansk ordbog* ([Molbech 1833]). The number of lemmas in this dictionary is probably about 50,000. Its lemma selection is sometimes said to be a bit on the puristic side, having a slight anti-German tendency. The definitions are quite good. Sometimes, they have even been criticized for being too pedantic, especially those concerning everyday words (cf. [Hjort 1970]). But most lexicographers nowadays would agree that the principle of defining all words, also well-known ones, is basically sound. Like the dictionaries of Johnson and Adelung, *Dansk ordbog* contains large numbers of literary quotations.

Two decades later, in 1850–55, the first monolingual Swedish dictionary appeared. The author, A.F. Dalin, had some years earlier published an excellent French-Swedish dictionary, to some extent based on the famous dictionary of the French Academy. It is interesting to note that Dalin's monolingual dictionary is also influenced by French lexicography. At least some articles concerning central-vocabulary words are more or less directly translated from the dictionary of the French Academy. Dalin's dictionary comprises about 50,000 lemmas. The definitions are not brilliant, but on the whole pretty good; e.g. the treatment of comparable kinds of polysemous words ('regular polysemy') is remarkably consistent. (Cf. [Malmgren 1988] and [Hannesdóttir 1998].)

The 19th century was the period when Norwegian was restored as a literary language. As a result of this process, two varieties of Standard Norwegian emerged, *bokmål* (with a more 'conservative' variety, *riksmål*) and *nynorsk*. The former was more related to Danish – but gradually, it became more and more 'Norwegian' – while the latter was based on traditional Norwegian dialects. The most important Norwegian dictionary of the 19th century, Ivar Aasen's *Ordbog over det norske folkesprog* ([Aasen 1850]) concerned *nynorsk*. More exhaustive dictionaries of *bokmål* (and *riksmål*) were to appear only in the 20th century.

As for Icelandic, the most important dictionary of the 19th century was probably Björn Halldórsson's *Lexicon Islandico-Latino-Danicum*. It was published in 1814, but the manuscript was in fact completed as early as 1785. Since Halldórsson's work met with some criticism, it was not printed at that time, but 25 years later it was revised and updated by a group under the direction of the famous Danish philologist Rasmus Rask. Comprising slightly less than 30,000 lemmas, with the main focus on contemporary Icelandic vocabulary, it has had great influence on later Icelandic lexicography, e.g. the first Icelandic-English dictionary (1876; cf. [Kvaran 2000]).

The 19th century meant a great breakthrough for Finnish as a literary language. The central figure behind this development was Elias Lönnrot, the editor of the famous national epic *Kalevala*. Less well-known, but also very important, is Lönnrot's Finnish-Swedish dictionary ([Lönnrot 1874–80]), comprising close to 200,000 lemmas (cf. [Romppanen 2000]). For a long time, this was to remain the most exhaustive lemmalist of any Nordic language. A monolingual dictionary of modern Finnish, as well as of modern Icelandic, was

to appear only in the 20th century. But Lönnrot's and Halldórsson's work were certainly very important steps in this direction.

In this brief survey, several kinds of dictionaries have been left aside. For instance, I have not mentioned etymological dictionaries and dictionaries of technical terms. Also, very little has been said about dialect dictionaries, or dictionaries of Old Norse. Further, there are lots of dictionary manuscripts that were never printed, or printed centuries after the authors had finished their work. Let us, finally, take a brief look at the most remarkable work of the latter kind, a great torso compiled by the Danish Government official Matthias Moth in the decades before and after the year 1700. Moth initiated collection of data on Danish vocabulary on a large scale, sending questionnaires to clergymen and teachers all over the country. His work resulted in some 60 handwritten folio volumes, forming an invaluable source of knowledge about Danish everyday language around 1700. Contrary to most other non-printed dictionaries, it played an important role for later lexicographers, e.g. Molbech. (Cf. [Hjort 1990].)

### Some important Nordic dictionaries in the 20th century

In this section, I will account for different kinds of modern Nordic dictionaries, the main sampling criterion being quality, especially innovative quality. I will mention a couple of historical dictionaries, some monolingual dictionaries of contemporary vocabularies, some bilingual dictionaries, one combinatorial dictionary, and one frequency dictionary. Needless to say, the 'sample' may suffer from a certain degree of subjectivity. Many other dictionaries would be worth mentioning, and it can probably not be denied that the present selection reflects, to some extent, the author's personal interests – and possibly his nationality. Nevertheless, I hope my selection is at least reasonably fair.

There are two Nordic historical dictionaries that may be compared to such dictionaries as the *OED*, Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* or the Dutch *Woordenboek der nederlandske Taal*. As is well known, the *OED* was completed within a period of about 50 years, while work on the two continental dictionaries occupied lexicographers for well over 100 years. In this respect, the Danish *Ordbok over det danske sprog*, [ODS 1918–56], is comparable to the *OED*, while the Swedish *Ordbok över svenska språket utgiven av Svenska Akademien*, ([SAOB 1898–], to be completed within 20 years) is comparable to the German and the Dutch dictionary.

The *ODS*, thus, was completed less than 40 years after the appearance of the first volume. Although the time span covered by the dictionary is relatively limited, starting around 1700, this is a truly remarkable achievement. The source material of the 28-volume dictionary consists of about 2.5 million excerpts. The sense descriptions are very accurate and in-depth, and thanks to the short production time reasonably consistent. Due to lack of money, work on the dictionary may have been speeded up a bit too much in the end. It has been observed, among other things, that in too many cases the dictionary provides merely a reference to a source, and not a full quotation. (A similar kind of criticism, although to a lesser extent, may apply to the *SAOB* as well.) Still, the *ODS* is a monumental work, and it has been characterized as the most important contribution to the description of the Danish language performed in the 20th century (cf. [Hjort 1970]).

The SAOB covers a longer time span than the ODS, starting in the 1520s. The aims of the SAOB are set extremely high, being the main reason for the long production time. In principle, every sense, every word, and even every spelling variant that has appeared in Swedish since the 1520s should be represented in the dictionary. When completed, it will comprise about 40 volumes (at present 32). Its source material consists of about eight million excerpts from some 20,000 books and other texts. The definitions and sense analyses may not always be as elegant as those of the OED, but as regards accuracy, in-depth treatment and consistency the SAOB seems to be at least on a par with its English counterpart. (Cf. [Holm & Jonsson 1990].)

It would be too complicated an undertaking to give an example, here, of the sense analyses provided by the ODS and the SAOB. Instead, we will take a look at the so-called 'head' (information on pronunciation, morphology, orthography and etymology) of a relatively large entry in each of the dictionaries.

**Kobber**, et ell. (nu *neppe br.*) en (jf.: \*tynd og klingrënd Kobber. *Höb. Metam.* 19. samt: Det er ikke saa ræt at sige: en göd kääber . . . som at sige i Neutro uden Artikel: gödt kääber. *Høysg. AG.* 38). [køu'ør] (jf.: Somme . . . udtaler det som kover, hvilket maa rettes. *Nu Haven. Orth.* 88) ell. (nu sj.) [køber] (*Arkiv. XII.* 366. jf. *Holstein. M.M.* 63: ~ sopper) ell. (*glägs.*) [kääber] kääber eller köber. *Høysg. AG.* 37. († *Kaab*(b)er. *D.L.* 5—3—34. *Höb. Paars.* 198 (jf. *sa. Orthogr.* 108). *Høysg. AG.* 37. jf. *S. Bloch. Sprögl.* 280. † Köber. jf. *Kobber-tssgr.* samt köber. *Høysg. AG.* 37. † Koper. *Langebek. Breve.* 301). *ft.* (i bet. 3) -ø ell. † d. s. (*Langebek. Breve.* 470). (*gläda.* köber (*Rimkr. Mand.* 144), *äda.* köper (*Harp. Kr.* 315), sv. koppar, no. kobber, kopper, *oldn.* koparr, *eng.* copper (oeng. copor), *ty.* kupfer (mät. kopper); *fra sen. lat.* cuprum, *til gr.* Κύπρος, *Kypern*; *egl.*: metal *fra sen. Kypern*)

**KOPPAR** kop'ar<sup>1</sup> (ko'ppar *WESTE*), r. l. m. (*ALMQUIST CivLokalforv.* 3: 150 (i *handl. fr.* 1540) osv.) ((†) n. *SjötågR* 1548, *Bouppt Växjö* 1838); best. -n l. -en (ss. n. -et). (kaaper- (i ssg) 1525 (: kaaperslongher), kopar (c-) 1529—1720. koper (c-) 1522 (: koperbergsmän)—1883. koppar 1527 osv. kopper (c-) 1538—1884. kápar (c-) 1545—c. 1632. káper 1541—1652. káppar 1552—1788. kápper 1523—1672. kääper 1531. cupar 1551. kuper- (i ssg) 1544 (: kupervgner). kupper 1535—1632) [sv. kop(p)ar, koper, kop(p)or; jfr d. *kobber*, isl. *koparr*, mnt. *kopper*, fht. *kupfar*, t. *kupfer*, feng. *copor*, eng. *copper*; av senlat. *cuprum*, eg.: cyprisk metall, av gr. *κύπριον*, eg. n. sg. av *κύπριος*, adj. till *Κύπρος*, *Cypern* (se *CYPER-*). — Jfr *KUPRI-*, *KUPRO-*]

Figure 1: The head of the entry *kobber/koppar* 'copper' in the ODS and the SAOB

Both dictionaries account for variations in pronunciation and spelling, the SAOB even giving the years of the first and the last recorded occurrence of every orthographic variant. The etymologies at the end of the 'heads' show the high degree of ambition in the two dictionaries: not only is the original loan-giving language (ancient Greek) given, as well as the 'path' from this language to Swedish and Danish, respectively, but also the equivalents of the word *kobber/koppar* in many other languages.

It should also be mentioned that an Internet version of the SAOB is available; the adress is <http://g3.spraakdata.gu.se/saob/> and consultation is free of charge; cf. [Cederholm 1996]. Here, you can make more or less the same searches as those possible in the CD- or Internet-version of the OED. For instance, you can look for English loanwords appearing in Swedish for the first time between 1840 and 1850. Here is an extract from such a search:

BLÅSTRUMPA	1842	efter	eng.	<i>bluestocking</i>
BOBINETT	1845	af	eng.	<i>bobbinet</i>
BUCKSKIN	1843	af	eng.	<i>buckskin</i>

CHEDDAR	1845	af	eng.	<i>cheddar</i>
CIVILINGENJÖR	1841	af	eng.	<i>civil engineer</i>

Figure 2: An extract from a search in the database version of the SAOB.

Three monolingual dictionaries of almost monumental size on contemporary Nordic vocabularies were published in the 20th century: the Norwegian *Norsk riksmålsordbok*, [NRO 1937–57], the Swedish *Nusvensk ordbok*, [NO 1917–72], and the Finnish *Nykysuomen sanakirja*, [NS 1951–61]. In fact, at least the Norwegian and the Finnish dictionaries can be said to represent an intermediate stage between contemporary and historical dictionaries. The lemmas are primarily taken from 20th-century vocabulary, but the quotations are often from classic works by 19th century authors, e.g. Ibsen and Kivi. The quotations in *Nusvensk ordbok*, on the other hand, are almost always from the 20th century, and, on average, perhaps a bit closer to everyday language, e.g. newspaper language, and less dominated by the ‘best’ authors. This difference is easily explained if you consider the historical background, Finnish and Norwegian being relatively recently established or re-established as literary languages. With regard to sense analyses, they seem to be much better in the Norwegian and the Finnish dictionary than in the Swedish one, the latter mostly relying on synonyms – and, of course, on the wealth of quotations – in its sense description (cf. [Gundersen 1990]; [Holm & Jonsson 1990]; [Korhonen & Schellbach-Kopra 1991]).

A more compact monolingual Finnish dictionary was published in the 1990s ([SKP 1990–94]), soon followed by a CD version. As to search possibilities, this CD was probably at the international forefront of electronic dictionaries. Thus, in spite of the extremely complicated Finnish morphology, lemmatized searching was possible; looking for the base form of a word, you will get all occurrences of all inflected forms of the word in the dictionary in a very lucid way. Here is an extract from the resulting list if you look for *\*koivu* ‘birch tree’ (quoted from [Martola 1998]):

juhannuskoivu	... nuoria koivuja. <i>Juhannuskoivut ovenpielessä.</i>
kasvannainen	... kuulumaton lisämuodostuma. <i>Koivun kasvannainen.</i>
	<i>Ihokasvannainen ...</i>

Figure 3: An extract from a search in the CD version of [SKP 1990–94]

To the left, the lemmas of the entries that contain some inflectional form of *koivu* or one of its compounds are listed. To the right, these examples are given in context. Among them are, e.g., genitive forms of *koivu* (*koivun*), and plural forms of compounds with *koivu* (*juhannuskoivut*). It should be noted that only inflected forms of *koivu* ‘birch tree’ (and related compounds like *juhannuskoivu*) are listed, not other (random) words beginning with the string ‘koivu’.

In the 1980s, monolingual Nordic dictionaries based on electronic corpora began to appear. One relatively early example was the Swedish *Svensk ordbok* [SO 1986]. The 6-volume *Den danske ordbog*, which will soon be published, is based on an excellent, carefully balanced 40-million-word corpus of modern Danish (cf. [Norling-Christensen 1996]).

A Swedish monolingual dictionary from the 1990s, *Nationalencyklopedins ordbok* ([NEO 1995–96]), represents an attempt to include some information categories rarely found in monolingual dictionaries. Here is the entry *chans* ‘chance’ in NEO:

**chans** [çanˈs, çanˈs ðv. fanˈs, fanˈs] subst.  
 ~en ~er  
 ORDLÄG: *chans-en*  
 • möjlighet till lyckat resultat t.ex. framgång, önskvärd utveckling e.d. (→risk): *chanslös; målchans; vinstchans; män och kvinnor har inte lika ~er i arbetslivet; han tog ~en och accepterade utlandsjobbet; Sveriges ~ ligger i kontringarna; det fanns ingen ~ att rädda de nödställ- da*  
 BETYNSÄSER: a) spec. tillfälle att visa sin förmåga (vard.): *han fick aldrig ~en i landslaget* b) i statist. sammanhang ibl. neutralt sannolikhet: *~en att slå två femmor är 1 på 36*  
 KONSTR.: ~ (till el. på ngt), en ~ (för ngn) (att+INF)  
 HIST.: sedan 1852; av fra. *chance* med samma bet.; sv folkligt lat. *cadentia* ‘fall’, till lat. *cadere* ‘falla’; jfr *kadens*

Figure 4: The entry *chans* in [NEO 1995–96]

Information on pronunciation and inflexion is followed by sense description, with a definition (including an ‘addition’ in smaller font) and morphological and syntactic examples (compounds, collocations, etc.). According to this analysis, there is one main sense and two – closely related – subsenses (a, b). The relation between the subsenses and the main sense is indicated, e.g. by means of the ‘operator’ *spec.* The sense description is followed by valency information, given in a relatively formal way. In this case, the main information concerns the choice of prepositions in ‘grammatical collocations’ with *chans* (*till, på*). Finally, a brief etymology is provided, including the year of the first recorded occurrence of the word *chans* in Swedish.

I will now mention some bilingual Nordic dictionaries that deserve special attention for somewhat different reasons. The most recent comprehensive Finnish-Swedish dictionary ([FSO 1997]) represents, among other things, a very interesting attempt to cross the borderline between dictionary and grammar. More clearly than earlier Finnish lexicographers, the authors take structural differences between Swedish and Finnish into consideration. For instance, the possibilities of forming deverbal nouns are much more limited in Swedish than in Finnish, and even when there is a Swedish deverbal noun corresponding to a Finnish one, it cannot always be part of the same kind of syntactic constructions as the Finnish noun. Now, instead of just getting the Swedish equivalent in such cases – which might give rise to very ‘un-Swedish’ constructions – the Finnish user is referred to a dictionary grammar where possible models for translating Finnish expressions with deverbal nouns are to be found. (Cf., e.g., [Martola 1995].)

Interestingly, a Russian lexicographer and linguist, Valerij Berkov, has played an important role in Nordic lexicography. From a practical point of view, he is the author of two excellent

dictionaries, one of them Icelandic-Russian ([IRO 1962]; at the time perhaps the best-structured bilingual Icelandic dictionary, cf. [Jónsson 1995]), the other Russian-Norwegian, [RNO 1987]. From a theoretical point of view, he has made Nordic lexicographers more aware of the advantages of bidirectional bilingual dictionaries (cf. [Berkov 1996]). In fact, Berkov's Russian-Norwegian dictionary is probably one of the best examples of such a dictionary (cf. [Trosterud 1997]). Berkov's work is now also influencing Swedish-Russian and Faroese-Russian lexicography.

One of the most impressive bilingual Nordic dictionaries is a French-Danish dictionary by A. Blinkenberg and P. Høybye ([1984]; there is also a Danish-French dictionary by the same authors). This dictionary is one of the most comprehensive of all bilingual dictionaries with French as a source language, comprising about 100,000 lemmas. Still more important is its accuracy concerning technical terms. This is possible thanks to the involvement of a number of specialists who continuously follow the development of French and Danish technical terms, from a contrastive point of view. (Cf. [Bornäs 2000].)

Finally, the work of a somewhat older lexicographer, the Norwegian John Brynildsen – active in the early 20th century –, is worth mentioning. Brynildsen was probably one of the greatest Nordic bilingual lexicographers of all time, producing extremely detailed, well-structured Norwegian-German and Norwegian-English dictionaries (both directions), to some extent in cooperation with the famous Danish linguist Otto Jespersen. The 1927 edition of his Norwegian-English dictionary ([Brynildsen 1927]) is still useful.

Many bilingual dictionaries concern technical terms. In this area, cooperation between lexicographers and subject specialists is extremely important. One of the best examples of such cooperation is probably a Danish-English and English-Danish dictionary on gene technology, [Bergenholtz & Kaufmann 1992], where the lexicographer and the specialist even share the authorship.

A Swedish-English dictionary – [Gullberg 2000] – that accounts for technical terms from a variety of different areas – natural sciences, economy, law, etc. – must be mentioned in this connection. Originally a one-man work, this dictionary comprises more than 200,000 Swedish words and phrases, and more than 300,000 English equivalents. Unfortunately, there is not yet any corresponding dictionary with English as the source language, but the CD version offers entries to the wealth of English terms referred to in the dictionary.

The most comprehensive Nordic dictionary of collocations and other word combinations is the Icelandic *Orðastaður* ([Jónsson 1994]). To some extent, it seems to be influenced by the well-known *BBI* dictionary ([BBI 1986]), but it is considerably bigger. Like the *BBI* dictionary, it is very well structured, although guided by somewhat different principles. While the *BBI* dictionary is, at least partly, structured according to lexical functions in the sense of Mel'chuk (e.g. [Mel'chuk 1996]), the entries of *Orðastaður* are often structured according to a 'logical' or 'natural' principle. Contrary to the *BBI* and most combinatorial dictionaries, *Orðastaður* accounts for compounds with the entry lemma as the first or second element.

Finally, let us take a look at a Nordic frequency dictionary, the Swedish *Nusvensk frekvensordbok 1-4* ([NFO 1970-81]). This project was carried out in the 1960s and 1970s by a group under the direction of Sture Allén. Based on a corpus of 1 million words of Swedish newspaper texts, it accounted not only for word frequencies, but also for frequencies of collocations and morphemes. Although the project was one of the first examples of computerized lexical research, it occupied several linguists for many years. Among other things, a great deal of homograph separation work had to be done (for Swedish, this kind of work still cannot be left to the computer, if you want more than 95-97% accuracy), real collocations had to be distinguished from random word combinations, and the morpheme investigation presupposed careful semantic analyses. Among many interesting results, it turned out that more than 60% of the textwords of the corpus were homographs.

### **Lexicographic cooperation between the Nordic countries. Nordic metalexigraphy**

More organized lexicographic cooperation between the Nordic countries started in the early 1990s. In 1991, in Oslo, the Nordic Association of Lexicography (*Nordisk forening for leksikografi*) was founded. At the same time, the first in a biennial series of Nordic conferences on lexicography was held. Thus, every 'non-Euralex' year, there is a conference of this kind, and such a conference has, by now, been arranged at least once by all the Nordic countries. Usually, more than 100 lexicographers take part in these conferences. It should be mentioned that biennial international conferences on lexicography have been organized in Copenhagen since 1982 by Arne Zettersten and others; the proceedings of these conferences are usually printed in the *Lexicographica Maior* series.

In this connection, perhaps a few more words should be said about the language situation in the Nordic countries. An important circumstance is the mutual comprehensibility of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian. Besides, most Icelanders and Faroese master Danish at least as a second or third language, and the same is true of Finns in relation to Swedish (also, a considerable minority of the Finns have Swedish as their mother tongue). Therefore, the preferred languages at the conferences of the Nordic Association of Lexicography are Swedish, Danish and Norwegian. The same goes for the papers of the journal *LexicoNordica*. (Exceptions are permitted, however.) This has, no doubt, promoted the 'Nordic' character of the conferences and the journal, and stimulated the development of a metalexigraphic terminology in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian (cf. below). On the other hand, of course, it has made it more difficult for non-Nordic lexicographers to take part in Nordic lexicographic work. However, this is a well-known dilemma in small language communities. At the Copenhagen conferences arranged by Arne Zettersten and others, papers are normally written in English or German.

The first issue of *LexicoNordica* appeared in 1994. The structure of *LexicoNordica* is, to some extent, influenced by that of the more well-known journal *Lexicographica*; cf. [Bergenholtz & Malmgren 1994]. Thus, every issue of *LexicoNordica* starts with a thematic section. Normally, the contributors to this section have an opportunity to present and discuss their papers in advance at an annual mini-symposium. Reports from this symposium are regularly published in *Lexicographica*, in German or English. The thematic sections of the

eight issues of *LexicoNordica* have concerned, e.g., 'Grammar in bilingual Nordic dictionaries', 'Corpus-based lexicography', 'Nordic dictionaries of technical terms', and, as already mentioned, 'Lexicographic traditions in the Nordic countries'.

Apart from the thematic section, there is, in every issue of *LexicoNordica*, an extensive review section, and normally a non-thematic, general section. Before 1994, there was hardly any specialized forum in the Nordic countries for in-depth reviews of dictionaries.

Another important result of Nordic cooperation is a dictionary of lexicographic terms, [NLO 1997]. At least one lexicographer from each of the Nordic countries took part in this project. It started out with a systematic analysis of the metalexigraphic field, based on terminological principles (cf. [Bergenholtz & Svensén 1994]), and with an inventory of international lexicographical terms, especially from the international standard handbook *Wörterbücher*. In many cases, these terms lacked equivalents in one or more of the Nordic languages. Thanks to the NLO, all the six 'biggest' Nordic languages are now provided with terms – about 1000 – for most important lexicographic concepts. Moreover, the English, French and German equivalents of these terms are registered in the NLO. Fig. 5 shows the entry *falske venner* 'false friends'.

**falske venner**

leksikalske enheter i to språk som ikke er ekvivalente, men har så store grafiske eller fonetiske likheter med hverandre og er semantisk og grammatisk parallelle i en slik grad at den ene blir tolket og brukt som ekvivalent til den andre av en fremmedspråksbruker

— Vanlige eksempler fra nordiske språk er *rolig* og *anedning* i norsk og svensk.

→ ekvivalens, ekvivalent; ordbok over falske venner

§ 27; klasse 31900

da falske venner  
fi riskisanat, faux amis  
is sýndarjafnheiti  
ny falske venner  
sv falska vänner  
en false friends  
fr faux amis  
ty falsche Freunde

Litt.: Gorbahn-Orme, A/F.J. Hausmann: The Dictionary of False Friends. I: *HSK* 5:2882–2888

Fig. 5. The entry *falske venner* 'false friends' in the NLO.

After the definition and a couple of examples, some references to related terms are given, followed by the number of the 'concept class' to which the entry word belongs (31900, the superordinate class 30000 being 'General linguistic theory'). After that, the equivalents of the term *falske vänner* in the Nordic languages and in English, German and French are given, finally followed by a reference to relevant literature. The language of the entry words is (Norwegian) *bokmål*, and there are Swedish, Danish, etc. indexes at the end of the dictionary.

Finally, two Nordic handbooks on lexicography, one Swedish and one Danish, should be mentioned, namely B. Svensén's *Handbok i lexikografi* (1987) and H. Bergenholtz's and S. Tarp's *Manual i fagleksikografi* (1994). Both these handbooks are wellknown also outside the Nordic countries, having been translated into English and German, respectively ([Svensén 1993; Bergenholtz & Tarp 1997]). They account for many aspects of general lexicography and lexicography on language for special purposes (LSP), respectively. One particular advantage with both manuals, in comparison with several international manuals of lexicography, is that they give a wealth of examples from dictionaries of many different languages.

### **Summary; final remarks**

In this paper, we have made a rapid tour through almost five centuries of Nordic lexicography. It seems possible to suggest at least some generalizations, especially concerning Swedish and Danish, but partly also Norwegian, Finnish and Icelandic, lexicography. Until about 1700, Latin was at the focus of almost all lexicographic work in the Nordic countries. Soon after 1700, this work became more oriented towards practical needs, the most important results being bilingual dictionaries with French, English and German as foreign languages. Towards the middle of the 19th century, the first monolingual Nordic dictionaries appeared. In fact, a division of the 500 years of Swedish lexicography into three periods (1500–1700, 1700–1850, 1850–) along these lines has been proposed (cf. [Hannesdóttir 1998]; [Ralph 2000]). This division also seems to be relevant at least for Danish lexicography.

For a long time, even the Swedish and Danish traditions seem to have been lagging about a century behind the great continental traditions. For instance, comprehensive monolingual dictionaries of French, English and German already existed in the 17th or 18th century, i.e. roughly 100 years earlier than [Molbech 1833]. Bilingual dictionaries between these languages existed at least in the 17th century, long before [Serenius 1734], and so on. Nordic dictionaries were often influenced by continental lexicography to a very high, occasionally too high, degree. In the 20th century, lexicographic work in the Nordic countries has become much more independent, at times even pioneering. In my view, at least some of the 20th century dictionaries presented in this paper deserve this epithet.

The model for lexicographic cooperation that has emerged in the Nordic countries in the last decade appears to be very fruitful. The specific language situation in the region, with several pairs of languages that are either related and mutually comprehensible – like Swedish and Danish – or related but not mutually comprehensible – like Swedish and Icelandic – or totally unrelated – like Swedish and Finnish – confronts lexicographers in all the Nordic countries with other types of problems than they used to face before the 1990s. Opportunities to discuss such lexicographic problems in an Internordic context, e.g. at the biennial conferences, have no doubt raised the professional standard of Nordic lexicographers.

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