

# Attitudes Towards Swedish-English

*Swedish Upper Secondary School Students' Evaluations of Swedish-English  
Accented Teachers*



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## **Abstract**

English can be seen, to some extent, as the second language of most Swedes, even though it has no official status in Sweden. Despite a high proficiency in the language throughout the Swedish population, Swedes seem to have issues identifying with English, as is evident in a widespread resentment towards a Swedish-English accented variety. The current study examines Swedish upper secondary school students' attitudes towards Swedish-accented teachers in comparison to native-like accented teachers. A matched-guise technique was used where two speakers (one male and one female) were recorded, posing as teachers with a typical Swedish-English accent as well as a native-like accent. In total, 99 students participated in the study and their attitudes to 12 different traits were examined, as well as the teachers' perceived suitability. The results of the study show that the participants prefer the native-like teachers to a great extent, as they are rated higher in almost every trait. The study also reveals that the students seem to prefer the male teachers over the females. The results presented in this study is interpreted as a sign of native-speakerist tendencies among Swedish upper secondary school students and it is pointed out that further research is needed in this field to support the findings of this study. Also, this study stresses that the native-speaker model needs to be counteracted in order for a model centered on global communication to take hold.

**Keywords:** Accent evaluations, matched guise, Swedish-English, native-speakerism

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## 1. Introduction

Without any doubts, English has become the most widespread and used language in history. Moderate estimates count the total number of L1 and L2 users to around 940 million speakers (Paul, Simons & Fennig, 2016). This number, however, does not take into account all of the millions of English as a foreign language (EFL) users. Amongst these EFL users we find representatives in nearly all of Europe and large parts of Asia. Putting these numbers together, we end up with well over a billion reasonably proficient users of English<sup>1</sup>. Presently, English as a second language (ESL) and EFL users greatly outnumber native speakers, which is also true for teachers of English (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011). According to Lowe (2016), non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) outnumber native English speaking teachers (NESTs) four to one.

Considering these numbers, prominent research from the early 1990s show that English language teaching (ELT) has yet to change in any drastic way to better suit the needs of the entirety of its users, but instead, teachers often cling to a model where the native speaker is seen as the ideal user of language (Kachru 1992; Phillipson 1992). Due to the world-wide spread of English, it becomes apparently problematic when the larger part of its users are expected to live up to a near impossible ideal. Some recent changes to remedy this can be identified in countries such as Sweden, where the introduction of the present curricula in 2011 stressed a more globally communicative approach; a change in orientation which builds largely on the theories of EIL and ELF (Modiano, 2009).

In Sweden, English holds a prominent position and is regularly featured in media such as television, radio and the internet. Also, it is not uncommon to encounter native Swedish speakers conversing with some English features as it is often used to color and supplement the

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<sup>1</sup> Getting exact numbers are near impossible as the number of users are rapidly increasing and it is a matter of how the term *user* is defined see: Crystal 1997; Xiaoqiong & Xianxing 2011; Ling and Braine, 2007.

Swedish language. But, at the same time, it is nearly as common to see fellow Swedes cringe at the sound of another Swede speaking English with a distinct Swedish accent.

Even though it lacks official status, English can, in some ways, be viewed as a second language to a majority of the Swedish population. Despite the frequent use, it appears contradictory, however, for a country like Sweden that prides itself on the generally high level of English proficiency of its population, not to have a stronger sense of identity in the language. In close relation to this, we (the authors of the study at hand) still feel that Swedes yet have a ways to go when it comes to ridding ourselves of the idea that local-accented speakers of English are less proficient than those who manage to sound more native-like (see Modiano, 2009).

As soon-to-be English teachers, this issue is of special interest to us. It would not seem farfetched to believe that, as teachers of English, we are expected to be models of proficiency. This raises questions about what proficiency exactly is perceived to be and what the consequences would be if we, the teachers, do not uphold this perception. As of yet (to our knowledge), little has been done in terms of researching this in Sweden, which is why one of the initial purposes of this study is to start laying a foundation for this subject in hopes of detecting areas of interest for future research. Thus, the research question addressed in this study is as follows: What attitudes can be found among Swedish upper secondary students towards native-like accented teachers and Swedish-English accented teachers? Based on this question, our hypothesis for this study is that Swedish upper secondary students prefer teachers who, as closely as possible, resemble, in speech, a native speaker of English over teachers with a distinct Swedish-accented English.

## 2. Previous Research

In the following section, an introduction to language attitudes is given with references to both initial and contemporary research in the field. Then, the concept of *native-speakerism* and how it has come to affect English language teaching and its practicing teachers is discussed. Finally, the spread of English and English as an international language (EIL) is addressed with specific emphasis on the European situation.

### 2.1. Language Attitudes

The study of language often straddles two different fields, namely, psychology and linguistics, where attitudes primarily relate to the former and language to the latter. Although this might seem inconvenient, this situation is somewhat self-explanatory as you cannot separate language from its user. Since the purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of upper secondary school students towards Swedish-English speaking teachers, it seems important to include in this text a section about attitudes and how they have been shown to correlate with problems associated with second language learning. It is of further relevance to describe some theories on how attitudes towards other people are built up to instill an understanding for some of the underlying reasons for common stereotypification and subsequent discrimination.

Everybody could be said to have certain pre-determined ideas about different languages and their speakers. Such ideas could be called stereotypes and they constitute a cornerstone in people's attitudes towards their surroundings. Deprez and Persoons (1987) argues that attitudes can be divided into three basic components: *cognitive*, *evaluative* and *conative*. The cognitive component refers to whatever conceptions someone might carry towards the object of one's attitude. Regardless if these conceptions are grounded in reality or if they are imagined, they are always valued based on one's emotions, the so called evaluative component. This process prepares us for how we act towards the object of the attitude in

question. How we act is, in turn, what is referred to as the conative component. These three components can easily be divided in theory, however, in reality they are closely connected and are naturally dependent upon one another (Deprez and Persoons, 1987). This is further explained by Cargile, Giles, Ryan and Bradac (1994) who have developed a process model specifically for language attitudes including the speaker, hearer and possible outcomes in an immediate social situation. Much like Deprez and Persoons (1987) they stress the convoluted relation between several factors, such as the three basic components previously mentioned, as well as the speaker and hearer's interpersonal history, and demonstrate how these factors produce stereotypical behavior and attitudes. They also argue that these attitudes might result in certain communication strategies (speaking louder, over simplifying), as well as disassociation and disengagement from the speaker.

In a classic study by Pear (1931) where he invited the audience of a BBC radio show to create personality profiles for speakers heard on the radio, it was concluded that there was little or no correlation between the audience and speakers' ratings. Still, studies continue to produce convincing results showing that a speaker's accent plays a crucial role when evaluating personality traits and L2 competence (Dalton-Puffer, 1997; Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois and Pittam, 2001; Buckingham, 2014; Rubin & Smith, 1990). Much like Pear's study, early research focused mainly on listeners' attitudes towards native varieties of English (Torstensson, 2010), and in a matched guise study by Howard Giles (1970) it was concluded that within mere seconds of hearing a person speak, we make assumptions and readily try to place him/her into a mold. This is further supported by other studies showing that a person's gender, age, social status, personality and ethnicity are examples of attributes that are ascribed within these first moments of interaction (Torstensson, 2010; Giles & Sassoon, 1983; Stewart, Ryan & Giles, 1985). Rarely do studies focus on all of these attributes, as it would be hard to manage, but rather focus on a selected



few. One such study, conducted by Stewart et al. (1985), addressed the status and solidarity aspects of language and examined the attitudes towards British and American English among American university graduates. The results aligned with their hypothesis and the speakers of British English were assigned higher status than their American counterparts, however, the solidarity ratings showed reversed results. Here the American speakers prevailed and the participants scored in favor of their own variety. These results coincide with other earlier studies (Huygens & Vaughan, 1983; Gallois, Callan & Johnstone, 1970) and is explained by Cargile et al. (1994) who state that a strong sense of in-group belonging and association to a specific language variety bolsters solidarity ratings. They also claim that a strong sense of outgroup belonging reinforces the willingness to achieve proficiency in a second language, which is further supported by Gardner (1985) and his studies on second language motivation.

Although earlier studies agree that listeners assign higher status to RP English than other native varieties, more recent studies indicate that a shift of power appears to have occurred. In an extensive study by Bayard et al. (2001), listeners from Australia, New Zealand and the USA were faced with the task to evaluate male and female speakers of several native English varieties (Australian, New Zealand, American and British English). In contrast to previous tradition, the results showed that all of the participants preferred American English. Also, the New Zealand participants downrated their own variety for several of the examined traits, except for solidarity which was rated slightly higher. The Australian participants rated their own variety comparatively high, but it was still bested by American English. Bayard et al. (2001) concludes by arguing that American English is replacing British English as the most prestigious and favored accent and ascribes this shift as being the result of “the inexorable pressure of American global hegemony in all its guises” (p. 41). These findings stand in clear contrast to the previous research by Stewart et al. (1985). Bayard et al. (2001) refers to this lack of *dialect/accent loyalty* as *linguistic deference*. Although a term initially

created for describing the relation between native accents, it is also applicable when studying the relation between native and non-native accents, especially when non-native accents are recognized as valid, rather than deficit, varieties of the language.

As mentioned earlier, language attitudes can lead to false prejudices and subsequent discrimination. Boyd (2004) concludes in her study of attitudes towards teachers in Sweden with a foreign accent that this instant judgement has proved to be a major reason for widespread discrimination of people that stand out from the native-speaker norm. This sort of prejudice, Boyd (2004) argues, often takes shape in the form of non-native speakers being rejected in the job market. Discrimination such as this becomes accentuated in fields that are more language intensive, such as teaching, and has become a primary concern in, for example, East Asia (Boyd, 2004; Holliday, 2006). This native-speaker ideal becomes even more problematic when considering, as Boyd and Bredänge (2013) point out, that people who learn a new language post-childhood are highly unlikely to ever achieve a fully native-like pronunciation. This becomes an obvious paradox for foreign language teachers as they are expected to convey the language proficiency of a native speaker, as well as understanding the situation of a foreign language learner.

**2.1.1. Native-speakerism.** In the context of English language teaching (ELT) much of the above mentioned discrimination becomes salient. Native-speakerism is a term used specifically in this context to address these issues and is defined by Holliday (2006) as “a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (p. 385). In other words, native-speakerism, much like the previously mentioned prejudice that Boyd (2004) discusses, refers to the often common belief that native speakers, regardless of any teacher training education, are more suitable teachers of language than NNESTs. This stereotypical belief is often based on

irrelevant factors, such as race or accent, rather than language proficiency or actual teaching ability (Amin, 1997; Boyd, 2003). Research has yet to find any evidence to support this belief, but native-speakerism is a resilient myth which continues to influence ELT and NNESTs negatively.

Not only does native-speakerism restrain ELT from embracing a more inclusive methodology, but its impact can, as Holliday (2006) argues, be identified in other aspects as well. Though most common in Asia, English native speakers are often preferred over non-native English speakers when employing teachers. Butler (2007) argues the reason for this being that ELT in east Asia has undergone several changes during the last decade where focus has shifted from a stance of mainly studying grammar, reading and writing to one where achieving a higher level of oral proficiency is emphasized. Thus, due to the native-speakerism ideology, the pronunciation of teachers has become increasingly important. In a matched guise study examining young learners' attitudes towards their teachers and student performance, it was concluded that students favored American-accented English over Korean-accented English and would rather have the American accented speaker as their teacher. However, the study failed to find any significant differences in students' listening comprehension between the two accents (Butler, 2007). Consequently, students might favor NNESTs, though dismissing teachers' suitability to teach based on their accent is no valid reason. However, in our experience, this is not the case in Sweden, where the standard is not to hire native speakers as English teachers, but rather that Swedish teachers are preferred due to their high proficiency and, arguably, their ability to mirror the speech of a native speaker.

As has been mentioned, early studies on language attitudes often focused exclusively on different standard accents (for example GA and RP) but, due to the spread of English, an increasing number of studies assume a native-speakerist approach by including non-native varieties (Dalton-Puffer, 1997). One such study, conducted in Austria, is of particular interest

to our study, as Austria, like Sweden, is a European country with a large number of highly proficient users of English, yet it is not an official language. The results of the study showed that the non-native variety, in this case Austrian-accented English, was rated last whereas the native speaker varieties were preferred. These findings coincide with another study conducted in Japan by Chiba et al. (1995), which concluded that Japanese university students favored native English varieties over Japanese-accented English. Also, it was concluded that an increased exposure to non-native varieties alone is not enough to produce more favorable attitudes, but instead it argues that “the rationality of ideology behind the development of world Englishes appears to be required” (p. 85).

## **2.2. Mapping the world of EIL**

In order to map out and better understand the spread of the English language with its increasing number of users, linguist Braj Kachru proposed a model which represents “the spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). He did this by drawing up three concentric circles, in which he placed the different speakers of English in the world. At the core of this model is the Inner Circle where English native-speaking countries such as USA, Australia and the United Kingdom are included. The Outer Circle then includes countries where English is an official language often used in institutionalized settings, though is not considered a native-language. Here we often find former colonies such as India, Pakistan, Singapore and South Africa. The final circle is called the Expanding Circle and includes countries such as China, Russia, and most parts of Europe, where English is seen and taught mainly as a foreign language but still has become an important language in various contexts (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011; Kilickaya, 2009).

Kachru constructed his model as a response to the *Interlanguage theory* which, according to Kachru, focuses too much on “[e]rrors, fossilization and socio-cultural contexts” (Kilickaya, 2009, p. 35). According to Interlanguage theory, language learning is a systematic process where native proficiency is the ultimate goal and the competence of second-language users of English is based on their ability to speak fluently, i.e. without interference from their L1 (Kilickaya, 2009). Second-language users of English are thus judged on their ability to imitate native speakers, which, according to Kachru, is not reasonable as English is not a fixed language owned by native speakers (Kachru, 1992). However, Kachru argues that reproducing these norms serves no purpose as they are not applicable or relevant for communities outside the Inner Circle (Kilickaya, 2009).

Despite the growing number of ESL and EFL users of English, ELT has yet to change in any drastic way to better suit its users’ needs. Kachru (1992) implies that “it involves issues of attitude, of power and politics, and of history and economics” (p. 357), and he continues by listing six fallacies which nurture these issues. Some of these fallacies have already been mentioned, though not explicitly, like the fallacy that “the goal of learning and teaching English is to adopt the native models of English” (Kachru, 1992, p. 358) or that the emergence of English varieties is a sign of linguistic decay (Kachru, 1992). Whereas other fallacies, such as, the main reason to study English is to be able to interact with native speakers, or that NESTs “provide a serious input in the global teaching of English” (Kachru, 1992, p. 358), have not been discussed in any wider sense. But, in summary, these fallacies all discourage the use of any non-native English varieties and elevate the native model. Phillipson (1992) discusses these issues in a similar way but instead he uses his own, more commonly used, term *native speaker fallacy*.

Due to the accessible nature of Kachru’s model, its rooting success in the field of EIL is understandable. However, it is not exempt from criticism and some concerns have been

raised (Modiano, 1999; Modiano, 2009; Graddol, 1997). One such concern relates specifically to the use of English in the Swedish context, namely, that Sweden does not fit any of the three proposed circles. Sweden does not meet the requirements for the Outer Circle as English is not an official language, nor does it find itself in the Expanding Circle as the English language can arguably be defined as more of a second than a foreign language (Cunningham, 2009). There is an ongoing shift in many countries, Sweden included, where English is being used at an increasing rate in several institutional contexts, such as business and education, similar to that of the countries in the Outer Circle (Graddol, 1997). However, Sweden is in no way exclusive as this is true for several of the European countries. Modiano (1999) raises an additional concern with Kachru's model when pointing out how the model of the concentric circles, indirectly, portrays an unbalanced relationship between the groups of the different circles in regards to the supposed ownership of the language, in favor of the countries within the inner circle. This becomes problematic, Modiano (1999) argues, in discussions regarding EIL as this enhances the (unobtainable) view of the native speaker as a model which speakers from the outer and expanding circles should emulate. When Kachru first introduced his model it was revolutionizing but the use of English has since changed, and one might question how relevant his model is in contemporary language research.

As a response to Kachru's model, Modiano (1999) therefore proposed an alternative which he called *the centripetal circles of international English*. This model focuses on proficiency in *English as an international language* (EIL) instead of nativeness, as he argues that simply being a native speaker of English does not directly qualify a person as being a proficient communicator in English on the international or intercultural level. Thus, for a native speaker with a strong regional dialect or accent to be considered a proficient EIL speaker he/she would need to be able to code switch to a more internationally intelligible accent. Modiano (1999) also argues that his model and the EIL perspective would “establish a

democratic basis for language development” (p. 26) and the deterioration of the native-speaker ideal would naturally follow, allowing its users to claim ownership and continue to develop the language.

**2.2.1. The European situation.** While most of the research on native-speakerism and EIL has been done in post-colonial countries or East Asia, this can be explained by the fact that most postcolonial countries still use English to a great extent as a second language, and that countries in East Asia, like China, are the biggest consumers of ELT, with an increasing demand for it (He & Miller, 2011). It would seem logical that parts of the world where the use of, and need for, English is extensive or rapidly expanding are naturally of interest to researchers in the field of applied linguistics, especially so to those who research EIL.

However, a large market for ESL that seems to have fallen between the cracks is mainland Europe. For it too is a region where English is used to an increasing extent and great efforts are being put into improving proficiency in the language throughout the EU. Modiano (2009) explains this by arguing that Europe finds itself in a gray area between the outer and the expanding circles. Mainland Europe, Modiano argues, has, unlike most post-colonial countries, yet to establish its own commonly accepted L2 varieties. Yet, proficiency in English and the use of it is generally high in the region. He further claims that Europe has, for long, bought into the myth of the ideal native-speaker instead of focusing on developing a system for ELT that better fits the use and needs of the European population (Modiano, 2009).

It is further argued that the term *English as a lingua franca* (ELF), as opposed to using the term EIL, could be used to better suit the European situation as it would include an openness to all kinds of speakers of English without ascribing more or less authority over the language based on which concentric circle one’s country happens to find itself in. It should, however, be noted that the way Modiano uses the term ELF differs from the more traditional

view where ELF is mainly used to describe L2 to L2 communication. In Modiano's view, inclusion of all speakers and their respective varieties is crucial as "[t]his sense of 'inclusion' promotes situational adaptation across the three [concentric] circles" (Modiano, 2009, p. 212).

Further, as an alternative to the native-speaker model, Modiano (2009) suggests that mainland Europe would do well in adopting a model for ELT similar to that of many postcolonial countries where local linguistic attributes have been allowed, rather than being shunned, to color their English. This *post-colonial theory* has been a proven factor in these countries' having established their own institutionalized L2 varieties:

If one attempts to superimpose postcolonial theory onto a mainland European scenario, much fruitful insight can be gained. Thus, I propose wholeheartedly that it is high time that the postcolonial imagination which championed the rise of second-language varieties across Africa and Asia be imported to Europe. (Modiano, 2009, p. 214)

Seemingly, this would be a welcome approach in countries such as Sweden where the national syllabus for English in the upper secondary school already emphasizes the importance of ELT as a medium for developing intercultural communication. In fact, the very first sentence in the syllabus stresses that "[t]eaching of English should aim at helping students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes" (Skolverket, 2013, p. 1). Nowhere is it implied that the L1 speakers of English should be looked to for modeling one's own language. In fact, Cunningham (2009) implies that such a process is already underway, as she explains how Swedish speakers of English report on reserving the right of sounding Swedish rather than native-like. As natives of Sweden, we (the authors of the essay at hand) do not entirely agree with such a stance, and as we have seen



firsthand during our professional experiences in VFU (work-integrated learning) there still seems to be a strong tendency in Sweden to uphold the idea of the native speaker as a model for which to strive, perhaps particularly so for teachers of English in Sweden.

### **3. Method**

This study aims to investigate how students' attitudes towards teachers are affected by teachers' accents. Thus, to achieve the goal of this study and to answer the focused research question previously mentioned, a quantitative matched-guise method will be used. The instrument of choice for collecting the required data is a questionnaire distributed to students focusing on their attitudes towards certain speakers of English. The study focuses on upper secondary school students' attitudes and was thus conducted on eligible schools in the southern part of Sweden. Once the study had been conducted and all the data was gathered, the results were analyzed to disclose any possible correlation between the speakers' accent and the students' attitudes towards said speakers. As the students' initial attitudes were what was aimed to be examined, their attitudes were only measured once, making this a *cross-sectional study*.

#### **3.1. Matched guise technique**

When doing attitudinal research it is common to do so through what is called a subjective reaction test, and while several methods for obtaining data exist for this purpose, when it comes to implicitly studying people's attitudes, the matched guise technique (MGT) is amongst those more frequently used (Gaies & Beebe, 1991). Due to its ability to single out reactions towards certain traits without the participant's direct knowledge, it has, since its introduction, been considered an obvious choice for sociolinguists who are interested in studying attitudes towards languages or parts of language.

In practice, MGT is a certain technique used to find out about people's attitudes without them knowing that you are actually targeting those specific attitudes. This is done by playing a set of voice recordings of a number of speakers. The listeners are then tasked with filling out an evaluative questionnaire for each speaker. What the listeners are not aware of (the guise) is that some of the speech samples are recorded by the same person/s with some linguistic differences. The results of interest are thus the ones produced by comparing the scores of the two variations of the same speakers. The researcher is then able to single out attitudes relating to specific linguistic utterances (Laur, 2014).

It is, however, important to note that the MGT is not without fault or criticism. The original MGT performed by Lambert (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum 1960) has been questioned in terms of generalizability as they only used male speech samples but also that the group of judges was rather small to be claimed to represent a large city's population (Laur, 2014). Several suggestions have thus been made as to how the technique can be applied to better allow for more reliant data to be obtained (Laur, 2014; Gaies & Beebe, 1991; Connor, 2008). Some of these even go as far as claiming that the method's greatest appeal may be of a more superficial character than that of its alternatives. This view is put forward by Gaies and Beebe in their study from 1991. Further, they conclude that, while the MGT has value in obtaining useful data, any information gained by this technique "can and needs to be confirmed by other means" (Gaies & Beebe, 1991, p.16).

Since this study appears to be the first of its kind (as far as we can determine) in that it attempts to study attitudes towards Swedish-English in a school context, it would seem appropriate to do so through the MGT with the hope that this study might spur others to conduct research in this field using other methods to confirm or contradict the results of this study. As such, we are well aware of the limitations of the MGT but the rewards of using it in

an initial study of a new field would seem greater. Especially if said limitations are well taken into consideration and kept in mind while designing the experiment.

### 3.2. Instruments

This section introduces the two major instruments used in the experiment: the voice recordings and the questionnaire. They are each introduced in detail below.

**3.2.1. Speech samples.** Perhaps the most important instrument in a study such as this are the speech samples which are played for the participants. As previously described, the speech samples are an integral part of the MGT and it is important that they are constructed to be credible. To ensure that the samples were convincing in this study, four native speakers of English and four native speakers of Swedish were asked in a validation survey to listen to the respective samples, scoring them on a scale of 1-4 in terms of how convincing they were as a Swedish speaker of English (SwEng) or as to what degree the speaker had a convincingly native-like accent. This survey gave a satisfying result (where satisfying = a mean score higher than 2) which ensured that the guises were convincing enough for the purposes of the actual MGT study.

Male guise SwEng	Male guise native-like	Female guise SwEng	Female guise native-like
3.13	3	3.63	2.25

*Table 1: Validation survey, mean scores for each separate guise.*

However, simply ensuring that each speech sample is credible in terms of accent is not enough. As a researcher, measures need to be taken in order to ensure that the guises are “deceiving” enough. In the study at hand, this was done in two ways: 1) by giving a credible context for the participants, and 2) by arranging the speech samples in a way so that the guises

were not played successively. As for the context, the participants were under the impression that we were in the process of choosing an appropriate teacher for a recording of an online course in English on an intermediate level and that they were going to listen to samples of candidates in order to let us know who they thought most fitting for the task<sup>2</sup>. For the play order of the samples, see table 1 below.

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>
Male Guise 1 (native-like)	Female Guise 2 (Swedish-English)
Filler 1	Filler 1
Female Guise 1 (native-like)	Male Guise 2 (Swedish-English)
Male Guise 2 (Swedish-English)	Female Guise 1 (native-like)
Filler 2	Filler 2
Female Guise 2 (Swedish-English)	Male Guise 1 (native-like)

*Table 2: Play order of samples in group 1 and 2.*

As is evident in the table, it was decided to use both a male and a female voice to represent the two varieties in order to ensure that a proper representation of the group was given. Further, two fillers were recorded, one male and one female, in order to increase the time and information given between the actual guises. Moreover, the order of speech samples was

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<sup>2</sup> For reviewing the recorded text in its entirety see appendix I.

changed for the second group to ensure that no one voice or accent was favored by a specific position. Each recording was approximately one minute long, the shortest being 1:01 minutes long and the longest being 1:15 minutes long.

The speakers were instructed to read in a fluent and casual voice, making the recording credible for the supposed purpose of the text. Furthermore, the speakers used for the guises were also instructed to read in an as native-like accent as possible for the non-Swedish-English samples, as well as not to exaggerate the Swedish accents in order to avoid becoming parodical. It should be noted that, for the sake of consistency, both of the native-like speech samples were modeled after American-English (AmEng). The specific native-like variety was chosen because it was the one in which both speakers were the most comfortable. Furthermore, according to Bayard et al. (2001) AmEng is a high status variety world-wide, making it a suitable contrast to Swedish-English. For the Swedish-English recordings, the readers were asked to focus on typical Swedish-English phonetic occurrences, such as the [dʒ]-sound in the word 'subjects' becoming a [j]-sound, the [tʃ]-sound in 'challenge' becoming a [ʃ]-sound and the omitting of [t] (Swan & Smith, 2001). Further, they were also asked to speak with an intonation similar to that of Swedish, as merely changing the pronunciation does not necessarily equate a convincing accent (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder, 2001, p. 21-25). It should be further noted that none of the phonological changes to the pronunciation had any influence on a semantic level, i.e. the changes did not result in certain words having a different meaning than the one intended.

The rationale behind choosing to study a native-like variety instead of that of actual native speakers of English is that even though some Swedish schools are sure to have NESTs in their employ, the fact remains that the norm is, unquestionably, that English teachers in Sweden are NNESTs. Thus, studying attitudes towards native-like accents in contrast to attitudes towards Swedish-English would seem the far more relevant option.

**3.2.2. Questionnaire.** The data was obtained by use of questionnaire as this study aims to gather quantifiable data about students' attitudes<sup>3</sup>. The questionnaire was designed with several factors in mind, one such being the possibility that participants in a study like this, often unintentionally, lie to themselves to avoid admitting certain personal flaws or undesirable traits of character, even though the questionnaire is anonymous. This depends on the design of the questionnaire and is mostly true when it contains questions regarding the participants' 'self'. In a statement such as 'I would not judge a person based on their accent', some tend to answer 'strongly agree' as this is a prejudice most would not like to be associated with. This even though they would most likely, at least to some extent, do just that. This was avoided by omitting the participants 'self' and thus making the statements more neutral (Dörnyei, 2003).

Something that also needs to be considered when working with questionnaires is *social desirability bias*, which implies that the respondents provide a normative answer rather than an honest one; that is, provide what they believe to be the most socially accepted answer (Krumpal, 2013; Neuman, 2006). Thus, the participants simply provide an answer they think the researcher, or society, is looking for, which ultimately affects the validity (Dörnyei, 2003). Even though our study examines attitudes, which can be argued runs the risk of being affected by social desirability bias (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007), the chances of it affecting the results are less imminent. For it is not the attitudes or the questions themselves that are sensitive, but rather the topic being examined; in this case teachers' accents, which the participants are unaware of. Furthermore, this study and its questionnaire were constructed in order to minimize these factors by, as previously mentioned, providing the participants with a specific context and by ensuring their anonymity.

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<sup>3</sup> For reviewing the questionnaire in its entirety see appendix II.

A final factor was considered under the construction of the questionnaire, namely, the fact that by using a questionnaire a great deal of reliability is placed upon the participants. Not only do you trust them to answer truthfully but also that they make an effort when filling out the questionnaire. Furthermore, you assume that they can read the instructions and interpret them accordingly, which might not be the case. Although some of these difficulties might be impossible to solve, certain measures can be taken in order to minimize the effect they might have on the results. For this particular experiment the instructions were given orally and example statements were answered together in class and each statement was, during the construction of the questionnaire, thoroughly considered to reduce ambiguity. It should also be noted that the questionnaire was written and presented to the participants in Swedish. The reasoning behind this was to ensure that everything was understood to as great a degree as possible.

For this study, three aspects were chosen to be judged: *solidarity*, *status* and *language*. The first two aspects, *solidarity* and *status*, were chosen since they have been proved to stand the test of time when it comes to judging attitudes. This is demonstrated by the fact that they have been used to categorize a number of traits into these two aspects in earlier MGT studies (see Giles and Sassoon, 1983) as well as in later studies using the same method (see Laur, 2014). The final aspect, *language*, was added on our own volition in an attempt to measure perceived proficiency. This third aspect is relevant as the intended group for study is teachers of language and their perceived proficiency is undoubtedly an aspect that might affect attitudes towards them.

In order to ensure that any misinterpreted statements do not affect the average value for a specific aspect, it was decided to use *multi-item scales* (Dörnyei, 2003). For example, by including numerous statements measuring the students' perception of a teacher's *status*, any misinterpretation of a statement will not affect the results in any significant way as there are

other statements measuring the same aspect. For this study a total of 12 items were used to measure these aspects; five for *solidarity* (*pålitlig* - *reliable*, *vänlig* - *friendly*, *sinne för humor* - *sense of humor*, *beslutsam* - *decisive* and *ambitiös* - *ambitious*), four for *status* (*intelligent* - *intelligent*, *välutbildad* - *well educated*, *cool* - *cool* and *framgångsrik* - *successful*) and three for *language* (*flyt* - *fluency*, *begriplig* - *intelligible* and *grammatiskt kunnig* - *grammatically knowledgeable*). Laur (2014) however, notes that each trait has to be considered in relation to the context, culture and language of interest for the study, i.e. what constitutes a measurement for status in one context might not in other contexts. The trait *cool* is an example of an attempt at modifying the study to better target the attitudes of the adolescents intended to constitute the group of participants for this study. Further, it was decided that an additional item should be added (*lämplighet* - *suitability*) to ask for the students' "gut feeling" about how appropriate or not the different speakers were for the task.

All of the 12 question items measuring the three aspects were posed in the form of a simple statement: "this teacher is/has ..." followed by different adjectives representing the various traits. Each statement was followed by a five point scale where 1 represented "not at all" and 5 represented "completely". The thirteenth statement was posed in a slightly different manner as it was aimed to get the students overall opinion of the teacher. It was posed as follows: "I think this teacher suits well for the online course", followed by a similar five point scale where 1 represented "do not agree at all" and 5 represented "fully agree". The students were asked to fill out one of these forms for each speaker, including the fillers. In addition to the 13 items in the questionnaires, the students were asked to fill out a short background form as well. This included questions of their age, gender, which English course they were currently studying, how often they used English outside of school and, lastly, an open question about what purposes they used English outside of school for.



### **3.3. Participants**

The participants of the study were 99 Swedish upper secondary school students (ages 16 - 19) from two different schools in a mid-sized city in the south of Sweden (45 male and 54 female). In total, six different classes participated in the study, two of these were classes in vocational programs whereas the remaining four classes were in college/university preparatory programs. All of the participants took part on their own volition and their participation was completely anonymous. Out of the 99 participants a total number of 13 (10 male and 3 female) did not fill in the questionnaire in its entirety, therefore the results yielded from these incomplete questionnaires were disregarded in the data analysis.

### **3.4. Procedure**

Due to the fact that this study was done on six different occasions, it was important that each of the presentations were done as similarly as possible. This was done in an attempt to control, as far as possible, any outer influences. Different measures were taken to ensure this, such as: making sure that the wording of the presentation and instruction of the experiments were, as far as possible, the same and that the same instructor did the majority of the talking. The second measure was further motivated by the fact that one of the instructors was also one of the recorded guises, thus we wanted to minimize the exposure of his voice to the students.

The first thing that was done for each of the experiments was preparing the classroom. This included setting up the computer and making sure the sound system was functional and that the volume was loud enough to be heard by everyone in the room. This was done before the participants' arrival.

Once preparations were done and the participants were all seated, the researchers introduced themselves by name. This was directly followed by an introduction to the project and the reason for their participation. In this part, they were informed that their participation

was fully anonymous and voluntary. Further, they were presented with the (supposed) context of the study. After this, a short description of their task was given prior to the handing out of the questionnaires. With the questionnaires handed out, an in depth instruction was given as well as a few minutes for the students to read through the questionnaires on their own. The whole procedure from the researchers' introduction to this point took approximately 10 minutes. The instructions included: information about how long each recording lasted, a detailed description of the grading system, and the importance of the judgments being done individually. Therefore, the importance of the students refraining from communicating with each other was emphasized. Lastly, the participants were instructed to not write anything until the end of each recording.

Before the first speech sample was played, the participants were given a few minutes to fill in the background part of the questionnaire. When this was done the experiment commenced and the speech samples were played successively in accordance with table 1. Once all of the speech samples had been played the questionnaires were gathered and the students were thanked for their participation. The experiment from the playing of the first recording to when the questionnaires were all collected took approximately 25 minutes.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed mainly using two methods. First, the ANOVA (analysis of variance) method was used to calculate mean scores, and second, a p-value (value of significance) contrasting the different guises was calculated using a t-test and an f-test was used when contrasting male and female ratings as the number of participants differed. These methods will be explained in detail below.

Starting with the ANOVA method, this allowed us to compare the participants' attitudes (scores) for the two guises by giving us a mean score. All the statements were

formulated in a positive manner which means that the higher the average score, the more positive attitudes the participants had against the speaker and vice versa. To better show the difference between the guises the mean score for the Swedish-English guise was subtracted from the native-like guise, resulting in either a positive or a negative value. A positive value then signifies that the native-like guise is favored whereas a negative value signifies that the participants scored in favor of the Swedish-English guise.

Once the mean score was calculated, additional evidence was needed to confirm if any observable differences were significant, i.e. if the differences were due to random occurrence or due to controlled variances between the samples (for this study the controlled variance between the samples were the speakers' accents). To calculate the significance of the findings a t-test was used to calculate a p-value ranging from +1 to -1 using the mean scores for the two guises being compared. When doing these calculations you first pose a null hypothesis, which means that you assume that there is no difference between the two samples (Wasserstein & Lazar, 2016). The p-value is then calculated and the lower the value, the greater the incompatibility with the null hypothesis.

When calculating p-value, certain thresholds are used to indicate significance of variance. The thresholds used for this study are the following: a p-value less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) means that the difference is significant, a p-value less than 0.01 ( $p < 0.01$ ) means that the difference is very significant, and a p-value less than 0.001 ( $p < 0.001$ ) means that the difference is highly significant. If the p-value is 0.05 or higher ( $p > 0.05$ ) the difference is insignificant. In other words, if the value exceeds 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted but any values lower than 0.05 and the null hypothesis is rejected (Stefanowitsch, 2005). However, as Wasserstein and Lazar (2016) points out, “[the p-value] is a statement about data in relation to a specified hypothetical explanation, and is not a statement about the explanation itself” (p. 4), i.e. a low p-value in itself does not infer that any differences are due to, in this case, the

teachers' accents, but rather it might be due to this. Therefore, one should always be careful when drawing any conclusions based on a p-value and be aware of the fact that other factors might have influenced the participants' ratings. Also, as with dealing with any threshold levels, the significance levels for the p-value are in no way clear cut and just because a value ends up on the negative side of the threshold it does not necessarily mean that it needs to be rejected.

Both mean scores and p-values were calculated not only to measure the total differences between the two guises, but several other factors were taken into account, allowing us to examine the differences between, for example, the three different aspects, males and females, and group 1 and group 2. The data was thus analyzed in several steps and the findings will be explained and presented in the results section.

#### **4. Results and analysis**

This section will focus on presenting and analyzing the results yielded by the study. Initially, the means for each guise and trait will be presented in figures, followed by a subsequent analysis. For clarity's sake it should be mentioned that the guises will henceforth be referred to by using our own abbreviations: MG1 = male guise, native-like; MG2 = male guise, Swedish-English; FG1 = female guise, native-like; FG2 = female guise, Swedish-English.

##### **4.1. Evaluation of solidarity traits, status and language**

As described earlier, the questionnaire asked for evaluation of 12 different traits which comprised the three different aspects that were judged: *solidarity*, *status* and *language*.

Presented below are the results for the questionnaire.

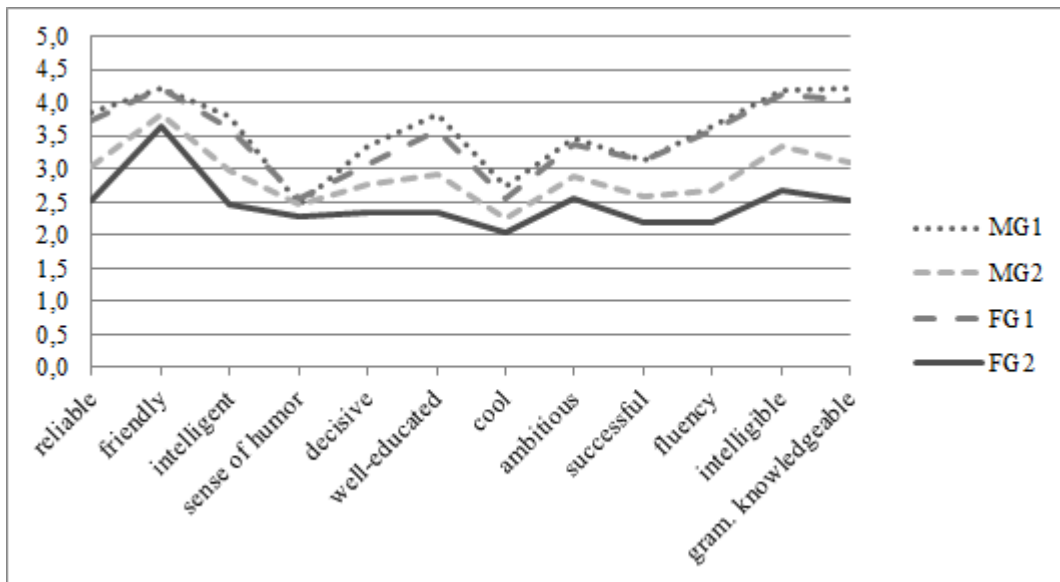


Figure 1: Means for all 12 traits: 86 Swedish upper secondary school students (35 male, 51 female).

Figure 1 shows the mean scores for each of the guises and traits as valued by the entire group of participants. The most apparent difference that is illustrated here is the fact that both of the native-like guises scored markedly higher on almost all traits. In fact, only in *sense of humor* is this not reflected clearly. Further, a pattern can be distinguished where the two Swedish-English guises seem to follow each other in proximity as well do the two native-like guises. Generally, MG1 scored the highest in all traits except for *sense of humor* and *successful* where FG1 scored marginally higher. Other than those two traits, FG1 scored the second highest in all traits. MG2, in turn, scored higher than FG2 in every trait. In general, all guises seem to follow roughly the same curve, though some distinctions can be identified. For example, the curve for FG2 is slightly less dynamic compared to the others, with the most distinctive peak being its value for *friendly* and less distinctive for *ambitious* and *intelligible*. Further, for both the male and female native-like guises, a rather distinctive peak can be identified for *well-educated*, which is less evident for the MG2 and virtually non-existent for FG2.

Below, the results for the separate aspects are illustrated each in their own figure in order to give a more detailed perspective.

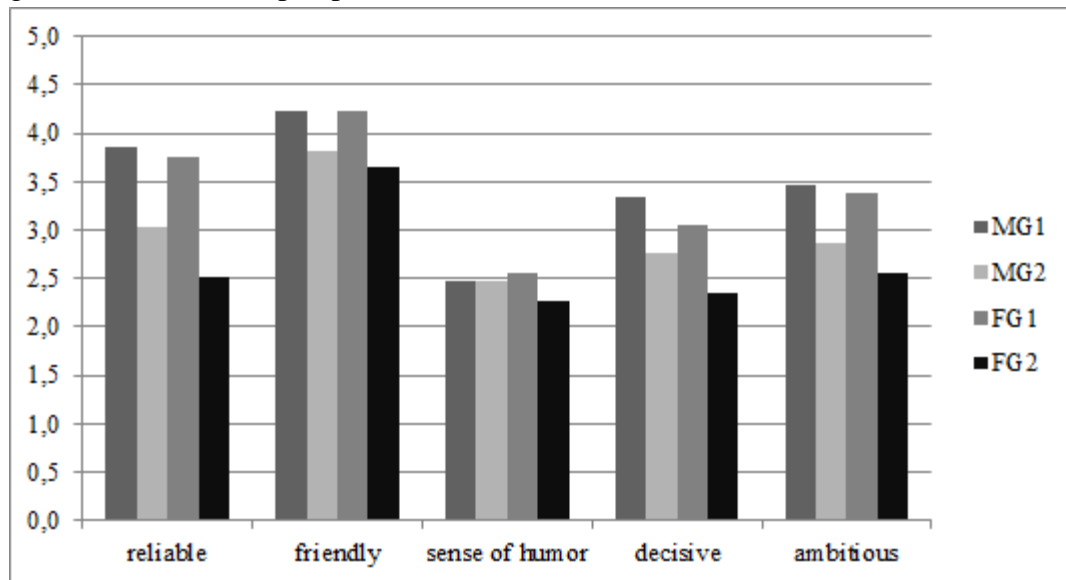


Figure 2: Solidarity, means for each respective trait

As mentioned above, as far as *sense of humor* goes, the participants judged all guises almost equally, as it marks the lowest score for each of the guises amongst the *solidarity* traits. In fact, it even marks the lowest score in total for MG1 and second lowest for FG1. A notable difference among the guises can be identified for FG2 which scored slightly lower than the others. Also, this is one of only two traits where FG1 scores higher than MG1. Further, this figure shows clearly that the trait *friendly*, in some ways act as an opposite of *sense of humor* as it, too, is scored without too much difference between the guises. It subsequently marks the highest mark within the aspect of *solidarity* as well as the highest score in total for MG1 (together with *grammatically knowledgeable*) and FG1.

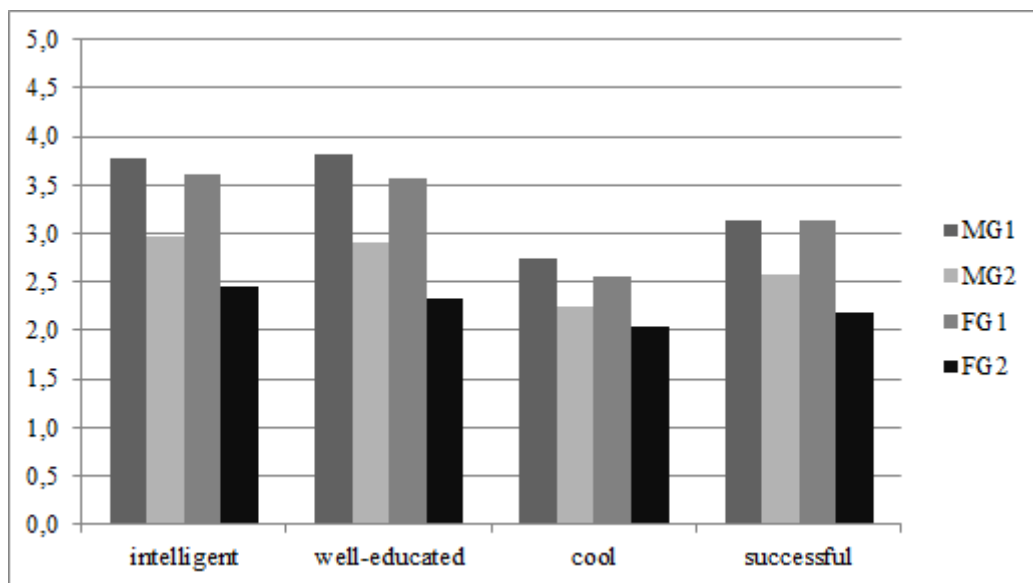


Figure 3: Status, means for each respective trait

Figure 3 illustrates a close-up look on the *status* aspect, which shows that the two native-like guises were judged distinctly higher than their two Swedish-English counterparts for all of the examined traits. Here we also see the previously mentioned peak for MG1's *well-educated* as it marks the highest score in the table and differs significantly from both FG1's and FG2's scores for the same trait. It is also evident that all the guises' scores dropped at *cool*, showing the least difference as they are closer in proximity to each other. In this table we also find the second trait for which FG1 scored higher than MG1, namely *successful*. The difference is, however, marginal as FG1 scored 3.14 and MG1 scored 3.13.

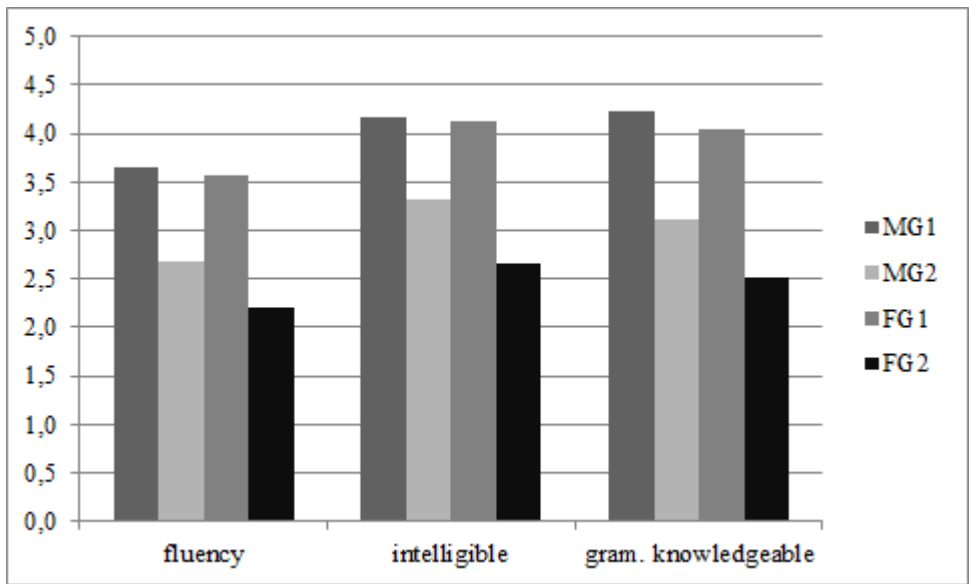


Figure 4: Language, means for each respective trait

Figure 4 shows the most distinct difference between the native-like guises and the Swedish-English ones. The participants were able to perceive distinction between them in terms of *fluency*, *intelligibility* and *grammatical knowledgeability* and the figure shows a clear favoring of the native-like guises. For the native-like guises a clear difference can be identified for *grammatically knowledgeable* where MG1 scores higher, whereas the scores for *fluency* and *intelligible* are closer in proximity.

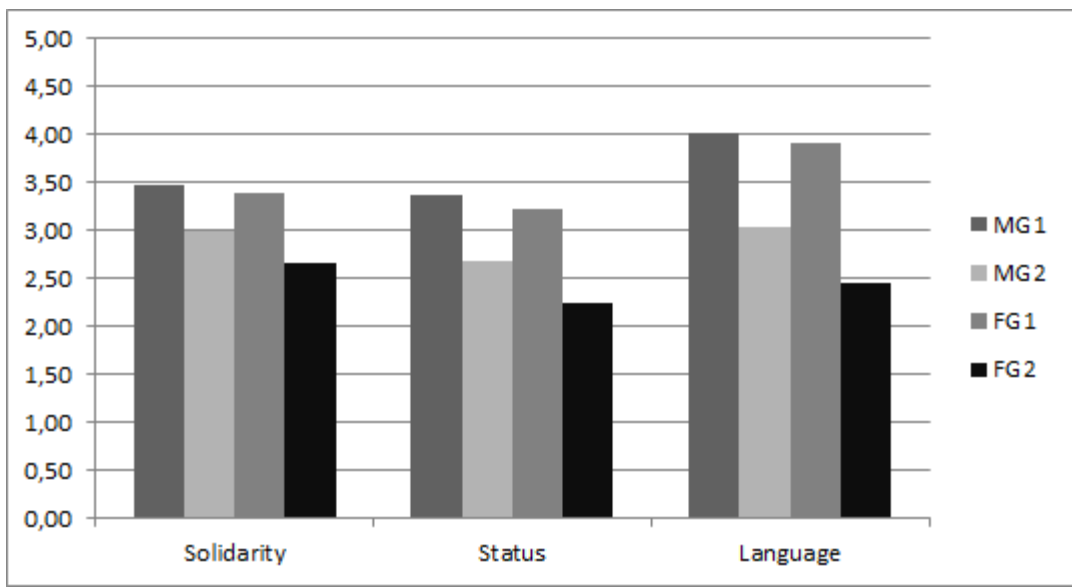


Figure 5: Total means for each evaluated aspect



Figure 5 shows an overview much like the one given in figure 1. However, in this figure the mean totals have been calculated for each aspect. This gives us an overview for all aspects and these results show a clear difference between the evaluation of the Swedish-English guises and the native-like ones on a much more reliable scale since the results for all traits are included in this figure. Much in accordance with previous results, MG1 receives the highest scores for all aspects, followed by FG1. Comparing the Swedish-English guises MG2 is rated higher than FG2 in all aspects. Note, also, that the differences between MG1 and FG1 is less palpable than that of MG2 and FG2, which is much more apparent.

*Table 3: Differences in evaluation of speech samples for the two guises*

	Guise 1			Guise 2		
	solidarity	status	language	solidarity	status	language
MG	<b><u>3.47</u></b>	<b><u>3.37</u></b>	<b><u>4.02</u></b>	<b><u>2.99</u></b>	<b><u>2.68</u></b>	<b><u>3.03</u></b>
FG	<b><u>3.39</u></b>	<b><u>3.22</u></b>	<b><u>3.91</u></b>	<b><u>2.67</u></b>	<b><u>2.25</u></b>	<b><u>2.46</u></b>

Significant differences, as calculated using a T-test, are specified by bold and underline,  $p < .05$  (= significant);  $p < .01$  (= very significant);  $p < .001$  (= highly significant)

To further support the findings demonstrated in figure 5, a complementary T-test was performed to calculate a p-value for the examined aspects for the two guises. The mean scores for both the male and female guises are presented above. As can be discerned from table 3, the differences, both for the male and female guises, for all of the aspects examined, are highly significant. The results all follow the same pattern and the biggest difference, when comparing the aspects, can be identified in *language*, and especially so for the female guises where there is a difference of 1.45. Following *language* is *status* where, again, the biggest difference can be identified for the female guises. Lastly, the smallest difference can be identified in *solidarity*, though the difference is still highly significant for both the male and female guises.

**Table 4:** Differences in evaluation of speech samples by groups decided by playing order

	Group 1				Group 2			
	solidarity	status	language	suitability	solidarity	status	language	suitability
MG1	<b>3.11</b>	3.03	<b><u>3.68</u></b>	3.18	<b>3.84</b>	3.72	<b><u>4.37</u></b>	4.07
MG2	3.18	2.88	3.21	2.98	2.79	2.46	2.85	2.29
FG1	<b>3.55</b>	3.44	3.98	3.77	<b>3.22</b>	2.98	3.83	3.19
FG2	2.70	2.26	2.27	1.75	2.64	2.25	2.66	1.93

Significant differences, as calculated using an F-test, are specified by bold and underline,  $p < .05$  (= significant);  $p < .01$  (= very significant);  $p < .001$  (= highly significant)

In table 4, the mean scores for the examined aspects for all guises and groups are presented.

The number of participants in group 1 and 2 differ and since the differences in evaluations between these two groups are compared, an F-test was performed to calculate a p-value. In group 1 MG1 was played initially, whereas in group 2 FG2 initiated the experiment (see section 3.2.1. for playing order), and, as table 3 demonstrates, the differences were mostly insignificant. One aspect, however, proved to be significant for both MG1 and FG1, namely *solidarity*. Another aspect, *language*, proved highly significant, though only for MG1. MG1 was less favored by group 1 where it was played initially and received higher scores in group 2 where it was played last. The evaluations for MG2 and FG2 both showed no value of significance for any of the examined aspects and were thus rated rather similarly by both groups.

Further, calculations were done to discern any differences in evaluation based on the gender of the participants. However, in those calculations, no significant differences were found and no table will thus be presented.

#### 4.2. Evaluating suitability

The last statement in the questionnaire asked the participants to rate each speaker's suitability to host the supposed online lectures. Their evaluations are thought to serve as a summary for the results presented above and is the one question most obviously connected to the teaching

profession. The results for the four guises are presented in figure 6 below.

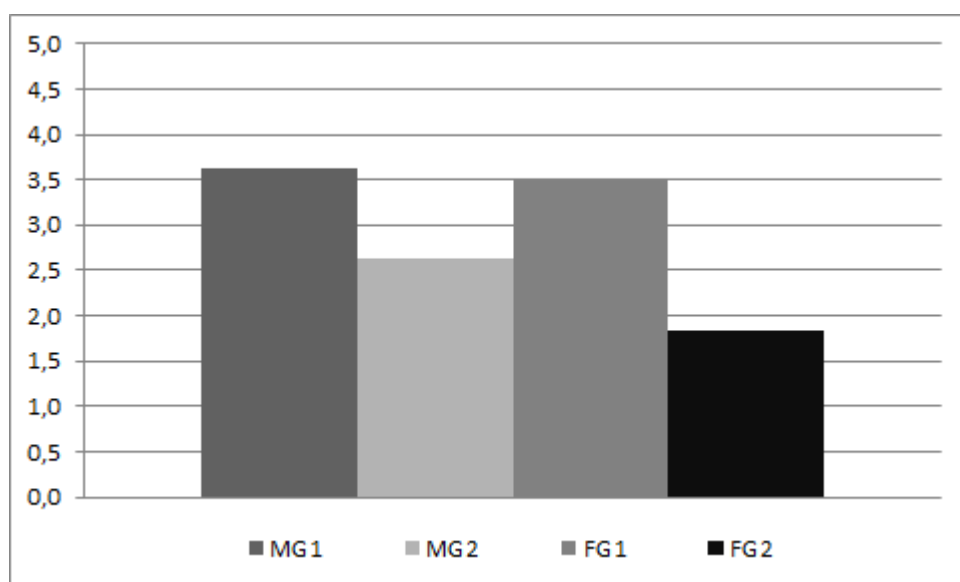


Figure 6: Means for suitability for each respective guise

The results in figure 6 indicate that the native-like varieties are rated most suitable with MG1 receiving the highest score (3.62), followed by FG1 (3.49). The two local varieties are rated less suitable with FG2 receiving the considerably lowest score (1.84). In contrast, while MG2's score (2.64) is still lower than the native-like varieties, it is significantly higher than its female counterpart.

## 5. Discussion

The following section will discuss and analyze the results in depth. Initially, a discussion will follow about the prevalent attitudes and how they manifest, followed by a discussion about possible implications of these attitudes for Sweden. The methodology of the study is then discussed in the following part, where the effects of the structuring of the experiment are addressed. Lastly, suggestions for future research are provided.

### 5.1 Linguistic deference and native-speakerism

As is evident in the results presented above, Swedish upper secondary school students seem less inclined to feel loyalty towards the Swedish-accented English. Rather, they prefer the

native-like speakers to a great extent, rating them higher in several of the individual traits. More specifically, MG1 rates higher than MG2 in every trait except *sense of humor* and FG1 rates higher than FG2 in all traits. Naturally, when analyzing the data, it becomes clear that the Swedish-English accented speakers are downrated for all of the three aspects as well. When comparing the three aspects for the Swedish-English guises, *solidarity* receives the highest scores, though Cargile et al.'s (1994) theory of accent loyalty, i.e. that people will uprate their own local variety, is still rejected, as the native-like speakers rate even higher. These results better coincide with the results presented by Bayard et al. (2001) and Torstensson (2010), where it was concluded that the *solidarity* ratings take a dip for the higher status accents when compared to local varieties. However, the fact still remains that the local varieties are valued lower than the native-like ones. Also, findings presented by Dalton-Puffer (1994) where Austrian students rated the most common local variety (Austrian-accented British English) least favorably, even in *solidarity* traits, corroborate with the results in this study to a great extent. Thus, the results presented in this particular study support Bayard et al.'s (2001) theory of linguistic deference.

Despite the convincing results, it is important to note that the participants' attitudes towards the Swedish-English accented speakers are not necessarily negative, but rather they are less favored than the native-like speakers. This is important to stress, since, as mentioned previously, negative attitudes often result in discrimination and disengaging behavior (Cargile et al. 1994). Figure 1 gives us a good overview of the results and it is evident that both of the native-like guises score higher than their Swedish-English equivalents. It is, however, necessary to analyze the results in figure 5 since it represents all of the aspects rather than the individual traits.

As a 5-point Likert-scale was used in the questionnaire where 1 signified the lowest score and 5 the highest, it is reasonable to assume that a score of 2.5 would represent a neutral

criterion. However, the scores on the Likert-scale should be interpreted as a value on a spectrum, i.e. the closer a score is to 2.5, the more neutral the attitude. Consequently, the closer a score is to 1 or 5, the more negative or positive the attitude.

A closer look at MG2 shows that this guise had a mean score above 2.5 for all three aspects, i.e. the participants attitudes are not negative as anything above the middle mark would have to be considered on the positive side of the spectrum. However, MG2 still scored significantly lower than both MG1 and FG1 in all aspects. FG2 is the only guise who was judged on the negative side of the scale; in both *status* and *language* the mean scores were below 2.5. Out of the two, *status* was judged most negatively whereas *language* was slightly closer to the 2.5 mark. Nonetheless, the results for FG2 could be interpreted as the students showing a slight negative attitude towards said speaker. This becomes even more obvious when analyzing the results for *suitability* (figure 6), where the score for FG2 is well under the neutral criterion and significantly lower than any of the other guises' scores. This difference in evaluation raises an important issue, as the participants seem to be less tolerable to a female speaking Swedish-accented English than to a male. However, it would not be implausible to assume that the fact that FG2 was judged to be more convincing in terms of "Swedishness" in the validation survey than its male counterpart would produce these results. That is, the more convincingly Swedish one sounds, the less positive the scores will be. This might also explain why FG2 received lower scores for several of the individual traits and all the aspects. Still, it is impossible to explain this solely based on the results of the validation survey and this issue calls for more attention than has been given in this study.

Furthermore, with *suitability* being the one trait with the most distinct connection to the teaching profession, the results presented in figure 6 support findings in other studies (Rubin & Smith, 1990; Butler, 2007) and confirm the presence of native-speakerist tendencies in Swedish upper secondary school (Holliday, 2006; Phillipson, 1992).

Clearly, the participants favor the native-like speakers, not only in terms of *solidarity* and *status*, but for *language* and *suitability* as well (see figures 4, 5 and 6). In fact, by examining figure 5, the most significant discrepancies between the native-like and Swedish-English speakers are found in the *language* aspect, thus supporting the ideologies represented in native-speakerism and native-speaker fallacy. When examining this aspect more closely in figure 4, it becomes even more evident when analyzing the data for a trait such as *grammatically knowledgeable*. This trait, as opposed to *fluency* and *intelligible*, is not associated, to the same extent, with pronunciation. Though these factors were reduced as much as possible (see section 3.2.1.), their effect on the participants evaluation could still be argued for. However, the differences are so salient that any effects these factors might have had on the participants are considered negligible. Still, as this is not the case for *grammatically knowledgeable*, the results for this trait is particularly interesting, and the biggest discrepancies can actually be found within this trait, which further confirms the presence of tendencies like that expressed in native-speakerism.

The tendencies observed here are, however, more subtle than those made in other studies. Even though students favor native-like speakers to a great extent, discrimination such as it manifests in parts of Asia (Buckingham, 2014; Ling & Braine, 2007) does not take place to the same extent in Sweden. Though accentedness has proven to cause teachers to be excluded from employment (see Boyd, 2003), being a native English speaker might still be meritorious when applying for a job as a teacher in that particular subject. However, if one does not possess the proper teaching degree, one will most likely be rejected in favor of a teacher that does. However, some similarities can be found between Sweden and countries in Asia, that is, the emphasis on acquiring good communication skills (Butler, 2007; Skolverket, 2013). Nonetheless, this is interpreted differently and manifests itself in contrasting ways,

where in Asia uneducated native-speakers are employed whereas in Sweden education and suitability is stressed.

## **5.2 Possible implications for Sweden**

The postcolonial theory suggested by Modiano (2009) would seem a desirable approach for educators in countries such as Sweden who, to some extent, appear impaired by the idealization of the native English speaker. It could even be argued that an approach such as the one presented by Modiano (2009) better suits the aims described in the syllabus for the English subject in Swedish upper secondary schools. As it, in no way, indicates that ELT should target specific varieties of English nor that any specific countries and their inhabitants should be looked to for cultural stimuli. Rather, it clearly advocates an international approach focused on communication between different cultures. An argument could be made that this cause is better supported by an inclusive ELT approach which strives for a global competence in communication where the users accept ownership of their own variety of the language, rather than placing it in the hands of a select few native speakers. Further motivation for this approach could be found in the syllabus, for example where it states that “teaching in the subject of English should give students the opportunities to develop (...) [t]he ability to adapt language to different purposes, recipients and situations” (Skolverket, 2013, p. 2). The fact that the syllabus has a more global, communicative focus suggests that a process much like the one suggested by Modiano (2009) is already underway.

This development could, however, be hindered if the results of this study turn out to be the general attitude of Swedish upper secondary school students. Due to the spread of new public management in Swedish schooling, it would not be farfetched to assume that schools would go as far as hiring language teachers, partially, based on native-likeness or even nativeness if they believed that students would be more likely to choose their school because

of it. This is something that could, if vaguely so, be derived from the fact that the participants, unequivocally, held both native-like guises as the more suitable teachers. However, at this point, consequences like the one above are mere speculations, as more research is needed before any general conclusions can be drawn. The results of this study, however, suggest that one should consider with more apprehension statements such as the one by Cunningham (2009) about Swedish users of English and their supposed sense of entitlement to their own variety.

### **5.3 Methodological Discussion**

As mentioned previously, when designing a matched guise study it is important to make sure that the different traits judged are relevant for the specific study (Laur, 2014). This was taken into consideration while constructing the study at hand. For example, the *status* trait *cool* was added in an attempt to mirror, what we thought was, a relevant symbol for status amongst youths. However, as seen in figure 3, this particular trait sticks out, as all guises plummet in the evaluation of their perceived “coolness”. The fact that all four guises drop in this trait could be seen as a sign that the above mentioned attempt at modifying the survey failed for this particular trait. The exact reason for the drop in scoring can only be speculated, and perhaps *cool* would have been a valid trait to measure if the targeted group of people of the study had been something other than teachers. Perhaps *cool* is not a trait that accurately measures status of teachers in the eyes of students. However, this does not mean that the data is unusable. It still tells us something about the attitudes towards the different guises. For instance, we see that in comparison to the other guises FG2 makes a much smaller dip in scoring. This is interesting as FG2 otherwise stands out consistently as far below the others. While still rated the lowest in *cool*, in this particular trait, FG2 is not as far below as in most other traits.



Another trait that attracts attention is *sense of humor*. As opposed to the results in Dalton-Puffer (1994) where the native-like guises received some of the highest scores for this trait and were far more dynamic than the evaluations presented in figure 2, *sense of humor* is the only trait in our study where there is no significant difference between the native-like and Swedish-English guises. It is thus the only trait which might coincide with Cargile et al.'s (1994) theory of accent loyalty when it comes to *solidarity*. However, as no other *solidarity* traits come close to the results of *sense of humor* it is likely that these results are due to other factors. The fact that Swedes often consider a Swedish-accented English humorous and embarrassing could be a feasible explanation, though it is unclear whether the Swedish-English guises score unusually high or if the native-like guises' scores are unusually low. One might also speculate that the scores are due to a sense of in-group belonging and association (Cargile et al. 1994), though why this would produce these results for *sense of humor* and not for traits such as *reliable*, fails to be explained. Though, supposing that the participants associate with the native-like, rather than the Swedish-English, speakers would possibly explain why they rate the native-like accents favorably in other traits. Further, it would also support the fact that native speakerism-like tendencies are at play in affecting Swedish upper secondary school students' attitudes to a great extent. But, in regard to *sense of humor*, the only differentiating factors between the guises are gender and pronunciation and, seeing as their ratings are so close in proximity, they seem to play no significant role when evaluating this particular trait. The common denominator for the guises, however, is, much like in the case of the aspect *status* and the trait *cool*, the fact that they are, presumably, teachers. It would thus be safe to assume that *sense of humor* is simply not a characteristic associated with teachers, whereas the opposite could be said for *friendly*. The guises' scores for this trait marks some of the highest values in the survey and, although not as close in proximity as *sense of humor*, their differences are not as palpable as for the rest of the traits. Maybe the

participants were affected by social desirability bias, thus preventing them from rating the speakers negatively. Though, this seems unlikely, as other particularly sensitive traits, such as *intelligent*, do not show this kind of proximity. *Friendly* is then perhaps a characteristic more often associated with teachers than *sense of humor*, which would explain the relatively high, yet even, scores for all four guises in this trait.

**5.3.1. Effects of playing order.** When it comes to the playing order of the speech samples, some conclusions can be drawn. The playing order was altered mainly as a mean for precaution and the order turned out to affect the evaluations for some of the aspects, which is apparent in table 4. Starting with FG1, the playing order only produced significant differences for *solidarity*. It seems that FG1 benefited from being played earlier, though the playing order was only marginally different for the two groups. In group 1 it was played as guise number three whereas in group 2 it was played as number four. Similarly, MG2, which was played in mirrored positions to FG2 (fourth in group 1 and third in group 2), was rated with no significant differences in the two groups.

Continuing with MG1, in contrast to FG1, it suffered from being played early in the experiment. When played initially, MG1 received a significantly lower score for *solidarity* and its scores in *language* differed to the point of highly significant. With *language* arguably being the one aspect most easily evaluated, these results are not surprising. It is not unlikely to consider that the participants in group 1 were restrictive with their ratings for MG1 as it was the first guise they heard and therefore did not know what to expect from the rest of the speakers. That is, they had no other guises to compare MG1 to, resulting in more neutral ratings. Interestingly, this is not the case for FG2 where in group 1 the guise was played last and in group 2 it was played first. Considering the results for MG1, it might be expected that FG2 would suffer from being played in the initial position. Still, the ratings (of FG2) in both groups are very similar and no significant differences are observable. But, the fact that MG1

uses a native-like accent whereas FG2 is a Swedish-English-accented speaker seems to play a crucial part. When played initially, the participants instantly perceive FG2 as a lesser variety, unsuitable for the supposed task. This distinct recognition is not as obvious for the native-like guise, resulting in more varied ratings. So, when the playing order of MG1 was changed from first to last in group 2, its score increased drastically as the participants now had the previous guises to compare with. Even though the *solidarity* traits might not be as easy to evaluate as *language*, the same reasoning could still be applied for those traits. Also, gender might very well play a part in these results, though to which extent is hard to determine.

Thus, it can be concluded that being played initially affected the native-like male speech sample but not the Swedish-English female speech sample. The fact that the difference between the other two speech samples (FG1 and MG2) who were mirrored in playing order was less significant signals that the greater the “distance” between the groups, the greater becomes the chance of varying scores for the affected speech sample. However, if said accent is an obvious local variety it seems less necessary for the listeners to compare it with other samples in order for them to recognize it as an accent with lower status. Thus, resulting in less varied scoring between the two groups of participants. In fact, the order of playing did not result in any significant differences in scoring for either of the Swedish-English speech samples, cementing the supposed position of Swedish-English as, for the participants, an obvious lower status accent.

In hindsight, the experiment would benefit from altering the order even more. For example, it would be interesting to see if playing FG1 both initially and last would produce the same results as it did for MG1. Furthermore, by increasing the number of groups and altering the playing order for each one, the reliability of the survey would improve. That is not to say that the results of this study are unreliable. As opposed to other similar studies, (see Rubin & Smith, 1990; He & Miller, 2011) they rarely, if ever, alter the playing order.

Nonetheless, they are being recognized as legitimate surveys and get published in renowned journals. However, the results in this study suggest that MGT research benefits, in reliability, from more attention being paid to varying the playing order of speech samples.

#### **5.4 Future research**

One of the main purposes of this study has been to investigate attitudes towards Swedish teachers of English in order to acquire a basic understanding for the present situation and to lay a basic groundwork for future research in this specific field.

Initially, it needs to be stated that, in order to more accurately point out areas for future research, the results of this study needs to be complemented by similar research using other methods. It would, for instance, be useful to have a study made where the perspective of the teachers are taken into consideration. Such a study would perhaps give a greater understanding for the implications of the data collected in studies such as the one present. Further, as one of the perks of a quantitative study, such as the one at hand, is that the data is quantifiable and open to be expanded. Thus, in order to draw more precise conclusions, it could be beneficial to replicate this study in other parts of Sweden, as well as on a larger group of participants.

However, this is not to say that this study fails in suggesting areas of interest for future research. One of the biggest questions that is somewhat left unanswered in this study is why the female Swedish-English guise was rated far below the others in *suitability*. This particular data raises questions regarding gender, privilege and power. It would be of interest to study why both female guises are consistently rated lower than their male counterparts in all three aspects as well. However, when it comes to the question of *suitability*, FG2 was rated even lower than what could have been anticipated based on the scores of the twelve traits. Perhaps it is the case that female teachers are expected, to a greater extent, to strive for “perfection”

and thus are allowed less leeway when this is not achieved. This is something that future researchers would do well in further investigating, as the implications of such expectations could be highly troubling.

## **6. Conclusion**

The research question after which this study was constructed, namely, ‘what attitudes can be found among students towards native-like accented teachers and Swedish-English accented teachers, has been answered and the hypothesis that students would prefer native-like teachers was confirmed. By reviewing relevant literature and previous research on the subject, it was concluded that Sweden, and parts of Europe, finds itself in a situation unlike that of other expanding circle countries in, for example, Asia, where much of the research has so far been conducted. It was therefore judged that Sweden’s situation called for more research on the subject in order to better understand the attitudes towards native-like and Swedish-English-accented teachers. After constructing a matched guise experiment where quantitative data was subsequently collected, presented, interpreted and analyzed, the conclusion was drawn that the upper secondary school students who participated in this study do, to a great extent, favor native-like over Swedish-English-accented teachers. The results were consistent, as the native-like accents, both male and female, were rated higher in all examined aspects, though seemingly, more research is needed to better distinguish the differences in ratings for the male and female native-like guises.

As a final remark, it needs to be pointed out that the results of this study should not be interpreted as encouraging teachers to pursue a native-accent-model. Rather, by increasing familiarity and embracing different varieties of English in their teaching, the native-speakerist ideologies might finally yield, allowing non-native users to claim ownership over English. Though arguably already underway, it is a process long overdue.

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## Appendix I

### Sample text

Hi, welcome to your first EnglishEd intermediate online lecture. During these 10 videos we will discuss a variety of things involving the learning of English at an intermediate level. Our subjects will cover all sorts of things, ranging from more theoretical aspects, such as grammatical structures and word order, to more practical areas, such as how to write a convincing speech. For each video we will provide you with different tasks that you can work with at home to develop your skills. We hope that you will find these lessons to be both challenging and useful, and, if you feel like there are certain areas that we haven't touched upon, please leave a comment below and we will try to cover it in future videos.

Now, for our first lesson, we will start with reviewing some basic grammar. As you may know, in grammar we talk about word classes, and the English language has four major word classes, those include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These can sometimes be called 'open word classes', which means that new words can be added.

## Appendix II

Bakgrunds information

deltagar-id: \_\_\_\_\_

Genom att slutföra och lämna in denna undersökning godkänner jag mitt deltagande samt har förstått att mitt deltagande är helt frivilligt och anonymt samt att svaren som ges endast kommer användas i forskningssyfte.

Ålder: \_\_\_\_\_

Kryssa i det alternativ som stämmer bäst för dig

Kön:        Man     Kvinna

Just nu studerar jag engelska: 5     6     7

Hur ofta använder du engelska utanför skolan?

Dagligen             Någon/några gånger i veckan

Någon/några gånger i månaden             Aldrig

I vilket sammanhang använder du engelska utanför skolan?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

Du kommer nu att få lyssna på sex olika inspelningar av lärare. Efter varje uppspelning kommer du att få tid till att fylla i ett formulär med ett antal påståenden. Din uppgift är att välja på en skala från 1 till 5 hur väl dessa påståenden stämmer överens med respektive lärare.

Syftet är att vi, med din hjälp, ska välja ut den lärare som är bäst lämpad att hålla en serie av web-baserade lektioner.

Kom ihåg att det inte finns några rätta eller fel svar, utan det viktigaste är att du svarar ärligt.

Tack för ditt deltagande!

#yrp

Vänligen **ringa in** var på skalan du upplever att talaren befinner sig.

**1** = inte alls och **5** = fullständigt

Denna talare är/har...

1. Pålitlig	1	2	3	4	5
2. Vänlig	1	2	3	4	5
3. Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sinne för humor	1	2	3	4	5
5. Beslutsam	1	2	3	4	5
6. Välutbildad	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cool	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ambitiös	1	2	3	4	5
9. Framgångsrik	1	2	3	4	5
10. Flyt	1	2	3	4	5
11. Begriplig	1	2	3	4	5
12. Grammatiskt kunnig	1	2	3	4	5

13. Jag tycker att denna talare passar bra för online-kursen.

Håller inte alls med 1      2      3      4      5 Håller fullständigt med

Vänligen **ringa in** var på skalan du upplever att talaren befinner sig.

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Denna talare är/har...

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Håller inte alls med 1      2      3      4      5 Håller fullständigt med



Vänligen **ringa in** var på skalan du upplever att talaren befinner sig.

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Denna talare är/har...

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11. Begriplig	1	2	3	4	5
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13. Jag tycker att denna talare passar bra för online-kursen.

Håller inte alls med 1      2      3      4      5 Håller fullständigt med

Vänligen **ringa in** var på skalan du upplever att talaren befinner sig.

**1** = inte alls och **5** = fullständigt

Denna talare är/har...

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11. Begriplig	1	2	3	4	5
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Håller inte alls med 1      2      3      4      5 Håller fullständigt med

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**1** = inte alls och **5** = fullständigt

Denna talare är/har...

1. Pålitlig	1	2	3	4	5
2. Vänlig	1	2	3	4	5
3. Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sinne för humor	1	2	3	4	5
5. Beslutsam	1	2	3	4	5
6. Välutbildad	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cool	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ambitiös	1	2	3	4	5
9. Framgångsrik	1	2	3	4	5
10. Flyt	1	2	3	4	5
11. Begriplig	1	2	3	4	5
12. Grammatiskt kunnig	1	2	3	4	5

13. Jag tycker att denna talare passar bra för online-kursen.

Håller inte alls med 1      2      3      4      5 Håller fullständigt med