

ANNOTATION GUIDELINES: POEM SIMILARITY

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ABSTRACT

These guidelines explain how to annotate whether poems are similar or dissimilar to each other. The annotation scheme focuses on relative instead of absolute similarities, uses triples of poems as annotation units, and distinguishes between different dimensions of similarity (content, form, style, and emotion). The guidelines contain information about both the annotation categories and the practical annotation process. They are developed and used in the project [anonymized].

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1 INTRODUCTION

GOAL The goal is to annotate the similarity of poems. Since it is difficult for annotators to judge similarities in absolute form ('Text A is hardly/somewhat/strongly similar to text B.'), the annotation aims at statements in relative form ('Text A is more similar to text B than to text C.').

ANNOTATION UNITS The annotation units are triples of poems (poems A, B, C). In each triple there is a base text (A) whose similarity to the comparison texts (B, C) is to be determined.

DIMENSIONS OF SIMILARITY The similarity of the texts is to be assessed from different points of view, namely with regard to the dimensions content, form, style, and emotion. Additionally, the overall similarity of the texts has to be annotated.

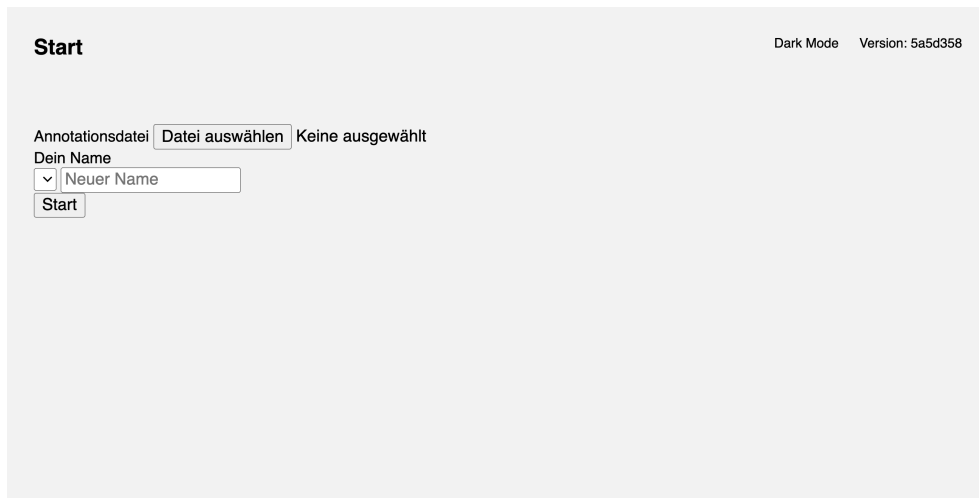
ANNOTATION OPTIONS For each triple consisting of a base text A and comparison texts B and C, it must be annotated for each similarity dimension whether A is either more similar to B than to C, more similar to C than to B, or equally (dis)similar to B and C.

SKILLS OF THE ANNOTATORS Annotators should have or acquire sufficient literary skills, since annotating requires knowledge of categories such as 'linguistic register' or 'rhyme scheme', and involves sophisticated acts of analysis and interpretation.

ORIGIN AND USE OF THE GUIDELINES The guidelines are developed and used in the project *[anonymized]*.

2 WORKFLOW

The annotators work with a tool specifically developed for this annotation task, which is freely accessible via the following link: *[anonymized]*.



The screenshot shows a web interface titled 'Start' in the top left corner. In the top right corner, there are two links: 'Dark Mode' and 'Version: 5a5d358'. Below the title, there is a section for file selection with the label 'Annotationsdatei' and two buttons: 'Datei auswählen' and 'Keine ausgewählt'. Underneath, there is a label 'Dein Name' followed by a dropdown menu showing 'Neuer Name' with a checkmark icon. At the bottom of this section is a 'Start' button.

Figure 1: Start of the annotation process (in German).

The tool first prompts you to upload a .json file via 'Select file', which contains the triples to be annotated. In addition, a user name has to be entered, with which the annotations will be linked. Via 'Start' you start the annotation process.

Konsens-Annotation, User: NewUser
#1 ▾
Speichern
Zum Start zurückkehren
Dark Mode
Version: 5a5d358

Jasmin
Wachsbleich die Sommernacht.
Auf erddunkeln Moderlachen
Singen rosigblaue Irislichter,
Wetterleuchten, schwefelgrün, in Splittern.
Eine weiße dünne Schlange sticht
Züngelnd nach dem blauen Mond.

Sehnsucht
Wie hab' ich mir den Lenz ersehnt
Mit seinen lieben Spenden,
Da sich der blaue Himmel dehnt
Und alle Leiden enden.

Nun blaut der Himmel klar darin,
Der Frühling ist gekommen,
Mit Amselsang und Sonnenschein,
Und doch will mir's nicht frommen.

Ich weiß nicht, wem mein Sehnen gilt:
Der Winter ist vertrieben,
Die Blüte treibt, die Knospe schwillt —
Die Sehnsucht ist geblieben.

Die Trauerweide
Ich grüne wie die Weide grünt,
Die Trauerweide,
Die aufzuschauen sich nie erkühlt
In ihrem Leide.

Sie steht und weint und läßt hinab
Die Haare fließen,
Wo Blumen über einem Grab
Und Gräser sprießen.

Der Frühling hat auch ihr geschwellt
Der Knospen viele:
Wann welket doch das Laub und fällt
Und ist am Ziele?

	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem linken Text	ist der mittige Text dem linken und rechten Text gleich ähnlich bzw. unähnlich	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem rechten Text
Inhaltlich	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sprachlich	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insgesamt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Zurück
Weiter

Figure 2: Example of an annotation prompt (in German).

Once the annotation process has started, the annotators see three texts (left, middle, right). The poem title is visible, but the author's name is not. The middle text is the base text, whose similarity with the left and right text is to be judged. The buttons below the texts are to be used to indicate for each similarity dimension - content, form, style, emotions, overall - whether the middle text is more similar to the left text, more similar to the right text, or equally similar or dissimilar to both texts. Once this has been done for all similarity dimensions, the annotation of the triple is complete. Via 'Next' the next triple can be selected.

When you have finished annotating all triples or want to pause the work, you can save the current state of the annotation via 'Save'. A .json file is generated and downloaded, which contains the previous annotations in addition to the triples. This file can be reloaded into the annotation tool via 'Select file' and edited further when required.

3 CATEGORIES

Here, the annotation categories content, form, style, emotion, and overall are explained and illustrated with examples. For each of these dimensions, possible sub-aspects are listed (e.g. for the dimension content, aspects such as theme or setting; for the dimension form, aspects such as meter or rhyme).

- **Heuristics:** The explanations do not claim to comprehensively cover the dimensions of content, form, style, and emotion in all their possible sub-aspects. Instead, the lists of aspects are heuristics that provide annotators with a basic understanding of the respective similarity dimension and point out which phenomena they can pay attention to when annotating. The lists of aspects are not complete.
- **Overall impression:** It is not necessary to extensively analyze all aspects of the respective dimension (for example, a complete analysis of meter and rhyme in the case of the dimension form would be too much). Instead, the annotators should be guided by an overall impression (which is nevertheless based on reflection and which is rationally justified). Ideally, one can see 'at a glance' to what extent texts are similar. Approximately 10 minutes of annotation time are appropriate per triple.
- **Weighting:** Which aspects (e.g., meter and rhyme) are most important for the annotation of the main dimension (e.g., form) or which dimensions are particularly relevant for the annotation of the overall similarity depends on the texts and cannot be determined in advance. The annotators have to do the weighting on a case-by-case basis, based on their competence in literary studies. Sometimes, however, the guidelines contain information on whether an aspect is *typically* important or rather less important for the main dimension.

3.1 Content

For the dimension content, the following aspects may be relevant:

- **[Typically especially important] Theme:** What is the poem about? Examples: Nature, love, religion, cities, railroads.
- **Setting:** What is the spatial, temporal, and situational setting of the text? Examples: undefined setting, in the cemetery at night, in the forest in the morning, at work in a factory.
- **Entities:** How many and which characters and objects are there? Examples: speaker only, speaker and 'you', God, collectives (e.g. workers vs. nobles), abstracts (e.g. 'fate'), natural objects (e.g. birds, trees).
- **Eventfulness:** Does the poem represent a static state or dynamic action? How eventful is the text? Examples: permanent state (e.g., beauty of nature), ephemeral situation (e.g., pause on a hike), single event (e.g., death of a child), sequence of events (e.g., an adventure including departure, battle, victory).
- **Interpretation:** What values, judgments, or ideologies does the poem convey? What 'thesis' does the text advocate? Examples: nationalistic vs. socialistic vs. religious interpretations; positive or negative assessment of socio-economic modernization processes.
- ...

3.2 Form

For the dimension form, the following aspects may be relevant:

- **Stanza structure**
 - [Typically especially important] Does the text consist of several stanzas, or is it organized as a single stanza?
 - [Typically especially important] How many stanzas are there and how many verses do the stanzas contain? Examples: 2 stanzas with 4 verses each, 3 stanzas with 3 verses each.
- **Rhyme**
 - [Typically especially important] Is the poem rhymed? Examples: rhymed throughout vs. partially rhymed vs. not rhymed at all.
 - What is the rhyme scheme? Examples: Pair rhyme, cross rhyme.
- **Meter**
 - [Typically especially important] Is the text metrically bound? Examples: metrically bound vs. metrically bound but irregular vs. metrically unbound (free verse).
 - How many stresses are there per verse? Examples: always 4, alternating 4 or 3, always 7.
 - How are the verses structured? Examples: iambic throughout, mostly trochaic, half iambic and half dactylic.
- **Text length:** How long is the poem? Examples: short, medium, long.
- ...

3.3 Style

For the dimension style, the following aspects may be relevant:

- **Vocabulary**
 - [Typically especially important] From which areas of origin do the words come? Which linguistic register is used? Examples: high register and 'poetic' language (in German e.g. 'Eiland' instead of 'Insel', 'Odem' instead of 'Atem', 'Zähre' instead of 'Träne') vs. low register and oral, everyday, sober or vulgar language (in German e.g. 'ersoffen', 'mies', 'Juchhe!'). Other examples: specialized language, dialect, old-fashioned language (in German, e.g., 'O holde Maid').
 - How (un)conventional are the words? Examples: conventional, common words (e.g. 'nature', 'love') vs. unconventional, uncommon words (e.g. neologisms).
 - Are there any peculiarities in the distribution of word classes? Examples: special accumulation of adjectives, especially many interjections.
- **Figures of speech**
 - How many figures of speech (metaphors, similes, symbols, etc.) does the text contain? Examples: complete absence of figures of speech vs. some figures of speech vs. very many and/or very prominent figures of speech.
 - What kind of and how (un)conventional figures of speech does the text contain? Examples: conventional figures of speech (e.g. 'the broken heart', 'a sea of tears') vs. unconventional figures of speech (e.g. 'the roots of groaning', 'the ashes of shame').
- **Syntax**
 - Is there a particular arrangement of words? Examples: Anaphors, chiasms, parallelisms, repetition structures.
 - Which types of sentences are there? Examples: only declarative sentences, especially many interrogative sentences, especially many exclamations.
 - How (un)conventional and complex is the syntax? Examples: conventional structure of words and constituents (e.g. subject-predicate-object) vs. unconventional arrangement of words and constituents (e.g. anastrophe, hyperbata); parataxis vs. hypotaxis.
- ...

3.4 Emotion

The annotation is not based on what emotions the text evokes in the reader, but on what emotions the text represents on its own (for example, by conveying that the speaker is happy or that characters are sad).

For the dimension emotion, the following aspects may be relevant:

- **Emotionality:** To what extent are emotions present? Examples: sober, non-emotional description vs. moderately strong emotion vs. intense expression of emotion.
- **Polarity:** Do positive or negative emotions predominate? Is the 'overall mood' of the poem more positive or negative? Examples: Representation of an enthusiastic celebration, neutral analysis, despairing lament of the speaker.
- **Individual emotions:** Which emotions does the text represent? Examples: in text A sadness vs. in text B loneliness, in text A enthusiasm vs. in text B gratitude.
- ...

3.5 Overall

- **Close relation to other similarity dimensions ...:** The annotation of overall similarity is closely related to the annotation of the previous categories. For example, if for two or three similarity dimensions it has been annotated that the base text A is more similar to text B than to text C, and at the same time A is equally (dis)similar to texts B and C in the remaining categories, this is a strong argument that A is overall more similar to B than to C.
- **... but no schematic derivation from other similarity dimensions:** Nevertheless, the annotation of overall similarity cannot be schematically derived from the annotation of the other similarity dimensions. For example, it is possible to annotate that text A is equally (dis)similar to texts B and C overall, even though one has previously annotated that text A is more similar to B than to C in at least one similarity dimension. Possible reasons:
 - **Diminished relevance of individual dimensions:** It is possible that when considering a particular dimension of similarity, a somewhat greater similarity of the base text to one of the comparison texts becomes apparent, but that this similarity is not strongly pronounced and therefore hardly matters when considering the poems as a whole.
 - **Consideration of other aspects:** It is possible to consider aspects in the annotation of the overall similarity that are not or at least not directly covered by the annotated similarity dimensions, such as genre affiliation or speech situation.

4 EXAMPLES

Here you can find annotation examples.

4.1 Example 'Die frühe Stunde'

	Auf der Höhe ist's einsam	Die frühe Stunde	Die Lawine
	Aus der Höhe ist's einsam, Und ich will in die Tiefe, Will in die Tiefe Wieder zu Menschen. Denn nun gehst auch du, Der mich oben gehalten. — Und mir ist doch, als wäre Es heller um uns — Weil wir beide auch in den dunkelsten Tagen Noch füreinander ein Lächeln hatten.	Silbern überflogen Ruhet das Feld und schweigt, Ein Jäger hebt seinen Bogen, Der Wald rauscht und eine Lerche steigt. Der Wald rauscht und eine zweite Steigt auf und fällt. Ein Jäger hebt seine Beute, Und der Tag tritt in die Welt.	Es wird die schlafende Lawine Leis wachgeküßt vom Sonnenmund, Und donnernd stürzt sie sich, die kühne, Vom Felsengrat zum Thalesgrund. Da liegt sie, überragt von Erlen, Bleich auf der Matte jungem Grün, Und weint befruchtend ihre Perlen, Allmählich sterbend, drüber hin.
		ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem linken Text	ist der mittige Text dem linken und rechten Text gleich ähnlich bzw. unähnlich
Inhaltlich	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Emotional	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sprachlich	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Insgesamt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
			ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem rechten Text
			<input checked="" type="radio"/>
			<input type="radio"/>
			<input type="radio"/>
			<input checked="" type="radio"/>
			<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Zurück Weiter

Figure 3: Example 'Die frühe Stunde' (in German).

- **Content**

- Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the right text.
- Explanation: Both the middle and the right text deal with the topic 'nature'. The left text, on the other hand, thematizes the mental state of the speaker and its relationship to an addressed 'you'.

- **Emotion**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: Explicitly, the middle text represents no emotions; at most, a calm, slightly positive mood is implicitly conveyed. In contrast, the right and especially the left text represent emotions much more explicitly, including negative emotions.

- **Style**

- Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the left text.
- Explanation: The right text differs stylistically from the middle and left texts in that a single anthropomorphism (the avalanche sleeps, cries, etc.) permeates the entire poem.

- **Form**

- Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the right text.
- Explanation: Both the middle and right texts contain 2 stanzas of 4 verses each, while the left text is not divided into multiple stanzas; moreover, it is unrhymed.

- **Overall**

- Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the right text.
- Explanation: The (dis)similarities in content and form are particularly pronounced and indicate a greater similarity between the middle and right texts.

4.2 Example 'Dein Bild'

	Wenn du ein Herz gefunden	Dein Bild –	Wie die Lerche
	<p>Wenn du ein Herz gefunden, Das treu mit dir es meint, In gut und bösen Stunden Bleib' eng mit ihm vereint!</p> <p>Hörst du's an deinem schlagen, Nichts schöneres hörst du je, Auf Händen mußst du's tragen, Und nimmer tu' ihm weh!</p> <p>Heut' darfst du's dein noch nennen – Was du in ihm umfaßt, Willst du's zu spät erkennen, Wenn du's verloren hast?!</p>	<p>Der Regen rauscht schwer nieder, mein Herz lauscht auf Lieder.</p> <p>Meine Augen gehen von den frühen Blumen, die im Glase stehen vor deinem Bild,</p> <p>in die Regenwelt, stumm und kühl und wild, die dein Bild im Herzen einzig mir erhellt.</p>	<p>Wie die Lerche möcht' ich sein, Die nicht blos im Sonnenschein, Die auch, wenn in dunkeln Tagen Wind und welke Blätter klagen, Singend reget ihr Gefieder; Nur von innen strömt der Quell der Lieder!</p> <p>Wie die Lerche möcht' ich sein, Die hoch oben ganz allein Und von Menschen ungesehen, Die ihr Singen doch verstehn, Sendet Melodien nieder; Kennet mich nicht, kennet meine Lieder!</p>
	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem linken Text	ist der mittige Text dem linken und rechten Text gleich ähnlich bzw. unähnlich	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem rechten Text
Inhaltlich	●	○	○
Emotional	●	○	○
Sprachlich	○	●	○
Formal	●	○	○
Insgesamt	●	○	○

Figure 4: Example 'Dein Bild' (in German).

- **Content**
 - Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the left text.
 - Explanation: Both the middle and the left text are about love or personal relationships, but the right poem is about completely different things.
- **Emotion**
 - Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the left text.
 - Explanation: Both the middle and left texts represent emotions such as love or affection. In the right text, these emotions do not occur.
- **Style**
 - Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
 - Explanation: All the poems use 'poetic' language and contain conventional metaphors (heart, dark days, etc.).
- **Form**
 - Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the left text.
 - Explanation: Both the middle and left texts consist of 3 stanzas of 4 verses each, while the right text consists of 2 stanzas of 6 verses each.
- **Overall**
 - Annotation: The middle text is more similar to the left text.
 - Explanation: The (dis)similarities in terms of content and emotion are particularly pronounced; moreover, there is no annotated dimension in which the middle is more similar to the right text than to the left text. All this speaks for a greater similarity of the middle and the left text.

4.3 Example 'Zarathustras Lied'

	Im Mai	Zarathustras Lied	Tränenkrüglein
	Düfte wogen auf und nieder, In den Lüften süßer Schall; Stille Blumen, laute Lieder, Engel Gottes überall. Und schon ward mein Herz zur Blume Und der Blume Duft zum Lied, Das im klaren Heiligthume Aufwärts mit den Engeln zieht.	O Mensch! Gib acht! Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht? „Ich schlief, ich schlief —, Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: — Die Welt ist tief Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht. Tief ist ihr Weh —, Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid! Weh spricht: vergeh! Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit — Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!“	Es wächst das Krüglein von Tag zu Tag, Der Trank wird gar zu bitter, Es steigt die Flut mit des Herzens Schlag, Bald werf ich den Ton in Splitter. Dann steigt die Flut, die salzige Flut, Und wird zum entsetzlichen Meere — Die Wellen leuchten wie Gold und Blut. Hol über! — Dort winket die Fähre.
	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem linken Text	ist der mittige Text dem linken und rechten Text gleich ähnlich bzw. unähnlich	ähnelt der mittige Text eher dem rechten Text
Inhaltlich	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sprachlich	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insgesamt	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 5: Example 'Zarathustras Lied' (in German).

- **Content**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: All the poems deal with entirely different themes.

- **Emotion**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: In the middle text, the emotions lust and woe are thematized abstractly; in the right poem, 'tears' or mourning are prominent; in the left text, a positive mood prevails.

- **Style**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: The middle text differs stylistically from the other two texts in its pathos, exclamations, and conspicuous repetition of the word 'deep'.

- **Form**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: The middle text has only one stanza, while the other texts have 2 stanzas with 4 verses each. They also have, unlike the middle text, a regular cross rhyme.

- **Overall**

- Annotation: The middle text is equally (dis)similar to the right text and the left text.
- Explanation: The fact that no tendency to the left or to the right was annotated in any similarity dimension suggests that the middle text is also equally (dis)similar *overall* to the right and left texts.