Does Plain Language Enhance
Reading Comprehension and Content Recall?

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In an increasingly text based environment reading comprehension has become an increasingly important matter of study. A development toward more and more communication carried out via text stresses the need for efficient texts. Since the year of 2009 it is stated by law that public agencies of Sweden should produce information that is correct, plain and understandable. For this purpose a concept called plain language was launched.

A target group of young adults (18-19 year olds) was chosen for examining reading comprehension for an authentic informative text. Three versions of the text were compared: 1) an original text published by the Swedish Employment Office, 2) a modified version of this text edited by a teacher of Swedish language to serve as control for text number 3) the plain language modified version of the original text. Comprehension, delayed recall and text experience were examined. Results showed no support for enhanced comprehension by plain language for this target group, but showed enhanced content recall for those who had understood their text better. Simply experiencing a text as pleasant did not mean the reader understood it better. Factors such as interest, context, individuality, match of expectations and choice of method were investigated.

1 Introduction

Most humans are skillful readers. Whenever we come across a traffic sign, a newspaper headline or an advertisement it is as if we cannot help but read the words. The average reader is able to read a semi complicated text with a speed of about 100 words every 30 seconds (Björnsson, 1968:191; Landauer, 1986:480). Reading speed is of course not equivalent to understanding what is read.

A press release from The Swedish National Agency for Education in 2010, stated that the reading comprehension of 15 year olds has decreased since the year 2000 (www.skolverket.se) and studies with adults show that comprehension for words is not as good as expected, and they even indicate a growing gap between the word comprehension of individuals and social groups, especially for younger readers (Gustafsson & Håkansson, 2010).

Already in 1968 Björnsson claimed there is reason to practice reading comprehension by presenting increasingly complex content during education, but there is no point in adding difficulties through features such as bad layout or heavy language (Björnsson, 1968:131). Now more than ever before, daily chores can, and are, being carried out via web sites. Information from public agencies has become an increasingly important and popular topic in the field of text production (Englund & Guldbrand, 2004).

Björnsson (1968) talked about them almost half a century ago, but still today the need to erase those unnecessary difficulties seems highly important. A tool called *plain language* meant to enhance readability in texts from public

agencies was launched (Language Council of Sweden, www.sprakradet.se). As a tool in a dynamic environment plain language needs constant looking after to continue to fulfill the task it was developed for.

Plain language (described more in detail below) sets out to make texts more comprehensible with the ultimate goal of efficient communication. It has been shown in earlier studies that some words and sentences are easier to identify and comprehend. These words and sentences also seem easier to recall, both immediately and with some delay (Dawn Moeser, 1974; Kintsch et al., 1975). This is interesting; if plain language enhances comprehension, can it also enhance memory of the information, doubling the efficiency? The relation between comprehension and recall seems to extend beyond words and sentences and also include rhetorical organisation of ideas (Montanero & Lucero, 2012).

Now, does plain language enhance comprehension and even recall? Some details on plain language, reading comprehension and recall need to be clarified before trying to answer that question.

The Concept of Plain Language

To support the use of understandable language in public service, the already existing project called *the Plain Swedish Group* was in 2006 assigned to the Language Council of Sweden (www.sprakradet.se/plain-language, read 2013-02-04), given the task to further develop the concept of plain language. In the year of 2009 the Swedish language act concluded that "the language in public service in Sweden shall be correct, plain and understandable" (author's translation from "Språket i offentlig verksamhet ska vara vårdat, enkelt och begripligt"; Språklagen 11§, 2009:600).

Plain language is a concept that has mainly come to refer to understandable information from public agencies and municipalities and a receiver oriented language (Ds 2006:10:7). It is argued that using plain language increases efficiency, quality, communication, democracy and trust (Ds 2006:10:9). Table 1 shows how the Language Council of Sweden sum up the essence of plain language.

The Language Council also provides a test for authority reports and resolutions. The test is an extensive guide based on the plain language advice to help writers see how well they follow the advice. The test is available for all and can be found online (www.sprakradet.se/testet).

Understanding Written Information

Plain language have not come from nothing. Years and years of research together construed a massive body of findings on reading comprehension. Plain language embraces some of these findings more than others.

Many previous studies have focused mainly on isolated words and sentences (e.g. Paivio & Begg, 1971; Platzack,

Table 1. Summary retrieved from the Language Council of Sweden, www.sprakradet.se/plain-language, read 2013-02-04.

> "Plain language is to
> - match your writing to the needs of the readers
> - consider the purpose and message carefully
> - structure the document clearly
> - write informative headings
> - write pithy summaries
> - use "I", "we" and "you" to make the writing more human
> - avoid passive constructions
> - take pride in everyday language
> - explain difficult but necessary words
> - use concrete words
> - read your colleagues' documents and give them advice."

1973; Dawn Moeser, 1974), while recent studies have focused more on how certain features affect comprehension in a full text (e.g. Linderholm et al., 2000; Montanero & Lucero, 2012; Nyström Höög, et al., 2012). As will be shown in this section, these studies together suggest some features that seem to be more crucial than others for a human reader to perceive and understand written information. To provide an overview, relevant findings are related to examples from the text of the current study. Three texts were used: the *original*, the *modified* by teacher and the *plain language text*. All texts were different modifications of the same content. Because the texts were used in their original language, the examples are presented in Swedish as well as in English (translated by the author), and serve only as examples to illustrate the theories. The conditions and texts are more extensively described in section 2 and full Swedish texts can be found in the appendix.

Gunnarsson (1982:265) found that readers seem to hang on to the concrete exemplified information, rather than to the general rule. Similar results have been found in several studies showing that readers of concrete sentences are significantly faster at identifying meaning than readers of abstract sentences (Paivio & Begg, 1970; Klee & Eysenck, 1973; Dawn Moeser, 1974; Holmes & Langford, 1976). Baddeley et al. (1974:53ff) found that reasoning time increased for negative and passive sentences. Further, studies on historical accounts showed that comprehension was enhanced for texts where the causal and temporal relations were made explicit (Linderholm et al., 2000; Montanero & Lucero, 2012). Table 2 shows how an abstract concept like *transition arrangements (utslussningsåtgärder)* in the original text was rewritten to an active sentence with more concrete referents.

Not too surprisingly, knowledge of the readers' previous experiences in turn gives the writer knowledge about what inferences to make or not to make. This way the writer is better qualified making the text more applicable to the needs of the readers (Nyström, 2001:163). Even though Björnsson already in 1968 found addressing the recipient to be fruitful in reading comprehension (Björnsson, 1968:130-131; 161), recent evaluations have found that texts from public agencies often fail to address their recipients properly (Nyström Höög et al., 2012). In the texts of the current study examples were many. Table 3 shows examples of changes in perspective

Table 2. Text comparison

Original Text	
Har beviljats utslussningsåtgärder från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och inte fullgjort ett år av prövotiden, är arbetslös och anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen.	Has been granted transition arrangements from prison or is on parole and has not yet completed a year of probation, is unemployed and registered as job-seeking at the Employment Office.
Modified Text	
Har beviljats utslussningsåtgärder från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och inte fullgjort ett år av prövotiden, och dessutom är arbetslös och anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen.	Has been granted transition arrangements from prison or is on parole and has not yet completed a year of probation, is unemployed and moreover is registered as job-seeking at the Employment Office.
Plain Language Text	
slussas ut från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och det inte har gått ett år av prövotiden	is in transition from prison or is on parole and a year of probation has not passed

Table 3. Text comparison

Original Text	
Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin är ett program för dig som varit utan arbete under en längre tid.	The Job and Development Guarantee is a program for you who have been without job during a longer period of time.
Modified Text	
Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin är ett program för dig som varit utan arbete under en längre tid.	The Job and Development Guarantee is a program for you who have been without job during a longer period of time.
Plain Language Text	
Har du varit utan arbete en längre tid? Då kan du delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin.	Have you been without job for a longer period of time? Then you can participate in the Job and Development guarantee.

Table 4. Text comparison

Original Text	
Vad innehåller jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?	What does the Job and Development Guarantee contain?
Modified Text	
Vad innehåller jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?	What does the Job and Development Guarantee contain?
Plain Language Text	
Vad får jag göra?	What do I get to do?

made for plain language where the text is talking *to the recipient*, rather than *from the sender*.

The example in Table 4 contains a headline. Headlines should serve to guide the reader, to spur interest and to mirror the content of the following paragraph (Holsanova, 2010:139). This example shows how a change of perspective was used also in a headline.

Table 5. Text comparison

Original Text	
Det är viktigt att du tackar ja till en insats i programmet och till ett erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete. Det är även viktigt att du är aktivt arbetssökande, redovisar dina jobbsökaraktiviteter och kommer på inbokade besök de datum som du och din arbetsförmedlare har kommit överens om.	It is important that you accept an arrangement in the program and an offer on a suitable job. It is also important that you are actively applying for jobs, report your job applying activities and come to scheduled visit the days that you and your job advicer agreed upon.

Modified Text	
Det är viktigt att du tackar ja till en insats i programmet och till ett erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete. Det är även viktigt att du är aktivt arbetssökande, redovisar dina jobbsökaraktiviteter och kommer på inbokade besök de datum som du och din arbetsförmedlare har kommit överens om.	It is important that you accept an arrangement in the program and an offer on a suitable job. It is also important that you are actively applying for jobs, report your job applying activities and come to scheduled visit the days that you and your job advicer agreed upon.

Plain Language Text	
För att delta i garantin och få ersättningen ska du • vara med i en insats i programmet, till exempel en utbildning • tacka ja om du får erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete • redovisa hur du söker jobb under tiden • komma på besök till din arbetsförmedlare.	To participate in the guarantee and get the compensation you shall • join in an arrangement in the program, e.g. a course • accept if you get an offer on a suitable job • report how you apply for jobs in the meanwhile • come to visit your job advicer

Table 6. Text comparison

Original Text	
Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du det lägsta stödet 223 kronor per dag. Ersättning i fas 3 utgår endast för dig som i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin hade rätt till aktivitetsstöd baserat på arbetslöshetsersättning. Övriga kan delta i fas 3, men då utgår ingen ersättning från Arbetsförmedlingen.	If you are not entitled to unemployment compensation you get the lowest compensation 223 krowns per day. Compensation for phase 3 is issued only for you who in the Job and Development/Progress guarantee were entitled to compensation based on unemployment compensation. Others can participate in phase 3, but no compensation will then be issued from the Employment Office.

Modified Text	
Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du det lägsta stödet, 223 kronor per dag. Ersättning i fas 3 utgår endast för dig som i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin hade rätt till aktivitetsstöd baserat på arbetslöshetsersättning. Övriga kan delta i fas 3, men då utgår ingen ersättning från Arbetsförmedlingen.	If you are not entitled to unemployment compensation you get the lowest compensation, 223 krowns per day. Compensation for phase 3 is issued only for you who in the Job and Development/Progress guarantee were entitled to compensation based on unemployment compensation. Others can participate in phase 3, but no compensation will then be issued from the Employment Office.

Plain Language Text	
Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du 223 kronor per dag under fas 1 och 2, men ingen ersättning under fas 3.	If you are not entitled to unemployment compensation you get 223 krowns per day during phase 1 and 2, but no compensation during phase 3.

Table 7. Noun phrase comparison (Platzack, 1973:91)

a. <u>That the expensive book didn't contain a single illustration</u> *surprised* me.
b. <u>It</u> *surprised* me that the expensive book didn't contain a single illustration.

Table 8. Insertion comparison (Platzack, 1973:122)

a. Rune *bought*, <u>when he was well ashore</u>, *a worn captain's hat*.
b. Rune *bought a worn captain's hat*, when he was well ashore.

Readability has been claimed particularly important for informative texts. The aim should be to provide maximum amount of information while requiring minimum effort. Three aspects have been stressed as primary by Platzack (1973:17;123): readers need to a) quickly be able to decide if the text contains new information, b) get an overview of a new topic and c) learn from the text. This can be related especially to the advice of plain language to write informative headings and pithy summaries that serve to give the reader the overview needed. The use of bullet lists has proven an efficient way to quickly guide the reader toward new information (Holsanova, 2010:92). An explicit example of this is shown in Table 5 where paragraph structure was used to stress important information.

The advice to take pride in everyday language was proposed already by Björnsson as he pointed out the need of simplicity, avoiding unnecessary repeating of words and choosing a shorter sentence with equivalent content if possible (1968:141ff). Already Table 1 showed an example of excluded redundant information. Table 6 gives an example of how everyday language was used to present equal information.

Gunnarsson (1982:265) found that it was hard to interpret negative information; information that was not explicitly expressed in the text. In Table 6 the reader might wonder who *others* are in the original or modified texts, while in the plain language modified text this relation was put straight forward. Table 6 also illustrates how the original text has been modified to a very much shorter version without compromising the content. Outing & Ruel (2004:6) found that readers prefer shorter paragraphs in web texts. For newspaper reading, a preference for shorter over longer texts

has been found when it comes to reading the text to its end (Holmqvist & Wartenberg, 2005:9). In plain language the writer is advised to construct shorter texts.

Platzack (1973:122) found it was harder for readers to process a sentence that had a heavy noun phrase (underlined in Table 7) or an insertion between the finite verb (italics in Table 8) and the object (italics in Table 8). This was found harder than processing a synonym sentence with an alternative structure. The finding can be compared with plain language advice to avoid an overweight of words to the left of the main verb (verb in italics in Table 7) and extensive insertions. A plausible explanation to this phenomenon could be the reader searching for clues to the function structure through the surface structure (Gunnarsson, 1982:266). It has been found possible, that there is a preference for a match between function and surface structure (Platzack, 1973:90). Tables 7 and 8 shows the sentences (translated by the author) used by Platzack to demonstrate these differences in structure.

There is of course more to reading comprehension than strictly linguistic factors. Reading in any everyday situation is dependent on the human factor of interest. Studies on online newspaper reading states that if we find a text or an article we choose to start reading, there is a 90% chance we read it to the end (Holsanova, 2010:130). Reading a text to its end is basic for any comprehension. The study presented in this paper will not be able to cover for interest. This will be discussed related to results in section 4.

Remembering Written Information

Research on reading comprehension has often found a correlation between what readers understand and what they remember; a word or a sentence that is easier understood seems also to be easier recalled.

Studies on full texts mainly concern narratives, descriptions and argumentations. When it comes to content recall, narratives and descriptions seemed to be better remembered, while texts of argumentations showed the opposite (Baddeley et al. 1974:60). McNerney et al. (2011) supported the claim that narratives demand less processing time, saying the construction of narratives made it easier for the reader to integrate new information as they were reading. Narratives are characterised by their chronological focus and high frequency of temporal connectors and action verbs (Nyström, 2001) which can relate to the plain language advice to use "I", "we" and "you" to clarify who executes what action.

On the sentence level, studies have confirmed that concrete sentences were significantly better and more completely recalled in their original form, than passive sentences (Holmes & Langford, 1976:565). It was suggested that concrete sentences are easier to process, not only because of lexical factors, but also of their imagability (Dawn Moeser, 1974:695)

On the text level Montanero et al. (2012:34) showed that rhetorical organisation affects recall one week after reading a text. When causal structure was made clear (when antecedent precedes consequent) this text was better recalled than a text with the inverse organisation (Montanero et al., 2012:34). It seemed a match between function and surface structure could be the key to enhanced performance.

The tendency for improved recall of the beginning of a paragraph, called *the primacy effect* seemed to not hold for all propositions. Kintsch et al. (1975:196) defined a proposition as the basic unit of meaning containing one prediator (eg. a verb) and one or more arguments (eg. nouns). Propositions were categorised as superordinate if they contained information of importance for the whole text. It was found these superordinate propositions were recalled better at all serial positions in a text (Kintsch et al., 1975:204). In addition to the primacy effect, there is also *the recency effect*, which refers to subjects' tendency to initiate recall with the latter items in a list (Kahana et al., 2008:470). *The contiguity effect* refers to subjects' tendency to recall neighboring items successively in free recall which suggests subjects rely on temporal guidance in recall (Kahana et al., 2008:472). It seems as if plain language has been taking some of these facts into account. Plain language stresses the need of informative headings and initiating a text or paragraph with the most important facts. The recommended summaries at the end of a document would make the text benefit from the recency effect.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The aim of the current study was to evaluate if the writing advice meant to enhance comprehension, actually do enhance comprehension. There is also reason to believe that what enhances comprehension might enhance recall as well. For this purpose, three hypotheses were examined.

As has been presented above, the plain language concept makes use of much of the research concerning features that has been suggested to enhance reading comprehension. Therefore it is reasonable to hypothesise (H1) a plain language modified text to be more comprehensible than a text that is not fully plain language modified (definitions are specified in section 2).

Features that enhance comprehension are often features that also enhance memory. The second aim of this study is to examine the relation between comprehension and recall. This hypothesis (H2) expects better comprehension to correlate with better content recall. As an addition to this hypothesis, enhanced recall for plain language will be examined.

The third hypothesis (H3) will extend beyond the strict linguistic factors and include interest by expecting preference for a text to show enhanced comprehension.

2 Methods

The study was divided into two parts. Part 1 examined reading comprehension and part 2 examined content recall.

The method chosen for part 1 was the same as used to evaluate and compare this ability internationally through the *Program for International Student Assessment* or *PISA* (www.skolverket.se).

In part 2, open questions were used to examine to what extent subjects were able to recall the content of the text two weeks later.

Subjects

The group of participants chosen for this study was young adults. Persons that are just about to graduate their 12th year of school are young enough to share similar educational experiences between them. They are old enough to take on the responsibilities of an adult life, including information

form public agencies and municipalities. To cover for a varietey of attitudes toward reading, the recruitment was addressed toward groups and not individuals. All subjects attended theoretically oriented programs and were recruited at the same public school in southern Sweden. The total subjects were 93 (63 women, 30 men), average 18 years and 3 months old (70 S of 18 yrs; 23 S of 19 yrs), divided into six groups with different teachers. The groups participated one at a time, all subjects within the group participating simultaneously. All 93 subjects completed part 1, 54 subjects also completed part 2 of the study.

Materials

Three conditions were used for the study. Each condition was assigned a version of a text, distinguished not by content but by linguistic modification. The conditions were: 1) the original text condition (OC), the modified text condition (MC) and the plain language modified text condition (PLC). The texts in MC and PLC were modified versions of OC, hence the three all possessed the same content.

It shall be noted that the concept of plain language is not an all black and white concept. Texts can fit some requirements of plain language but not others. The text used in the OC was an authentic text published at the Swedish Employment Office (www.arbetsförmedlingen.se), and being a published text by a public agency it had already had some modifications. Taken the plain language online test (www.sprakradet.se/testet), this text did show strengths but was still estimated suitable for this study because a lot more could be done according to plain language, also the text held a content that was relevant for the target group. The text in the PLC was rewritten by an educated language consultant with great experience of the plain language concept as well as of the Swedish Employment Office. The PLC text scored very high in the plain language online test. This text was never an official or published text by the Swedish Employment Office. The text used in the MC was the original text modified by a teacher educated to teach Swedish to 13-18 year olds. The teacher had no experience of the plain language concept. This version of the text showed no differences from the OC in the plain language online test. The purpose of this condition was to distinguish plain language text modification from just any text modification. Regarding the plain language online test, results were only briefly mentioned here to provide an overview of the three texts. Much can be said about this test, and more will be said in section 4 (Discussion).

To examine comprehension for the texts, questions based on the PISA model were construed. PISA is a program held every three years in several countries across the globe in order to compare and evaluate different educational systems. The study covers three areas where reading comprehension is one (www.skolverket.se). To evaluate reading comprehension, PISA uses a six level model to examine how well students find, interpret, reflect on and evaluate text content (PISA 2012, Assessment and Analytical Framework, 2013:79).

A total of twelve content questions were used. Eight questions were multiple choice questions where the subject was asked to pick one alternative out of five to answer the question. Out of the eight, two questions were such that the subject simply needed to find the right piece of information

(related to the PISA level 1), three questions needed some interpretation of the information (PISA level 2), two questions needed the subject to retrieve and interpret more than one piece of information throughout the text (PISA level 3) and one question needed the subject to fully understand the whole text and be able to reflect on the content (PISA level 4). The last four questions were open and the subject needed to produce the answer. For these, one question was related to each of the four levels of the PISA model. Levels 5 and 6 were excluded since they would demand a much more complex text than was chosen for this study.

The questions needed to explicitly focus on the content and should not sound more like the wording in one text compared to another. Pilot tests were run and questions were revised to minimise this risk. The questions were construed to evaluate text content and were hence identical for all conditions (see appendix).

The subjects were also given five pairs of opposing descriptions where they were asked to choose the description that better matched their experience of the text.

For part 2, three open questions were used to test the subjects' content recall. First an open content question where subjects were asked to write all that they remembered from the text. Then, minding the contiguity effect, subjects were given a trigger question and last another open content question. Identical questions were used for all conditions (see appendix).

Procedure

The study was carried out in a familiar environment to the subjects: their ordinary classrooms in the school they were recruited at. For some groups the teacher was present in the room, and for some s/he was absent, this was held optional for all teachers. Before starting up part 1, subjects were told they will be offered a small treat (candy and/or cake) for participating.

The three conditions were randomised between the subjects and the groups. During part 1, each subject was assigned one text and then asked to answer the related questions as well as rate their text experience. Subjects had continuous access to their text. After finishing the questions, subjects were asked to raise their hand if they had encountered this information prior to participating in this study. Eight subjects confirmed and were excluded from the results (excluded from the above presented 93 subjects). Subjects were also encouraged to spontaneous reactions, although the outcome of this was scarce. Reactions like "it was hard" and "was this a real text?" were the most frequent ones. Lastly, subjects were asked to please show up again in two weeks for supplementary questions. Part 1 took about 20 minutes to complete.

Two weeks later content recall was tested. Before given the questions, subjects were told it was okay to write that they did not know or remembered, rather than fabricating an answer. The first question on the front of the paper asked the subjects to write down all that they remembered from the content of the text. Eight to ten minutes were assigned for page one. They were told explicitly not to turn the page until the whole group had completed the first page. Once the group simultaneously had turned to page two, no one was allowed to turn back. Page two contained a trigger question and a final question asking if they, after the trigger, could
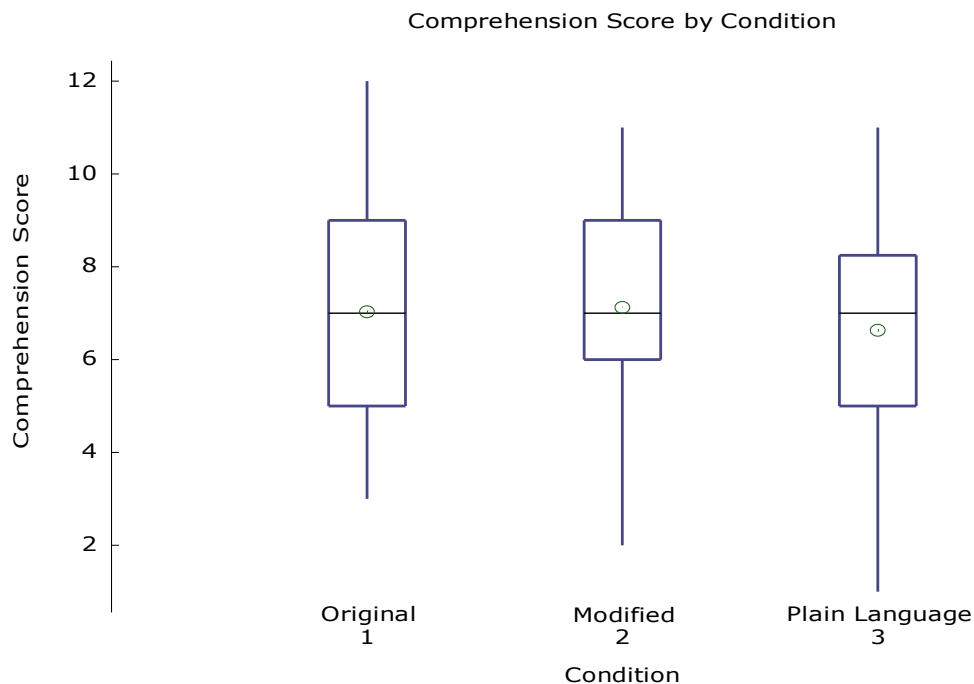
Figure 1. Distribution of Comprehension Score across Conditions: OC: n = 31, mean = 7.0, s.d. = 2.4; MC: n. = 32, mean = 7.1, s.d. = 1.9; PLC: n. = 30, mean = 6.6, s.d. = 2.4 (circle = mean, line = median).

recall more than they had already written. Subjects were also asked to fill in whether they had or had not spoken to anyone about the content of the text. Part 2 took about 15 minutes to complete.

Comprehension and Recall Score

To quantify the subjects' written answers into scores of comprehension and recall, information units were collected from the text prior to analysing the data. The maximum comprehension score was 14 points. One point was assigned for every right answer to the multiple choice questions. For the open questions, subjects needed to state the right information unit/s (with some tolerance for choice of words).

For recall score, a total of 66 unique information units were identified by a swedish linguist (the author) to represent the content of the whole text. Every information unit consisted of a central noun or adjective (the argument) most often closely related to a verb (the predicator) that together constitute a proposition (Kintsch et al., 1975:196).

Information units were identified in the subjects' answers, each information unit was assigned one point and collectively summed up the subjects' recall scores. For example one unit was "be without job" *or* "be unemployed", subjects writing one of them in the right context were assigned one point. If subjects used both concepts or repeated one of them, they were still assigned just one point.

3 Results

This section is divided into three sub parts treating the different hypotheses. Due to the method of this study, the number of subjects differed between part 1 (comprehension) and part 2 (recall). A total of 93 subjects completed part 1 and formed the basis for the data concerning hypothesis 1 (*Readers in the plain language condition score higher in*

comprehension than readers in other conditions). The 54 subjects who also completed part 2, formed the basis for data concerning hypothesis 2 (*Readers who score higher in comprehension, also score higher in recall*). For hypothesis 3 (*Higher preference ratings is followed by higher comprehension score*) the comprehension score for the 36 subjects who rated the text pleasant was compared to the 54 subjects who rated their text unpleasant. For all ratings, subjects who did not rate the text were excluded. No significant difference was found on comprehension between genders (women: n = 63, mean = 6.9, s.d. = 1.9; men: n = 30, mean = 7.0, s.d. = 2.9; p = .77). The presentation of results does therefore not distinguish between scores based on gender.

Reading Comprehension

Results for reading comprehension (n = 93) showed no difference for either condition, as presented in Figure 1. Mean comprehension score for conditions were 7.0 for OC, 7.1 for MC and 6.6 for PLC. A t-test comparing the OC and PLC presented a p-value of .52. This result did not support the first hypothesis that suggested comprehension would be enhanced for plain language modified texts.

Content Recall

Those who had talked about the text (n = 20, mean = 6.5, s.d. = 3.5) showed significantly better recall (p-value = .047) compared to those who had not talked about the text (n = 34, mean = 4.7, s.d. = 2.9). No significant differences were found in recall across conditions for those who had talked about the text, these results are therefore not further treated here. The 20 subjects who had talked about the text were excluded when analysing results for content recall. Results for recall were based on the remaining 34 subjects (20 women, 14 men).
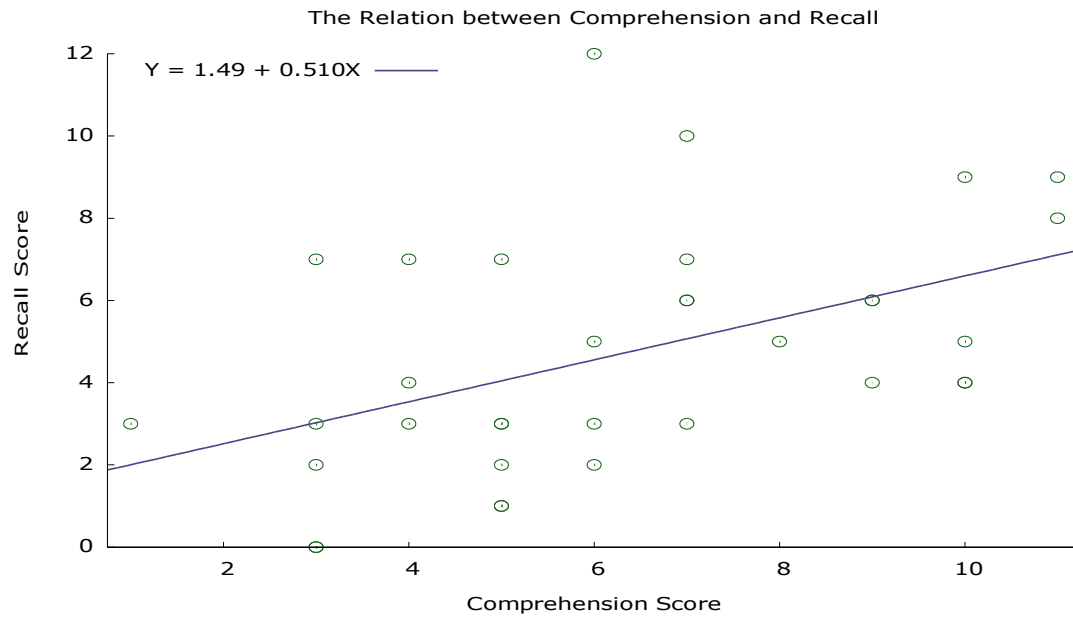
Figure 2. How Comprehension and Recall Correlate, n = 34, maximum recall score = 66, maximum comprehension score = 14 (circle = 1 data point, dot in circle = 2 data points).

When analysing the data for hypothesis 2 (*Better comprehension is followed by better recall*), conditions were put aside for a moment, since performance independent of condition was the primary focus. Figure 2 shows an ascending linear graph that confirms (p-value = .0047) the proposed relation between comprehension and recall; better comprehension is followed by better recall.

Results on recall showed a small advantage for the PLC. Figure 3 shows subjects score both higher and lower in the PLC than in the OC. A t-test showed a p-value of .066, which is close to significant. The difference between the OC and the MC presented a p-value of .071.

Text Experience

This section treats text experience compared mainly to comprehension and includes all 93 subjects who completed part 1. Not all subjects chose an alternative for every rating. This was interpreted as the subject found the alternatives insufficient for their experience. Therefore average scores in this section were based on subjects who did choose an alternative.
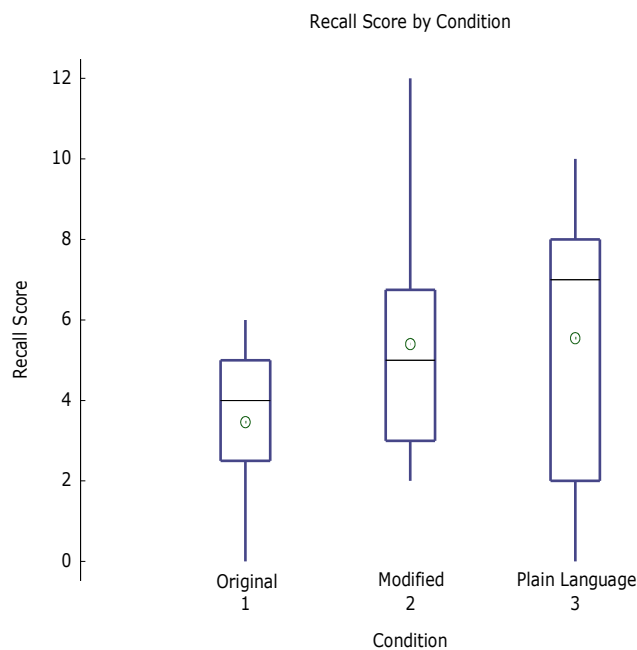

Figure 3. Content Recall across Conditions, OC: n = 13, mean = 3.5, s.d. = 1.7; MC: n = 10, mean = 5.4, s.d. = 3.1; PLC n = 11, = mean = 5.5, s.d. = 3.4 (circle = mean, line = median).
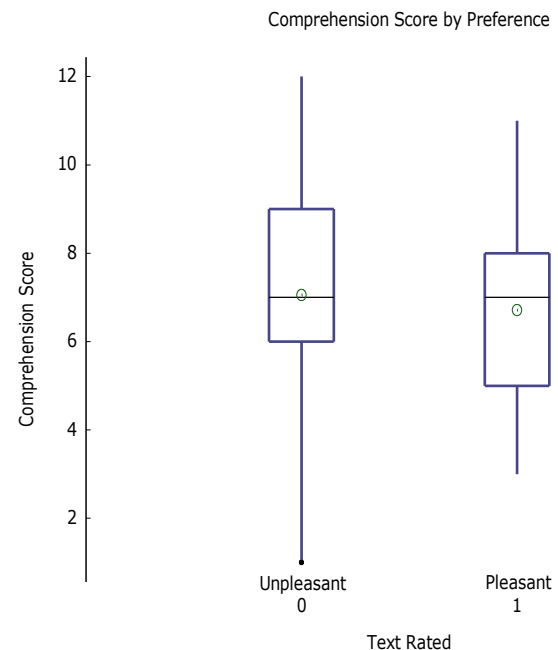

Figure 4. Distribution of Comprehension Score by Preference, Unpleasant: n. 54, mean 7.1, s.d. 2.3; Pleasant: n. 35, mean 6.7, s.d. 2.0 (circle = mean, line = median).
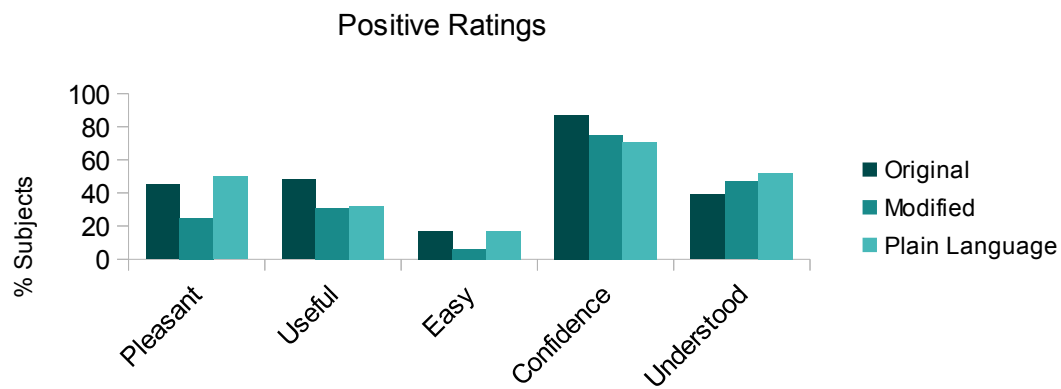
Positive Ratings

Figure 5. Percentage Positive Ratings across Conditions.

To evaluate hypothesis 3 (*Preference for a text is followed by better comprehension*) comprehension score for the 89 subjects who rated their texts pleasant or not, independent of condition, were analysed. Comprehension score for subjects who rated the text unpleasant did not distinguish much from subjects who rated the text pleasant. Figure 4 shows a result that do not give support to the third hypothesis (p-value = .48).

Figure 5 presents the rating percentage for positive experience by condition. Since the negative ratings would be inverted from the positive, only the positive are shown here. Focusing on the OC and the PLC, three main differences were found. Readers in the OC more often than those in the PLC reported their text useful and having confidence in their text. In the OC and the PLC, the same percentage subjects were found rating their text easy (interestingly MC showed the lowest frequency). And looking at subjects who reported they understood their text, a small advantage for the PLC compared to the OC seemed to appear.

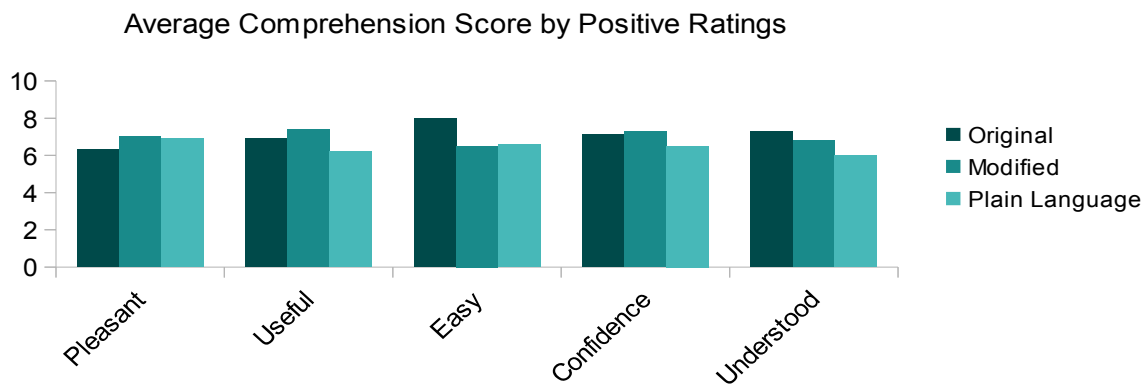Did these differences in experience reflect in the subjects'

Average Comprehension Score by Positive Ratings

Figure 6. Average Comprehension Score by Positive Ratings across Conditions.

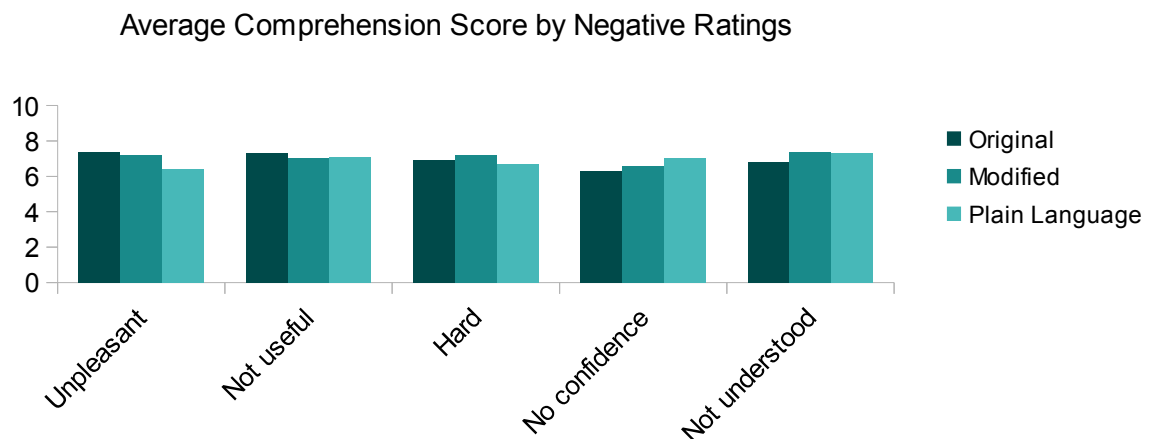Average Comprehension Score by Negative Ratings

Figure 7. Average Comprehension Score by Negative Ratings across Conditions.
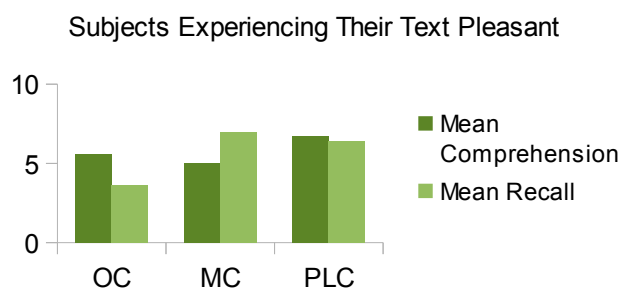
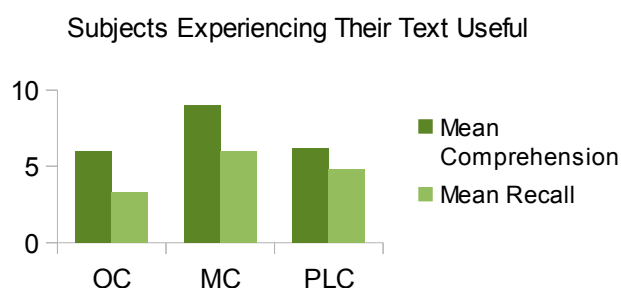**Figure 8.** OC (n.8), MC (n.1), PLC (n.7).

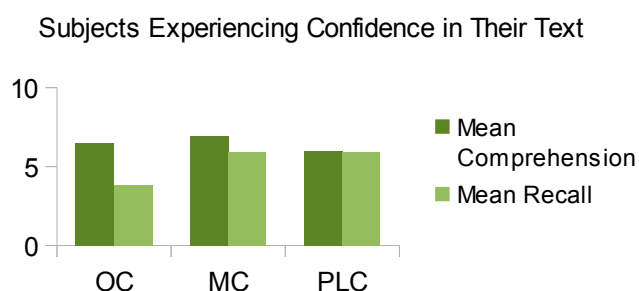**Figure 9.** OC (n.7), MC (n.2), PLC (n.5).

Figure 10. OC (n.12), MC (n.8), PLC (n.7).
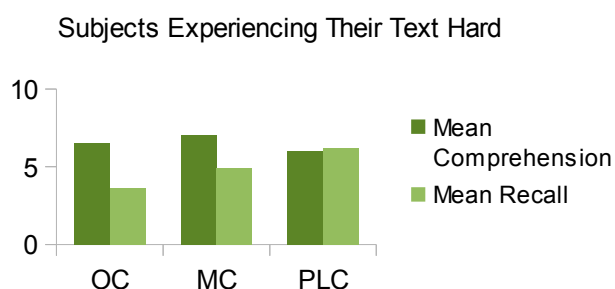

Figure 11. OC (n.4), MC (n.3), PLC (n.7).

Figure 12. OC (n.12), MC (n.10), PLC (n.9).

comprehension? They seemed not to. No greater differences in comprehension scores across both positive and negative ratings and conditions were found. Figures 6 and 7 provide a picture of average comprehension that was not affected much by text experience.

Subjects who completed part 2 of the study was only about half the amount of subjects who completed part 1 (54 of 93) and only 36 subjects remained for analysis on recall after excluding those who had talked about the text.

From the set of 16 out of 35 subjects who rated their text pleasant, the OC showed a somewhat greater decrease in recall than in the PLC, see Figure 8. It seemed texts rated pleasant or useful (Figure 9, based on 14 out of 34 subjects) did not distinguish much across conditions in comprehension. Data in Figure 8 and 9 for the MC was based on just one or two subjects respectively. Figure 10 shows performance for the 27 out of 35 subjects who experienced confidence in their text and Figure 11 shows the 14 out of 35 subjects who experienced having understood their text. Very few subjects rated their text easy; instead Figure 12 shows the 31 out of 36 who rated their text hard.

4 Discussion

The current study has compared three versions of the same text and evaluated the readers' performance in comprehension and content recall. Reading comprehension seems to be a complex matter of study. Some results and tendencies have been suggested, others need further discussion.

Did Plain Language Enhance Reading Comprehension and Content Recall?

Quickly reviewing the hypotheses, this study showed three things: plain language did not enhance comprehension, better comprehension did correlate with better recall, but better comprehension did not correlate with preference for the text per se.

The reasons for these results can of course be many, and no definite conclusions can be drawn. An example: looking closer at the results there was a slight difference in favor of plain language concerning recall, but this difference was not found concerning comprehension. Is there something about plain language making content easier to remember? Another look at the results, showed that the modified text did not distinguish much from the plain language text in average recall (Figure 3). It is important to remember that the original text and the manipulated text were two quite similar texts. This is why care should be taken when looking at the better results in recall for the plain language text compared to the original text. The number of subjects dropped dramatically in recall to almost half of the subjects in comprehension. For these reasons, data on recall must be considered tendencies and not definite results.

Two hypotheses of this study were not supported in the results. Even though the results do not provide any definite answers as to why, it is highly relevant to consider their possible explanations.

The Effect of Interest

As mentioned earlier, a factor of great effect in reading is interest. No linguistic factor can ever separate a text from its context. In this study the subjects were simply given a text

asked to help out in research by reading and answering questions. They did not look up the information themselves because they held specific interest in, or needed, this particular information. However, this setting was identical for all conditions and should still be able to make room for differences between conditions.

Contrary to the desired setting of the study, many subjects talked about the content of the text between confrontations. Those who had talked about the content remembered significantly more than those who had not. Why talk about something if it is does not put questions and curiosity in the reader's mind? The outcome of this might be interpreted as confirming the effect of some sort of interest. A quick analysis of comprehension and recall across conditions of those who had talked about the text showed no significant differences, indicating interest was a top down process (a process generated by the readers themselves) and not generated by the different texts. Either the plain language text was not enough motivating to the readers, or the versions of the texts did not distinguish from each other enough to present a definite result, or most plausible, the number of subjects was not sufficient to provide a clear result.

The Effect of Expectations

A readers previous experiences are of great importance for the reader to make the right inferences and to grasp what genre it is that they are currently reading. In the target group for this study, lack of previous experience could have affected the subjects. Little experience of public agencies and what information they provide, could make either text unfamiliar and difficult to attend to. This could be a reason for the results showing nothing but little difference in comprehension across conditions. However, the results found for text experience do not reflect this. Results showed 87% of readers in the original condition claimed confidence in their text and 71% of the readers in the plain language condition claimed the same thing (Figure 5). Could this be interpreted as proof of expectations built from having read similar texts and forming a concept of what this information genre should look like? Other fields of communication and interaction have shown that expectation matter. When expectations are not met, this can cause a communication breakdown (Goetz et al., 2003; Han et al., 2010). When expectations are met, communication should be fast and successful. Assuming the confidence expressed by the subjects was based on genre experience, could the differences across conditions indicate that the relatively new concept of plain language do not yet meet the expectations on information from public agencies? Is the reader not prepared to meet everyday language in this context and is therefore confused, causing a decrease or even to erase the possible effects of plain language modifications? Turning to the readers in the modified condition, 75% experienced confidence in their text, a number not too far from the 71% for the plain language modified text (Figure 5). This result could be an indication of confidence decreasing for plain language texts, and perhaps with more subjects, this indication would become more clear. The results could also try to tell us that the three texts did not distinguish enough to result in a difference in comprehension after all.

Addressing the reader as "you" has been up for discussion before. A recent questionnaire survey on web information from public agencies showed that a too personal tone is not always given a warm welcome. A suitable formal and/or informal tone was suggested a solution (Nyström Höög et al., 2012:158). A solution not too far from studies concluding it is a good idea to make use of genre conventions (Holsanova, 2010:141).

There is an obvious problem in meeting reader expectations. Readers are individuals. Although writers make use of conventional genres, it is complicated to provide general conclusions concerning readability. Not only do two individuals read one text in two different ways, one reader probably reads a text from one public agency in one way, and a text from another public agency in another way (Nyström Höög et al., 2012:165).

A match between expectations and reality seems preferable, but readers might also need a match between substructure and surface structure (as presented in section 1). Research on texts modified to be easy to read (that is not only applying plain language, but even an *easy* language), has found these texts to be linguistically less authoritarian, but still possess the same substructures. This causes a mismatch between textual practice and social practice (Forsberg, 2013:3). Might the decrease in confidence for the plain language condition be a sign of this phenomenon?

Hard Texts Enhancing Performance

Looking at text experience, the only performance that somewhat separates from the rest is the comprehension score for those who rated their text easy in the original condition (Figure 6). Studies have shown that when using open questions as method for recall this caused subjects to perform worse when given a text modified to require less inferences than when given a text requiring more inferences. This seemed to hold for subjects who already had knowledge of the subject (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). Again the phenomenon of individuality appears and stresses the importance of attention to the plain language advice to think about your readers.

Looking at the 17% of the readers of the original text and the 17% of the readers of the plain language text that rated their text easy (Figure 5), results showed the 17% in the original condition actually understood more than the 17% in the plain language condition (Figure 6). A similar result was found for the 39% in the original condition and the 52% in the plain language condition who experienced they understood their text (Figure 5). The 39% in the original condition scored higher in comprehension than the 52% in the plain language condition (Figure 6). Is this an indication of plain language giving the reader the feeling they understand, even though they do not?

Another possible explanation for these results could be that experiencing a text hard, changes the readers' approach to it. When readers experience difficulties in their text, it has been found this triggers processes that makes the reader increase their attention and effort, causing them to perform better than readers who do not experience the same difficulties (Alter et al., 2007).

Plain Language and Recall

Some linguistic features that facilitate comprehension are also found to affect recall positively. Could text experience affect comprehension and recall in a similar manner? No apparent tendencies to better comprehension for some

specific text experience was found. Comparing recall with the different text experiences narrows down the number of subjects for each category which makes these analyses less trustworthy. However, conditions do seem to have some affect on recall. Concerning the relation between comprehension and recall, the decrease in recall did not appear as heavy for those who read the plain language text, as for those who read the original text. The pattern of less decrease was found for subjects experiencing their text pleasant (Figure 8), useful (Figure 9), hard (Figure 12) and having confidence in their text (Figure 10).

Results from all 36 subjects showed that recall was lowest for subjects reading the original text and higher for those reading the modified or the plain language text (Figure 3). Despite the fact that the original and the modified texts were two quite similar versions of the same text, the difference between average recall for the modified and the plain language text was smaller than average recall between the original and the modified text. This makes it impossible to settle for any definite conclusions concerning text experience and recall. However, it is an interesting tendency indicating that modifications actually might affect recall.

Limitations

A weakness of the study has exposed itself during the process. Subjects were merely asked if they perceived the text hard to understand, they were not asked if the *language* was hard or if the *content* was hard to understand. Given the outcome of the study, this would have been an obvious question to pose. Not foreseeing this need complicated the search for explanations to the result.

Previous studies have aimed toward mixed age groups, this study did not. One of the big concerns in the research of readability is the recipient. For the sort of information used in this study, the recipient is anyone risking, or is already, in unemployment. Adapting information to such a hetero-geneous group is not an easy task. This study examined a somewhat homogenous group, making it possible to focus on text modifications. Inevitably, this means that the current results can only evaluate the performance of young adults. This is a limitation, but with some strengths. When focus on one large heterogeneous group is problematic, there are obvious advantages in collecting results from studying several smaller homogenous groups.

Previous studies have measured comprehension and recall in relation to time spent on each unit of examination (be it word, sentence or paragraph). This study focused on text modification and comprehension of the full text. The time spent on the text was 20 minutes, a setting that was assigned independent of group and condition. The purpose of plain language is to facilitate and/or enhance comprehension, therefore this study was designed to examine comprehension where time spent would not be a factor (as long as time was assigned equal across conditions). Looking at the results, this might have been a weakness. With the current setting it is impossible to say what condition required more time to complete the tests. It is also impossible to tell what condition might have required more effort and text working from their readers. On the other hand, far from the majority reached the maximum score in either of the confrontations (mean comprehension in Figure 1, mean recall in Figure 3), indicating reading comprehension and plain language is in

need of further examination.

Stressing the role of context once again, it should be noted that the original text for this study was published as a PDF on the website of the Swedish Employment Office. A PDF could be read online, it could be downloaded and read later (taken out of the website context) or it could be printed and read from a paper. Reading online and reading on paper are two different situations and hence different behaviors (Holsanova, 2010:125). In this study the text was printed and given to the subjects out of context and results here can of course not count for comprehension and recall for the online situation to fall out the same way.

Future research

As seen in the results and discussion, this study struggled with older, already known issues, but also with newer ones. Given the outcome, the study provides new questions and possible directions for the future.

This study has primarily focused on comprehension and the relation between comprehension and recall. Text experience was only briefly attended to. Further studies examining how experience relate to both comprehension and recall might be taking a step closer to find out what it is a plain language actually do or even what is it we want it to do. To be able to draw conclusions from text experience in a setting with three conditions, many more participants would be necessary.

Finding a text pleasant or not, does not determine whether the reader understands their text. Many more factors seem to be involved. Still, it is possible a pleasant text spur interest, and interest has shown critical to reading a text thoroughly. This study showed results that can be interpreted to confirm the claim that an interested reader understands their text better and hence gives us reason to continue the search toward tools that help motivate an unmotivated reader.

This study suggested that a better understood text is also a text that is better remembered (Figure 2). When motivating writers in public agencies to engage in plain language, efficiency is often claimed a positive effect of this writing. If plain language can be concluded to enhance comprehension, it would most likely also be able to enhance recall. When so, plain language has the potential of being efficient both in understanding while reading, as well as remembering what was read.

The online plain language test (mentioned in section 2) is a test designed explicitly for two kinds of texts; reports and resolutions. The three texts of the current study are informative texts, which makes the estimations made for these less reliable than if a test designed toward informative texts had been run. Although the two tests share many objectives (because they rely on the same plain language concept), a test designed toward informative texts might point out shortcomings in content presentation with better precision.

Plain language is a matter of quality. In this study a modified version was used as a third condition aiming to distinguish plain language from just any modification. The modified version itself was an interesting result. Even with several years of education in the Swedish language and teaching it, the original version of the text was obviously hard to modify without specific instructions or education. It has been pointed out by Nyström Höög et al. (2012:24) when

discussing the online plain language test, saying that it can be of great help, but there is always a risk for a lack of precision in the instructions to the writer. This means that care should be taken not only in respect for the readers, but also for the writers. Writers need proper education and the right tools. This very much stresses the need for continued research in the area.

Plain language is a relatively new concept and like all phenomena it is dependent on the dynamics of time and surroundings. It needs evaluation and it needs evolving. In order to write texts optimised toward the human ability to understand, we need to know more. This study rests upon research that much concerns a collection of isolated linguistic factors documented to enhance reading comprehension bottom up (the process generated by the text). This search seems to have come a long way, although evidently not yet far enough. We can choose to continue the same way or we can continue top down, including text experience and try to locate if there is some specific reader experienced feature that makes a text easier to understand, and then search for the linguistic factors that together construe this feature of experience.

5 Acknowledgements

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1. Text used for the original condition/OC (Arial 12/16,1/14pt)

Faktablad för arbetssökande februari 2013

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin är ett program för dig som varit utan arbete under en längre tid. Du deltar i individuellt utformade aktiviteter som ska stärka dina möjligheter till att få ett arbete. Under tiden du är i programmet får du aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning.

Vem får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Du får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin om du är arbetslös, är anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen och om du:

-Har arbetslöshetsersättning och förbrukat 300 ersättningsdagar i en ersättningsperiod.

-Är förälder till barn under 18 år, kan du under ersättningsdagarna 301 till och med 450 i en ersättningsperiod, välja att delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin eller få arbetslöshetsersättning.

-Har förbrukat 75 ersättningsdagar under veckor med deltidsarbete, samt är ensamstående och på grund av vårdnad eller umgänge, har egna barn under 18 år boende helt eller delvis i ditt hem.

-Inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning och oavsett försörjningsform varit sammanhängande arbetslös och anmäld hos Arbetsförmedlingen eller deltagit i arbetsmarknadspolitiska program under minst 14 sammanhängande månader.

-Har deltagit i jobbgarantin för ungdomar i 15 månader, om anvisningen sker direkt efter deltagandet i jobbgarantin.

-Har deltagit i etableringsinsatser för vissa nyanlända invandrare då etablerings planen upphört och löpt ut.

-Har beviljats utslussningsåtgärder från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och inte fullgjort ett år av prövotiden, är arbetslös och anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen.

-Har deltagit i programmet arbetslivsintroduktion och fyllt 25 år.

Vad innehåller jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin innehåller tre faser.

Fas 1 innebär att din arbetsförmedlare kartlägger dina behov av aktiviteter, jobbsökaraktiviteter med coaching och förberedande insatser. Fas 1 omfattar längst 150 dagar. I förberedande insatser ingår även kortare folkhögskoleutbildningar under tre månader för deltagare som saknar slutbetyg från grund- eller gymnasieskola.

Om du inte hittat ett arbete under den första fasen går du vidare till nästa fas inom jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin.

Fas 2 ska, förutom det som finns att tillgå i fas 1, även innehålla arbetspraktik, arbetsträning eller förstärkt arbetsträning. Dessa aktiviteter är förlagda på en arbetsplats.

Om du är utan arbete efter 450 dagar i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin, kommer du bli erbjuden fas 3 som är en sysselsättning hos en anordnare (arbetsgivare).

Ersättning

I jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin får du aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning. Om du har haft arbetslöshetsersättning motsvarar stödet 65 procent av din tidigare dagsförtjänst (max 680 kronor per dag). Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du det lägsta stödet 223 kronor per dag. Ersättning i fas 3 utgår endast för dig som i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin hade rätt till aktivitetsstöd baserat på arbetslöshetsersättning. Övriga kan delta i fas 3, men då utgår ingen ersättning från Arbetsförmedlingen.

Hur länge får jag vara med i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Du får vara med i programmet till dess du

börjar arbeta på heltid med eller utan statligt stöd

börjar en utbildning som inte berättigar till aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning

tar ut föräldrapenning på heltid.

Kan jag komma tillbaka till jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Om du har lämnat programmet har du rätt att komma tillbaka till programmet om du inte har uppfyllt ett nytt arbetsvillkor hos din arbetslöshetskassa och om du inte blivit erbjuden en anställning. Du får även komma tillbaka om den utbildning som du deltagit i, föräldrapenningen eller sjukskrivningen inte pågått längre än ett år.

Vad förväntas av mig?

Det är viktigt att du tackar ja till en insats i programmet och till ett erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete. Det är även viktigt att du är aktivt arbetssökande, redovisar dina jobbsökaraktiviteter och kommer på inbokade besök de datum som du och din arbetsförmedlare har kommit överens om. Det kan annars få den konsekvensen att jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin återkallas.

Regler

Förordning (2007:414) om jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin
Förordning (1996:1100) om aktivitetsstöd
Lag (1997:238) om arbetslöshetsförsäkring

2. Text used for the modified condition/MC (Arial 12/16,1/14pt)

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin är ett program för dig som varit utan arbete under en längre tid. Du deltar i individuellt utformade aktiviteter som ska stärka dina möjligheter till att få ett arbete. Under tiden du är med i programmet får du aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning.

Vem får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Du får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin om du är arbetslös, är anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen och om du:

-Har arbetslöshetsersättning och förbrukat 300 ersättningsdagar i en ersättningsperiod.

-Är förälder till barn under 18 år. Då kan du under ersättningsdagarna 301 till och med 450 i en ersättningsperiod välja att delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin eller få arbetslöshetsersättning.

-Har förbrukat 75 ersättningsdagar under veckor med deltidsarbete, samt är ensamstående och på grund av vårdnad eller umgänge, har egna barn under 18 år boende helt eller delvis i ditt hem.

-Inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning och oavsett försörjningsform varit sammanhängande arbetslös och anmäld hos Arbetsförmedlingen eller deltagit i arbetsmarknadspolitiska program under minst 14 sammanhängande månader.

-Har deltagit i jobbgarantin för ungdomar i 15 månader och om anvisningen sker direkt efter deltagandet i jobbgarantin.

-Har deltagit i etableringsinsatser för vissa nyanlända invandrare då etableringsplanen upphört och löpt ut.

-Har beviljats utslussningsåtgärder från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och inte fullgjort ett år av prövotiden, och dessutom är arbetslös och anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen.

-Har deltagit i programmet arbetslivsintroduktion och fyllt 25 år.

Vad innehåller jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin innehåller tre faser.

Fas 1 innebär att din arbetsförmedlare kartlägger dina behov av aktiviteter, jobbsökaraktiviteter med coachning samt förberedande insatser. Fas 1 omfattar längst 150 dagar. I förberedande insatser ingår även kortare folkhögskoleutbildningar under tre månader för deltagare som saknar slutbetyg från grund- eller gymnasieskola.

Om du inte hittat ett arbete under den första fasen går du vidare till nästa fas inom jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin.

Fas 2 ska, förutom det som finns att tillgå i fas 1, även innehålla arbetspraktik, arbetsträning eller förstärkt arbetsträning. Dessa aktiviteter är förlagda på en arbetsplats.

Om du är utan arbete efter 450 dagar i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin kommer du att bli erbjuden fas 3 som är en sysselsättning hos en anordnare (arbetsgivare).

Ersättning

I jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin får du aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning. Om du har haft arbetslöshetsersättning motsvarar stödet 65 procent av din tidigare dagsförtjänst (max 680 kronor per dag). Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du det lägsta stödet, 223 kronor per dag. Ersättning i fas 3 utgår endast för dig som i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin hade rätt till aktivitetsstöd baserat på arbetslöshetsersättning. Övriga kan delta i fas 3, men då utgår ingen ersättning från Arbetsförmedlingen.

Hur länge får jag vara med i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Du får vara med i programmet tills dess att du:

- börjar arbeta på heltid med eller utan statligt stöd,

- påbörjar en utbildning som inte berättigar till aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning

eller

- tar ut föräldrapenning på heltid.

Kan jag komma tillbaka till jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Om du har lämnat programmet har du rätt att komma tillbaka till programmet om du inte har uppfyllt ett nytt arbetsvillkor hos din arbetslöshetskassa och om du inte blivit erbjuden en anställning. Du får även komma tillbaka till programmet om den utbildning som du deltagit i, den föräldrapenning du tagit ut eller din sjukskrivning pågått kortare tid än ett år.

Vad förväntas av mig?

Det är viktigt att du tackar ja till en insats i programmet och till ett erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete. Det är även viktigt att du är aktivt arbetssökande, redovisar dina jobbsökaraktiviteter och kommer på inbokade besök de datum som du och din arbetsförmedlare har kommit överens om. Det kan annars få konsekvensen att jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin återkallas.

Regler

Förordning (2007:414) om jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin.
Förordning (1996:1100) om aktivitetsstöd.
Lag (1997:238) om arbetslöshetsförsäkring.

3. Text used for the plain language condition/PLC (Arial 12/16,1/14pt)

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin

Har du varit utan arbete en längre tid? Då kan du delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin. Då går du på aktiviteter som ska stärka dina möjligheter till att få ett arbete, och får aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning. Du kan få gå på coachning, utbildning och liknande.

Vem får delta?

Du får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin om du är arbetslös, är anmäld som arbetssökande hos Arbetsförmedlingen och

- har haft arbetslöshetsersättning (a-kassa) i 300 dagar i rad
- har barn under 18 år, då kan du delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin istället för att ha arbetslöshetsersättning från dag 301 till dag 450
- är ensamstående och har barn som bor hos dig, och du har haft arbetslöshetsersättning på deltid i 75 dagar, då du har arbetat deltid
- inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning och varit arbetslös och anmäld som arbetslös hos Arbetsförmedlingen (eller deltagit i våra program) under minst 14 månader i rad
- precis har deltagit i jobbgarantin för ungdomar i 15 månader
- precis har följt klart en etableringsplan om du är nyanländ invandrare
- slussas ut från fängelse eller är villkorligt frigiven och det inte har gått ett år av prövotiden
- har deltagit i programmet arbetslivsintroduktion och fyllt 25 år.

Vad får jag göra?

Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin innehåller tre faser.

Fas 1 innebär att du och din arbetsförmedlare kartlägger vilka aktiviteter du behöver. Du kan också få gå på coachning och jobbsökaraktiviteter. Du kan också få gå på folkhögskola i upp till tre månader, om du behöver något slutbetyg från grundskolan eller gymnasiet. Fas 1 är längst 150 dagar.

Under fas 2 får du göra arbetspraktik eller arbetsträning på en arbetsplats.

Om du inte har fått ett arbete inom 450 dagar i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin, börjar fas 3. Det innebär att du får arbeta på en arbetsplats.

Vad får jag för ersättning?

Du får minst 223 kronor per dag när du deltar i fas 1 och 2, i aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning. Om du har haft arbetslöshetsersättning (a-kassa) innan, får du 65 procent av den som ersättning, men max 680 kronor per dag.

Om du inte har rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning får du 223 kronor per dag under fas 1 och 2, men ingen ersättning under fas 3.

Hur länge får jag vara med?

Du får delta i garantin tills du

- börjar arbeta heltid
- börjar på en utbildning som du inte kan få aktivitetsstöd eller utvecklingsersättning för
- tar ut föräldrapenning på heltid.

Kan jag komma tillbaka till jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

Om du lämnar garantin, för att till exempel vara föräldraledig, kan du komma tillbaka efteråt. Du kan alltid komma

tillbaka om du var borta mindre än ett år. Men du kan inte komma tillbaka om du har uppfyllt ett nytt arbetsvillkor hos din arbetslöshetskassa, alltså arbetat så länge att du kan få arbetslöshetsersättning (a-kassa) istället. Du kan inte heller komma tillbaka till garantin om du har blivit erbjuden en anställning.

Vad förväntas av mig?

För att delta i garantin och få ersättningen ska du
- vara med i en insats i programmet, till exempel en utbildning
- tacka ja om du får erbjudande om ett lämpligt arbete
- redovisa hur du söker jobb under tiden
- komma på besök till din arbetsförmedlare.

Om du inte gör det, kan Arbetsförmedlingen återkalla din garanti. Då kan du inte få ersättningen.

Regler

Förordning (2007:414) om jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin
Förordning (1996:1100) om aktivitetsstöd
Lag (1997:238) om arbetslöshetsförsäkring

4. Questions for comprehension (Arial 14pt/Times New Roman 12pt)

Frågor på texten ”Jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin”

Du får 8 alternativfrågor och 4 öppna frågor. Du får lov att ha texten till hjälp. Sist får du även 5 skattningsfrågor som handlar om hur du upplevde texten. Lycka till!

1.Den ekonomiska ersättningen ges beroende på vad du har rätt till innan du påbörjar garantin.
 Vem ger deltagarna pengar under tiden för garantin?

    A) I första hand försäkringskassan, annars arbetsförmedlingen.
    B) I första hand arbetsförmedlingen, annars ingen.
    C) I första hand försäkringskassan, annars deltagarens arbetslöshetskassa.
    D) I första hand deltagarens arbetslöshetskassa, annars arbetsförmedlingen.
    E) I första hand deltagarens arbetslöshetskassa, annars ingen.

SVAR: _____

2. Förutsättningarna för att få delta kan ändras under tiden för garantin.
 Vem får fortsätta delta i garantin?

    A) Den som blivit erbjuden en anställning men som sjukskriver sig från anställningen och återvänder till garantin inom ett år.
    B) Den som blivit erbjuden en anställning som efteråt inte skulle ge tillräcklig ersättning från deltagarens arbetslöshetskassa.
    C) Den som varit sjukskriven från garantin i 366 dagar.
    D) Den som deltagit i garantin och påbörjar en utbildning med aktivitetsstöd.
    E) Den som fått föräldrapenning eller arbetslöshetsersättning under mindre än ett år för sitt deltagande i garantin.

SVAR: _____

3. Hur många faser innehåller garantin?

    A) 2
    B) 3
    C) 5
    D) Så många som behövs tills deltagaren fått jobb.
    E) Antalet faser är individuellt och bestäms tillsammans med en arbetsförmedlare.

SVAR: _____

4. Vad är syftet med det här faktabladet från Arbetsförmedlingen?

    A) Att argumentera för fördelarna med Arbetsförmedlingens tjänster.
    B) Att påpeka risker för de som står inför långtidsarbetslöshet.
    C) Att informera om Arbetsförmedlingens tjänster.
    D) Att beskriva följderna av att inte skriva in sig på Arbetsförmedlingen i tid.
    E) Att argumentera för nyttan med att hitta ett arbete innan garantin tar slut.

SVAR: _____

5. Vad vill jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin främst hjälpa sina deltagare med?

    A) Att fortsätta ge ekonomiskt stöd trots att ersättningsdagarna är slut.
    B) Att bli erbjuden en anställning med eller utan stöd.
    C) Att förbättra deltagarnas självständiga jobbsökande.
    D) Att förlänga tiden för arbetslöshetsersättning tills deltagaren får en anställning.
    E) Att fånga upp de som riskerar hamna i arbetslöshet.

SVAR: _____

6. Vem får delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

    A) Om man är under 25 år får man delta om man tidigare fullföljt 15 månader i jobbgarantin för ungdomar.
    B) Om man kommer ut ur en föräldraledighet och är arbetslös kan man välja om man vill delta i garantin eller ta ut a-kassa.
    C) Om man kommit ut från fängelse kan man delta först när man varit inskriven på Arbetsförmedlingen i 300 dagar.
    D) Om man har barn men inte rätt till a-kassa kan man få delta i programmet om man varit inskriven på Arbetsförmedlingen i 14 månader.
    E) Om man är under 25 år kan man välja om man vill delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin utan ekonomiskt stöd eller först gå igenom jobbgarantin för ungdomar.

SVAR: _____

7. Vad kan hända om deltagarna inte följer det program som deltagaren och handledaren upprättat ihop?

    A) Man får inte fortsätta garantin, men fortsätta ta del av andra tjänster hos Arbetsförmedningen.
    B) Man får inte fortsätta garantin, eller ta del av andra tjänster hos Arbetsförmedlingen.
    C) Man får fortsätta garantin, men din situation måste omprövas innan du kan återuppta garantin.
    D) Man får fortsätta garantin, men utan handledare.
    E) Man får fortsätta garantin, men utan ekonomiskt stöd.

SVAR: _____

8. Vilket påstående är sant om faktabladet?

    A) Arbetsförmedlingen påpekar att det är deltagarens ansvar att följa garantins program för att programmet ska få så stor effekt som möjligt
    B) Arbetsförmedlingen rekommenderar dig att endast delta i garantins inledande fas om du inte hade rätt till arbetslöshetsersättning innan du började i garantin.
    C) Arbetsförmedlingen berättar hur man deltar i programmet utan att bli av ekonomisk ersättning.
    D) Arbetsförmedlingen förklarar att jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin är en garanti att delta i aktiviteter. Endast de deltagare som var långtidsarbetslösa före garantin blir erbjudna en anställning i slutänden.
    E) Arbetsförmedlingen garanterar att den som gått igenom tre faser blir erbjuden en fast anställning förutsatt att deltagaren har uppfyllt det som förväntats.

SVAR: _____

9. Vilken är den grundläggande förutsättningen för att man ska kunna delta i jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin?

SVAR: _____

_____

10. Vad händer efter fas 2 i garantin?

SVAR: _____

_____

11. Hur många gånger kan en deltagare som påbörjat men sedan lämnat jobb- och utvecklingsgarantin återvända dit igen?

SVAR: _____

_____

12. Vad garanterar garantin?

SVAR: _____

_____

Skattningsfrågor

Jag vill veta hur du upplevde texten. Du får fem motsatspar att bedöma utifrån. Ringa in det led i varje motsats som stämmer bäst in på din upplevelse.

Tyckte du

att du förstod texten   eller   inte förstod texten

att informationen var till nytta för dig   eller   inte till nytta för dig

Tyckte du att texten var

trevlig att läsa   eller   otrevlig att läsa

förtroendeingivande   eller   inte förtroendeingivande

lätt att förstå   eller   svår att förstå

Tack för att du hjälpt mig med min studie!

5. Questions for recall (Times New Roman 14/12pt)

<div align="center">

Utvärdering av olika texttyper

Uppföljning

</div>

För två veckor sedan fick du läsa en text. Nu kommer du att få fyra frågor. Jag vill att du svarar så utförligt du kan. Om du inte vet eller minns svaret, är det helt okej att skriva det.

1. Har du pratat om textens innehåll med någon annan som varit med i undersökningen?

❑   Ja   ❑   Nej

2. Vad handlade texten om? Skriv ner så mycket som möjligt.

_____

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<div align="center">

Vänd inte blad förrän hela klassen är klar med första sidan!

</div>

3. Kommer du ihåg de tre faserna? Vad handlade de om?

_____

24

_____

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_____

4. Fick fråga 3 dig att minnas något mer av texten? Skriv allt du minns här.

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

Tack för att du hjälpt mig med min undersökning!