



Implicit attitudes and personnel selection

- a phenomenological study regarding the implicit attitudes of personnel selectors' in relation to their work and job-applicants

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe and understand how personnel recruiters reason when they select new co-workers to an organisation. A focus is on the implicit thoughts and characteristics the personnel recruiters ascribe to the job-applicant. Another aim is to generate new knowledge in relation to how personnel selection is done in real life. A phenomenological approach is proposed as a way to reach the personnel recruiters' subjective perceptions and feelings about their work. Eleven recruiters from companies and municipalities in Sweden answered two questions each regarding the interview process, of which ten protocols were analyzed. To achieve a better understanding of the meaning constitution and the specific thoughts recruiters have in employment situations we used the qualitative software MCA-Minerva. The results showed a tendency among the recruiters to characterise the applicants on the basis of their own earlier experiences and perceptions, implying that some of the participants manifest implicit attitudes that could, in specific situations, lead to implicit discrimination.

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Introduction

Our interest in the process of personnel selection mainly derives from a university course that we attended during the autumn of 2004 called Intercultural Psychology. During this course we discussed a phenomenon called implicit discrimination. As the word implicit imply, the discriminatory act is done without the person's awareness. These implicit thoughts and feelings that people have and the actions they carry out, is what we want to study further. How do these emerge and what influence do they have on the individuals working with personnel selection?

Our research is based on phenomenological thoughts and ideas, which means that it is an interpretative-descriptive research where we relied on people's words and meanings as data for the analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996). The phenomenological approach strongly advises not to form any hypotheses about the phenomenon that you are about to study. Hypotheses direct your focus and decide what is important and what is not in the research process. This will lead the researchers to miss things in their research that might have been useful in order to understand the phenomenon (Ibid). To be able to explore and understand how the individual personnel recruiter make their choice of job applicant we as researchers have to get an insight into his/her life-world. Therefore we did not form any hypotheses beforehand; instead we tried to keep our mind open for any information that might turn up during the research process.

In our research we asked two open phenomenological questions. The questions asked were of significance both to us as researchers and to the persons participating and they were answered by a self-report. By using a self-report method we let the individuals with their own words and expressions describe as freely as possible, their thoughts, feelings and experiences of the phenomenon.

Our interest mainly lied in the employment interview, which is the second step in the selection process according to Prien (1992). The first step is sorting out the applications; one group is composed of the applications that, on paper, fulfil the requirements for the job. The other group consists of applications that lack some qualifications but still are interesting for the post. The next step is deciding what candidates are to be called to the employment interview. Our study was focused on the employment interview as a situation.

The study was done on various companies and municipalities, which were contacted through email or by phone. The participants were then asked to answer two

questions through an Internet website. One question focused on the thoughts and feelings the personnel selectors have in advance and during the employment interview. The second question focused on how the personnel selectors attribute characteristics to the applicant both explicitly and implicitly. Our first research question was: *“You are about to do an employment interview with a job applicant for a vacancy on the company. The type of post is not of interest. Under these conditions describe the thoughts, expectancies, feelings and associations you have about the applicant when you do the interview.”*

The second research question was: *“You work as a recruiter at the company and you are asked to hire a person as a fill in for the post as assistant in the economics department. The pictures below show six job-applicants. You don’t have time to do any job interviews. Given these conditions you are asked to choose three persons who you think will be appropriate for the job. Describe what influenced your choice and how you think under these circumstances. Also motivate why you didn’t pick the other three persons.”*

When analysing our material we used Meaning Constitution Analysis (MCA), which is a phenomenological method of text analysing developed by Roger Sages at the department for work- and organisational psychology at Lund University. Sages method for analysing is based on the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Through a software called Minerva we carried out our text analyses.

The aim of our study was mainly to get a deeper understanding of how the personnel recruiters’ reason and their implicit thoughts and actions during an employment interview.

The purpose of our study

The phenomenon we aim to study is implicit attitudes; the context we chose to study this within is personnel selection in employment interviews.

Phenomenology

We adopted the phenomenological perspective throughout our research process since the purpose of our study was to analyze and understand the meaning constitution of a psychological phenomenon.

We are interested in understanding how individuals who work with personnel selection assess job applicants during an employment interview. What criteria do they explicitly say they use and how do their implicit thoughts and stereotypes affect their assessment of the individual? Also, we are trying to understand the meaning constitution of the individuals' implicit processes. Only this kind of knowledge can offer us a possibility of introducing effective changes in the assessment process. In this section we will briefly describe the basics of the phenomenological approach with focus on the parts, which are of relevance to our study.

The phenomenological approach to knowledge differs from the positivistic (mainstream) view of what knowledge is. While the positivistic researcher mainly is concerned with trying to verify or falsify hypotheses and explain cause and effect, the phenomenological researcher is focused on trying to describe the life-worlds and horizons as the individuals themselves experience them. Hence it is a method focused on meaning constitution.

The founder of the phenomenological approach to knowledge was the German mathematician/philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl was critical to the way science was done during his time (the end of the 19th century) and was of the opinion that the human being and her environment could only be studied through a careful analysis of her own experience, as experienced and reported by her. While the positivistic researchers of his time applied the methods used in natural sciences when studying human psychological phenomenon, Husserl claimed that it was only through the study of the individual experience that true knowledge about a phenomenon could be attained. The human being is part of the society; we therefore cannot study her objectively in the same way that we can study a phenomenon belonging to the realm of nature. We cannot free ourselves from our environment (Smith, 2003).

What Husserl sought was to answer questions concerning *what* and *how* things are rather than *why* things are as they are. He wanted to reveal the meaning structure of a phenomenon. Man is seen as the being through whom meaning is present within the world, and the function of meaning is to allow man to dwell in the world (Sages, Lundsten, Andersson, & Histrup, 2000). "To mean in phenomenology is to be oriented toward, to look

at, to strive toward, to feel for, to feel in face of, that is, to be intentionally oriented toward an object, independently of what kind of object it can be or how we define it” (Sages & Jakobsdóttir, 1999 p. 24).

Central to the understanding of Husserl’s phenomenology is the concept of the life-world. It is through a critical examination of the life-world and by describing its essence, structure and character that true knowledge can be obtained (Karlsson, 1995). Every individual has his/her own life-world. The life-world is shaped by the several forms of daily activities humans participate in, in different intersubjective contexts, as well as memories of our everyday life and how we experience and think about a phenomenon. The life-world is also culturally bound. This means that the life-world for Swedish people differs from the life-world of other European countries. It is the individual’s perception of oneself and of his/her subjective life-world that determines his/her actions in life.

However the life-world is not only subjective but also intersubjective, which means that the individual experiences a phenomenon or an object in a similar way when they are part of a shared life-world. “In my own understanding of the world I am aware that other people could view the world differently” (Karlsson, 1995 p.37). These perceptions that emerge from different ways of seeing the world, Husserl calls horizons (Moustakas, 1994). Each individual has his/her own horizon. A horizon is formed by our thoughts, understandings and perceptions of a phenomenon. All things and objects are given to us within the world horizon and it is the individual’s many horizons that constitute the individual’s life-world. Thus an object or phenomenon can be given different meanings depending on which angle it is viewed from.

The most important, pivotal idea developed by Husserl is the concept of intentionality. He viewed the conscious, as synonymous with psychic activity in general, as always being directed at something, real or imaginary, actual or non-existent (Karlsson, 1995). This is what Husserl called intentionality, the essence of consciousness. The acts of consciousness which are intentionally directed at an object Husserl called noesis and the meaning structure of the intended object is called the noema (Sages, Lundsten, Andersson, & Histrup, 2000). The intentional object is the real object as lived from a particular perspective and the complete noema is this object’s as meant and intended. At any moment, this intended object has a more or less complex meaning structure, which itself is lived in specific ways. This meaning structure is called the noematic kernel. When taking into account the above named ways of living this noematic kernel, the modalities, we have what Husserl calls the complete noema. Every noetic act has a correlate, the noema. Hence the meaning structure

(noema) reflects the intentions of the act (noesis). The concept of meaning is thus tied to the concept of intentionality (Karlsson, 1995). Together with the above mentioned concept of horizon, we see that meaning is also closely connected to future expectancies, that is, to mean is to expect.

The relationship with the world is both determined and dependent on the individual's thoughts and actions being directed at something (Starrin, & Svensson, 1994). All individuals have a life-world and depending of where we are headed (the horizon) we experience this life-world differently. "The life-world is always pre-given, always taken for granted and never questioned in its existence" (Karlsson, 1995 p.37). This taken for grantedness Husserl called the natural attitude. A research problem always first appears to the researcher in his/her natural attitude, as part of our daily preconceptions (Sages, & Jakobsdóttir, 1999). Our earlier experiences of a phenomenon influence our perception of a subsequent similar phenomenon. "If one can drive one car, one can drive them all" (Smith, 2003). In order to solve this problem two methods were developed, epoché and phenomenological reductions. It is through these methods that you can reach the transcendental attitude, which is the one Husserl proposes. It is through the transcendental attitude that true knowledge of the phenomenon can be obtained. That is, presenting the phenomenon as it appears in the world without any judgement.

A phenomenological research should always begin with the application of epoché. Epoché is done in order to obtain a pure vision as free as possible from our preconceptions. By suspending all our preconceptions whatever their origin may be we can become open for new experiences and knowledge (Sages, & Jakobsdóttir, 1999). The awareness of our natural attitude and our preconceptions will then be engaged in the exploration of the phenomena, but since we are aware of them we will be able to separate new knowledge from old. Thereby we will be able to refrain from letting our old knowledge influence our understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore Husserl recommended the use of the phenomenological reduction. The phenomenological reduction is about questioning not only the things you see and experience but also your existence. This is done by the reduction of your own personal opinion, beliefs and knowledge.

Theory

In order for us as researchers to study the implicit attitudes that persons working with personnel selection have and how these influence their decisions in employment situation, we

find it necessary to first explain the concept of implicit discrimination. After this an explanation of personnel selection and methods commonly used for this is given.

Implicit discrimination

Almost daily we interact with other people. It can be people we know or people we have just met. We can describe them as “kind, nice and hard-working or good looking and smart etc”. However we do not always have to have had an interaction with a person in order for us to “know” what kind of person he or she is like. Implicit attitudes are preferences that exist outside of conscious awareness or conscious control. We tend to think that we know what kind of person the guy in the suit who is walking down the street is, without even having spoken a word with him. In psychology this phenomenon has been termed the Gestalt effect in perception (Gabriel, Fineman, & Sims, 2000). We all strive more or less for achieving order and stability in our life, we therefore tend to categorise everything around us so that we can feel comfortable. That is, we try to make an order out of confusing elements. Our categorisations are influenced by our desires. We tend to see what we want to see and hear what we want to hear etc. That is, we select cues that suit our purposes – sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously.

When we assess other people we usually tend to judge them based on our own perception of ourselves as a person. To be more precise, the individual projects his/her own understanding of him/herself onto others. This is why different persons can ascribe different characteristics to the same person. According to Gabriel et al (2000) we characterise other people by using the cues available such as body language, voice, clothes etc. The observer describes a person in ways that reflect what s/he felt was important or noteworthy. In this way one can say that all descriptions or characterisations of others are also a characterisation of the observer.

The impression that one gets of a person is then matched with the ways in which we perceive such a person is or should be, how they should act or talk etc. That is what Gabriel et al refers to as our implicit personality theories (ibid). For example, let’s say that we perceive a person as aggressive; the aggressive person is then, based on that initial judgement, also ascribed other characteristics such as he or she is not a very good sport and is easily angered.

The criteria behind the judgements need not to be exact or even true in order for the individuals to use them as a system for characterising his/her surroundings. Several studies have been made regarding how our implicit attitudes and stereotypical thinking affect people in different situations such as in employment interviews, health care and education (Brownell

& Puhl, 2003; Nisser & Ryberg, 2003; Dahlgren, 2002). For example Nisser & Ryberg (2003) showed a tendency among recruiters to choose applicants that were more representatively dressed. Other studies showed that obese and overweight people are discriminated in employment interviews. Stereotypical perceptions held about obese people were that they were lazy, stupid and lacked self-discipline (Rothblum, Miller, & Garbutt, 1988).

Personnel selection

Personnel selection is often a very time consuming and costly process. Therefore one has to be sure that the applicant that one is about to employ, will be able to meet the expectations and demands of the job. Consequently, various methods for predicting how well a potential employee will do at the job have been devised. The methods used are sometimes very different from one another depending on what theoretical approach they originate from. However, before describing these methods we find it essential to first give a brief characterisation of the work a recruiter does. This since our report is mainly concerned with personnel selection.

A personnel recruiter is a person who has been appointed by the company to select and employ workers. The person has often been given some beforehand defined criteria that he or she is supposed to follow when doing the selections. Along with these criteria the personnel selector also has to follow the policy of the company.

With this definition of a recruiter in mind, we in the following sections will turn to the most common methods that are used today. We will only focus on the employment interview since this is the context within which we have chosen to do our research regarding implicit attitudes and its consequences.

Interview as a method

In overall, the most commonly used method for selecting personnel for companies is the interview. It is considered by people working with personnel selection to be an essential step within the selection process (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002; Cassell & Symon, 1999). But how well does the interview really fulfil its purpose of predicting how well an applicant potentially will do at a job? In the following section we will describe the different types of interviews and also discuss the pros and cons for each type of interview.

The most common way of describing different types of interviews is to divide them into three categories, the unstructured-, the structured- and the semi-structured interview. As the name structured interview suggests this is the strictest and most formal of the three interview methods. In the structured interview every part of the interview has been structured. It begins with a detailed job analysis, which ensures that the questions and the criteria are related to the job in question. The structured interview can be more or less structured and still fall in the category structured interview. For example some structured interviews certify that every interview is the same, that is, you ask the same questions to every applicant and go through the same interviewing procedure in the same way every time. The reason for conducting the interviews in the same strict way is in order to avoid interviewer bias. Interviewer bias can occur when different recruiters perform the interviews for the post (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2003). Another reason for using the structured interview is according to Cook, M (2004) that it ensures that the most competent person is employed as well as it reduces the risk of prejudice and favouring.

In the unstructured interview the recruiter does not use a job description or any in advance made up questions, neither does s/he take any notes. In earlier days this was the type of interview, which was most frequently used, however it is still common in today's labour market. An unstructured interview gives deeper insight concerning each individual applicant, but these insights seems to be of no value when you want to predict future work achievement (Mabon, 2002). Many managers and researchers have questioned the reliability and validity of such a selection method. Therefore it is now common to use a more systematic way of interviewing in order to resolve the problem of bias in the selection process.

The third type of interview is the semi-structured. This method is a combination of the unstructured- and structured interview. It contains some elements that have been predefined, such as some general questions concerning the job that are asked to every applicant. The difference between this method and the other two, is that here the interviewers are allowed to be guided by the interview process. This means that if any other relevant topic or information occurs during the interview these are pursued and follow-up questions are asked. Hence the questions can differ from one interview to another. According to Smither (1998) the semi-structured interview gives the most information with the least risk of unfair treatment.

Apart from the most common types of interviews described above we found it relevant to briefly describe two additional methods, which are becoming more and more

frequent in today's employment interviews. These are behavioural interviews and situation interviews. In behavioural interviews applicants are asked questions concerning their actions and behaviours in earlier work-related situations. For example "Please tell us how you acted when a conflict occurred at your workplace". The situational interview does not differ that much from the behavioural interview. The difference lies in that it is concerned with how an applicant would behave in a hypothetical work situation. For example "How would you react if you found out that one of your co-workers had a serious drinking problem?" According to Latham et al (1980) and Campion, Pursell & Brown (1988) referred to by Mabon (2002) answers to these kinds of questions can give the employer an impression of how the applicant handles a difficult ethical dilemma as well as where he or she stands in such a situation. This type of interview has a good prediction value in specific situations. If a thorough job analysis has been performed where critical situational behaviour has been identified this method provides a good opportunity to employ a person who can handle the critical situations that turn up in the future employment.

Nevertheless, the structured interview is today the most popular and widespread method.

Interview as an interaction

It is important to note that it is not only the interviewer who is responsible for the interview process; instead it is an interaction between the applicant and the recruiter. Even though it is the qualifications of an applicant that leads him or her into being called to an interview it is still his or her behaviour in the interview situation that determines whether or not he or she get the job (Pipboye, 1992, referred to by Mabon, 2002).

Compared to everyday conversation, interviewers and interviewees adopt a more formal and standardized speech style. Communication in an interview tends to be quite structured and usually a certain type of conversation develops, with typical questioning and answering patterns. Due to the regular communicative patterns, experienced interviewers tend to develop particular expectations of the interviewees behaviour during interview episodes (Ramsay, Gallois, & Callan, 1997).

The applicant is consciously or sometimes unconsciously trying to convey a positive impression to the interviewer with the hopes of being offered a future job. These actions, that often are spontaneous, are gathered under the term impression management (Mabon, 2002). Before the recruiter carries out an interview he or she usually has a pretty

good impression about what kind of person the applicant is. Their impression is based upon prior information such as CV, personal letter, and references etc. However the impression is not always in accordance with the reality. People are inclined to give people characteristics that one wants them to have. Some interviewers tend to rely on their implicit personality theory, which can lead to that an applicant is assessed as good or bad based on the interviewer's previous experience (Cook, 2004). In some literature this theory is also referred to as the Halo effect (Kahlke, & Schmidt, 2002). Other effects that can be shown in interviews are something that Kahlke et al refers to as the Contrast effect and the Rosenthal effect. The Contrast effect describes the tendency of the interviewer to give a prominently good assessment after having gotten a poor impression of another applicant, which s/he interviewed earlier. This effect can also be reversed. The Rosenthal effect addresses the fact that interviewers can have positive or negative expectations. These influence the interaction with the applicant and thereby indirectly affect the performance of the applicant (ibid). An interesting research made by Spingbett (1958) referred to by Cook (2004) showed that interviewers made up their minds after only 4 minutes of a 15 minute interview. Furthermore the study showed that male interviewers were inclined to react against perfume and aftershave, regardless of the sex of the applicant, whereas female interviewers seemed to favour it (ibid).

Another interesting study that Mabon (2002) refers to is done by Magnusson (1967). This research was aimed to study how quickly a decision was taken in an interview. The study was done in the Swedish military services with two professional psychologists assessing individuals' appropriateness for the post as officer. A third psychologist interviewed the applicants while the two other psychologists observed. When eight minutes had passed the two observing psychologists had reached fairly similar opinions about the applicant's appropriateness for the post however both felt that they needed more time before they could reach a decision. After 30 minutes the psychologists felt that they had enough information in order to make decision. However the psychologists by then usually had two completely different opinions about the applicants' appropriateness for the officer post. The explanation for this phenomenon, provided by Magnusson, is that the first eight minutes of an interview usually is aimed at gathering simple background facts, which is why the psychologists' opinions are rather similar. The other part of the interview concerns less routine questions and is instead focused on asking more sensitive questions concerning the applicant. In the beginning of the less routine part of the interview the psychologists made up their minds rather quickly and then spent the rest of their interview gathering evidence that confirms their

decision. This tendency to gather information that supports one's own opinion has been termed "selective awareness".

As has been described above a frequent problem with interview methods is that they are often subject to bias. We will here briefly comment on two additional forms of bias, which are of relevance to our study, adverse impact and overt discrimination. Adverse impact is not what the layperson thinks of discrimination. It involves the systematic recruitment and selection methods of organisations that result in for example fewer women or people from ethnic minorities being employed. The discrimination done here by the interviewer is usually unintentional. It occurs due to some of the criteria, which has been determined earlier. For example a criterion like "you should be able to travel five days a week" might unintentionally be discriminating to women who has children etc. Overt discrimination on the other hand is done more or less openly with the interviewers' awareness. This is often done based on irrational stereotypes.

Method

We chose to do an explorative study using a phenomenological approach regarding implicit thoughts and actions and how these influence people working with personnel selection. Qualitative methods are focused on understanding the research subject and to describe the phenomenon as truthfully as possible, whereas the quantitative researcher is interested in generalising and in finding support for their hypotheses (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996). We chose the phenomenological approach since we were interested in understanding the thoughts and meanings that people who work with personnel selection have concerning their jobs. How do they think and feel when they are about to do an interview with a job applicant? What do they expect from the job applicant, not only explicitly but also implicitly? How do they select a person for a job? Questions like these are not easily answered and we believed that they called for a qualitative method in order for us as researchers to gain an understanding of them.

Since we used a phenomenological approach to our study we tried to keep ourselves as open as possible for any information that we might gather about this phenomenon. As we believed it would be almost impossible to ask people “if they’d ever discriminated a job applicant because of the way they were dressed or carried themselves” without triggering them to say no, we decided to go about our inquiry another way, that is by not explicitly asking and instead forming two broad questions without any emotionally charged words concerning this phenomenon. These questions were answered through self-reports.

Our research design developed gradually as a process during which we modified some parts. Before carrying out our study we tried our research questions on our friends and family in order to see how they reacted to them. For example we noticed that the questions we had devised for our test made people feel uneasy. They felt as if they were being tricked and they also felt insecure of how they should answer them in order to be correct. We tried to explain the purpose of our study but still they found it very hard to understand what we wanted them to do. We therefore revised the questions and added some further instructions where we informed the future participants about the phenomenological research design. We also decided to provide the participants with a context to the research questions as this were the part that the people in our “pilot study” reacted most strongly about.

The first question used in our study, concerned the thoughts and feelings the recruiter had before and during an employment interview:

Question 1:

You are about to do an employment interview with a job applicant for a vacancy on the company. The type of post is not of interest. Under these conditions describe the thoughts, expectancies, feelings and associations you have about the applicant when you do the interview.

When we devised our second research question we were inspired by a lecture of Professor Mohammed Lahlou (Guest lecture TAT-test, October 2004). Lahlou reintroduced the TAT-test in implicit discrimination studies as a way of reaching the implicit attitudes within individuals. TAT is a perception test, developed by Murray in the 1930s, where pictures are shown to the participant. The participant is then asked to write a story about the picture, "what happened before the picture was taken, what happens on the picture and what happened after the picture". The idea is that the participants will project their personality in the picture. This way the researcher can get an insight in the individual's implicit way of thinking and not just the explicit stereotypical answers.

Question 2:

You work as a recruiter at the company and you are asked to hire a person as a fill in for the post as assistant in the economics department. The pictures below show six job-applicants. You don't have time to do any job interviews. Given these conditions you are asked to choose three persons who you think will be appropriate for the job. Describe what influenced your choice and how you think under these circumstances. Also motivate why you didn't pick the other three persons.

Sample

All in all eleven individuals participated in our study. In total we got eleven answers on each question, which means that we received 22 self-reports. The participants consisted of persons working with personnel- and recruitment issues at five small and middle sized municipalities located from the northern to the southern parts of Sweden; one privately owned amusement park, one multinational industrial concern specializing on chemicals and engineering materials, one company who is a big actor within the beverage industry, one company specialized on recruiting experts for companies, and last but not least newly formed company specialised on HR-consulting.

However since it would have been a very time consuming and lengthy process if we were to analyse all reports in Minerva we felt compelled to make some limitations. Therefore we decided that we would only analyse five reports on each of the questions. We selected the reports for our analysis according to the idea that creativity and engagement indicate that the participant has fully understood the question. Therefore in some instances both the protocol on question one and question two have been analysed for one person while in some cases only one protocol have been analysed for another person.

The reports that showed a lack of engagement and creativity where omitted from our analysis since we viewed creativity as one of the indicators of the participant being interested in our question. We also view creativity as one of the factors indicating that the participants truly answers as themselves, they are not just giving an answer according to a book.

Data collection method

A website was designed through which the participants submitted their reports. Our choice of data collection method mainly rested on the thought that this would be the most convenient way for both the participants and us as researcher to gather material for our study. Since the potential participants in our study would be working during the weekdays and therefore probably would have a busy schedule we thought that they would be more inclined to participate in our study if they wouldn't have to schedule meetings with us. The website also enabled us to conduct our study in other parts of the country where the distance otherwise would have been too long.

Material

Our research material consisted of a website which was constructed with the help of a friend who studies computer science. The website was written in PHP which is one of the larger programming languages available today (a copy of the website can be found in appendix B).

Apart from the website we also sent the participants a research description where some information about the research was given (see appendix A). However the information given was rather general and did not specifically contain the phrase "implicit discrimination". Instead we used the words diversity and personnel selection. The reason for this being that the aim of our study was to study implicit discrimination within the employment interview as well as how they felt, thought and associated within this setting. The participants were also made aware that their participation was anonymous and that their answers were confidential.

In the following sections a detailed description of the website is given along with the material presented there.

The website

The website consisted of six pages. In order to make the website easy to follow, technical language was avoided as much as possible. A brief presentation of the web-based test was given on the first page along with instructions on how the website worked. A short explanation of the goal of the phenomenological approach was given where it was explained that we were interested in how individuals interpreted and understood their work as a personnel selectors. Furthermore each participant was given a login name by e-mail and was through this able to enter their answers anytime they wanted. Once the answers had been submitted on both questions the login ceased to work.

Furthermore, the website was constructed in a way which made it impossible for the participants to go back and change a submitted answer. It was also impossible to answer question two before question one. The reason for this was that the participant perhaps wanted to change their answer on question one when they had reflected on question two in order for the answers to correspond to one another. If this had been possible then their answers might have been affected by the way in which we asked the second question. We were therefore also very aware of the order in which we asked the questions.

In question one the participant was asked to answer a very broad question concerning their thoughts feelings and associations about their role as a recruiter. This question was asked first because we wanted the participant to reflect upon how they thought and what they based their decision on when conducting a job-interview. Since the other question was more specified and referred to pictures of six applicants, this was put as second. This as we thought that it in some instances would make the participants feel a little bit uneasy or become suspicious. Another reason to why this question was asked as second and couldn't be answered before question one was that we thought that some participants perhaps would have felt inclined to answer in a social desirable way if the questions were posed the other way around.

Pictures

On our website six individuals posed as applicants for the post as assistant at the economics department. The six pictures were constructed with the aim at coming as close as possible to real life job-applicants. Nevertheless we wanted the job applicants to differ from each other in

some beforehand specified ways. For example we wanted them to reflect the diversity within the society, therefore we chose persons of different ages and ethnic background. However the differences could not be too obvious since then the participant might feel like we were tricking him or her to answer in a certain way and therefore stop them from answering the way they would by themselves. We didn't want them to be primed to answer in a social desirable way. A detailed description of each picture is given in appendix B however the pictures have been removed due to the promise to the "applicants" that they would remain anonymous.

Procedure

Our sample was not randomized. Instead it was guided by our field of interest. By using a purposive sample we increased the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon would be represented in the data collected (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996). The initial selection criteria for the people in our sample were that they should work at a company that did not only specify on "staffing". The person who participated in the study should have some experience with doing job-interviews and selecting personnel. Therefore we concentrated on individuals working in HR (human resource) departments.

Initially we contacted people we knew and companies that we had had contact with earlier in other contexts. We contacted them by e-mail or by phone, in some cases both. In the e-mails we introduced ourselves and the study that we wanted to do, we also stressed the personal contact and positive experiences that we had had of the company in other situations. This we did because we thought that they would be more inclined to participate if we mentioned our earlier personal connections with them. We also tried a sampling method, which Maykut & Morehouse (1996) refer to as snowball sampling. This is a method where one research participant leads to another. This proved to be a good method as almost half of our sample emanated from one research participant.

The size of the company was of some concern; the company couldn't be too small because then there would not be an HR department that worked actively with recruiting people. There also had to be some employee turnover in order for the participant to have some experience with personnel selection. We did not expect small companies of 5-10 people to have much employee turnover. However after the initial contacts with the companies were taken it turned out to be quite hard to persuade people to participate. Many stated that they would have liked to help but that they felt that they had no time to spare. We therefore had to broaden our sample and started to search for companies on the Internet and the yellow pages

and contacted them through e-mail and by phone. We also decided to admit companies who were specified on staffing into our sample. Perhaps they would be more interested to participate than other companies since they specialize on staffing. The initial reason for omitting these types of companies was that the people working in these companies perhaps were too specialized and therefore possibly too inclined to answer according to the textbooks.

As a qualitative researcher one cannot decide a priori how many research participants are needed in order to fully understand the phenomenon of interest, one instead collects information until you reach the saturation point. The saturation point is reached when newly collected data is excessive and no new information about the phenomenon turns up (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996).

Finally, eleven people decided to participate in the study. The eleven participants came from different parts of Sweden and worked within diverse companies or municipalities. In this sense they were not a homogenous group, instead they were a heterogeneous group that had one aspect in common. That is, they had experience of working with personnel selection and conducting employment interviews.

Analysis

The collected data consisted of self-reports from eleven participants. The analysis of this material was done with the help of software called Minerva. Minerva is built upon the ideas of Husserl and by using this method we were able to study the life-worlds of the individuals'. The method we used in the analysis of our material is called Meaning Constitution Analysis (MCA). It is a method that has been developed by Roger Sages at the department for work- and organizational psychology at Lund University. MCA is well suited for phenomenological text analyses and it'll be described in detail in the following section. We have also tried to clarify the different steps taken in the analysis by providing examples.

MCA

MCA aims at uncovering the noetic and the noematic aspects of meaning within a specific context as well as finding patterns within the individual's way of constituting meaning. Another aim is to find possible correlations between different meaning constitutions of the phenomenon.

The method begins with a carefully formulated question that is of significance both to the respondent and of scientific interest to investigate (Sages, Lundsten, Andersson, &

Histrup, 2000). The question should be phrased so that the individual is allowed to freely associate around the question without there being any restrictions whatsoever.

Since the research problem has first appeared to us in our natural attitude as part of our daily preoccupations, the first step of the MCA method is the *application of the epoché*. Our natural attitude is imbued with our several uncritically admitted presuppositions and prejudices. The application of the epoché involves the act of questioning the meaning of the phenomenon by disregarding your natural attitude as a researcher. By being aware of one's own natural attitude one is able to describe the phenomenon as accurately and truthfully as possible. In order to minimize the risk of the researcher's preconceptions from colouring the description of the phenomenon the text is divided into smaller meaning units. The smaller meaning units also increase the ability of other researchers comparing their results and thereby validating the research (Ibid).

There is no need for the meaning units to be divided grammatically or syntactically correct. Instead it is essential that wherever there is a slight shift of meaning in the text, it should be broken of (ibid). For example we have the sentence "I prefer chocolate rather than fruit". This sentence would be divided into the following two meaning units; 1 "I prefer chocolate", 2 "rather than fruit".

The second step of the analysis is the identification of the modalities and pure meanings, which become apparent when applying the epoché. This is called the *second application of the epoché*. The modalities are the way in which a person experiences his/her life-world. Each meaning unit is divided into modality categories describing how the individual expresses him/herself. For example "What feelings do the person express, which tempus do they use, who is the subject" etc. There are seven modalities; these are belief, function, time, affect, will property and subject (see appendix C for a further explanation). Each of the seven modalities contains categories with which the researcher categorises the individual's way of expressing him/herself. The modality categories with which we would categorise the meaning unit "I prefer chocolate" are doxa-affirmation, perceptive, present, positive-prospective, engagement, none, I.

The third step is the *application of the phenomenological reduction*. In this step the aim is to do an intentional analysis of the meaning content obtained in the epoché (meaning units and modalities). This is done by the researcher trying to find all the different partial intentions in the meaning units, which taken together lead to the constituted meaning. In this step the researcher tries to identify all the active syntheses as well as the passive ones. The idea is that whenever a person says something explicitly s/he also says something

implicitly (Smith, 2003). In our example “I prefer chocolate” we can find many partial intentions. This is illustrated in table 1.1 below where some partial intentions have been identified as an example.

In each partial intention that can be identified there is an entity. This is the first step of defining the *constitution of the noema*, the discerning of the entities that form meaning constellations of the intended object (ibid). It is called the *synthesis phase*. An entity is something that appears to the experiencing individual as something that exists. In this step all the variation tied to each entity is accounted for. The way in which each entity is expressed in constitutes the predicate. This is also illustrated in table 1.1

Table 1.1 illustration of partial intentions and entities within the meaning unit “I prefer chocolate”

Meaning unit: I prefer chocolate

Partial intention	Entity	Predicate
I exist	I	Who exist
Chocolate exists	Chocolate	That exists
There could be I who prefer I something else than chocolate	I	Who could prefer something else than chocolate
I who prefer chocolate	I	Who prefers chocolate

The next thing you do as a researcher is to describe how the subject expresses him/herself in the different modalities. This is done by putting the modalities in relation to the groups of entities and predicates that were found in the previous steps. Hereby one obtains a picture of the intended object as the respondent intends it in its full richness, the complete noema (Sages, Jakobsdóttir, & Lundsten, 2000). What the researcher does in more practical terms is to choose some of the most important entities and on the basis of these entities the predicates are gathered. Thereafter one presents the different modalities that constitute each predicate and a short indication of what that implies. The attempt is to gain insight into the life-world of the person. For example we had the entity “I”, related to this entity we identified the predicates “who exists”, “Who could prefer something else than chocolate” and “who prefers chocolate”. The modality categories that the person expressed him/herself with were doxa-affirmation, perceptive, present, positive-prospective, engagement, none, and I. This then might indicate that the person is sure that s/he likes chocolate (doxa-affirmation), it is something that s/he has experience of (perceptive) as well as something which s/he would probably have in the future (positive-prospective).

The next step in the analysis is to formulate the horizon. In this step one gets to know whom the person who wrote the text really is and what he or she actually thinks of the subject etc. As a researcher one in this step chooses the entities and predicates that are of most relevance to the person and the research inquiry, one then interprets the chosen predicates step-by-step in order to fully understand the meaning an entity has to the person. The predicates are chosen from the most important entities such as for example “I”, “applicant” and “one”. In order to understand fully how the entity “applicant” appears to the person the most important predicates related to that entity are included in the analysis. A horizon includes past experiences necessary for meaning constitution as well as possible future experiences, which can be expected, from the person; hence it has a temporal structure. The specific already constituted meaning is called the past dimension and the different kinds of possible experiences are called the future dimensions (Sages, & Lundsten, in press, 2004). It is in the end of the horizon, that is in the future dimensions, that one finds the behaviour that can be expected from the person in relation the research question. When formulating the horizon one tries to answer the questions “When”, “Where”, “Why” and “How.” In order to illustrate this we will use the meaning unit “the flower that grows is yellow”; “*when*” (the flower is yellow at this moment) “*where*”(everywhere where it grows in spring, but could be other than yellow), “*why*” (it is it’s biological dna) and “*how*” (it grows with the help of water and sunlight). After this the researcher asks him/herself what lies behind the phenomenon and what experience can lie behind the individual’s experience of the phenomenon. One also asks what experience is needed for the statement as well as what it can be. In the end the researcher can conclude what meaning the entity and the predicate has for one particular subject and a possibility for predicting his/her future actions is given. For a more detailed explanation of how the descriptions of the horizons and life-worlds are formulated please see the article by Roger Sages & Jonas Lundsten (2001) “the ambiguous nature of psychology as science and its bearings on methods of inquiry” (pp 214-217).

The final step in the analysis is to formulate the life-world. This is done by considering the totality of the horizons. Here the researcher tries to summarize and describe all the information that has been collected concerning the subject and his or her understanding of the phenomenon.

Result

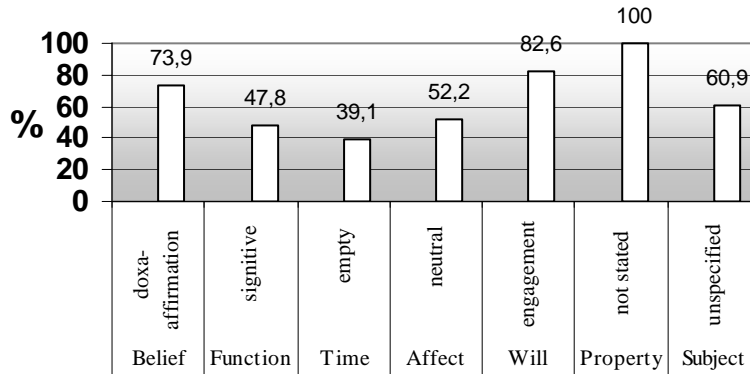
We have analysed each self-report separately as we were interested in the subjective experience of the phenomenon. The interpretations are referred to as Protocols. The Protocols are numbered, for example Protocol 1:1. The first number refers to the respondent; the second number refers to the research question. Each interpretation of a self-report will contain the following:

- A bar chart describing the most frequent modalities that the subject uses
- A description of how the subject has implemented the different modalities
- A brief description of the entities and predicates in order to illustrate how the respondent expresses him/herself within the different categories of the modalities
- An interpretation of the life-world

After going through the individual self-reports a conclusion and discussion of the result will be presented.

Protocol 1:1

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: In this modality the category doxa-affirmation is the most represented one (73,9%). The remaining cases are constituted by the category possibility (26,1%). In overall, this is a person who considers him/herself to know what he or she is talking about (doxa-affirmation) In a few cases the person expresses him/herself in the category possibility for example “the person can be nervous or perhaps overly conscious about the situation”. In this example the person has actively engaged him/herself in the applicants situation, which we find interesting since the recruiter reflects on the possible feelings of the applicant.

Modality Function: The category that is the most frequent is signitive (47,8%) closely followed by perceptive (37,5%). The expressions that are made in the signitive category mostly concern feelings such as the person saying s/he trusts his/her gut feeling. The category imaginative is expressed four times (17,4%). For example when the respondent talks about the expectations and reflections that s/he has on the applicant, such as “It is important to me to try to get behind the persons façade” or “the person could be playing a role due to the many things that are at stake in the employment interview”.

Modality Time: In most cases, no time at all is being expressed (39,1%). However when time is expressed it is done so in the categories present (34,8%), always-recurrent (21,7%) and the category present-future (4,4%). Whenever time is expressed it is mostly done so in the category *present*. When something was expressed as always-recurrent it mainly concerned the expectations that the person had before and during the interview, such as “I always have expectations” and “I try to get an impression of what kind of person s/he is in private”.

Modality Affect: The modality neutral is the most used category (52,2%). The rest is expressed in the categories negative-prospective (21,7%) and positive-prospective (26,1%). When talking about the importance of getting to know the person behind the façade this is expressed in the positive-prospective category, which might imply that the person sees it as something positive to try to find out who the person really is. Also when talking about the importance of “trusting the gut feeling” this is expressed as something positive. Perhaps this person has had many experiences of trusting his/her intuition before where it has proven to be a basis for a good judgement. When something is expressed in the category negative-prospective the respondent mainly expresses his/her thoughts and feelings concerning the possibility that the applicant could be “playing a role” or the fact that it might be s/he who is forming an impression too early and therefore not free of prejudices.

Modality Will: In the modality will the category engagement is mostly used (82,6%). In the remaining cases no will at all is expressed (17,4%). This we view as an indicator of the person actively having reflected upon the assignment.

Modality Property: No ownership is expressed (100%)

Modality Subject: Overall, no subject is being presented (60,9%). However when there is a subject expressed it is “I” (39,1%), for example “I’m sometimes afraid that I form an impression too soon”.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 69 different entities. When reflecting on question one this person often talks in an abstract way and it is clear that s/he trusts his/her intuition. We therefore wanted to illustrate this by having a closer look at the predicates related to “I”, “me” and “he/she”, something which we decided to call “The recruiter and the applicant”

Table 1.2 Theme: the recruiter and the applicant

Entity	Predicate
I	Who try to get an impression of him/her in his/her private role Who have learned to trust his/her gut feeling Who have expectations
Me	That the gut-feeling is very important to
He/she	Who can be nervous and insecure Who plays a role

When conducting an interview the recruiter considers it to be important (doxa-affirmation) to get an impression of who the person is outside the interview, in private. This is something which s/he always believes (always-recurrent). Furthermore this is something the person states without neither positive nor negative affect (neutral).

The recruiter has learned to trust his/her gut-feeling in interview situations (doxa-affirmation), something which s/he feels have positive consequences when doing employment interviews (positive-prospective) and in future interviews (present-future).

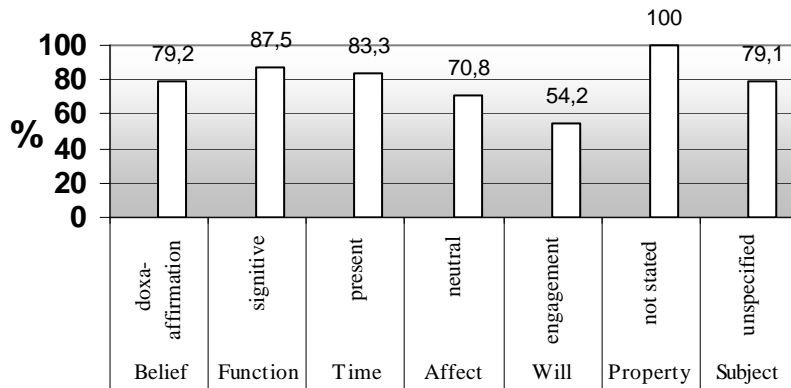
When talking about his/her expectations before and during an interview the recruiter states that s/he expects to find the “actual person” behind the interview. Having expectations is something that the recruiter sees as something positive and this is further expressed as something which has consequences in the future (positive-prospective). This is also something that is always important to him/her (engagement, always-recurrent). Furthermore the recruiter is very aware that s/he has expectations before beginning an interview (doxa-affirmation) however, what these expectations are, isn’t clearly expressed (signitive). It is neither clearly expressed what the recruiter considers to be the “actual person” behind the interview (signitive).

The recruiter is aware of the possibility of the applicant being nervous (possibility) something which s/he expresses in a signitive way. The recruiter expresses no emotion concerning this possibility (neutral).

When talking about playing a role the recruiter is referring to the possibility that the applicants aren’t themselves in the employment interview. It is implied that the persons who are caught playing a role probably will not be employed (negative-prospective). When expressing his/her thoughts and feelings concerning this possibility the recruiter is engaged.

Protocol 1:2

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: The category doxa-affirmation is the most frequent category within this modality (79,2%). The remaining cases are expressed in the category possibility (20,8%). This implies that the person most often is sure of what s/he says (doxa-affirmation). Whenever expressing possibilities these concern the persons on the pictures, such as them having certain characteristics, for example “she seems to be a good source of vitamins” or “the person would be able to complement the group in an excellent way”.

Modality Function: In this modality the most frequent category is signitive (87,5%). The category perceptive is only used in three cases (12,5%). Thus, the person often talks in an abstract way and in the few cases where s/he expresses something clearly this is done in an “as a matter of fact tone” such as “that is the way I would choose” or “they all appear to be too predictable”.

Modality Time: In most cases the person talks in present (83,3%) and sometimes in present-future (12,5%). Only in one case this person expresses no tempus at all (4,2%). The person most often talks in present, however whenever s/he expresses something in present-future this is done in positive terms, for example “how the group could develop together” or “would complement the group in a most excellent way”.

Modality Affect: The category neutral is the most frequent (70,8%) followed by positive-prospective (20,8%). Only in some cases does the person express something as negative-prospective and positive-retrospective (each 4,2%). The fact that neutral is the affect most frequently expressed might signify that the person’s emotions are not affecting the way in which some parts of the statements are being made. Wherever the person has expressed something as positive-prospective it concerns the persons on the pictures such as “I am very

curious about him” or “I became curious of how the team of economists would develop together”.

Only in one occasion did the person express him/herself in a positive-retrospective way, this the person does when s/he talks about his/her earlier experience of employing a person who is a bit older, the person however does not explicitly say what those positive feelings s/he had about this past experience were.

Modality Will: For the most part the category engagement is used within this modality (54,2%). The respondent also expresses no will as often as s/he does wish-positive (each 20,8%). Only in one case the person expresses something as an aspiration (4,2%). Most of the time when the recruiter answers our research question s/he is engaged. In the cases where something is expressed as wish-positive it concerns the presuppositions that the recruiter has about the persons on the pictures such as “he would be able to complement the group in an excellent way”. However the person also expresses a positive wish about employing people who are a bit older.

Modality Property: No ownership is expressed (100%)

Modality Subject: Overall, the respondent mostly uses the category unspecified (79,7%). In the remaining cases s/he uses the category “I” (20,8%). The person talks in the “I form” when s/he is reflecting and motivating his/her choice of the persons on the picture to hire, such as “I get an impression of” or “Then I would choose”.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 100 different entities. When we went through this protocol it became apparent that the respondent mostly reflected on the different persons on the pictures, for example “Person B seems to be very energetic” or “I get the impression that she is older”. The entities that we found most interesting to have a closer look at however where whenever the respondent expressed something concerning “I” and “the group”. Other frequent entities where for example “the pictures” and “co-workers”

Table 1.3 Theme: I and the group

Entity	Predicate
I	Who become curious upon person C Who have positive experiences
The group	That could be complemented in an excellent way

After looking at the pictures the recruiter is very sure that s/he is curious upon Person C (doxa-affirmation). However s/he does not in an explicit way explain why s/he becomes curious (signitive). Nevertheless the fact that s/he becomes curious is something which will have positive consequences in the future (positive-prospective), implying that the person probably will be employed or at least be called to an interview. The recruiter also expresses a wish for becoming curious (wish positive).

Furthermore the recruiter also expresses positive feelings towards employing older persons since it is something s/he has had earlier good experiences of (positive-retrospective). S/he is not clearly expressing what these positive experiences are (signitive) however s/he is sure that it is positive to employ older people.

The recruiter furthermore sees the possibility for complementing the existing group at the company (possibility). In what way the group could be complemented is not specified (signitive), however s/he finds this possibility to be positive (positive-prospective). It is also something which s/he feels could have impact on the future group (present-future). This possible impact is something which can have positive effects on the future group (positive-prospective).

Interpretation of Life-world

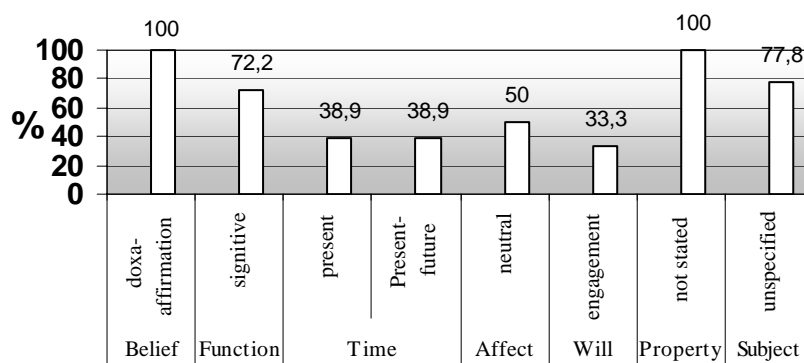
The respondent considers the interview to be a very interesting interaction where one should look for persons who differ and who can complement the existing group in some way. This is something which s/he also will do in future interviews. S/he for example expresses that a Person B seems to be a person who is filled with energy and therefore could be good to have in the company, since she can spread her energy to the other employees who, it is implied, are rather “toned down”. The respondent relies on her intuition when s/he assesses an applicant. It is something, which has proven to be a basis for good judgements in his/her past experiences and therefore it is something which s/he will continue on doing. At the same time s/he is afraid of being negatively affected by her gut-feeling, becoming biased. The way an applicant

dresses or what he or she says can sometimes lead the respondent to form an impression too fast. This is something which s/he is afraid happens sometimes.

However we believe that the respondent tries to be fair and objective when conducting employment interviews, something, which s/he refers to as trying to find out whom the applicant really is outside the interview situation. When assessing the applicants the person also takes into account that the person could be playing a role. The respondent bases his/her employment decision not only on the references and background of a person but also on the impression s/he gets when doing the interview, though aware that his/her prejudices influence him/her.

Protocol 2:1

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: This person expresses him/herself only in doxa-affirmation (100%). Thus this is a person who is very confident in him/herself and about what s/he is expressing.

Modality Function: The category, which the person most frequently expresses is signitive (72,2%). In the remaining cases the category perceptive is being used (16,7%), followed by imaginative (11%). The category signitive is used when the person talks about feelings, these are expressed in an abstract way. When talking about “facts” such as for example “the references should be up-to-date and should consist of people of managerial positions” and “the interview proceedings depend on what post it concerns”, s/he expresses him/herself in the category perceptive.

Modality Time: In this modality the most frequent categories are present and present-future. These are equally frequent (each 38,9%). These are followed by the categories empty (16,7%) and future (5,6%). Thus, when comes to time this person usually expresses him/herself in present or present-future.

Modality Affect: In this modality the most frequently expressed category is neutral (50%). The person also expresses him/herself in both positive (38,9%) and negative categories (11,1%), which are both directed at the future. The few times the person expresses him/herself in the category negative-prospective it concerns him/her feeling forced as a recruiter to have to engage him/herself in order to get “an honest impression of the applicant”. This implies that some applicants do not convey an honest impression. The recruiter then has to put down his/her energy and effort into trying to find out who the person really is. When the recruiter talks about the demands that the applicant should fulfil s/he falls into the positive-prospective category. For example “the applicant should show up on time and be prepared”, “the candidate should give much of him/herself so that one gets a good picture of what type of person s/he is. When the person talks about actual things s/he mostly expresses him/herself in the category negative-prospective. Also when talking about the demands on him/herself as a recruiter such as “it is up to the recruiter to make the participant feel at ease” s/he expresses him/herself in this category.

Modality Will: The category most frequent in this modality is engagement (33,3%), closely followed by aspiration (27,8%) and wish-positive (16,7%). The least used categories are the categories none and wish-negative both equally as frequent (each 11,1%). In the few cases where s/he expresses wish-negative it concerns things that s/he feels shouldn't be needed from him/her or the candidate such as “the candidate shouldn't need to feel nervous” or “ otherwise one has to pry with questions”. When the person expresses something as an aspiration it is usually demands that the recruiter has on the applicant such as “the candidate should be on time and be prepared” or “the candidate should give much of himself or herself”.

Modality Property: No ownership is expressed (100%).

Modality Subject: The most frequent category expressed is unspecified (77,8%), the remaining are expressed in one-all (22,2%). Thus, this person mainly does not express any subject. When using the “one-all” category in the subject modality the person usually expresses generalities concerning his/her work as a recruiter, for example “it is important that the applicant gives much of him/herself so that one as a recruiter can get a good picture of the person”.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent's material was divided into 38 different entities. In this material we found it interesting to have a closer look at how the respondent talks about him/herself as a recruiter and the candidate. Other frequent entities expressed were "image" and "references".

Table 1.4 Theme: Applicant and Recruiter

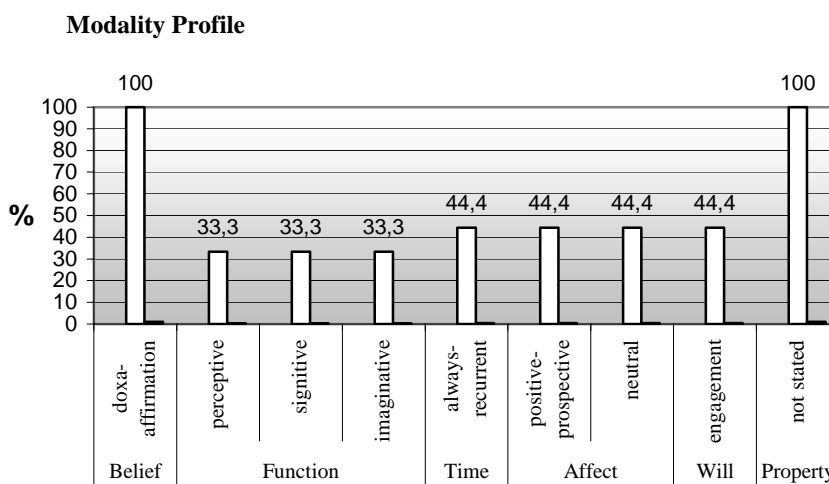
Entity	Predicate
The candidate	Who should show up on time and be prepared Who should give an honest impression of themselves
The interviewer/ one	Who should make the candidate feel at ease Who otherwise has to pry a lot with questions

When talking about the candidate the respondent finds it essential for him/her to be on time for the interview and to be prepared (aspiration). This the recruiter expresses in doxa-affirmation indicating that s/he is sure of what s/he says. However the recruiter does not state exactly what s/he means by being on time is (signitive). Being prepared is according to the recruiter for the applicants to bring relevant documents and references. But what relevant documents and references are is not further explicated (signitive). Being on time and being prepared is something that the respondent expresses with a positive emotion which might have impact on future impressions of the applicant (positive-prospective).

Furthermore the recruiter finds that it is up to the candidate to give an honest impression of him/herself (doxa-affirmation). What an honest impression is the recruiter does not specify, it is more as if he/se knows when the candidate is not being honest (signitive). The recruiter wishes that the candidates are honest (wish-positive). However the respondent is neutral in his/her emotions concerning the impression given, it doesn't matter if it is a negative or positive impression as long as it is honest; this is something which is said implicit. When talking about his/her role as an interviewer the respondent considers it to be up to him/her to make the candidate feel at ease (doxa-affirmation). How this is to be done the recruiter doesn't explicate (signitive), but it is something, which s/he considers to have a positive impact on the interview process (positive-prospective). The recruiter also wishes that the person feels at ease (wish-positive), which implies that the interviewer otherwise gets an unfair impression.

When stating that one otherwise has to pry with questions the interviewer is referring to applicants who don't give an honest impression of themselves. When s/he doesn't feel that they are being honest s/he is forced to ask further questions, which is expressed with a negative-prospective emotion. However the respondent is not clearly expressing what type of questions s/he then has to ask (signitive). But it is not something that s/he wants to happen or likes to do (wish-negative), this is feeling which s/he believes is shared by all interviewers (one-all).

Protocol 2:2



Modality Belief: This person only expresses him/herself in doxa-affirmation (100%). Thus this person expresses him/herself in a confident way without any doubt.

Modality Function: In this modality all categories are equally frequent that is, the person expresses him/herself as often in perceptive as s/he does in signitive and imaginative (each 33,3%). We view this as an indicator of that the person is very flexible and not afraid of guessing or taking chances. S/he is also not afraid to have his/her own opinion concerning the applicant. The person relies equally as much on what s/he sees and thinks as on what s/he knows to be a fact.

Modality Time: The most commonly expressed category is always-recurrent (44,4%.) This is followed by the category past (11,1%). The other percent is equally divided between the categories present and empty (each 22%). Thus the person is mainly talking in terms of always-recurrent. More specifically when s/he talks about something, which s/he feels is important and true in general, such as “a sure impression signifies ambition and will” and “the interview is a must”. It is also interesting to note that this person feels that clothes are

important. Something which is expressed both in the belief modality category doxa-affirmation and in the time modality category as always-recurrent.

Modality Affect: In this modality the categories positive-prospective and neutral are the most frequently expressed (each 44,4%) followed by the category negative-prospective (11,1%). In this modality we found it interesting to have a closer look at what instances the person expressed the category negative-prospective. We found that when this category was expressed it concerned feelings of how hard it would be to choose if no interviews were used. Only in one case did the person express something as an aspiration and that was when s/he stated “that the interview is a must”.

Modality Will: The most frequent category is engagement (44,4%). However this category is closely followed by the category wish-positive (33,3%). The categories aspiration and none are expressed in the rest of the cases (each 11,1%). We view the fact that engagement was the most frequently expressed category as an indicator of that the person is engaged in our question. Some examples of this are “all persons except person C looks positive and seems to be driven” and “it is the eye that makes the choice”. Also the fact that the person never expresses her/himself as unengaged we view as a support for this idea. Furthermore the person often expresses him/herself in the category wish-positive, s/he does this when s/he talks about the way the applicant should present themselves, for example “clothes are important” and “a smile says a lot on a picture”.

Modality Property: The person expresses no ownership, the category none (100%)

Modality Subject: Unspecified is the only category expressed in this modality (100%).

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 32 entities. Here we decided to have a closer look at how the person talks about impressions that s/he gets from looking at the fictive applicants on the pictures. This we will do under the theme that we decided to call “Impression”. Other frequent entities, which the respondent used, were “Person A”, “Person B” and “Interview”.

Table 1.5 Theme: Impression

Entity	Predicate
Clothes	That also are important
Impression	That is sure show ambition
Person C	Who doesn't appear to be positive and ambitious
	Who doesn't smile
	Who could have smiled

The recruiter feels that clothes are something, which is important for his/her impression of the persons on the pictures. This is expressed in doxa-affirmation that signifies that this is something that s/he is sure of. The clothes are always important (always-recurrent), however the recruiter doesn't specify what clothes s/he thinks give a positive or negative impression (signitive). However s/he feels that it is important for his/her impression of the person and the future choice of employee (positive-prospective).

When the recruiter discusses the pictures s/he is certain that a sure impression signifies ambition (doxa-affirmation). This is something that applies to all interview applicants (always-recurrent). What a "sure impression that shows ambition" is, the recruiter doesn't explicate further (signitive). Furthermore the respondent believes that a sure impression always signifies ambition (always-recurrent).

When commenting on person C on the pictures, the recruiter is convinced that this person doesn't appear to be positive and ambitious (doxa-affirmation), something that is demonstrated by Person C not smiling (perceptive, doxa-affirmation). The recruiter is further expressing a wish for the person to smile (wish positive). however the recruiter does not express any emotion concerning the fact that Person C doesn't (neutral). It is not something, which would have affected his/her choice of applicants in the future (past).

Interpretation of Life-world

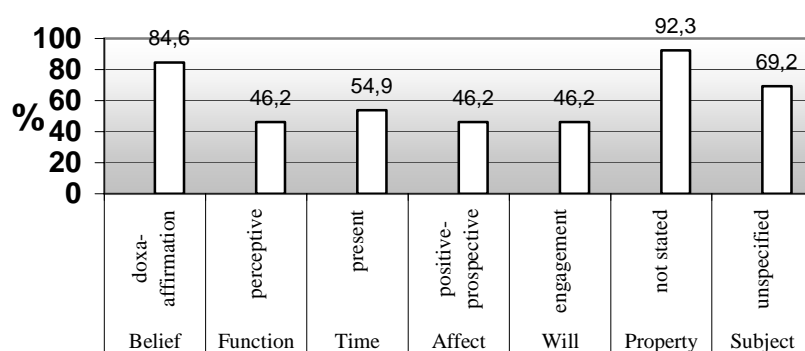
The respondent believes that interviews are necessary when one is to hire new persons for the organisation. This is something which applies to all employment decisions. When forced to make an employment decision without an interview to base his/her decision on it is the visual cues that the applicants give, that are the basis for his/her choice. Therefore it is implied that the impression given by clothes and body language is something which probably will affect his/her choice in future decisions as well.

The respondent is also of the opinion that it is his/her responsibility as a recruiter to make the applicant feel at ease. Applicants who aren't relaxed and feel nervous will not be easy to make a fair assessment of and therefore s/he actively works with trying to make the applicant comfortable when s/he does his/her interviews. Otherwise the interview is useless. The responsibilities that the recruiter puts on the applicant are mostly things that are accepted as a norm when one goes to employment interviews, such as showing up on time and being prepared. However the respondent furthermore expects that the applicant tries to give an honest impression of him/herself. If the impression given by an applicant isn't honest then the recruiter finds it hard to form an objective impression that reflects what that person is like. This usually tends to lead to more work for him/her as a recruiter and this is something which one as a recruiter doesn't appreciate.

The impression given of this person is that s/he is more passive than active in the interview process. This however is something which s/he prefers. Furthermore it is a person who takes his/her job seriously and expects the same of the applicants. S/he is also likely to hire applicants who convey a sure impression of themselves as this is considered a sign of ambition.

Protocol 3:2

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: The most frequently expressed category in this modality is doxa-affirmation (84,6%). The person also expresses him/herself in probability as much as in doxa-negation category (each 7,7%). Most of the time the person is sure of what s/he is talking about (doxa-affirmation). In the cases where the person expresses *probability* it concerns the choice s/he has to make, which persons should s/he employ? When doxa-negation is expressed it concerns the fact that s/he has to make a choice without any background information about

the applicant in the fictive situation. For instance the person expresses “it is hard to choose”, and this is something that s/he is very sure of. It is interesting to note that the person does not express any possibilities, instead s/he seems to be pretty sure about what persons will do a good job or not (probability).

Modality Function: The most commonly expressed category is perceptive (46,2%) closely followed by signitive (38,5%). In some instances the person also expressed the category *imaginative* (15,4 %). Thus this person is clear in his/her expressions, but s/he talks almost as often in an abstract or unclear way (signitive). When the category *imaginative* is expressed it concerns the impression that the person gets from looking at the pictures such as “person E appears to be quite insecure of him/herself and looks like a wimp” or “this is also one of the few who gives quite a good impression”.

Modality Time: The category most common is present (54,9%). The rest of the time she/he expresses her/himself equally as often in the category future as s/he does in the category empty (each 23,1%). When it comes to time this person often expresses him/herself in present tense. S/he talks about the choice of applicants that the s/he has to make in the fictive situation. When present-future is expressed it reflects the thoughts this person has about the applicants on the pictures s/he is about to employ, for example “ I want to have a person who has some “go” in them”.

Modality Will: In this modality the respondent mostly expresses the category engagement (46,2%), closely followed by the category wish-positive (38,5%). Only in a few cases the categories none and aspiration are expressed (7,7% each). The person expresses him/herself in an engaged way when s/he describes how s/he made his/her choice of applicants to employ in the fictive situation. The importance of giving a good impression is being stressed throughout the text. When the category wish-positive is expressed it concerns the recruiter’s wishes concerning how the applicant should be. Here the person describes the applicants on the pictures that s/he could consider employing along with commenting on how to dress, and how to act etc. Whenever something is expressed as an aspiration it is directed at the persons on the pictures. The recruiter states that some of the persons on the pictures do not give a particularly professional and serious impression. This seems to be one of the most important things that the recruiter expects from the applicant.

Modality Affect: Here the person mostly expresses the category positive-prospective (46,2%) followed by neutral (30,8%). The person also expresses him/herself in the category negative-prospective (23,1 %). The person mostly expressed the him/herself in positive-prospective when talking about the persons s/he had chosen to employ. Whenever

the negative-prospective category was expressed it concerned the impressions that the recruiter had of the persons that s/he did not choose to employ, such as “they do not give a professional and serious impression”. In the instances where the person expressed him/herself neutrally it concerned thoughts about the assignment in general such as “it is a tough choice” and “older people with more experience”

Modality Property: Overall the person did not express any property (92,3%). However the category “my” was expressed in one instance (7,7%). This was when the person was talking about his/her choice of people to employ “my first hand choice of persons to employ are”.

Modality Subject: The most frequently expressed category is unspecified (69,2%) however the person also quite often talks in terms of “I”(30,8%). This s/he does whenever s/he talks about making a choice of people to employ.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 49 entities. When going through this protocol we became interested in how the respondent talks about him/herself and what s/he expects from the applicant. We therefore chose the most important predicates related to the entity “I”.and “Impression”.

Table 1.6 Theme: I and Impression

Entity	Predicate
I	Who want a person with some “go” Who prefer if the candidates are dressed up
Impression	That can be something else than professional and serious That can be rather good

The recruiter is sure that s/he wants a person who has some “go” in them (doxa-affirmation). This is something that s/he thinks will have positive consequences in the future, something which s/he expresses with the time modality present-future and the affect modality positive-prospective. This is something that s/he personally is looking for (subject I). The recruiter also prefers if candidates are formally dressed (doxa-affirmation). However this is something s/he imagines, what dressed up means is not further explicated. Nevertheless the recruiter

expresses this with a positive emotion, which implies that persons who are dressed up probably will have a greater chance to get the job (positive-prospective, present-future).

When the respondent talks about the different impressions s/he gets from looking at the pictures, s/he states that Person B and Person C do not give a professional and serious impression. This is something which s/he is very sure of (doxa-affirmation). The recruiter probably wouldn't employ them (negative-prospective).

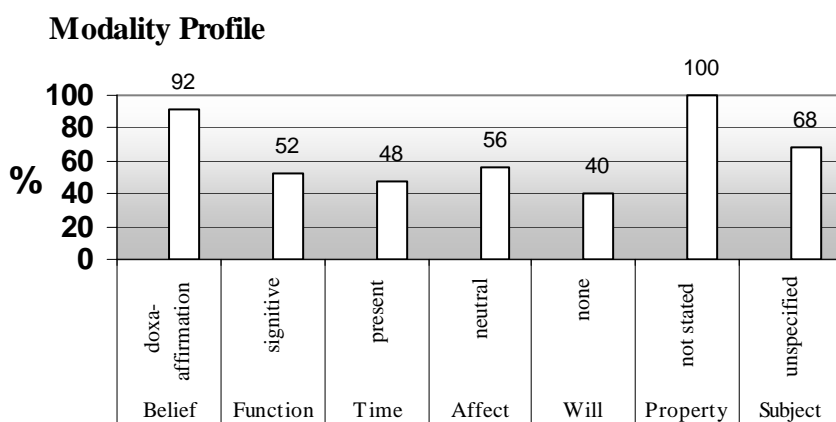
Before choosing the persons s/he could imagine him/herself employing, s/he states that it is a hard choice. Person A and Person D are the only applicants that the recruiter believes give a rather good impression (imaginative, doxa-affirmation). This is expressed in a negative-prospective way implying that, had there been anyone else to choose from, besides the persons on the six pictures, his/her choice probably would have been different.

Interpretation of Life-world

This person in general has a neutral attitude towards job-interview situations. S/he prefers if future applicants and present applicants are dressed up and s/he mainly looks for candidates who give a good and serious impression during the interview. However this is something that s/he believes most of the applicants don't do in this particular situation. It is only two of the applicants that s/he considers to give a good impression, which also is the reason for why s/he chose those persons. The third person s/he simply chose because this person is older than the other persons on the picture and may have more experience.

Thus, we got the impression that this respondent is rather narrow-minded and a bit locked in his/her selection patterns. S/he does not seem to be flexible and s/he does not seem like the kind of person who gladly sees many different types of people in his/her organisation. This person would probably not employ a person who comes dressed in shorts and an old t-shirt as s/he prefers people who are dressed up for the interview. This further implies that this person probably makes up his/her mind rather quickly in an interview situation as the clothes are the first thing s/he notices.

Protocol 4:1



Modality Belief: In most cases the person expresses doxa-affirmation (92%). The only other category expressed is possibility (8%). Thus, this person expresses him/herself in a confident way without a doubt. When possibility is expressed the person reflects upon his/her feelings in the employment situation for example “sometimes one just feels no” or “sometimes there is someone who one seems more interesting than the others”.

Modality Function: In this modality the category signitive is the most used category (52%) followed by the categories perceptive (24%) and imaginative (24%). Hence, this person most often expresses her/himself unclear (signitive). This the person mostly does when describing how s/he thinks when s/he employs people. It is only in six cases that the person expresses something in a clear way and this is mostly done when s/he describes how the applicant should act or speak, for example “The candidate should use a simple language and not try to impress”.

Modality Time: Present is the category, which is used the most (48%) followed by always-recurrent (28%). In four cases no time at all is being presented (16%) and in the remaining two cases he or she is expressing present-future (8%). Some aspects of the applicants behaviour is considered by this person to be important all the time, for example “if the applicant isn’t nervous I begin to wonder if that person seeks the job seriously”, this is expressed in the category always-recurrent.

Modality Affect: Neutral is the most frequent category expressed (56%). But in some cases the category positive-prospective (28%) is being used as well as negative-prospective (16%). Thus, this person mostly expresses him/herself neutrally. However, when the person expresses negative emotions towards the future these are directed at the applicant.

This is illustrated in the example which we used as an example in the modality time; “if the respondent is not nervous I begin to wonder if that person seeks the job seriously” This indicates negative emotion towards applicants who are not nervous. This is something the respondent doesn’t just consider to be important at the moment, it is also important in the future.

Modality Will: All categories, except unengagement were expressed in this modality. The most frequent category is none (40%) followed by engagement (28%), wish-positive (20%), aspiration (8%) and wish-negative (4%). Thus, this person most often doesn’t express any will at all, but whenever s/he does, it is mostly engagement that is being expressed. A positive wish is expressed when s/he describes how the person should act in an interview, “it is more than ok for the applicant to be nervous and it is something that they gladly can tell me”. It is also interesting to note that this person doesn’t want the applicant to be too much like him/her, something which is expressed as an aspiration.

Modality Property: No ownership is expressed (100%)

Modality Subject: In most cases no subject is being presented (68%). Whenever a subject is presented it is “I” and “one-all” that is being expressed (16% each). Wherever “one-all” is expressed it is usually generalities that are being stated which the person has in common with other recruiters.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 87 different entities. This respondent quite often talks about his/her work in terms of “I”, “the group” and “one”. Therefore we found it interesting to have a closer look at the predicates relating to these entities. Other frequent entities were the applicant, impression and interview.

Table 1.7 Theme: I, one and the group

Entity	Predicate
I	Who gladly see possibilities Who don’t want someone who is like me
The group	Which the applicant should be able to fit in with
One	Who feels intrigued Who feels no

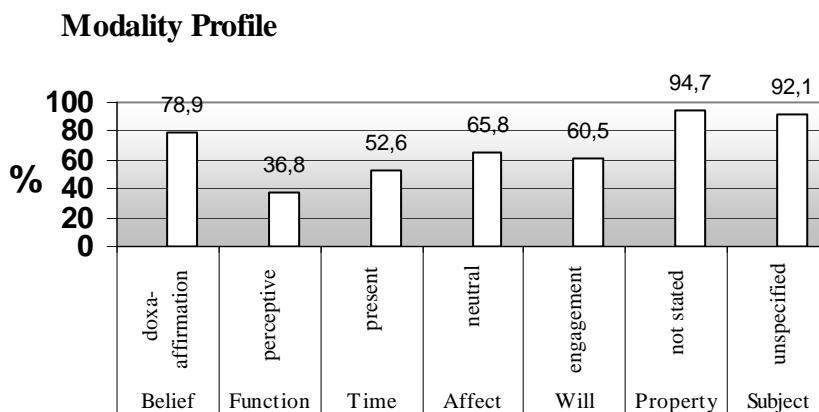
When reflecting upon his/her expectations and associations concerning the applicant, the respondent states that s/he gladly sees the possibilities of candidates who don't have all the experiences that initially were requested. It is ok if the applicant doesn't have all the experiences. This the recruiter says in a confident manner (doxa-affirmation). The respondent feels that this flexibility in his/her attitude is something which brings positive consequences in the future (positive-prospective, wish positive). Furthermore the recruiter states this in a "one-all manner" implying that the recruiter believes that it's not only s/he who feels this way.

When describing what s/he looks for in an applicant the recruiter is sure that s/he doesn't want someone who is like him/her (doxa-affirmation), what "someone like me is" is not further explicated (imaginative). It is implied that if there is an applicant who is like him/her then that person would not be employed (negative-prospective). The recruiter is very clearly searching for someone that differs from him/her (aspiration).

However the applicant should be able to fit in with the group (doxa-affirmation). This is something which is always important to the recruiter when s/he employs an applicant (always-recurrent) and something, which s/he wishes for (wish-positive). This indicates that applicants who the respondent believes are able to fit into the organization probably will be employed (positive-prospective).

Furthermore when the recruiter discusses impressions in general s/he states that "one notices very quickly if one is intrigued or one feels no". This however is stated as a possibility implying that this is not always so (imaginative). What is causing those feelings is not clearly expressed (signitive, imaginative). The recruiter is engaged when s/he says this and s/he believes that there could be other recruiters than him/her who feels this way (one-all).

Protocol 4:2



Modality Belief: The most frequently expressed category is doxa-affirmation (78,9%). Also the categories possibility (13,2%), probability (2,6%) and question (5,3%) are expressed.

Most of the time this person is sure of what s/he says (doxa-affirmation). The occasions when s/he expresses something as a possibility concern the fictive applicants, such as his/her ideas of what kind of characteristics the persons on the pictures might have. For example “the person hopefully hasn’t got any preconceived ideas”, “they might have good references” or “it could just be the picture”. When the person talks in terms of probabilities s/he talks about him/herself as the person who has the possibility “to do something”, in this case it is s/he who has the possibility as an employer to see new opportunities. The only times when the recruiter is expressing him/herself in the category question it concerns the assignment and the persons on the pictures. “Why do they apply for a post as an assistant” and “what kind of people are they, what experiences do they have?”. This we view as an indicator of suspicion directed towards the assignment.

Modality Function: All three categories in this modality are expressed. The most frequently used among these is perceptive (36,8%). However it is closely followed by signitive (34,2%) and imaginative (28,9%). The person almost as often expresses her/himself in a clear way (perceptive) as s/he does in an abstract way (perceptive). The respondent also expresses him/herself quite often in the imaginative category, this s/he does when s/he states his/her thoughts and ideas about the persons on the pictures such as “the person is young and curious”, “they could be inclined to please?” or “I believe he is very skilful”.

Modality Will: The most frequent category is engagement (60,5%), also the category none is represented (31,6%) as well as wish-positive (7,9%). Although the person shows signs of being engaged in only a little more than half of the cases we are of the opinion that the individual has been very interested and engaged in the assignment. The recruiter is actively assessing the persons on the pictures and expresses his/her thoughts and ideas in an engaged way throughout the text. It is interesting to note that whenever the person expressed something in the category wish-positive it concerned the persons which s/he chose to employ after looking at the pictures, for example the characteristics they might have that would be positive in their future employments.

Modality Time: When comes to time, the respondent usually expresses him/herself in the category present (52,6%). This is followed by the category empty (21,1%). Furthermore, the person also uses the categories always-recurrent (15,8%), past (2,6%) and present-future (7,9%). Usually the person expresses him/herself in the present. Whenever the

person expresses something as always-recurrent it is mostly clichés such as “a happy person is always an advantage” or “the way a person dresses doesn’t say anything about their knowledge”. When the category past was expressed the person was consciously contradicting something s/he said earlier about the importance of clothes. It seems as if the clothes signify something after all. When the category present-future is expressed the person is justifying his/her choice of applicants, by reasoning about “why they applied for the post as an assistant”, and stating that “perhaps the people are too inclined to please so that they won’t bring something new to the place of work”.

Modality Affect: In this modality only three categories are expressed, the most frequent being neutral (65,8%) and positive prospective (28,9%). The person also occasionally talks in the category negative-prospective (5,3%). When expressing affect the neutral category is the most common one. This could imply that, although the person shows engagement in our research question, s/he tries to answer it in a professional way. Whenever the person expresses something as negative-prospective it concerns the clothes the persons on the picture are wearing or the fact that some of the persons might have presupposed thoughts on how to act in an employment interview. When the respondent expresses the positive-prospective category it is done in relation to the applicants. For example s/he reasons about the positive characteristics the applicants have, such as “he wants work and show what he can do” and “asks and comes up with new ideas”.

Modality Property: Most often property is not expressed (94,7%) however in the cases where it is expressed it is done so as his or others (each 2,6%). In the cases where the property is stated as “his” the recruiter is describing one of the men on the pictures. Interesting to note is that the recruiter sees “others” as the ones who provide the company with new knowledge.

Modality Subject. The subject is most often not specified (92,1%) when it is specified it is specified as “I” (7,9%). Whenever the recruiter expresses something as “I” it concerns him/her being sure of things or making assumptions such as “I believe he is skilful” or “I have the possibility to see to new opportunities”.

Entity-predicate view

The respondent’s material was divided into 131 different entities. In this protocol the respondent tended to talk in terms of I and They when s/he reflected on the characteristics of the fictive applicants. Therefore some of the predicates that were related to these entities were

chosen. Other frequent entities in the respondent's material were "impression" and "employer"

Table 1.8 Theme: I and they

Entity	Predicate
I	Who perhaps prefer to have it like I always have
	Who have the possibility to see new opportunities
they	Who bring something new
	Who can be inclined to please

When reasoning about his/her choice of applicants the recruiter states that "Perhaps I prefer to have it as I always have". This is said with doxa-affirmation, implying that s/he is certain that s/he knows the way s/he prefers to have things. The respondent however doesn't give any further clues to what that is (signitive). No emotions are apparent in the statement, which might indicate that the person isn't sure whether it is positive or negative to want things to be as they always have been.

It is interesting to note that the respondent sees him/herself as the person who has the possibility to see new opportunities. This is something which s/he imagines him/herself doing, however s/he is not sure that this always happens instead it is something which most likely happens. The recruiter finds his/her ability to see new opportunities to be a positive characteristic (positive-prospective), which has good influences on the organisation's future.

The recruiter is certain that when someone brings something new to the company this will have consequences for them in the future (present-future). However s/he expresses neither positive nor negative emotions towards the applicants who bring something new to the company (neutral). Nevertheless s/he is sure that there are those who bring something new (doxa-affirmation).

Furthermore the recruiter finds it possible that there are those who are inclined to please (possibility). This s/he imagines (imaginative). The recruiter doesn't express any emotion towards this possibility, but states that this happens in the present.

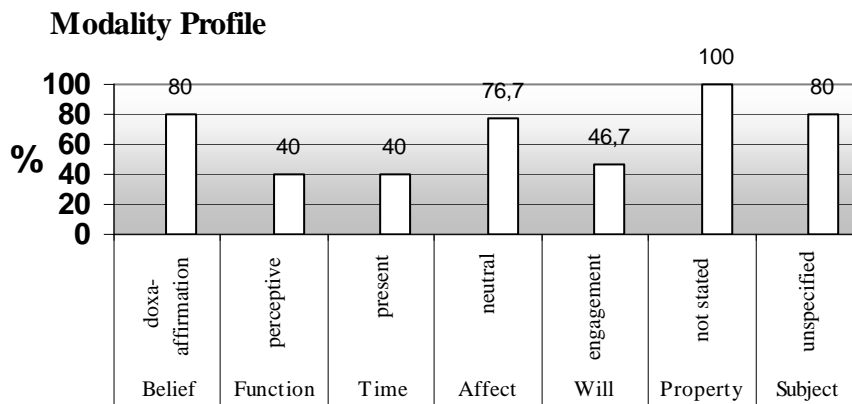
Interpretation of Life-world

The respondent actively reflects upon his/her own way of thinking and thereby tries to avoid letting his/her preconceived opinions influence his/her employment decisions. It is a person who actively considers the possibility of the applicants having preconceived ideas about the company. The recruiter doesn't want to employ "know-it-alls", something which s/he actively tries to avoid doing. Furthermore this person believes that older people have harder to change since they are less open for new ideas. "Younger people more easily changes along with the technology and thereby also may be better at questioning the things around them". This implies that respondent is more likely to employ applicants who are young since they are more acceptant towards change.

The respondent trust his/her first impression, however s/he is aware that this impression doesn't always correspond to the reality. S/he also feels that a happy person is something, which is beneficial for an organisation. When doing interviews the recruiter tries to look beyond the work situation and understand what kind of person the applicant is in private. In addition to this the respondent believes that it is ok for the applicant to be nervous in an interview. When no signs of nervousness are shown s/he becomes suspicious of the applicants intentions and starts to question whether s/he really wants the job. Therefore applicants who seem untouched by the employment interview situation are less likely to be hired as they are considered to be hiding something from the recruiter. It is not only the pre-requested criteria that the respondent looks for in the applicant. It is also considered important that the applicant fits in with the current group of people working at the company.

In overall, this is a person who seems to be flexible and open for new experiences. It is also a person who wants some diversity at the workplace, however not too much. S/he is also willing to look beyond the fact that an applicant lacks some of the references and experiences requested as long as that applicant awakes his/her curiosity. These applicants deserve a try anyway.

Protocol 5:1



Modality Belief: The category doxa-affirmation is most frequently used (80%), followed by possibility (10%), probability (3,3%) and question (6,7%). All in all the respondent is mostly sure of what s/he says (doxa-affirmation). S/he is sure that the applicant who s/he is to employ needs to fit into the team of people already working at the company (doxa-affirmation). However the recruiter never explicitly says in what way the person has to fit in. Furthermore the recruiter in some instances raises questions concerning the interaction between the him/her as an interviewer and the applicant, for example “how do the applicant interpret my questions” We view this as a an indicator of the recruiter trying to form an impression by reflecting on the applicant’s part in the interaction, “Is s/he interested to know more?” and “does she have the ability to learn?”

Modality Function: In this modality the category perceptive (40%) is used slightly more than signitive (36,7%) and imaginative (23,3%). Thus, the respondent as often as not expresses him/herself in clear terms (perceptive) as often as s/he does abstract (signitive).

Modality Time: The most used category is present (40%) followed by empty (20%) meaning that no time at all is being expressed. The remaining cases are expressed in the categories always-recurrent (16,7%), present-future (10%), future and past (each 6,7%). This person does not have any particular pattern when it comes to expressing time, which can indicate that the person is flexible in his/her way of thinking and acting. However s/he mainly talks in present terms, things that are important occur now and s/he is not influenced by past experiences. Nevertheless there are things that the recruiter feels are important all the time

(always-recurrent), for example “the person need to be able to fit into the team”. This is an important criterion for employment.

Modality Affect: The most common category within this modality is neutral (76,7%). Followed by positive-prospective (13,3%). The remaining categories are negative-prospective (6,7%) and positive-retrospective (3,3%). The only category s/he didn't use was negative-retrospective, meaning that s/he doesn't have any bad past experiences which influences the employment choice. However in general s/he expresses neutral emotions. Furthermore the respondent expresses negative feelings regarding the future of applicants who s/he feels leave him/her without an impression. S/he states that she wouldn't hire such a person.

Modality Will: The two most frequent categories are engagement (46,7%) and none (36,7%) followed by the categories unengagement and aspiration (6,7% each). Also wish-positive (3,3%) was expressed. When the person expressed unengagement this concerned the applicants who didn't leave the recruiter with an impression of what kind of person he or she was. The thing the recruiter aspires for when s/he performs an employment interview is to have an impression of the applicant when the interview is over (aspiration).

Modality Property: No ownership is expressed (100%).

Modality Subject: The respondent in general doesn't express any subject (80,0%), but when s/he does the subject “I” is used (20%).

Entity-predicate view

The respondent's material was divided into 85 different entities. When reflecting on question one this respondent is very focused on the ability of the fictive applicant to fit in with the existing group working in his/her organisation. Therefore we decided to illustrate this by having a closer look at how s/he talks about “the group”. We will also comment on some of the predicates related to the entity I. Other frequent entities were “the candidate” and “interview”.

Table 1.9 Theme: The existing group and I

Entity	Predicate
The group	That is important That the person should fit in with
I	Who probably isn't interested Who expect

According to the respondent the existing work-team is something that is always important (always-recurrent). This s/he is very sure of (doxa-affirmation), however why it is important is not clearly stated (imaginative). The recruiter has positive feelings towards the group which could influence the future (positive-prospective, wish positive).

Throughout the text the recruiter stresses the importance for the applicant to fit in with the present group working at the company. This is something, which influences his/her choice of applicants. The recruiter is sure that the person s/he employs should fit in with the group (doxa-affirmation). Furthermore this is expressed with a neutral affect, which could imply that the person is not entirely sure if it is positive or negative if the person fits in with the group. However s/he is certain that this will have consequences in the future (present-future).

When talking about interviews in general the recruiter states that if s/he hasn't gotten an impression of what type of person the applicant is when the interview is over then s/he probably wouldn't employ him or her. This is expressed in a negative-prospective manner. Nevertheless this is not always the case since s/he expresses this as a probability. What kind of impression the respondent wants to have of the person is not clearly stated (signitive). Additionally the person expects that s/he has an impression of applicant when the interview is over (doxa-affirmation). If it is positive or negative doesn't matter (neutral).

Interpretation of Life-world

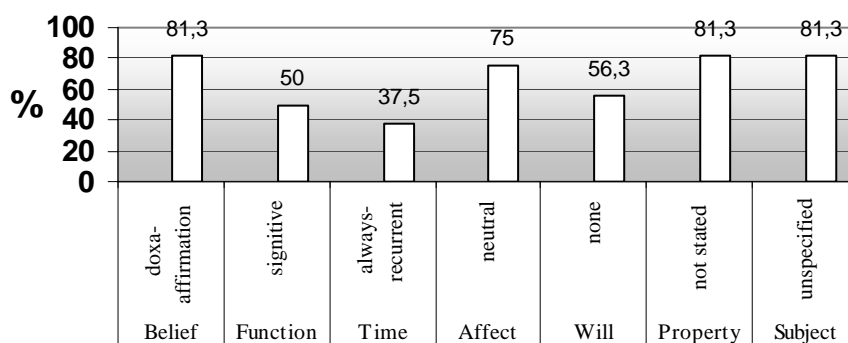
This is a flexible person who doesn't necessarily let his/her own preconceived impressions affect his/her choice of applicants. We are of the opinion that this is a rather fair and neutral judge. Something which we base on the fact that the person focuses on the applicant's ability to perform the posted job. However this is a person who doesn't like to make employment decisions by him/herself, something which is implied by him/her wanting to be certain that the other interviewers present in the employment interview have a chance to assess the applicant's possibility of learning as well as his/her ability to manage the post.

One of the most important characteristics which this respondent looks for in an applicant is an ability to fit in with the current work team in the organisation. Therefore the interview is important. An impression is always important for this recruiter, whether it is positive or negative. Applicants who doesn't give an impression of what kind of person s/he is, most certainly aren't hired. It is therefore implied that applicants who fit with the current work team in the organisation, and leaves the respondent with an impression of him/herself which is positive then probably that applicant will be hired, even though it is possible that s/he lacks some of the qualifications required.

Although this respondent seems as a person who doesn't let his/her own prejudice influence his/her employment decisions it is implied that s/he isn't likely to give an applicant a second chance. The possibility of the applicant's nervousness affecting the impression given in the employment interview is not something which the respondent considers. However this may be due to the fact that it costs time and money to do so.

Protocol 6:1

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: In overall, the category doxa-affirmation is most frequent (81,3%) followed by probability (12,5%). The category possibility is only used one time (6,3%). In general this is a person who more often than not is sure what s/he is talking about (doxa-affirmation). Some examples of statements that are made in this confident manner are “It is important to be attentive of your own reactions” and “as I am very open and happy”. When talking about something as a probability it concerns the kind of contact that develops between him/her as an interviewer and the applicant.

Modality Function: The categories signitive and perceptive are used almost as often (50% and 43,6%). Imaginative is the category which is expressed the least (6,3%). This

implies that the person talks more often in an abstract way than s/he does in a clear way. When describing how s/he assesses the applicant and forms an impression the person does this in an abstract way (signitive). This might imply that the respondent isn't quite sure what kind of person the organization needs, which is why s/he expresses his/her criteria in an abstract and broad way. For example "the person should give much of themselves".

Modality Time: In most cases the category always-recurrent is used (37,5%) followed by the category empty (25%). The other two categories used are present and present-future (each 18,8%). In most cases where always-recurrent is expressed it concerns generalities which the respondent finds important to be aware of such as "people are different" or "some are very open while others are reserved". This is something that the respondent doesn't only consider important right now, but something that is constantly important, in every interview, all the time.

Modality Affect: In general the category neutral is the most frequently used (75%), while the categories positive-prospective (18,8%) and negative-prospective (6,3%) are less frequent. This person is mostly neutral in his or her emotions. When describing his/her own part in the interview situation, the respondent states that s/he more easily connects with people who are similar to her/himself, something which s/he finds positive (positive-prospective). When stereotypical ideas are being expressed these are stated without emotion (neutral) for example "it is important to be aware of your own reactions".

Modality Will: In more than half the cases this person uses the category none (56,3%). In addition to this he or she also uses all other categories except wish-negative. The other categories are engagement (18,8%), aspiration (12,5%); unengagement and wish-positive are expressed equally often (both 6,3%). The respondent most of the time never expresses a will. When he or she does it is usually engagement that is being expressed. The person expresses a wish for "the applicant to give more of him/herself, this is something which s/he would like to see more often.

Modality Property: In most cases the category not stated is used (81,3%). In addition to this the person also to some extent expresses the categories you, his and my (each 6,3%). However these are only used once.

Modality Subject: The category unspecified is the most frequent category (81,3%) followed by "I" (18,8%).

Entity-predicate view

The respondent's material was divided into 41 different entities. When answering our question this respondent quite often reflected on his/her own role in the interview. This is something which we illustrate by having a closer look at how the person talks about him/herself in terms of "I" and "my meanings", a theme which we decided to call "I as a recruiter". Other frequent entities were "others" and the "candidate"

Table 1.10 Theme: I as a recruiter

Entity	Predicate
I	Who am pretty open and happy
	Who have the risk/possibility of getting a better contact
My meanings	Which are prejudiced and needs to be worked with

When reflecting upon her/himself as a recruiter and the applicant s/he describes him/herself as pretty open and happy, something which s/he always is (doxa-affirmation, always-recurrent). The respondent expresses a positive feeling when characterising her/himself this way however s/he also realises that this might have an impact on the applicant. S/he recognises the risk/possibility of getting a better contact with applicants who "gives more of themselves"(imaginative). This risk/possibility the recruiter sees is something, which s/he believes probably, happens (probability). Nevertheless it is something which s/he believes is positive at the moment and also in the future (positive-prospective). This further implies that the recruiter perhaps is inclined to employ a certain type of people.

Furthermore the recruiter recognises that his/her impressions are prejudiced and needs to be worked with (doxa-affirmation). The emotion s/he expresses is negative-prospective implying that s/he is aware that s/he has these ungrounded thoughts and associations which impact his/her judgement. Moreover this is something, which s/he is presently working with; with the hopes of being less prejudiced in the future (present-future, engagement).

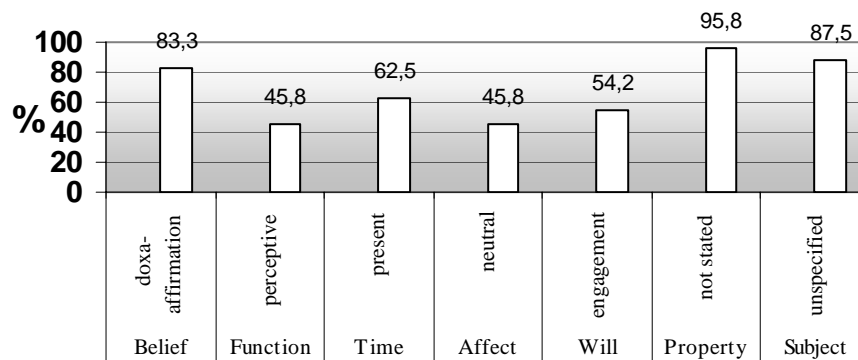
Interpretation of Life-world

This person mainly focuses on connection and interaction. S/he finds the interview situation very interesting and refreshing. It is a person who is open and aware of the fact that his/her own opinion can influence his/her employment decisions. S/he is also aware that his/her own personality affects the job-applicants, and s/he therefore finds it important to be aware of your own reactions.

The fact that people are different in the ways that some are more open while other are more reserved could influence the applicants possibility of getting a job, since the respondent states that s/he believes s/he has a greater risk/opportunity of forming a better connection with individuals who give much of themselves. This could imply that this person sometimes employ applicants who don't have all the criteria that initially were requested, as long as s/he forms a good connection with him/her. This is however something which s/he will try to work with in future employment situations.

Protocol 7:2

Modality Profile



Modality Belief: In this modality the category doxa-affirmation is most frequent category (83,3%). Other categories used are question (8,3%), possibility (4,2%) and probability (4,2%). Most of the time this person is sure of what s/he says (doxa-affirmation). For example the respondent states that his/her gut feeling is important when s/he has no background information to base a decision on. The person is also very sure when s/he ascribes characteristics to the persons on the pictures. It is done in “a - matter- of- a- fact” way (doxa-affirmation). Even though s/he most of the time is sure of what s/he is talking about; s/he also expresses possibilities and probabilities. The respondent for example expresses probabilities when s/he reflects upon the persons on the pictures. An example of this is when the

respondent describes one of the persons among the applicants as “probably being the big thinker”, who helps him/her to figure out solutions on systems and finding good ways of presentation.

Modality Function: the category that is most frequent in this modality is perceptive (45,8%) followed by signitive (33,3%). The category that is least used is imaginative (20,8 %). When expressing him/herself this person usually does this clearly (perceptive) however s/he is also quite often being unclear and abstract in his/her expressions.

Modality Time: When time is expressed the most frequent category is present (62,5%) followed by empty (20,8%), past and present-future (each 8,3%). When the respondent talks about time s/he usually talks in terms of present. It is interesting that this person doesn't talk in terms of something being generally important (always-recurrent). Instead s/he is focused on what is important in the present moment (present).

Modality Affect: In this modality there are two categories that equally frequent. These are the category neutral (45,7%) and the category positive-prospective (41,7%). The remaining categories are negative-retrospective (8,3%) and negative-prospective (4,2%). The only category that the respondent hasn't expressed is positive-retrospective. Thus, this respondent usually expresses neutral and positive emotions directed at the future. Whenever negative emotions are expressed these mostly concern the distress of having to choose employees based solely on pictures (negative-prospective). The respondent is reluctant to choose a person from only pictures, but still s/he accepts it although it could have negative consequences in the future (negative-prospective).

Modality Will: The most frequent category used is engagement (54,2%) followed by the category none (29,2%). The remaining two categories used are wish-positive (12,5%) and aspiration (4,2%).

Most of the time the person shows signs of being engaged when answering our question, for example s/he states “I'm struck by how much my earlier experiences influence the impressions that I get”. The fact that the person becomes aware of her own prejudices we view as an indicator of that the person has been engaged and put down time and energy when answering the question. Another example where this becomes apparent is when s/he says “I've been thinking a lot about person E. Is he a social scientist or will she become a priest? Ugh! So prejudiced.” It's really interesting that the respondent here becomes aware of his/her own prejudice. We also intrigued by the fact that the person could not make up his/her mind concerning the gender of the person on picture E. Of course it could be a typo but we believe that it isn't since s/he referred to all the other applicants consistently as him or her.

Modality Property: Mostly no property is stated in this person's text (95,8%).

However in one case this person uses the property "their".

Modality Subject: The category "I" is used in three cases (12,5%), The respondent who wrote this text only expresses "I" when s/he is trying to interpret the pictures. Most of the time however, s/he doesn't express any subject (87,5%).

Entity-predicate view

The respondent's material was divided into 92 different entities. In this respondents' material it is apparent that s/he has thought and reflected quite sometime while answering the second question. Here we found it interesting to have a closer look at in what ways s/he expresses him/herself in terms of "I". This is something which we decided to call "I as the recruiter".

Table 1.11 Theme: I as a recruiter

Entity	Predicate
I	Who rely on my gut feeling Who get a feeling of a will to do a good job Who is struck by how much (my earlier experiences affect my impressions)

The first thing the respondent does when answering question two in our research is to state that s/he feels distressed over not having any background information about the applicants on the pictures. When choosing the applicants s/he would employ the respondent relied on her gut-feeling (doxa-affirmation), it is something which s/he imagines her/himself doing (imaginative). No emotion is expressed concerning this intuitive approach (neutral).

However when reflecting upon the persons on the pictures s/he is very imaginative. When reflecting upon Person F the respondent imagines her to be a person who will do a good job (imaginative), something which is said in a confident manner. This is expressed in a positive-prospective way, which implies that the possibility for that person getting a job is high, and it is something that the recruiter wants to happen (wish-positive).

The respondent further on in his/her reflections states that s/he is struck by how much her/his earlier experiences affect the impressions s/he gets. S/he knows that his/her earlier experiences influences the impressions that s/he gets of the applicant (doxa-affirmation). What kind of experiences s/he is referring to is not clear (signitive). The person is engaged when reflecting upon this question (engagement) and is positive regarding the fact

that s/he has become aware of his/her own prejudice, implying that s/he will consider this aspect in other interviews in the future.

Interpretation of Life-world

This respondent feels distressed when s/he doesn't have any background information about the applicants whom s/he interviews. When no background information is given the respondent relies much on her gut-feeling and the earlier experiences s/he has. It is a very creative person when it comes to ascribing characteristics to applicant. Although s/he prefers to have background information about future job-applicants s/he is not afraid of trusting her intuition when forming an impression. We are inclined to believe that the respondent feels that background information about the applicants will help him/her to make less prejudiced employment decisions.

The respondent is not unfamiliar with the fact that some of the ideas s/he has are prejudiced, however it is something, which s/he probably will take into consideration in a more direct way in future employment situations.

Discussion

The aim of our study was to reach a deeper understanding of how personnel selectors form an impression of an applicant in an interview, as well as the expectations that s/he has before and during the interview. We wanted to study how people working regularly with personnel selection were influenced both by their explicit thoughts and actions as well as the implicit, unconscious attitudes they had. In the discussion we will reflect a bit further on the results of the study as well as try to convey a general picture of how the phenomenon is experienced by the respondents. We will also comment on the different aspects of our research design as well as we will refer back to theories presented in the beginning of our essay.

Commentary of the results

As we have used a phenomenological approach to our study we were interested in understanding and describing how the individual constitutes meaning, something which was achieved through an intersubjective approach to the phenomenon. We therefore will not generalise in the positivistic sense, as our result is based upon how individual respondents experience the situation, however we will describe the general pattern which became apparent among the participants of our study.

It is evident throughout the protocols that the respondents are sure of what they are saying when they describe their feelings and associations concerning their work and the applicants (doxa-affirmation). In all protocols this category had the highest frequency in the modality belief, however it is important to note that the percentage differed among the applicants. When the respondents reflected upon the fictive “applicants” they were all more or less confident of what kind of persons they were, something which indicates a prejudiced carriage. This since they cannot know beforehand what type of person an applicant is. The same conclusions could have been drawn if the most frequent category had been doxa-negation. If the category question had been the most frequent category expressed then this could have indicated that the respondents were less inclined to prejudiced thinking in employment interviews, as s/he wants more information about the applicant before making up his/her mind.

In general the respondents’ expressed themselves either in a concrete-(perceptive) or abstract manner (signitive). When reflecting upon the question concerning the associations and expectations they had on the applicants (question one) they tended to be more abstract. However, when they were reasoning about the second question where they

were to choose applicants to employ they became more concrete. This pattern was something which we became very curious about since this then could imply that the respondents found it hard to describe what they really searched for in an applicant. This idea was based on the fact that the respondents often were more careful when they formulated their answer on this question than they were on the TAT-inspired question. However, one other possible explanation for this tendency could be that the broad formulation of the question without a clear description of what we were after influenced the respondents to answer in a more abstract manner. This they could have done intentionally in order for us to get a good impression of them.

There were no general patterns in the way the respondents expressed themselves in the modality time. However, most of the respondents tended to express themselves in the category present. We also couldn't find any pattern in how this differed between the two research questions. It would have been interesting if we had found a general tendency for the respondents to express themselves in either always-recurrent or present-future.

This because it then could have been implied that the recruiters weren't just talking about things that were important to them in their work at this moment, but always and in the future. Perhaps we could have gotten an indication of what things were always important to think about when going to employment interviews.

Most of the respondents expressed neither positive nor negative feelings towards our research questions, which could imply that they were afraid of being exposed as biased. This we base on the fact that they were reluctant to express any feelings.

In the modality will the most frequently expressed category in the ten self-reports was engagement. The instances when no will was discernable regarded question one. This implies that in overall the respondents were interested in our research questions and put down time and energy when answering them. However when some of the respondents were asked to describe their thoughts and feelings and what they expected from an applicant they were not as engaged as when they actually were able to put a face to that applicant. These findings suggest that the respondents become more engaged in their work as personnel selectors when they are allowed to interact with an applicant.

Regarding the entities and the predicates we presented in our result section, these were mostly chosen in order to illustrate and clarify how the respondents expressed themselves in relation to the most important entities. For example the entities and predicates in some cases can illuminate whether the respondent tends to engage in biased ways of thinking. Furthermore entities and predicates can deepen the understanding that one as a

researcher gets of the individual's way of expressing him/herself, both explicitly and implicitly. For example quite a few of the respondents expressed a positive wish for the applicant to be able to fit in with the present group of people working in the organisation. When discussing this finding we thought of the possible impact that this could have on the applicants being selected as well as the future of the company. This criterion could for example lead to the company not developing, as the persons who are employed are too similar to those already working there. A possible positive consequence the criterion could have however is that the applicant becomes more content and happy since s/he finds it easy to adjust into the climate of the team.

In conclusion we are inclined to believe that the respondents, who tended to be less active in their characterisations of the fictive applicants on the pictures, are likely to be less biased in their way of thinking.

The theories and our result

We cannot draw any conclusions regarding what types of interview methods that the respondents tended to implement in their everyday work, however it became clear that they tended to rely to a rather great extent on the implicit personality theories in employment interviews. This was more or less apparent in all the protocols.

The Gestalt effect (Gabriel, Fineman, & Sims 2000) could also be identified as active in the respondents' experiences of the phenomenon. However, this was most discernable in the second research question. When put with this assignment the recruiters tended to characterise the applicants into different roles with the help of cues they found in the picture, such as clothes and body language. In some cases we also found evidence for the Halo-effect (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002) where the recruiters explicitly stated that they were influenced by their past good/bad experiences when they decided which applicants to employ.

We are also of the opinion that our research supports the theory of selective-awareness (Mabon, 2002). However since no actual interview was ever recorded or studied we cannot explicitly say when the recruiters made their choice of applicants. However we can identify some of the criteria which they based their choices on. Since many of the respondents stated that clothes and facial expressions were important this suggests that they in general make up their mind rather quickly in an interview situation as this is the first thing one notice.

Furthermore we have found some tendencies of adverse impact among several of the respondents. For example one of the respondents states that s/he believes older people are less likely to change; also the fact that many of the respondents find it important that the

applicant should be able to fit in with the current work team. These ideas could lead to, and probably will in some cases, that older applicants become discriminated in employment situations as well as persons who don't fit in with the current work group. Also the fact that many of the respondents considered clothes to be important in the employment interview could have an adverse impact on persons who cannot afford to dress formally when going to the employment interview.

In our research we couldn't find any inclinations of discrimination towards people of ethnic minorities. One of the persons posing as an applicant was chosen based on the fact that he came from a South European country. On the surface however this doesn't seem to have affected the respondents' choice of applicants. Though we are very well aware that the fact that we wrote the word diversity on our research description might have affected the respondents.

Validity

In order for a phenomenological research to reach high validity it needs to be evident that the respondent has been engaged in the assignment and the research question (Lindén, & Szybek, 2003). In accordance with Dahlgren (2002) we consider creativity to be one of the indicators of engagement, this since when the respondent is creative in his/her answers it means that s/he has actually thought and reasoned when answering the question, and therefore is engaged. The full cooperation of the individual is needed. After having read the self-reports we consider them to show a high validity, while all respondent shows signs of engagement in relation to the questions.

Another basis for validity is the ability of other researchers to take part in the researchers' line of argument both within the analysis as well as in the methodological steps within the research process itself. This is one of the strengths of the software Minerva as it provides the possibility for other researchers to review the process of analysis in every step. Thereby it also makes it possible for other researches to validate the research. We are also of the opinion that our research process is described in a clear way where one can get an insight into our own reflections we had as researchers during the study.

Method

Our choice of data collection method proved to work pretty well when studying the implicit attitudes among recruiters once they agreed on participating in our study. It reduced the amount of paper-work as well as we weren't limited to having participants in only one part of

the country. However, we cannot claim that we reached a saturation point in our study nevertheless we felt that the self-reports that were submitted to us at some point started to bring less and less new information about the phenomenon we aimed to study. We are therefore of the opinion that the sample is large enough in order for us as researchers to be able to draw some conclusions and see some general tendencies.

Regarding the method for analysis, MCA, it can be described as an ongoing maturity process. By this we mean that it took quite some time before one felt that one had full control of how it worked. The idea of the software however works well with the study we performed. One of the greatest advantages of the method was the application of the epoché, this because it allowed us to study the phenomenon without being influenced by our natural attitude. We also feel that our preconceived ideas weren't something that affected us much during the analysis and interpretations of the protocols.

Sources of error

One possible source of error which we identified in our study is the research description. Our research description was rather detailed and we now believe that perhaps we were too detailed. In spite of our attempts to be careful of not telling the participants too much by omitting the term implicit discrimination we believe that perhaps this wasn't enough. Perhaps we should have left out the word diversity as well since this could have influenced some of the respondents to pay more attention to the way they answered. However we still found it necessary to be quite specific in the research description since we otherwise believed it would have been hard to persuade people into participating in our study.

The pictures can also be considered as a possible source of error since these in a few cases are taken at another distance than the others. One person for example appears to be further away than the others. We believe that this in some cases could have affected the respondents' way of answering.

Future

As most studies concerning implicit attitudes have shown, prejudices exist in employment situations as well. Therefore we were interested in studying how these implicit attitudes appear in the shared life-world. This in order to hopefully be able to increase the personnel selector's awareness of how his/her implicit thoughts and ideas influence his/her employment decision; something which in the future can lead to less biased employment decisions.

In our study the majority of the respondents came from different municipalities in Sweden. One possible explanation for this tendency, which we discussed, could be that the municipalities perhaps had come further with their diversity project, than companies in the private sector. Therefore the municipalities may have been more interested in this topic than other companies. Nevertheless we also believe that it is possible that municipalities felt more inclined to answer, since they represent people in their regions in another way than companies do. That is, they work more with the social aspects of society such as childcare, health issues and building permits etc. It could also be that they perhaps had more time to participate than the companies had.

We believe that there are many ways in which one can build upon our study. For example, it would be interesting to ask the same questions to recruiters living in other countries and see if the same tendencies also can be shown there. One could also focus on municipalities exclusively and see if there are any differences between different parts of Sweden.

A possible modification of our study could be that one instead of using pictures and letting the respondents discuss these, would use CV's exclusively. It is also possible to give the recruiters the assignment to pair a fictive CV with a picture and explain their reasoning behind their choice. Another way, which we also discussed during the research process, was that it could be interesting to study how the different dialects of applicants affect the recruiter's impression of them. This could have been done with the help of tape recordings of people from different parts of Sweden describing themselves. The descriptions however would be rather similar to one another.

In the discussion of our result and during the research process many new questions awoke, such as "to what extent do they rely on their education and how much of their choice is based on their implicit personality theories?" Another question we discussed was how much education about diversity would influence the recruiter's judgement? Will education about prejudice and diversity lead the recruiters' to abandon their implicit personality theories in employment interviews?

We believe that it is impossible to be totally objective since it is necessary for us as humans to characterise our surroundings and the people within them. It is impossible to ignore our feelings whether these are part of the individual's life-world or the shared life-world. Nevertheless we are of the opinion that it is necessary to discuss the negative aspects of our implicit attitudes explicitly. That is people, especially people working with personnel

selection, need to become more aware of how much their earlier experiences and presuppositions affect their employment decisions.

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Appendix A

Project description: Psychology essay concerning the subject diversity

Background

We are two students, Evelina Bergh and Anna Hagsten who are studying our fourth semester at the “Human Resources program” at Lund University. We are wondering if You are interested in participating in our research regarding personnel selection and recruitment. We are interested in knowing how You work with diversity within Your organisation.

Our interest in this area mainly comes from a university course we attended last autumn called “Intercultural Psychology”. In this course we had many interesting discussions on how culture marks the individual’s way of thinking.

An active work with diversity can for example help the organisation to become better at meeting the demands of different customers. Something which is necessary as Sweden today is a more multicultural society and therefore call for an understanding of different cultures..

Method

We will be using a less traditional research design which is built upon the phenomenological approach. Therefore our research will not be done with the help of surveys or other common types of instruments. Instead we have designed a website where You are asked to answer two questions, one broad question and a question relating to pictures. The test will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, however this is of course very individual, and depends on how much or how little one wants to write.

Our study is built upon the individuals’ experiences of their work and the goal of our study is to reach a greater understanding of the individual. With the help of the individuals’ own words we as researchers will interpret the submitted self-reports with as objectively as possible. This in order to understand Your situation.

The interpretations will be done with the help of a computer program designed for text analyses (MCA-Minerva). It is a program developed by our instructor, senior university lecturer Roger Sages, who we in our research will work with. Among other things Roger has worked with this mode of procedure at different companies in Sweden and abroad, meaning that he has great experience of the phenomenological approach within the area of work- and organisational psychology.

Naturally You are guaranteed total confidentiality, something which also will be apparent when we carry out our research.

Object of our study

The purpose of our study is to get a deeper understanding of how personnel selection is done in reality within Swedish companies.

Presentation of our study

The essay will be completed in the end of May. After the 10th of June, when the essay is finished and accounted for, we will send you a copy of the finished research. Possibly, our instructor Roger Sages will arrange a seminar where we present our research.

We are hoping for a rewarding and interesting co-operation!

Best regards

Evelina Bergh and Anna Hagsten

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We are also available by email: evelina_bergh@hotmail.com or annahagsten@gmail.com
Instructor Roger Sages can be reached at: 046-2228756 or roger.sages@psychology.lu.se*

Appendix B

The Website

Page 1

Hi, we are delighted that You want to participate in our study!

The test consists of 2 parts. In the first part You are asked to answer a broad question and in the second part we ask You to answer a question relating to a few pictures.

Of course Your answers will be treated confidentially-

As we have chosen a phenomenological research approach to our study the questions are intentionally phrased broad and all-embracing. The reason for this being our interest in how You as an individual interpret and form an understanding of Your work as a recruiter.

Please note that once You have written an answer and moved on to the second question **it is impossible to go back and change your answer on the first question.** You can choose to answer the questions on different occasions. Consequently You don't have to do the whole test at once.

We will send You a copy of the finished essay in the beginning of June if you are interested in taking part of the finished research.

We need Your answers as soon as possible, however preferably before the 29/4.

Thank You for your interest !

Anna Hagsten och Evelina Bergh

Students at the institution of work- and organizational Psychology at Lund University.

[next page](#)

Page 2

Instructions: 2 pages are the maximum length of your answer. Write freely and spontaneously, there is no right or wrong answer. Do not think about grammar and spelling, it is the content that is important

Question 1: You are about to do an employment interview with a job applicant for a vacancy on the company. The type of post is not of interest. Under these conditions describe the thoughts, expectancies, feelings and associations you have about the applicant when you do the interview.

Page 3

Due to the promise that the persons on the pictures would stay anonymous, no pictures are presented in this paper, instead we have provided descriptions of each picture below.

Picture A: shows a blonde young man in his early twenties who is well-dressed with a shirt and jacket. He wears glasses and is smiling warmly at the camera.

Picture B: shows a young dark haired woman, also in her early twenties, she is casually dressed wearing a t-shirt. Her hands are held behind the back and she is smiling warmly into the camera.

Picture C: shows a South-european man in his middle twenties, he is casually dressed wearing a sweatshirt, his black hair is quite long and is kept back by his hands. He is not smiling into the camera. He also has short stubble.

Picture D: shows a brown haired woman in her middle twenties, she wears a colourful pink jumper; she has her hands behind her back and smiles into the camera.

Picture E: shows a well dressed man with glasses in his middle twenties, he wears a jacket and a shirt. His brown hair is quite long and grows down to his cheeks. His hands are in his pockets and he smiles nervously into the camera.

Picture F: shows a woman in her fifties, she wears her brownish hair short and clutches her hands in front of herself. She is casually dressed and smiles confidently into the camera.

Instructions: 2 pages are the maximum length of your answer. Write freely and spontaneously, there is no right or wrong answer. Do not think about grammar and spelling, it is the content that is important. If you experience any problem with the pictures, please let us know.

Question 2: You work as a recruiter at the company and you are asked to hire a person as a stand in /fill in for the post as assistant in the economics department. The pictures below show six job-applicants. You don't have time to do any job interviews. Given these conditions you are asked to choose three persons who you think will be appropriate for the job. Describe what influenced your choice and how you think under these circumstances. Also motivate why you didn't pick the other three persons.

Appendix C

Modality Belief

Categories

- Doxa-affirmation: the person expresses something with confidence
- Doxa-negation: the person is not certain that he/she knows what is being expressed
- Probability: the person expresses a probability
- Possibility: the person expresses a possibility
- Question: the person expresses something questionably/dubiously

Modality: Function

Categories

- Perceptive: the person expresses something clearly and concretely
- Signitive: the person expresses something abstractly
- Imaginative: the person expresses an abstract idea/concept
- Other categories within this modality are combinations like signitive-perceptive, which mean that the person expresses him/herself abstractly however he or she is still concrete on some levels.

For example “B and C does not give a serious and professional impression” This meaning unit is signitive since it raises further questions like what is a serious and professional impression, it is perceptive since the person clearly expresses that it is B and C that does not give a serious expression.”

We have chosen to implement only the first three categories of the modality function since we found the others to be irrelevant in our short texts.

Modality: Time

Categories

- Present: the persons expresses something that is taking place now
- Past: the person expresses something that has taken place earlier
- Future: the person expresses something that will take place in the future
- Present-past: the person talks about something that has happened earlier that has consequences in the present
- Present-future: the person talks about something that takes place now that will have consequences in the future
- Always-recurrent: the person expresses something that always occurs that the person has experience of
- Empty: No perception of time is being expressed

Modality: Affect

Categories

- Positive-prospective: the person’s expression is positive and future oriented
- Positive-retrospective: the person’s expression is positive and oriented towards the past
- Neutral: The person expresses her/himself neutrally or without emotions

- Negative-prospective: The person's expression is negative and future oriented
- Negative-retrospective: The person's expression is negative and oriented towards the past

Modality: Will

Categories

- Engagement: The person is engaged in something
- Aspiration: The person expresses a demand
- Wish-positive: the person expresses a wish for something to happen
- Wish-negative: the person expresses a wish for something not to happen
- Unengagement: No engagement can be traced
- None: No form of will can be traced

Modality: Property

Categories

- My: something belongs to me
- Your: something belongs to you (singular)
- His/her/its: something belongs to he, she or it
- Our: something belongs to us
- Your: something belongs to you (plural)
- Their: something belongs to them
- None: no form property is expressed

Modality: Subject

Categories

- I: "I" is the subject in the expression
- We: "We" is the subject in the expression
- One-all: "one or one-all" is the subject in the specific context
- Unspecified: No subject exists in the expression