



Linguistic approaches to Swedish authorities' web-based information in English

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Abstract

Official information from authorities to the general public is expected to be worded in a clear and correct way. Most authorities in Sweden provide an English language version of their web sites, in the form of a translation or an adaptation of the Swedish original text. The first part of this thesis includes an analysis of the linguistic quality of a selection of texts from authorities on three different administrative levels and the second part investigates how the information is perceived by potential readers from a language point of view. The purpose of the first study was to identify the frequency and nature of linguistic inadequacies in the selected texts. Based on the outcome of the first study, the second and main study investigated native speakers' and non-native speakers' attitudes to linguistic aspects of informative texts with regard to comprehension, acceptance of wording and reliability of the content. By means of a questionnaire with authentic sentences, with and without inadequacies, retrieved from the texts in the first study, a group of 105 participants were asked to indicate their impressions of these sentences from a language point of view. Their responses revealed that particularly grammatical inadequacies, found to be the most common in the first study, have a negative impact on comprehensibility, acceptance of wording and the perceived reliability of the content. The sentences that were without inadequacies were generally viewed more positively by all participants. The results suggest that linguistic inadequacies are liable to lead to both unexpected and unwanted consequences, while accuracy enhances the perceived reliability of the informational content.

Keywords: comprehensibility; acceptance of wording; reliability; informative texts; machine translation; cross-linguistic influence

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1. Introduction

Effective communication requires wording that is sufficiently comprehensible for the receiver. This does not necessarily presuppose linguistic accuracy, but wording that is clear enough to convey the intended message. “To be communicatively effective, the message must get across swiftly and unambiguously and without undue demands upon the receiver” (Johansson, 1978, p. 6). This is of particular importance for official information from authorities, published online for the benefit of the general public. Providing information in other languages for citizens unacquainted with the dominant language in a country is a praiseworthy service. Most Swedish authorities on all administrative levels provide web-based information not only in Swedish, but also in other languages, notably English.

The Swedish Language Act was adopted in 2009 and stipulates that Swedish is the official language of Sweden (SFS 2009:600). Although not an official language, English has an indisputable and prominent position in Sweden (Josephson, 2014, p. 107). Many residents, both native speakers and non-native speakers, are in need of information in English from state authorities, regional councils and municipalities. Depending on the purpose and duration of their stay in Sweden, their need for information may vary. Regardless of the individual circumstances, the linguistic accuracy of such communication is crucial for the information to be understood adequately. This ambition requires that the wording of informative texts is clear and comprehensible. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

One might question the gravity of this. The occurrence of linguistic errors or infelicities in the English text versions may not be of significance if potential readers are still able to acquire the information. The deviations will perhaps remain unnoticed or be disregarded, without causing confusion or casting any doubt on the credibility of the message. Linguistic quality may or may not be a matter of concern for the reader, but for the information provider linguistic inadequacies in informative texts could nevertheless lead to both unforeseen and unwanted consequences.

There are a number of previous studies where native speakers (NS) have been requested to evaluate the gravity of errors, primarily in a second language (L2) acquisition context. Olsson (1972) and Norell (1991) investigated NS perceptions of errors made by Swedish students in oral production. There are also corresponding studies of English as a Second Language (ESL) errors in written production, commonly student compositions (Johansson, 1978). Similar studies have also been made where errors by ESL students of other nationalities were evaluated by NS (Kobayashi, 1992, Vann et al., 1984). To the best of my

knowledge, however, there are no studies of NS attitudes to the linguistic aspects of informative texts in English produced by Swedish authorities.

Despite its frequent use in previous studies, the term *error* is insufficient to comprise the different levels of deviations. There are not only grammatical or lexical errors to consider, but also ones that are of a more stylistic and pragmatic kind. Henceforth, I will therefore use the overarching term *inadequacies* to cover infelicities on all levels.

This thesis encompasses two separate albeit connected studies. The first study investigates the general linguistic quality of a selection of web-based English texts published by Swedish authorities on three administrative levels. The purpose is to shed light on the occurrence, frequency and nature of various linguistic inadequacies in informative texts retrieved from a variety of English web site versions.

This initial study forms a point of departure for the second and main study, which investigates the consequences of these inadequacies. The aim of this study is to explore how potential readers perceive linguistic inadequacies and how these affect comprehensibility, acceptability of wording and reliability of the informational content. By means of a questionnaire, both NS and NNS participants were asked to assess a number of authentic example sentences from a language point of view. The main study will indicate whether NS and NNS evaluate these aspects differently and if a long duration of stay in Sweden facilitates the comprehension of inadequacies caused by influence from Swedish. The study also analyses how acceptance of wording and perceived reliability relate to each other. The research questions are as follows:

1. Which language inadequacies are the most common in the selected texts?
2. How are language inadequacies perceived by NS and NNS with regard to comprehension, acceptance of wording and reliability of the information?
 - 2 a) Will familiarity with Swedish society facilitate comprehension of sentences with cross-linguistic influence from Swedish?
 - 2 b) Is there a correlation between the acceptance of wording and perceived reliability of the information?

My hypothesis in relation to the second research question is that inadequacies in informative texts have an adverse effect on comprehension, acceptance of wording and perceived

reliability. Wordings without inadequacies, on the other hand, are likely to be looked upon more positively. Previous studies (Kobayashi, 1992) have shown that native speakers (NS) are less acceptant of linguistic errors than non-native speakers (NNS), who may not observe all errors or not judge them as severely. It is therefore assumable that there will be some discrepancy between the two groups of participants.

With regard to the first subordinate research question (2 a), there is reason to believe that participants who are more familiar with Swedish society will be at an advantage in terms of comprehension of inadequacies caused by influence from Swedish. Regarding the second subordinate question (2 b), my expectation is that there could be a correlation between acceptance of wording and perceived reliability of the information. When wordings are considered unacceptable, the trustworthiness of the information may be impacted upon negatively. Conversely, texts without inadequacies are likely to be perceived as reliable. This assumption is based on the idea that people often link linguistic quality to trustworthiness (Sundström, 2015).

The methods and results of the two studies are presented in their respective sections 3 and 4. Section 5 includes an analysis and discussion of both studies, their limitations as well as suggestions for future studies. The thesis is concluded with a summary of the findings of both studies in section 6. The next section presents the contextual background, including definitions of relevant terminology and references to previous studies that are of significance for the research field.

2. Background

This section opens with a presentation of relevant parts of the Swedish language policy. Section 2.1 presents the most essential legislation and recommendations with regard to language use and policy of public authorities. Most state agencies, regional councils and municipalities provide translations in English on their web sites. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 define and explain the terms *community translation* and *machine translation*, which are pertinent in this context. Inadequacies can occasionally be explained by *cross-linguistic influence*, another key term that is introduced in section 2.4. A number of previous studies, with results similar to and differing from this study, are presented in section 2.5. The term *error* is commonly

used in these studies, which justifies the use of this term rather than *inadequacies* when a reference is made to any previous research.

2.1 Swedish language policy and guidelines

The Swedish Language Act (SFS 2009:600) stipulates that the principal language in Sweden is Swedish. There are also five national minority languages: Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Sami (SFS 2009:600). The rights of minority language speakers are confirmed by the Act on the National Minority Languages (SFS 2009:724) which entered into force on 1 January, 2010. This legislation enables the use of minority languages in contacts with various administrative authorities (SFS 2009:274). It is society's responsibility to ensure that the minority languages are used and promoted. This not only includes the rights of persons with other first languages than Swedish, but also of those who have functional variations (Domeij, 2010). The Language Act, for example, mentions society's responsibility to protect and promote the Swedish sign language (SFS 2009:600).

The Language Council of Sweden (hereafter the Language Council), *Språkrådet*, a department within the Institute for Language and Folklore (*Institutet för språk och folkminnen*, ISOF), monitors the implementation of the Language Act (ISOF, 2019). The Language Council offers advice, but does not intervene or sanction any breach against the legislation (Josephsson, 2014). In addition to its advisory role, the Language Council analyses the language situation in society as a whole and encourages public agencies to use "plain language" (ISOF, 2019).

The Administrative Act (SFS 1986:223) states that authorities have a responsibility to ensure that all citizens gain access to community information (Domeij, 2010). The legislation has recently been revised, to include an explicit obligation for authorities to provide translations of documentation if it is needed to safeguard the rights of the individual (SFS 2017:900). The Language Act establishes that, in official contexts, language usage should be "cultivated, simple and comprehensible" (SFS 2009:600). This entails a usage that is as clear as possible to allow as many people as possible to understand. When a text is not understood by a recipient, the communicative needs are not fulfilled (Domeij, 2010).

The comprehensibility requirement should also be taken into account when considering the nature of a diverse and multicultural society where the need for communication in other languages than Swedish and its minority languages becomes

increasingly important. This poses a challenge for authorities that are obliged by law to communicate in such a way that everyone can comprehend essential information and participate in society. Any authority that does not fulfill the citizens' needs for information and community service, consequently does not comply with the legal requirements (Domeij, 2010). The internet opens new possibilities to meet this challenge by providing online services and information that are both useful and accessible. At the same time, knowledge and expertise are required in order to fully benefit from this technology for communicative purposes (Domeij, 2010).

There are about 150 different first languages (L1) represented in Sweden today, but there are no official figures available relating to how many speakers there are of each L1 (Domeij, 2010). Estimations can be made based on statistics retrieved from courses in Swedish for immigrants (SFI) and the compulsory school's mother tongue education (Parkvall, 2015). The number of students enrolled and their countries of origin give an indication of how many speakers there are of a particular language. This assumes, of course, that each person's L1 is identical to the official language of their home country, which is not always the case (Parkvall, 2015).

English is the third most common L1 in the world, with about 370 million native speakers (Parkvall, 2015). It is estimated that around 50,000 English NS reside in Sweden. Although it is not an official minority language, English is nevertheless omnipresent in Swedish society and often considered a second language (L2) rather than a foreign language (Parkvall, 2015). It has a position as "the most prominent lingua franca" (Josephsson, 2014, p. 105). In a survey by Eurobarometer in 2006, over 90 % of the Swedish respondents regarded themselves as "English-speakers" (Parkvall, 2015, p. 171).

A survey made by the Language Council in 2009 including 504 Swedish authorities, regional councils and municipalities revealed that around 40 % of these provided web-based information in other languages than Swedish (Domeij, 2010). English was the preferred language for 96.3 % of them. Those who provided machine translated (MT) web sites were not included in this group. The survey also revealed that there was a huge discrepancy between authorities with regard to how many alternative language versions they offered and the amount of information that was provided in each language (Domeij, 2010).

From a multilingual perspective, the web sites of public authorities are currently not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of minorities or persons with first languages other than Swedish and therefore online information and services are not accessible to everyone (Domeij, 2010). In their report, *En språkpolitik för internet* – 'A Language Policy for the

Internet' (2010), the Language Council suggests a 13-point action plan to improve the situation. Among their suggestions, an internet language policy is proposed as well as concrete guidelines for multilingual web-based information (Domeij, 2010). The Language Council also emphasizes the need to consider linguistic knowledge as an asset and that a multilingual perspective should be included in every authority's action plan for online information and communication (Domeij, 2010).

In 2012, the Language Council published guidelines for multilingual information online (Språkrådet, 2012). Their publication contains practical advice for authorities, regional councils and municipalities with regard to their web-based information, both in the minority languages and other foreign languages. The choice of languages is made by the authorities themselves. Their selection should be based on the requirements of the target groups for whom the information is intended. The Language Council therefore recommends the authorities to start with an analysis of their target groups' needs before publishing, so that their information will be accessible and adapted (Språkrådet, 2012).

Authorities should keep the needs of their target groups in mind while also taking the quality aspect into consideration. All translations should be of good quality and the Language Council suggests that existing translations be reused, if possible, and that simpler translation tasks be handled by the authorities themselves. A professional translator should, however, be recruited whenever the competence of the authorities' in-house staff is insufficient (Språkrådet, 2012). Accordingly, quality should always be prioritized over price. The Language Council advises authorities to beware of resorting to machine translation tools because the quality of such translations varies greatly. They may be tempting to use, as they are free of charge, but cannot replace a translation that is complete and of good quality (Språkrådet, 2012). The first study of this thesis compares the linguistic quality of machine translations to other solutions.

2.2 Community translation

Translations from authorities to citizens, are examples of *institutional translations* (Strandvik, 2013, p. 49). Another term is *community translation* which can be defined as: "a text generated by the larger community (society) or by smaller communities (...) in order to ensure communication with all citizens (and residents) and permit their participation and, therefore, empowerment" (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016, p. 7). These texts require adaptation, reformulation and quality assurance to make them accessible (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). Features and terms

that are self-evident for a Swedish reader may require an explanation in the English (or other language) version (Sundström, 2005). The ultimate aim is to ensure that all residents have access to information and public services, so that they can fully participate in their society (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). This goal corresponds to the requirements of the Swedish language policy, as described in section 2.1.

Community translation differs from translations for an international audience in the sense that it is intended for the residents of a country where the source text was written. This readership is diverse and, depending on how long an individual reader has resided in the country, will invariably be shaped by its culture and language (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). The source text is an “offer of information”, grounded in a source culture and language and the translation is therefore a “reproduction of this text that best serves its new purpose” (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016, p. 80).

Depending on their function, all source texts can be placed into one of the following groups: 1) depictive/informative, 2) expressive or 3) persuasive (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). Translations of depictive or informative texts will focus on the content, conveying the original text in “plain prose” with explanations, if needed. Literary or fictional texts belong to the expressive category. Here, the aesthetic form of the source text needs to be considered. The third text type includes persuasive texts, which are expected to appeal to its readers or to elicit a reaction of some kind. These are found for example in advertising and such translations are therefore often adapted to a specific target audience (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016).

Translations inevitably entail choices and there are nearly always alternative translations for a given text (Strandvik, 2013, p. 48). Within the field of translation, the preference of either a “faithful” or a “free” translation has perpetually occupied translators (Strandvik, 2013, p. 45). This relates to the translators’ choice to be loyal to the source text and its form, or to focus on the target language and recipients. Over the years, translation has developed from being a transfer of linguistic signs from one language to another to a contextual based transfer of language use. Nowadays, translation also includes other aspects than the mere linguistic, such as sociological, ideological, cultural features. The purpose is what determines the preferred translation method rather than the source text itself (Strandvik, 2013).

The *functionalist approach* has been of particular relevance for non-fictional translations. This theory views translations as a communicative act, where the purpose of the translation outweighs the source text in importance (Strandvik, 2013, p. 46). It provides a basis for the choices that the translator needs to make and lifts three aspects to be taken into

consideration. The first of these relates to the function of the text. Informative texts should be accurate in terms of content and wording. The second aspect relates to the norms and conventions of a particular genre, both in the source language and the target language. This concerns the extra-linguistic features, as specified above. Thirdly, the translator needs to be well informed about the specifications and requirements behind the ordered translation. In other words, the translator must have access to explicit information about the background of the text; why it was written, for whom it is intended, when and where the text will be read, etc. (Strandvik, 2013). In community translations this requires an interaction between the authorities, the translator and the target groups (Strandvik, 2013, p. 51).

2.3 Machine translation (MT)

There are generally two kinds of MT-systems available: the rule-based and the corpus-based (Moberg, 2013). In the former, the software makes use of grammatical rules and lists of words that are recognized and translated into the target language. The second kind saves texts in multilingual corpuses, which can later be used for automatic translations. Google Translate (GT) and most other modern MT-systems are corpus-based. Their corpuses are continuously expanded and improved. The translations are based on statistical co-occurrence. The MT-system assesses which word or phrase is the most likely to be the correct one whereby the statistically most common translation alternative is chosen (Moberg, 2013). This explains why MT functions satisfactorily for the translation of conventional and frequently used phrases. These are more likely to appear in the corpus, than unusual constructions or new combinations of words. Problems can also arise when there are several possible translations for a particular word or phrase depending on the context. Human translators have access to contextual and cultural knowledge and can therefore outperform MT-systems that are unable to make these distinctions (Moberg, 2013).

As mentioned in 2.1, the Language Council advised against an excessive use of MT (Språkrådet, 2012). It appears, however, that many municipalities and regional councils still opt for this solution. The Institute for Language and Folklore (2018), established that in 2017, 241 out of 290 municipalities offered machine translations of their web sites. Andreasson (2013) studied Swedish municipalities' attitudes to a common MT tool, GT, and their motivations for choosing this solution for their translations. Andreasson (2013) also investigated how compatible this alternative was with their obligation to provide accessible information for all citizens. Machine translation tools enable municipalities to comply with

this legal requirement, while at the same time disregarding the Language Act (SFS 2009:600) which proposes the use of a “cultivated, simple and comprehensible” language (Andreasson, 2013, p. 36).

A survey was sent to all Swedish municipalities, 290 in total, out of which 114 replied. Out of these responses, 72 % indicated that they used GT, while 28 % did not. The survey also asked the municipalities to motivate their choice, for the purpose of investigating why this solution was preferred. Factors such as low costs, timesaving, simplicity and easy access played important roles. A majority of the municipalities did not proofread their translations, yet 95 % had experienced problems with them. The identified problems related to grammatical errors and comprehension difficulties. The municipalities that chose not to use GT, referred to the quality issue as the main reason for rejecting this alternative (Andreasson, 2013).

Andreasson (2013) raises another problem with MT systems, which concerns the responsibility for the accuracy of the translations. Many municipalities disclaim any liability for the translation that the MT generates. By linking the user to an MT-tool, however, the municipalities indirectly give their approval of the service that it offers and many users will not be able to discern the difference between the wording of the municipality and of the MT-tool (Andreasson, 2013).

According to the Administrative Act (SFS 1986:223), the needs of the target group should be considered when providing information. Andreasson (2013) therefore proposes a target group analysis as a way of identifying the languages for which a translation is needed (Andreasson, 2013). Based on this analysis, municipalities could recruit translators of those languages that are most sought after. However, machine translations need not be discarded altogether. If an MT is used as a first step, the translation could subsequently be edited by a professional translator for quality assurance (Andreasson, 2013). This proposal is in line with Moberg’s (2013) suggestion that human translators could use MT as a starting-point, providing them with a draft translation, which then can be either accepted or rejected (Moberg, 2013).

There are further studies relating to the connection between translation quality and the accessibility of information. Melki & Kouthoofd-Lans (2018), investigated the usability and accessibility aspects of MT on websites (Melki & Kouthoofd-Lans, 2018). The authors assert that no MT-system is able to translate from one language into another flawlessly. Comprehensibility is crucial, because if the information cannot be understood, it is not accessible. Their study examined how well Google Translate (GT) translates texts and how

this translation affects the users' access to information. Melki & Kouthoofd-Lans (2018) concluded that GT can provide useful translations, to the extent that they facilitate the users' access to information. In other words, the translation is "useful enough", despite apparent errors or non-translated words. Their results, based on three participants, revealed that the message was conveyed and the information was comprehensible and accessible (Melki & Kouthoofd-Lans, 2018).

The studies referred to above indicate that the use of MT-systems, such as GT, has both advantages and disadvantages. Generally speaking, the statistical translation method is successful and GT is the most popular system on the market today (Moberg, 2013). In study I, the linguistic quality of MT texts will be analysed further.

2.4 Cross-linguistic influence

In the context of this study, the notions *cross-linguistic influence* or *transfer* cannot be excluded. The two terms are synonymous and can be defined as "... the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin & Yu, 2016, p.1). This means that a person's first language (L1) influences their second language (L2). The most typical example of L1 → L2 transfer is in a second language acquisition context (Odlin & Yu, 2016). The situation can also be the reverse, whereby L2 influences L1. The first language can be influenced by knowledge of L2 and long residence in a country where L2 is spoken. This dual influence is also known as *bidirectional transfer* or *parallel transfer* (Odlin & Yu, 2016, p.2).

Transfer, or cross-linguistic influence, can be both positive and negative. Similarities between L1 and L2 are positive and helpful, while differences are negative and cause transfer errors (Odlin & Yu, 2016). In translations, divergences between the source language and the target language could include transfer of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation or spelling. There is a link between transfer and translation. In fact, the words *transfer* and *translation* share the same etymology, derived from Latin *trans* ('across') and *ferre* ('to carry') and *trans* + *latus* (participial form of *ferre*). Both words refer to something that is "carried over" (Odlin & Yu, 2016, p. 4).

Translation errors may be the result of lexical or grammatical transfer (Odlin & Yu, 2016, p. 4). Gabriëlsson (2011) studied these types of transfer errors and their communicative implications. Grammatical transfer occurs when L1 grammar structure is used in L2. (Gabriëlsson, 2011) Lexical transfer arises when words or phrases are translated literally.

From a native speaker's viewpoint, lexical transfer errors are perceived as far more confusing because they have a greater impact on meaning. Some lexical items are readily transferred into L2 due to their perceived similarity with an L1 word, so called "false friends" (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 32). Such mistranslations can cause rather severe misunderstandings or a complete breakdown in communication (Gabrielsson, 2011). Study II of this thesis investigates if grammatical and lexical transfer errors have a detrimental effect on communication and if long residency in Sweden makes it easier to understand such errors.

2.5 Error evaluation studies

Error evaluation is defined by Johansson (1978) as a complement to error analysis and concerns error gravity (Johansson, 1978). Errors can be more or less severe, depending on their interference with communication. Johansson (1978) states that the first and most important question to answer is therefore whether the error is comprehensible or not. Even if it does not seriously interfere with comprehension it could nevertheless lead to other negative consequences, such as irritation or a loss of interest in the content. The second essential question to be answered is to what extent the error causes irritation or, in other words, how well it is tolerated (Johansson, 1978).

Johansson (1978) studied NS reactions to Swedish ESL learners' errors in both spoken and written language. The participants were requested to correct and grade the acceptability of the errors on a five-point scale. The errors were ranked in a hierarchy, where low-level errors caused few comprehension problems and high-level errors caused severe difficulties. The same scale was used for measuring the degree of irritation. Errors that were fully comprehensible and did not lead to any irritation, were considered low-level errors. Article errors were examples of low-level errors, while word-order errors were examples of high-level errors. The error evaluation scale revealed that lexical errors were more difficult to understand and caused a "higher degree of irritation" than grammatical errors. (Johansson, 1978, p. 65). Johansson (1978) explains the interpretation problems with lexical errors by their unpredictable nature. The reader faces a more difficult task when attempting to find the correct lexical item, compared to the more predictable and rule-governed options within grammar (Johansson, 1978, p. 71). Furthermore, Johansson (1978) points out that the reactions to errors could vary depending on the type of language context (formal or informal), the role of the sender and the individual characteristics of the receiver (Johansson, 1978).

There are also other studies of attitudes to English language errors, four of which are relevant in relation to this thesis. The first is an evaluation study of the acceptability of English L2 errors in compositions written by Japanese students (Kobayashi, 1992). Both English and Japanese students were asked to correct and assess the grammaticality, meaning clarity, naturalness and organization/structure of the compositions (Kobayashi, 1992). The study investigated whether the informants (NS and NNS) would detect the errors and how they evaluated them in terms of acceptability. The Kobayashi study (1992) revealed that NS were less acceptant of deviations relating to grammaticality than NNS. Moreover, many errors remained undetected by the NNS. In general, the NS corrected more errors and provided a greater variability in alternative wordings. This can be explained by their ability to assess the acceptability of an expression “by intuition” (Kobayashi, 1992, p. 82). The NNS normally do not have this advantage and are more dependent on explicit knowledge, for example of prescriptive grammar (Kobayashi, 1992).

The second study concerns accuracy in journalism and the correlation between errors and the credibility of news providers. Beede & Mulnix (2017) studied digital news articles with the aim of assessing whether spelling errors and grammatical errors would impact the media’s credibility. The investigators’ assumption was that while factual inaccuracies may pass by unnoticed, spelling and grammar errors are transparent and obvious to most readers. These mistakes can contribute to the undermining of the news source’s credibility and damage its brand value. Their study encompassed 100 online news articles from seven different news sources: CNN, Fox News, USA Today, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and Huffington Post. Their analysis of the articles, made by computer and manually, showed that spelling errors and grammatical errors were found in 10-15 % of the articles in most of the selected news sources (Beede & Mulnix, 2017).

The findings were then compared to the news agencies’ perceived trustworthiness, in a rating issued by the Pew Research Center’s American Trends Panel (Beede & Mulnix, 2017). The expected outcome was that low error rates would in turn entail a high score on the credibility scale and vice versa. This was true for some news sources, but there were also examples where a high error rate did not affect the credibility of the news provider (Beede & Mulnix, 2017). This study shows that there is not always an inverse relation between errors and perceived trust. Beede & Mulnix (2017) point out, however, that considering the general decline in trust among their readers, news providers would still be wise to attempt to reduce the number of errors to avoid eroding their credibility.

The third error evaluation study (Wolfe et al. 2016) concerns employers' assessment of business correspondence containing grammatical and pragmatic errors made by both NS and NNS. A number of Human Relations (HR) professionals were asked to give their opinion of (fictitious) e-mails sent from prospective job applicants. Wolfe et al. (2016) investigated if employers will make allowances for certain kinds of errors depending on the writer's first language. Pragmatic errors, related to style or tone, were compared to grammatical errors such as wrong verb tense or agreement and spelling errors (Wolfe et al. 2016). Three different versions of the same e-mail message were sent to 169 employers. These persons were asked to rate the error gravity, ranging from "slightly bothersome" to "highly bothersome" (Wolfe et al., 2016, p. 401). The results showed that pragmatic deficiencies were judged more severely than grammatical ones. Employers did make allowances for grammatical errors made by a NNS writer, as long as they "got their point across" (Wolfe et al. 2016, p. 405). A message with few grammatical errors, but with a casual and impolite tone, was judged as the most bothersome. Despite this outcome, most of the respondents were still of the view that grammatical correctness was important. Many of the employers stated that grammatical errors suggest "character flaws" (Wolfe et al., 2016, p. 409).

The fourth study is most similar to the present study. In 2011, the association *Funka Nu* in cooperation with the Language Council studied the comprehensibility, linguistic quality and trustworthiness of machine translated web sites of Swedish authorities and municipalities. The purpose of this study was to evaluate how well the users are able to understand these translations and to establish recommendations based on the results of the study (Funka Nu, 2011). The study included individual tests, interviews and group discussions. The source material, in English, Arabic and Finnish, had been retrieved from six different authorities and municipalities. There were 29 participants in total, ten of whom were English NS (Funka Nu, 2011).

The degree of comprehensibility and linguistic quality was evaluated with four different versions of the same text: (1) a translation by an authorized translator, (2) a machine translation, (3) an edited original text translated by authorized translator and (4) an edited original text translated by an MT (Funka Nu, 2011). The degree of comprehensibility was tested by letting the participants read one of these text versions and answer questions about the content. The results displayed a noticeable difference in comprehensibility between texts that were translated by an authorized translator and those that were machine translated, in favour of the former (Funka Nu, 2011).

In order to evaluate the quality of different translations, the participants were asked to compare two versions and indicate which one they preferred (Funka Nu, 2011). Again, the results clearly showed a preference for human translations, version (1). Among the English NS participants, none preferred the MT versions (2) of the original text. Concerning the edited text versions, (3) and (4), eight out of ten preferred the human translation and two replied that neither of the versions was satisfactory (Funka Nu, 2011).

The trustworthiness of the web sites was evaluated by instructing the participants to log on to a municipality web site that provided an MT-tool. They were asked who they believed was responsible for the translation. Three out of ten English NS thought it was the authority or municipality, six believed it was the MT system and one did not know (Funka Nu, 2011). This was also the average result for the whole participant group. This result raises a number of concerns. It is unclear, for instance, who will carry the responsibility for errors caused by MT, such as missing words or contradictory information (Funka Nu, 2011).

The study concluded that even the most advanced MT programmes available today, cannot produce translations comparable to the level of precision and accuracy of a human translator (Funka Nu, 2011). MT solutions are currently used too indiscriminately and their varying quality could create problems for the end user, who may rely on information that is erroneous. It is therefore important that users are well-informed about the origin of the translation and that errors may be found (Funka Nu, 2011).

3. Study I – Material and method

The purpose of study I was to investigate the linguistic quality of informative web-based texts in English by Swedish authorities and was made in two stages. The first stage included a search for representative examples of informative texts from authorities on three administrative levels: government, regional and municipal. Section 3.1 describes the text material selection and categorization. The second stage consisted of an analysis of the frequency and nature of the inadequacies in the respective text categories. The classification of inadequacies is presented in section 3.2. This corpus study answers the first research question: Which language inadequacies are the most common in the selected texts? The primary sources are listed in Appendix A. All texts were retrieved in January 2019, and may have been revised or deleted since then.

3.1 Selection and categorization of web-based texts

There are 267 state administrative authorities in Sweden, all of which are listed in the register of state authorities, *Myndighetsregistret* (Appendix A, no. 20). For reasons of delimitation, fifty of these were selected by including every fifth name mentioned in the list. In the event that an authority did not have an official web site, it was replaced by the following name on the list. This selection procedure rendered a varied group of examples, including universities, museums and government agencies of varying sizes.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*SKR - Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) provides a list of all regions and municipalities (Appendix A, no. 38). There are 21 regional councils in Sweden and due to this limited number, it was reasonable to include them all in this first study. In total there are 290 municipalities in Sweden and 50 were selected, again in a similar course of action as with the state authorities, by including every fifth municipality on the SKR list. The three largest cities (Malmö, Göteborg, Stockholm) were added due to their importance in size and population. This initial step rendered a list of 120 (50+20+50) authorities, regional councils and municipalities. A complete list of the selected web sites is found in Appendix B.

During the selection procedure it became apparent that the authorities had chosen different solutions for the presentation of their information in English. In some instances the English web site had been rephrased and adapted. In others, the authorities had chosen to translate their Swedish texts into English, to various extents. There were web sites that provided a nearly complete translation of the Swedish original content, but most had limited the translation to certain parts of the original text. Most of the full translations were provided by MT tools, linking the user to a new page with the exact same design and content as the original. This discrepancy made it necessary to categorize the web sites into three text types: (i) adapted version, (ii) partial translation and (iii) machine translation (MT).

The above mentioned division was inspired by the three forms of multilingual web site solutions, as described by Sundström (2005). His handbook *Användbarhetsboken* 'Usability guide' (Sundström, 2005) includes guidelines and recommendations for user-friendly structures of web sites. Users can access other language versions by links that either direct them to a corresponding page with the exact same content as the original, or to a new web-page which can be either entirely different or partially similar to the original. Sundström (2005) argues that if a web site is to be used, it is fundamental that its users consider it

reliable. This means that the user must be able to identify the publisher and perceive the content as both accurate and topical (Sundström, 2005). The correlation between accuracy and reliability will be analysed in study II, section 4.4.

As a second step, each selected web site was studied for 5-10 minutes for the purpose of categorizing the English text version into one of the three groups. When this procedure was completed, representative text material of equal length was retrieved from each of the three text types. To ensure that the material was as diverse as possible, extracts from all three administrative levels were included in each group. The selected texts were retrieved from municipalities and regional councils representing both densely populated cities and rural areas. It is noteworthy that not all web sites included linguistic inadequacies.

3.2 Classifying inadequacies

Following upon the collection of text material, 2,000 words for each text type, the frequency and nature of the inadequacies in the selected texts was investigated. Text types (ii) and (iii) were compared to their Swedish original text versions in search for mistranslations, omissions, additions and other deviations. Type (i) texts were not translations and therefore did not have a Swedish source text. This made the classification challenging because without an original version it was not always evident whether a chosen lexical item corresponded to the intended item. It was also occasionally difficult to determine whether an inadequacy was grammatical or lexical. Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 exemplify lexical and grammatical inadequacies and the results of the study are presented in section 4.

3.2.1 Lexical inadequacies – examples

Table 1 includes examples of lexical inadequacies that were found in the selected texts. Lexical inadequacies can occur in both noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP), as the examples below show. Some machine translated texts (type iii) included words that were left untranslated, such as in example (2). To facilitate the reading, each example is followed by a number that corresponds to its source reference in Appendix A.

Table 1. Examples of lexical inadequacies

No.	Quoted wording – <i>my italics</i>	Suggested wording	Administrative level & text type
1.	If you plan to build a <i>chicken coop</i> , you sometimes need to <i>seek</i> planning permission. (6b)	poultry house...apply for	Municipality (iii)
2.	Thank you for <i>recovering</i> your <i>gran</i> ! (35b)	recycling...Christmas tree	Municipality (iii)

3.2.2 Grammatical inadequacies

The grammatical inadequacies were grouped into the following main categories: VP, NP, prepositions, adverbs & adjectives. These categories are presented in Table 2, each followed by an example sentence. The list commences with the VP-related inadequacies. Whenever a NP and VP were wrongly positioned in relation to each other (erroneous word order) this inadequacy was included in the VP category. See examples (1), (2) and (3). The gravity of this inadequacy varies. The word order in example (2) could even be considered acceptable and the alternative wording is a suggestion. The VP inadequacies also relate to tense and agreement, such as in example (4).

The NP category includes missing/wrong genitive form, pronoun, number, form or determiner, see examples (5) and (6) below. Missing or wrong articles are evidently connected to the NP, but due to their high frequency, these were regarded as a separate category. Example (7) illustrates this inadequacy. The list below also includes examples of erroneous prepositions, examples (8) and (9). The final sentence exemplifies an inadequacy relating to an adverb, see example (10). All the inadequacies in Table 2 have been italicized and a suggested wording, based on the Swedish original, is provided for each example. A detailed account of the sources is found in Appendix A.

Table 2. Examples of grammatical inadequacies

No.	Category	Quoted wording – <i>my italics</i>	Suggested wording	Administrative level & Text type
1.	VP: word order, tense	As of July 1, 2012 <i>introduced a new law and regulation</i> in adult education. (1b)	As of July 1, 2012, a new law and regulation was introduced in adult education.	Municipality (iii)
2.	VP: word order	Share <i>with your neighbours the information you have obtained from the radio</i> . (5)	Share the information you have obtained from the radio with your neighbours.	State authority (i)
3.	VP: word order, agreement	For students who are still learning Swedish the opportunity to attend our public school <i>are</i> available. (11)	is	Municipality (i)
4.	VP: tense	If you have not <i>register</i> an account you can't get your money. (32)	registered	State authority (ii)
5.	NP: determiner	When it comes to children and young people who are ill are many different kinds of help available. (26b)	...there are many different kinds of help...	Regional council (iii)
6.	NP: plural, pronoun	You will participate in a <i>22 weeks</i> Swedish course to achieve the C1 level in order to apply for <i>you</i> Swedish license. (22)	22-week, your	Regional council (i)
7.	Article	This distribution is based on the number of qualified voters in election constituencies. (41)	the election constituencies	State authority (i)
8.	VP Preposition	You <i>get</i> objective information and useful advice <i>of</i> the group of officials who are involved in your case. (37b)	will get, from	Municipality (iii)
9.	Adjective, preposition	The stillness in rural areas is in contrast to the <i>summer high pulse at</i> the sandy beaches and in the entertainment. (4b)	high summer pulse on the sandy...	Municipality (iii)
10.	Adverb: position, negation	The County Administrative Board <i>can at this stage not to count the votes</i> . (14b)	...can not count the votes at this stage.	State authority (iii)

4. Study I - Results

The categorization of web sites (section 3.1) revealed that state authorities primarily provide adapted versions (i) or partially translated versions (ii), while regional councils and municipalities commonly use MT versions (iii), see Appendix B. This section begins with a presentation of the general results, including a comparison between the three text categories. In section 4.2, the grammatical inadequacies are categorized per text type. Charts 1-3 illustrate which grammatical inadequacies occurred most frequently.

4.1 General result

Grammatical inadequacies were more frequent than lexical inadequacies in all three text types. Figure 1 presents the number of grammatical and lexical inadequacies per 2,000 words. Inadequacies relating to punctuation and spelling were excluded from the count.

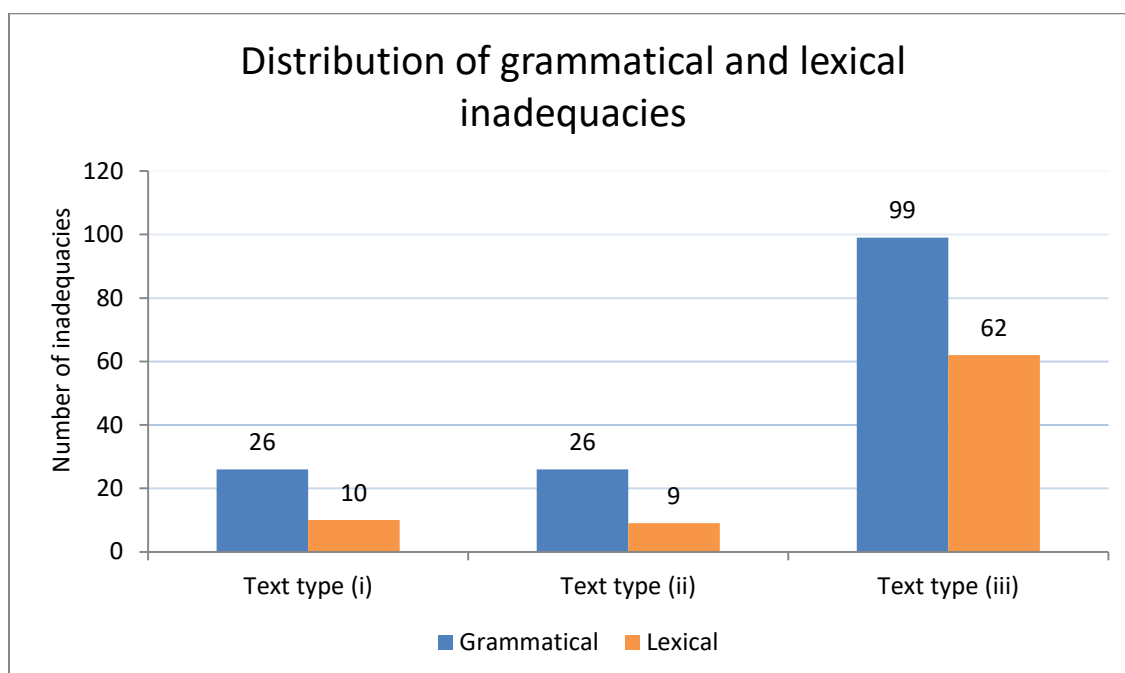


Figure 1. Number of inadequacies per 2,000 words in text type (i), (ii) and (iii)

The comparison between the text types in Figure 1 establishes that type (iii) texts included considerably more inadequacies than type (i) and (ii). There were only minor differences between text types (i) and (ii). The analysis of the text material also revealed that all text types included more grammatical than lexical inadequacies. Based on this outcome, it is relevant to

analyse of what nature these grammatical inadequacies are and how frequently they occur. This will provide a more complete answer to the first research question.

4.2 Grammatical inadequacies

Sections 4.2.1 - 4.2.3 present the frequency and nature of the identified grammatical inadequacies, as described in 3.2.2, in the three text types. All of the texts (3 x 2,000 words) were retrieved on 21-22 January, 2019.

4.2.1 Text type (i) – Adapted text versions

The compiled material consisted of 2,000 words. The text samples each included approximately 200 words retrieved from three state authorities, three regional councils and four municipalities. The sources are specified in Appendix A (no 5, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 27, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41). Chart 1 accounts for the various grammatical inadequacies found in the selected type (i) texts. There were 26 grammatical inadequacies in total.

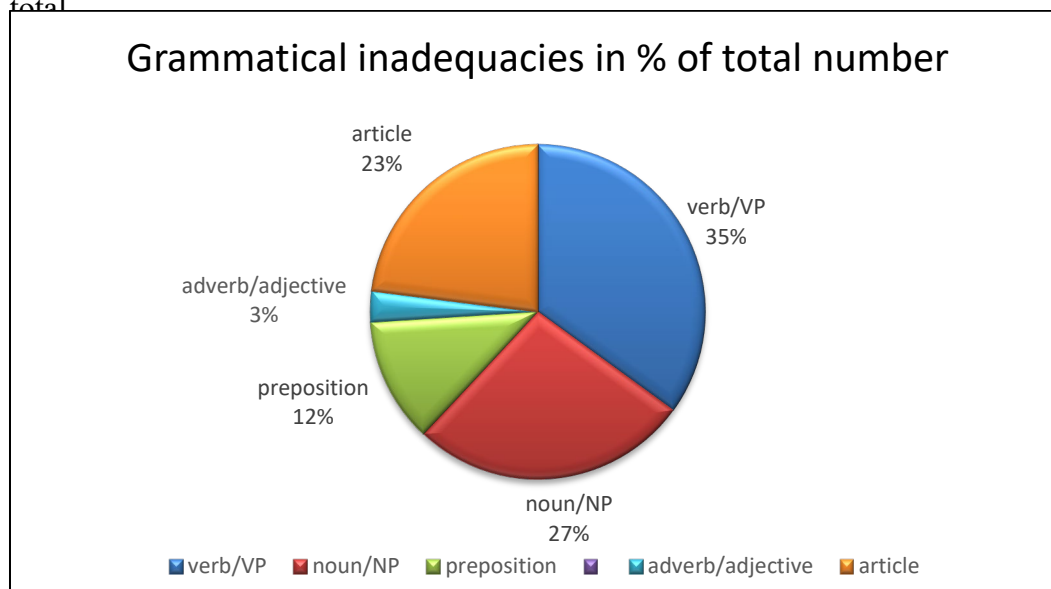


Chart 1. Grammatical inadequacies in adapted text versions (2,000 words).

Chart 1 shows that the most common grammatical inadequacies related to the verb/VP, followed by those involving NP and articles. Inadequacies relating to prepositions and adverbs/adjectives were not as frequent.

4.2.2 Text type (ii) - Partially translated texts

Text type (ii) is not as common as type (i) and (iii). That is the reason why only five sources were used, all of which were state authorities. The text samples contained approximately 400 words each. The analysis also included the Swedish original texts which were of equal length. The sources are listed in Appendix A (no. 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 32, 33, 42, 43). There were 26 grammatical inadequacies found in the selected text material.

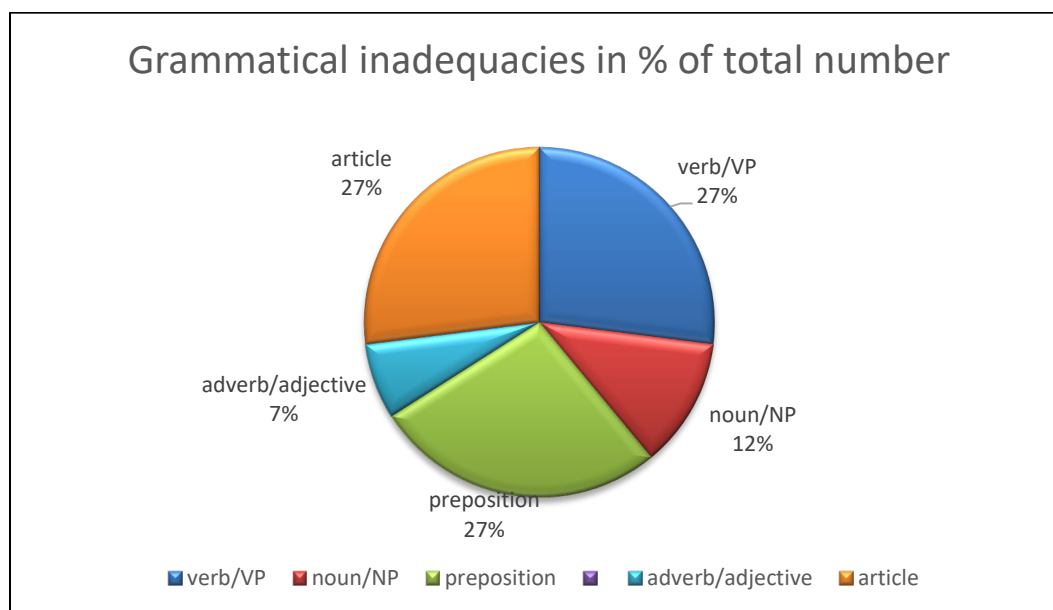


Chart 2. Grammatical inadequacies in partially translated texts (2,000 words)

The partially translated texts were comparable to the adapted texts with regard to the number of inadequacies. Chart 2 displays that inadequacies relating to the VP and missing/wrong articles were the most frequent, followed by erroneous prepositions. There are similarities with the occurrence and kinds of inadequacies in the type (i) texts, presented in Chart 1.

4.2.3 Text type (iii) – MT texts

The type (iii) texts were retrieved from ten sources: two state authorities, two regional councils and six municipalities. Approximately 200 words were retrieved from each source. These were compared to their Swedish original versions which were of equal length. The references are specified in Appendix A (no. 1a-b, 2a-b, 3a-b, 4a-b, 6a-b, 14a-b, 15a-b, 24a-b, 25a-b, 26a-b, 28a-b, 29a-b, 34a-b, 35a-b, 36a-b, 37a-b). There were 99 grammatical inadequacies found in the selected type (iii) texts.

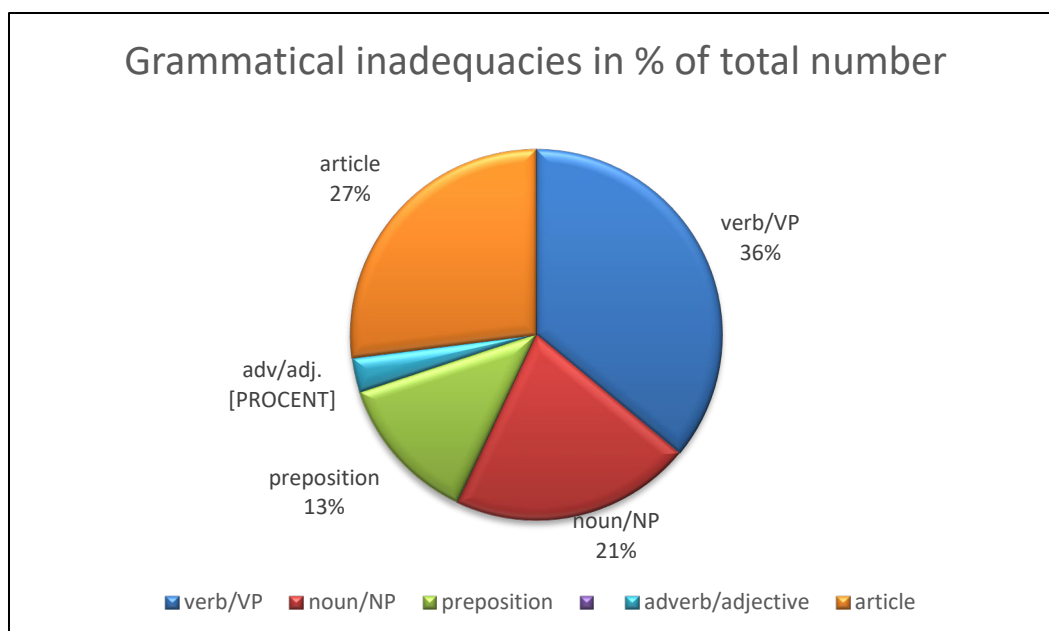


Chart 3. Grammatical inadequacies in MT texts (2,000 words).

In comparison to the two previous text versions, the type (iii) texts included four times as many inadequacies per 2,000 words. It appears from Chart 3 that the distribution of grammatical inadequacies differs little from text types (i) and (ii). Inadequacies relating to the VP, particularly word order problems, were the most common in the selected type (iii) texts.

4.3 Summary of findings

The text material in this study was of limited length and the retrieved texts cannot claim to be representative for all web sites within the respective categories. Figure 1 indicated that grammatical inadequacies are generally more common than lexical ones in all three text types. Charts 1-3 showed similarities between the text types with regard to the nature and distribution of grammatical inadequacies. The selected MT texts (type iii), however, contained considerably more inadequacies than the adapted, type (i), or partially translated, type (ii) texts. Based on previous studies (Andreasson, 2013, Melki & Kouthoofd-Lans, 2018), this result is not surprising, see section 2.3. The Language Council advises against an indiscriminate use of MT, due to the varying quality of these translations (Språkrådet, 2012, p. 26).

It is essential to know which inadequacies are the most common, since these will be the ones that potential readers are most likely to encounter. The main study, study II, is therefore inspired by the findings above and investigates NS and NNS attitudes to inadequacies in informative texts. This study analyses the consequences of linguistic

inadequacies with regard to comprehensibility, acceptance of wording and reliability of the information.

3. Study II - Material and method

The study I results revealed that, in general, inadequacies are more frequent in MT texts. All text types included more grammatical than lexical inadequacies. The main study builds upon these findings and aims at investigating their consequences. Now that the frequency and nature of the inadequacies have been established, the next stage concerns how these are perceived by potential readers. This will answer the second research question as well as the two subordinate questions.

2. How are language inadequacies perceived by NS and NNS with regard to comprehension, acceptance of wording and reliability of the information?

2a) Will familiarity with Swedish society facilitate comprehension of sentences with cross-linguistic influence from Swedish?

2b) Is there a correlation between the acceptance of wording and the perceived reliability of the information?

The main study includes a questionnaire (Appendix C) with authentic example sentences that were retrieved from the texts in study I. The examples were selected as to ensure that both lexical and grammatical inadequacies were represented. The sources were retrieved from all text types and from authorities on all administrative levels. This section presents the material and method that were used for the study as well as the grounds for their selection.

3.1 The questionnaire

Litoselliti (2010) states that a frequently used method for gathering data in linguistics is the questionnaire, not least when trying to measure attitudes and perceptions to language and language variation (Litoselliti, 2010). There are also other ways of studying attitudes to

language, such as focus groups or interviews. These methods are used in linguistics to study a range of topics, such as perceptions of particular language aspects, dialects, language usage, etc. A typical feature of the focus group is the dynamic interaction between the participants. They tend to influence each other's views and there is also a risk that some hesitate to express a deferring viewpoint in the presence of other participants. This may lead to a false consensus and even to polarization, in which the collective group responds more exaggeratedly than any individual would (Litoselliti, 2010). The same argument holds for interviews, which can offer some insight into what the participants *say* they believe, but not necessarily what they *really* believe. Furthermore, both focus groups and interviews are time consuming methods that demand commitment from the participants (Litoselliti, 2010).

In this study, I wanted each participant to make their individual assessment unaffected by the opinion of others and therefore neither focus groups nor interviews were suitable as a method of research. If these methods had been chosen, the aim and scope of this study would have been different. Interviews would, for example, have been suitable for a more qualitative study allowing the participants to motivate their views.

This study is quantitative in the sense that it counts the occurrence of a particular characteristic or item (Litoselliti, 2010). This requires a form of measurement and the questionnaire has the advantage of generating a large amount of information (Litoselliti, 2010). In light of the practical constraints and the disadvantages of the above mentioned methods, a questionnaire was the most suitable research method. A questionnaire makes it possible to study the consequences of different inadequacies. The selected example sentences were taken out of context, but were still informative and comprehensible. The sources (government agencies, regional councils and municipalities) were not revealed to the participants, since it is advisable that names of people and organizations be avoided in questionnaires about opinions (Peterson, 2000, 4:17).

The questionnaire contained 16 sentences: four with one or more grammatical inadequacies, four with one or more lexical inadequacies, four with a combination of lexical and grammatical inadequacies and finally four control sentences. All sentences were retrieved from the texts that were selected for study I. The sentences were jumbled, to prevent the same kind of inadequacies from recurring after each other, which could lead to habituation. The order of the questionnaire sentences was reversed in half of them, to mitigate the order effect. The participants were also given instructions on how to complete the form.

The participants were asked to state their opinions on a rating scale. Peterson (2000) asserts that there are three fundamental matters that need to be determined when using a rating

scale: the number of scale categories, which wording to use, the physical format of the scale (horizontal, vertical, boxes, lines, circles, etc.) (Peterson, 2000, 5:12). This questionnaire included a three point scale, with two opposing alternatives and one intermediate alternative. The participants were requested to indicate whether they agreed, partially agreed or disagreed with three statements, listed after each sentence. There was also the possibility to refrain from answering, by ticking a fourth alternative, “no opinion”. The instructions mentioned that this answer could be used if the participant felt unsure or preferred to remain neutral.

As a general guideline, Peterson (2000) suggests that questionnaires should be easy to read and complete, include instructions, sufficient space for replies and be of an appropriate length. This makes the questionnaire easier both to complete and to administer (Peterson, 2000, 7:2). All of these aspects were taken into account when constructing the questionnaire for this study. Horizontal boxes were preferred because they require less space and make it easier for the participants to respond.

The first page of the questionnaire included demographic questions. These are questions relating to each participant’s age, educational background and occupation and can be used to compare groups of participants (Peterson, 2000, 6:2). The NS and NNS replies were compared in this study and therefore all respondents were asked to indicate their first language. The participants’ knowledge of Swedish could influence the results. Consequently, it was relevant to have knowledge about the duration of the participants’ residence in Sweden. Their length of stay in Sweden was deemed a more reliable indicator of how familiar they were with the Swedish language and culture.

3.2 The participants

The collection of data was administered from April to September, 2019. Finding a sufficient number of participants matching the requirements was a time consuming endeavor, requiring both persistence and patience. First of all, every respondent had to be fluent in English, either as a native speaker or by having otherwise acquired a sufficiently high level of proficiency. Bilingual participants were accepted, as long as Swedish was not one of their first languages. The second selection criteria was that the participants should be residing in Sweden, either temporarily or permanently.

To ensure that the group was as representative as possible, participants of different ages, educational backgrounds and professions were recruited. They were contacted through various organizations, work-places, churches, schools, libraries and informal community

groups. Other candidates were found through colleagues, friends and acquaintances. This effort was made in order to ensure that a diverse group of participants was found. The following sections include details relating to the participants' background.

3.2.1 Participants' first language

In total, there were 105 participants who took part in the study: 50 English NS and 55 NNS. The latter group represented a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Their first languages (L1) were, in order of frequency: German (15), Arabic (10), Dutch (4), Italian (4), Chinese (3), Spanish (3), Russian (2), Lithuanian (2), Hindi (2), Afrikaans (2), Turkish (1), Dari (1), Basque (1), Czech (1), Urdu (1), Punjabi (1), Sinhala (1), Somali (1). Any participant who indicated that they were bilingual with English and another language were considered to be NS.

3.2.2 Participants' age

The survey should preferably include participants of different ages. The participants were requested to circle the age group to which they belonged. The number of persons in each age group is listed in Table 3. There were nearly twice as many participants aged 20-29 than there were in the age groups 50-59 and over 60.

Table 3. Participants' age

Age group	Number of participants
20-29 years	46
30-39 years	21
40-49 years	10
50-59 years	16
60 years or older	12

3.2.3 Participants' educational background

A vast majority of the participants in this study had an academic background. This comes as no surprise, bearing in mind that locations were visited where many academics work and/or study. This was a conscious choice due to the circumstance that the NNS participants needed to be relatively fluent in English to be able to complete the questionnaire. Many had acquired

their knowledge through university studies, either in their respective home countries or in Sweden. The English NS population in Sweden is characterized by a high level of education (Parkvall, 2015). This provides an explanation to why many of the participants held a university degree. Table 4 accounts for the participants' highest completed educational level.

Table 4. Participants' educational level

Highest completed level of education	Number of participants
Secondary school, High school, A-levels	28
BA	46
MA	21
PhD, MD	5
Unknown	5

3.2.4 Participants' occupation

Table 5 accounts for the participants' (present) occupation. The responses were divided into the categories: employed, unemployed, student or retired. Approximately half of the group were either employed or self-employed.

Table 5. Participants' occupation

Occupation	Number of participants
Employed/self-employed	52
Student	39
Unemployed	3
Retired	7
Unknown	4

When searching for suitable candidates for this study, an effort was made to find participants from different professions and academic fields. There were many students among the participants, but collecting replies only from students of linguistics would have biased the results. To this end, exchange students from universities offering other specializations were contacted. Similarly, the non-student participants were not asked to specify their profession, only their present occupation. This question resulted in a variety of answers. Some chose to answer "employed", while others described their working tasks in great detail.

Two international schools were visited during the collection procedure. It is therefore natural that teachers were the best-represented profession (15 persons). Six of the participants were interpreters, the second most common profession. Other occupations, represented by one or two persons, included: consultant, nurse, engineer, architect, courier, physio-therapist,

scientist, medical doctor, research assistant, administrator, Pilates instructor, civil servant, priest, lecturer, graphic designer, musician, etc.

3.2.5 Participants' duration of stay in Sweden

It is likely that persons who have spent a long time in Sweden, will also be more familiar with the Swedish language. Although one of the background questions concerned the participants' self-assessment of their knowledge of Swedish, this information would be too uncertain to use for any estimation or comparison. The participants' duration of stay in Sweden would therefore serve as a better form of measurement. There were 25 participants that had lived in Sweden for 5 years or longer, while 26 persons had arrived within the past month. Many of them were exchange students. I did not ask the informants about the purpose or planned length of their stay. Table 6 lists of the number of participants and their duration of stay on a time scale.

Table 6. Participants' duration of stay in Sweden

Duration of stay in Sweden	Number of participants
< 1 month	26
1 – 11 months	22
1 – 5 years	32
> 5 years	25

3.3 Procedure

Before completing the questionnaire, each participant was requested to sign a consent form (Appendix D). This form was kept separate from the questionnaire to maintain their anonymity. I met with each informant personally and provided everyone with the same instructions. They were informed that the questionnaire was for an MA thesis in English linguistics and that the purpose of the study was to investigate attitudes to informative sentences from a language point of view. The sentences they would be presented with were authentic and retrieved from web sites of public agencies on a state, regional and municipal level. They were not told that the sentences included any language problems or inadequacies. For the purpose of making the participants feel more at ease, I explained that this was not a test but a study of opinions and attitudes. There would be no right or wrong answers.

It was crucial that all responses were individual and that the participants refrained from discussing or consulting with anyone else while answering the questions. This was the

main reason why the questionnaire could not be submitted electronically. My presence during the completion of the questionnaire was essential also for the purpose of answering questions and to provide further clarifications of the instructions, which some participants needed. Occasionally, a question revealed that someone’s proficiency in English was insufficient and the questionnaire therefore unfortunately could not be completed.

Most participants required approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire, but there were no time constraints. While some read the sentences quickly and responded to the statements within a few minutes, others devoted half an hour to reading and carefully considering the alternative responses. Once the questionnaire was completed, the purpose of the study was explained in further detail and everyone was given a small reward (e.g. chocolate) as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the project.

4. Results

The presentation of the questionnaire answers starts with the general results for all sentence categories and includes all 105 participants. The 16 questionnaire sentences are divided into four categories (A-D), as listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Sentence categories

Category	Sentences	Description
A	2, 7, 9, 10	One or more grammatical inadequacy
B	3, 5, 13, 15	One or more lexical inadequacy
C	4, 8, 12, 14	Combination of both grammatical and lexical inadequacies
D	1, 6, 11, 16	Control sentences

The categories are compared with regard to their comprehensibility, acceptance of wording and perceived reliability in sections 4.1.1 - 4.1.3. Following upon this general overview, the results for each sentence category are presented and analysed further, including comparisons between the native speakers’ (NS) and non-native speakers’ (NNS) replies. The findings, presented in sections 4.2.1 - 4.2.4, show to what extent the attitudes to comprehensibility, acceptability and reliability differ between the participant groups. This analysis will answer the second research question. The comparisons will also reveal to what extent the results correspond to the findings of previous studies of error evaluation and linguistic acceptability, as referred to in section 2.5.

Following upon the presentation of the sentence categories, some specific aspects are examined more closely with the aim of answering the two subordinate research questions. The first of these (2a), relates to whether the length of stay in Sweden can be linked to comprehension of wordings with cross-linguistic influence from Swedish. Persons who have spent a long time in Sweden may be more familiar with inadequacies caused by transfer and find them easier to interpret. To this end, I selected three exemplifying sentences and related the participants' replies to their duration of stay. The results are presented in section 4.3.

The second subordinate question (2b) concerns the possible link between the wording/phrasing of a sentence and the perceived reliability of its informational content. This was analysed by listing the sentences with the most accepted wording and comparing these to the sentences that were perceived as the most reliable. If the same sentences appear on both lists, this could suggest that there is a connection between acceptance of wording and perceived reliability. The same procedure was subsequently repeated with the sentences considered to have the least accepted wording and viewed as the least reliable with regard to their content. The findings are presented in section 4.4.

4.1 Overall results

Each sentence category included four examples, whereby the total number of responses amounted to 420 (4 x 105). The results are presented in Figures 2, 3 and 4 in the form of percentages of the total number of replies for each alternative. Section 4.1.1 accounts for the comprehensibility of the sentences, while 4.1.2 relates to the acceptability of the wording and 4.1.3 to the perceived reliability of the information.

4.1.1 Comprehensibility

Figure 2 below illustrates how the participants evaluated the comprehensibility of each sentence category. The four columns represent the responses per category, in per cent, to the first statement; "The sentence is easy to understand."

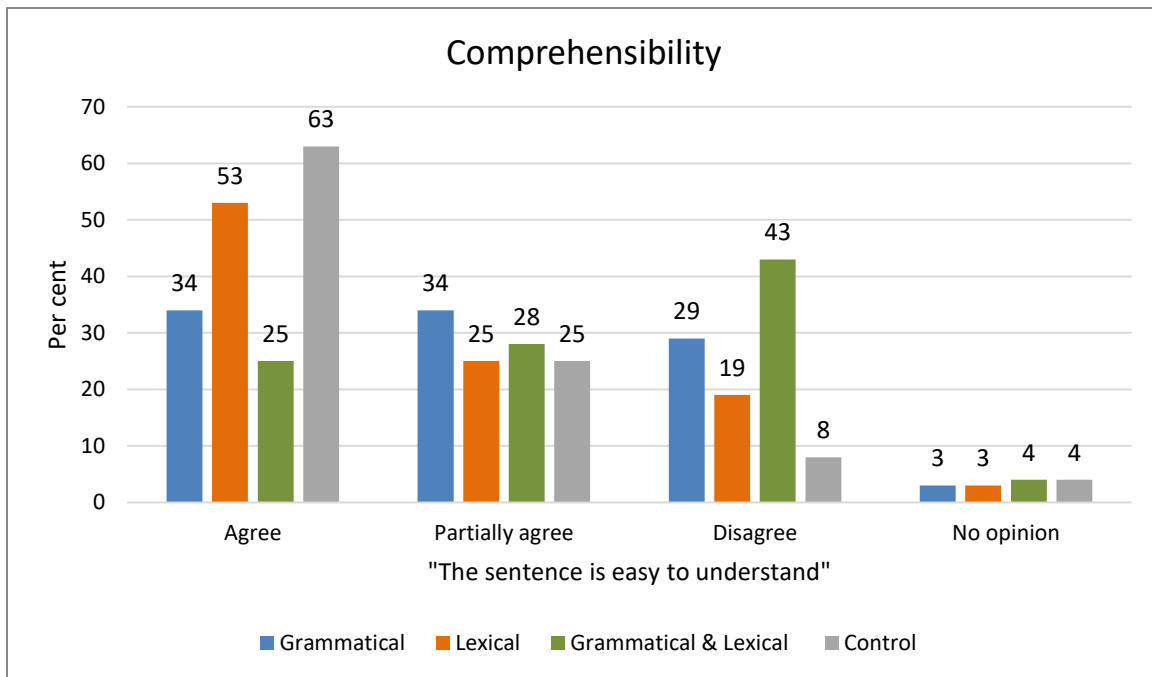


Figure 2. Comprehensibility per sentence category

The respondents found the sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C) the most difficult to understand, generating the most “disagree” answers. Only 25 % of the participants agreed that these sentences were easy to understand, compared to 63 % for the control sentences. The comprehension rate for the control sentences was expected to be even higher and may have been a result of the missing context.

The results indicate that the participants were in doubt about the meanings of the sentences with grammatical inadequacies. It appears that these inadequacies were more detrimental to comprehension than lexical ones. As Figure 2 shows, only 34 % of the respondents indicated that the sentences in category A were easy to understand, compared to 53 % for category B. This result contrasts the Johansson (1978) study which concluded that lexical errors are more confusing or difficult to understand than grammatical errors, see section 2.5 (Johansson, 1978). Agreeing to have understood a sentence does, however, not exclude the possibility of a misconception or that erroneous information is conveyed.

4.1.2 Acceptance of wording

The second statement concerned the wording/phrasing of the sentences. The participants were requested to indicate whether they agreed, partially agreed or disagreed that a sentence was worded in an acceptable way. Figure 3 presents their reactions to the statement “The wording/phrasing is acceptable”.

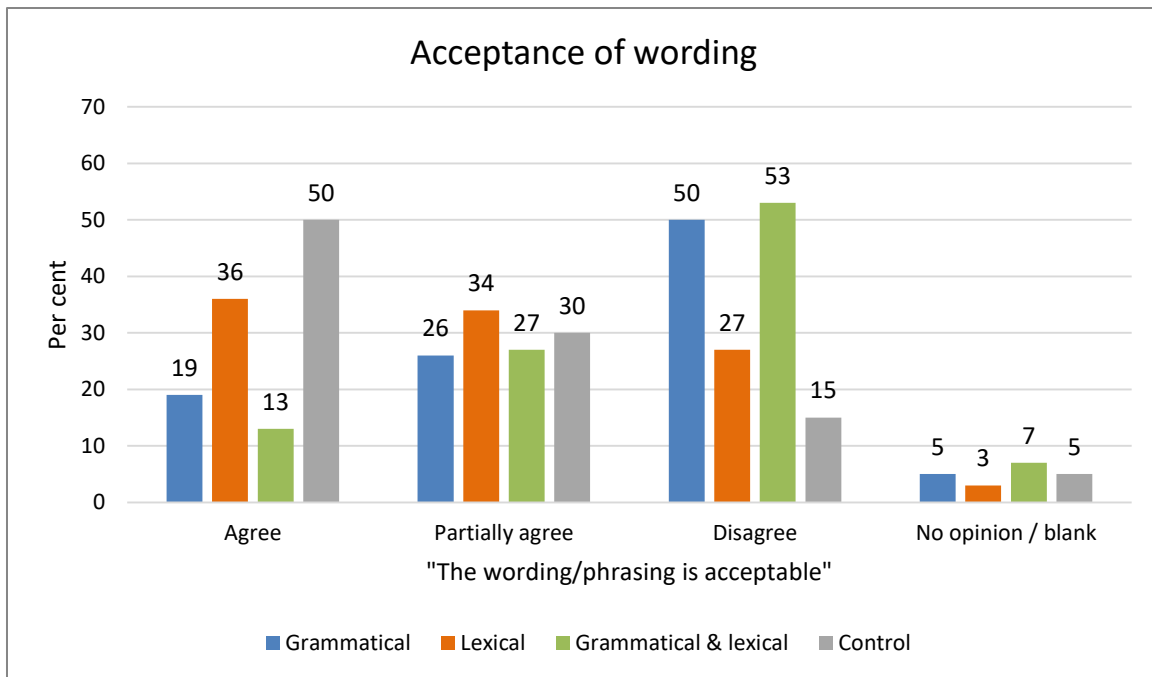


Figure 3. Acceptance of wording/phrasing per sentence category

Based on the results in Figure 3, it appears that sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C) were not only the least comprehensible, but also the least acceptable with regard to wording/phrasing. A majority of the participants, 53 %, disagreed that the wording of these sentences were acceptable. The second least accepted category included sentences with one or more grammatical inadequacy (category A). As many as 50 % objected to the statement. There was a noticeable difference in attitude to these sentences compared to the ones containing lexical inadequacies (category B). As expected, the control sentences (category D) were the most accepted in terms of wording and received the most “agree” replies. The respondents were however not unanimous. This category also generated a number of “partially agree” and “disagree” responses, which indicates that the wordings were not fully acceptable.

4.1.3 Perceived reliability

Figure 4 displays how the participants perceived the reliability of the sentences’ informational content. This figure presents the responses per category to the third statement; “The information sounds reliable”. The result resembles the outcome presented in the previous sections.

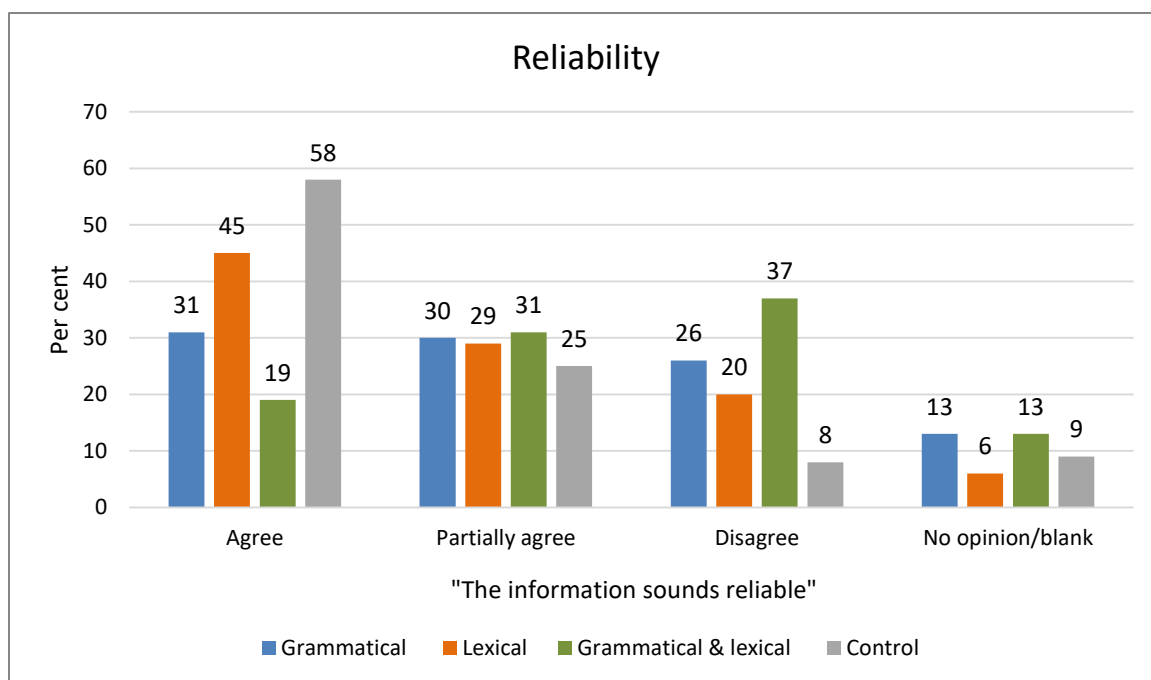


Figure 4. Perceived reliability of information per sentence category

The participants' replies indicated that sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C) were not only viewed as the least comprehensible and acceptable in terms of wording, but also perceived as the least reliable. Only 19 % of the participants agreed that the information sounded reliable, compared to 58 % for the control sentences (category D). Sentences with lexical inadequacies (category B) were perceived as more trustworthy than those with grammatical inadequacies (category A). This does, however, not exclude the possibility that the information that was understood differed from what was intended. The statement referring to the reliability of the information generated more "no opinion"-replies than the two previous statements. This result suggests some degree of uncertainty or reluctance to respond, possibly due to the missing context. The coming sections will analyse each of the sentence categories in further detail, including a comparison between the replies from the two participant groups.

4.2 Results per sentence category

The coming sections give a more detailed account of the results for each sentence category. The questionnaire sentences, their Swedish equivalents and respective source text types, (i), (ii) or (iii) are presented in tables. Following this background overview, the results per category are displayed in figures, with the answers from the NS and NNS respectively. There were 50 NS and 55 NNS participants, making the groups unequal in number. The results are

therefore presented in form of percentages, calculated based on the total number of answers in each sentence category: 200 NS answers per category (4 x 50) and 220 NNS answers per category (4 x 55). A detailed account of the number of replies is provided in Appendix E.

4.2.1 Category A - Grammatical inadequacies

The category A sentences were no. (2), (7), (9) and (10). These were retrieved from all three text types. The numbered references are specified in Appendix A. For text type (iii), the references for the Swedish and English language versions are identical, although only the Swedish version was written by the authority, see sentence (2) and (10). Sentence (9), text type (i), did not have an original Swedish wording, hence the comment “not applicable”. Table 8 below presents the Category A sentences, in both language versions, as well as the relevant grammatical inadequacy (-ies).

Table 8. Presentation of sentences with grammatical inadequacies

Sentence no.	Text type	Swedish wording	English wording	Grammatical inadequacy
2	(iii)	Växande branscher och unga entreprenörer med global utblick har sin bas i regionen. (24a)	Growing industries and young entrepreneurs with a global outlook is based in the region. (24b)	VP agreement
7	(ii)	Det är viktigt du har tillgång till den e-postadress du ger till din arbetsgivare fram tills att du har fått beslut på din ansökan. (16)	It is important that you have access the email address you give your employer until you have received a decision regarding your application. (17)	VP tense article
9	(i)	(not applicable)	Wintertime is embarking on a dog sled trek and experiencing the forest’s stillness and quiet a real adventure. (39)	word order preposition
10	(iii)	På Kommuncenter kan du boka tid för ett kort möte på 30 min med vår handläggare. (36a)	In the Municipality Center, you can schedule a brief meeting in 30 minutes with our officers. (36b)	Preposition NP number

4.2.1.1 Category A - comprehensibility

Figure 5 shows how the NS and NNS participants responded to the first statement: “The sentence is easy to understand.” The replies are indicated in percentages.

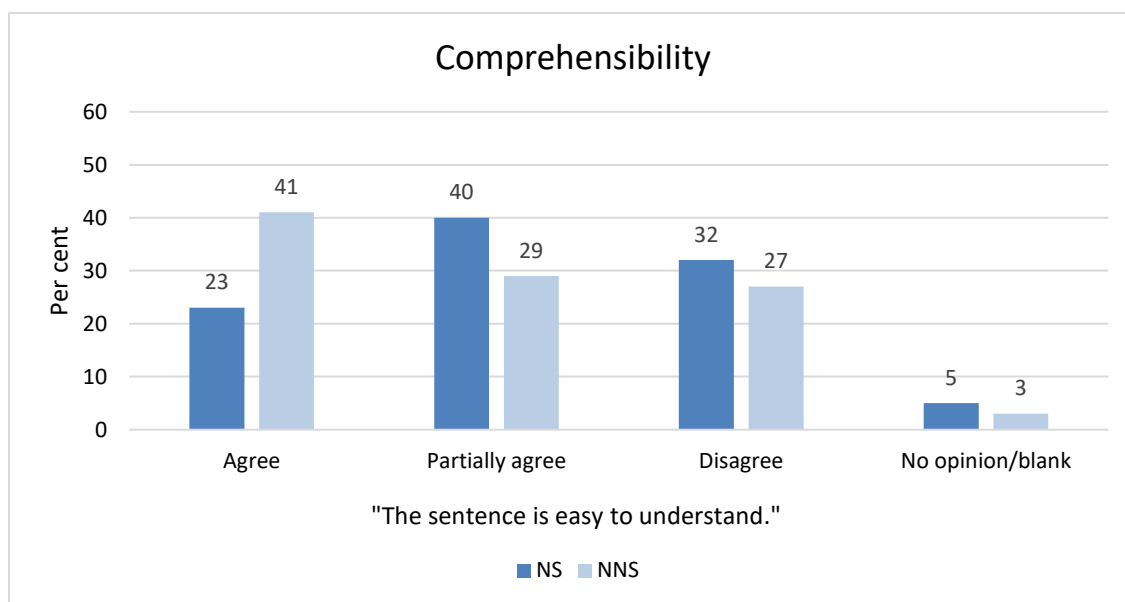


Figure 5. Comprehensibility for sentences with grammatical errors

The grammatical inadequacies in category A were viewed as more comprehensible by the NNS than the NS participants. Nearly twice as many NNS as NS replied “agree”. Figure 5 presents the average results for all four sentences, but not all sentences within this category were assessed in the same way. Sentence (10), (see Table 8) included only one grammatical inadequacy and received more “agree”-replies than the other sentences in category A. Sentences, (2), (7) and (9), were not as easily understood. This is an indication that both the frequency and nature of the inadequacies could affect the comprehensibility of the information. Sentence (9), with wording influenced by Swedish, generated the most “disagree”-responses from both participant groups. This example reappears in section 4.3, which investigates the correlation between comprehensibility and familiarity with inadequacies caused by Swedish cross-linguistic influence.

4.2.1.2 Category A – acceptance of wording

Figure 6 illustrates the reactions to the second statement: “The wording/phrasing is acceptable”. A majority of the participants replied “disagree”, in other words did not find the wordings acceptable.

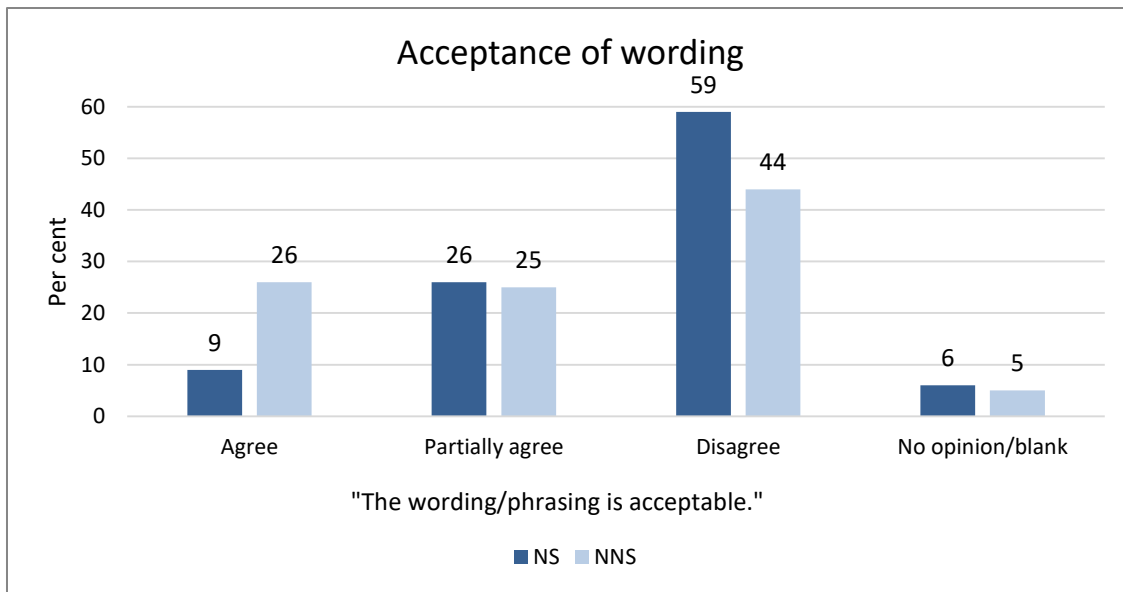


Figure 6. Acceptance of wording for sentences with grammatical inadequacies

The NS were less acceptant of the grammatical inadequacies than the NNS. This result bears resemblance to the findings of the Kobayashi (1992) study, see section 2.5, which also concluded that NS were less acceptant of language errors than NNS (Kobayashi, 1992, p. 104). The responses for this sentence category show that although the sentences were considered comprehensible by most participants, very few agreed that the wording was acceptable.

There was some variation between the responses to the individual sentences, suggesting that some grammatical inadequacies were less acceptable than others. Both sentence (9) and sentence (10) included inadequacies relating to prepositions in time adverbials (see Table 8). In sentence (9) the preposition (and article) was missing (*In the* wintertime), and the wrong preposition was used in sentence (10) (*for* 30 minutes, instead of *in* 30 minutes). The use of an erroneous preposition can often be explained by cross-linguistic influence (Gabrielsson, 2011). Sentence (9) also included further inadequacies, which could explain why it received more “disagree” responses.

4.2.1.3 Category A – perceived reliability

The replies to the last statement, “The information sounds reliable”, are presented in Figure 7.

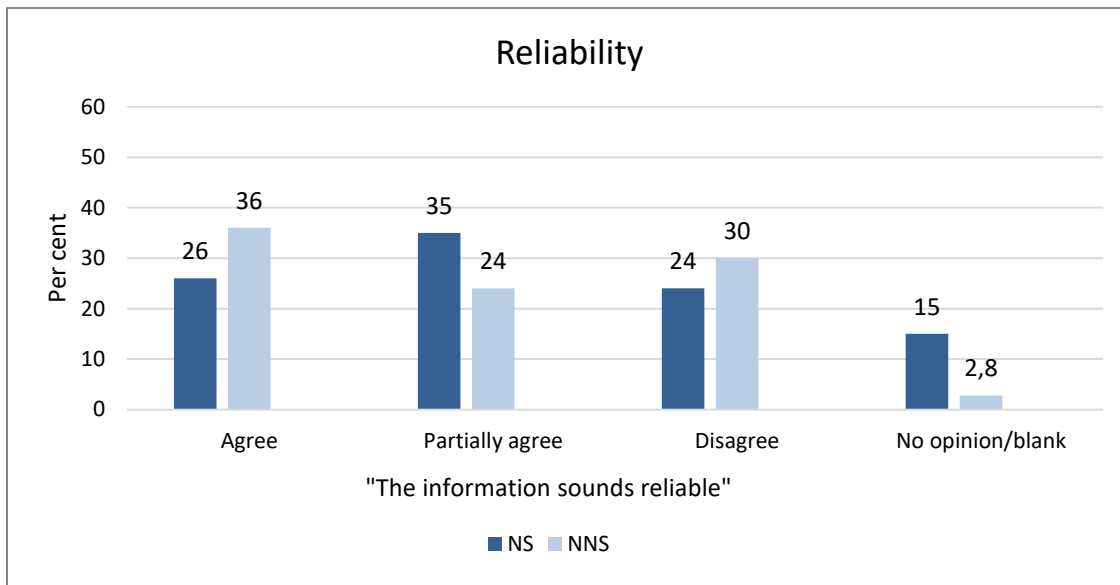


Figure 7. Perceived reliability of information for sentences with grammatical inadequacies

Figure 7 indicates that sentences with grammatical inadequacies were considered reliable by 26 % of the NS and 36 % of the NNS. This means that a majority of the participants either only partially agreed or disagreed that the information sounded reliable. When comparing these percentages with the results in Figure 6, it appears that despite the low acceptance of the sentences' wording, their informational content was generally deemed fully or partially reliable. In section 4.4, the correlation between acceptance of wording and perceived reliability is analysed further.

4.2.2 Category B – lexical inadequacies

Sentences (3), (5), (13) and (15) were included in category B and contained one or more lexical inadequacy. These sentences are presented in Table 9 with both their English and Swedish wording, where applicable. Two of the examples were retrieved from text type (i) and two from type (iii). The latter text type included various mistranslations or other deviations whereby the lexical item did not correspond to the original wording. In the former, a word or phrase was used erroneously or inappropriately for the context. In some instances, for example in sentence (15), the lexical inadequacy may have been a spelling error. The inadequacies are specified in the far right column together with a suggested alternative translation within parentheses. The list is not exhaustive and there may be other inadequacies that have not been included.

Table 9. Presentation of sentences with lexical inadequacies

Sentence no	Text type	Swedish wording	English wording	Lexical inadequacy (-ies)
3	(i)	(not applicable)	Common problems students seek for are anxiety, stress, sleeping difficulties, crisis, relationship problems, difficulties in concentrating or completing assignments, loss of energy, homesickness or difficulties in adjusting to life in Sweden. (12)	seek for (seek help for) crisis (?)
5	(iii)	För en del resor kan du få viss ersättning men du betalar alltid en egenavgift oavsett färdstätt. (25a)	For some trips, you can get some compensation but you always pay a customs fee regardless of transport. (25b)	customs fee (national insurance contribution) (mode of) transport
13	(iii)	Vattenslang eller hinkar och strilkannor är lämpliga släckredskap. (34a)	Hose or buckets and spray cans are suitable firefighting gear. (34b)	spray cans (sprinkling-can)
15	(i)	(not applicable)	General professionals, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, physio- and psychotherapists and many other professionals provide an excellent service. (21)	General professionals (practitioners) psychotherapists (psychotherapists)

4.2.2.1 Category B – comprehensibility

The reactions to the statement “The sentence is easy to understand” are presented in Figure 8.

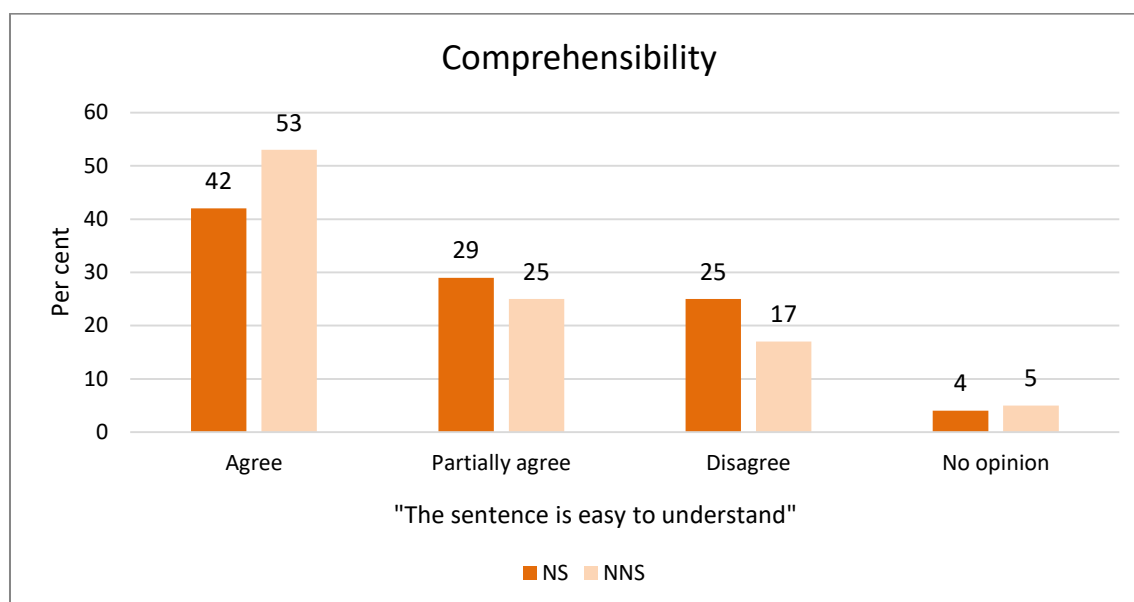


Figure 8. Comprehensibility for sentences with lexical inadequacies

A majority of the participants agreed that the category B sentences were easy to understand, despite the lexical inadequacies. The results suggest that these had little impact on the comprehensibility of the sentences. There were slight differences between the NS and NNS responses to the statement referring to comprehensibility. Figure 8 shows that the NNS

informants replied “agree” to a larger extent than the NS. Gabrielsson (2011) asserted that NS find lexical errors more confusing than grammatical errors, especially if these are caused by L1 transfer (Gabrielsson, 2011). In this study, however, the grammatical inadequacies were considered less easy to understand (see Figure 2). It is possible that the participants’ L1 influenced the result. Another explanation could be that some of the lexical inadequacies remained undetected. There were participants who read the sentences very rapidly, perhaps not noticing the inadequacies. The lack of context may also have contributed to the results.

4.2.2.2 Category B – acceptance of wording

Figure 9 shows that NNS replied “agree” to a larger extent than the NS, indicating a greater

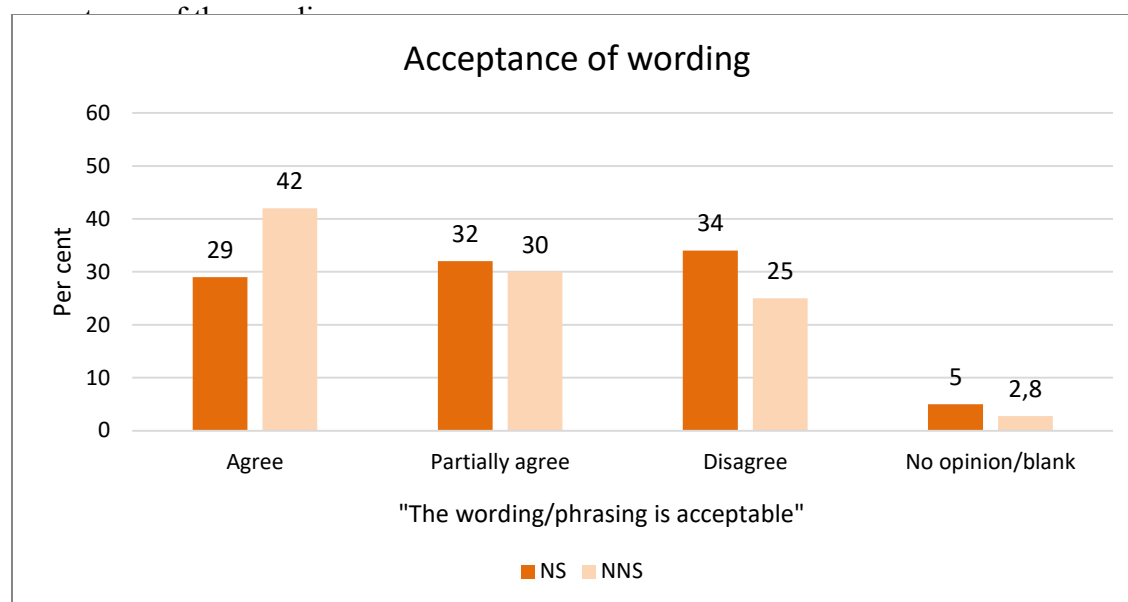


Figure 9. Acceptance of wording for sentences with lexical inadequacies

Both participant groups found sentence (3) the least acceptable, followed by sentence (13). For detailed results, see Appendix E. Sentence (3) received 28 “disagree”-replies from the NS compared to 16 from the NNS. The same pattern reoccurred for sentence (13), which generated 23 “disagree” answers from the NS, but only 13 from the NNS. Despite the unequal size of the groups, these figures still give an indication of the informants’ attitudes to the wording.

4.2.2.3 Category B – perceived reliability

A majority of the participants confirmed that the information in the category B sentences sounded reliable, as Figure 10 illustrates. As many as 70 % of the NS and 77 % of the NNS agreed or partially agreed with the statement “The information sounds reliable”.

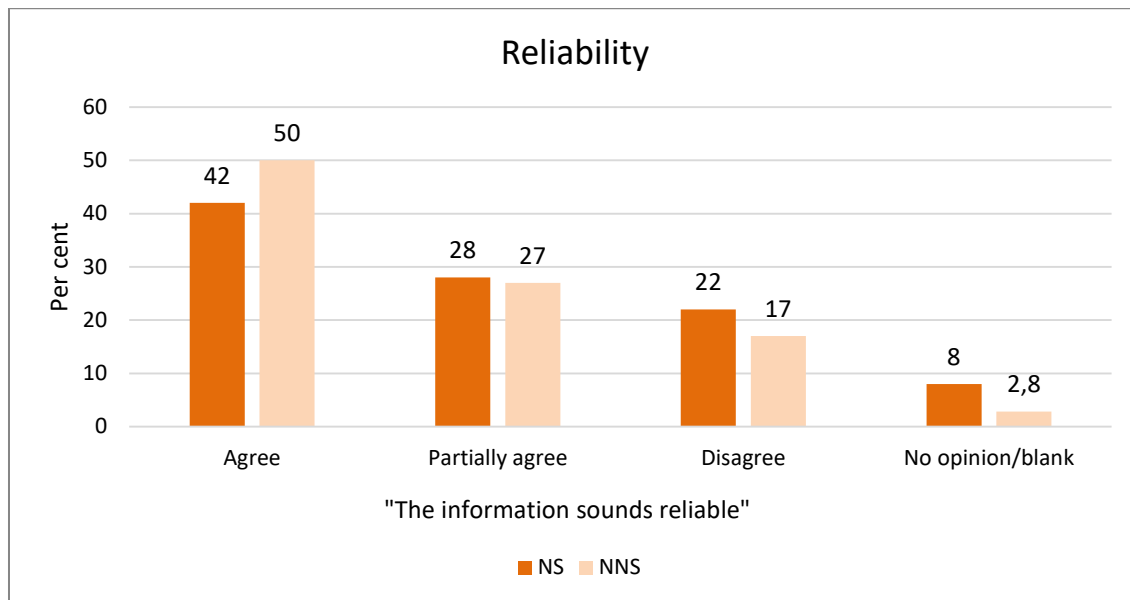


Figure 10. Perceived reliability of information for sentences with lexical inadequacies

It appears that despite the low acceptance of wording and comprehensibility, the information was generally perceived as reliable or partially reliable. There were only slight differences between the two groups. The lexical inadequacies in these sentences appear not to have had a negative impact on the perceived reliability of the information. An undetected lexical inadequacy could be misleading, however. Sentence (13) lists various forms of fire-fighting gear (see Table 9). A majority of the NS and NNS participants agreed that the information sounded reliable or partially reliable. One may doubt the appropriateness of using spray cans to extinguish fires.

4.2.3 Category C – both grammatical and lexical inadequacies

This category included a combination of grammatical and lexical inadequacies. The results presented in section 4.1 established that category C generated more negative responses than categories A and B. Sentences (4), (8), (12) and (14) are introduced in Table 10. The inadequacies specified in the right hand column could, in certain instances, be corrected in alternative ways. Some sentences would benefit from a complete rephrasing, but I chose not

to consider the wording as erroneous as long as the meaning was conveyed. There may also be further inadequacies that I failed to include.

Table 10. Presentation of sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies

Sentence no.	Text type	Swedish wording	English wording	Grammatical/lexical inadequacy
4	(iii)	Gymnasieskolan ska fortsätta att genomföra kompetenshöjning av eleverna kring cannabis. (2a)	Upper secondary school should continue to implement the skills of students around cannabis. (2b)	NP: missing article (The upper secondary school) preposition: <i>around</i> (about, concerning) <i>implement the skills</i> raise awareness (Swedish version: enhance competence)
8	(iii)	För skuldsatta som inte uppfyller skuldsaneringslagens krav eller som vill ha andra typer av betalningsuppställningar kan rådgivaren räkna fram betalningsförslag. (28a)	For debt that does not meet the debt settlement legal requirements or who want to have other types of payment arrangements, the adviser calculate the payment proposal. (28b)	VP agreement: persons in debt who <i>do</i> not... NP pronoun: those <i>who</i> VP tense (calculate – can calculate) <i>debt</i> – indebted, persons in debt
12	(iii)	Att ta ansvar för en barngrupp innebär till exempel att tillsammans med övrig personal ha samling, gymnastik, gå till skogen, påklädning, disk, blöjbyten, hjälpa till vid toalettbesök med mera. (3a)	Taking responsibility for a child group means, for example, together with other staff have the collection, gymnastics, go to the forest, dressing, washing, changing diapers, help with toileting and more. (3b)	word order NP: missing pronoun: <i>means that you...</i> VP: verb form: <i>changing diapers</i> (change) <i>have the collection</i> (assemble the group) <i>dressing</i> (help them get dressed) <i>washing</i> (do the dishes/wash up), <i>toileting</i> (help them go to the toilet). <i>and more</i> (et cetera)
14	(ii)	Återigen har fräcka tjuvar varit på universitetet och det finns all anledning att tro att de kommer att komma tillbaka de närmaste dagarna. (42)	Again, cheeky thieves have been at university and there are reason to believe they will come back in the next few days. (43)	VP agreement: <i>are</i> : is NP: missing article: <i>at the university</i> <i>cheeky</i> : bold, shameless <i>again</i> : once again

4.2.3.1 Category C – comprehensibility

Figure 2 (see 4.1.1) revealed that the Category C sentences were considered the least “easy to understand”. Somewhat surprisingly, a greater number of NS than NNS replied “disagree”, which can be seen in Figure 11.

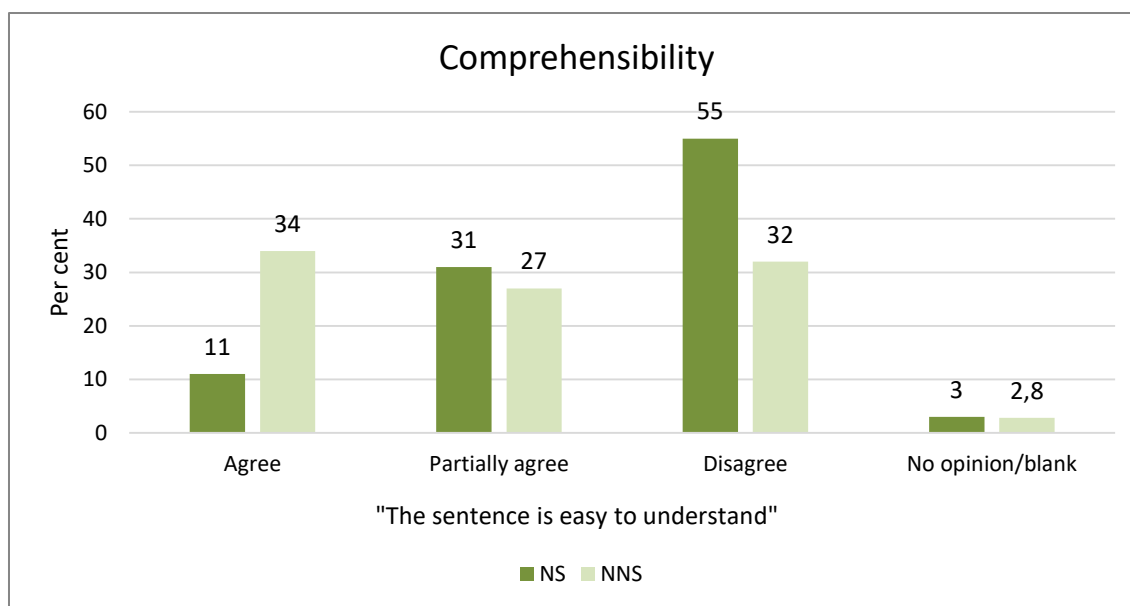


Figure 11. Comprehensibility for sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies

For this category, there were clear differences between the responses from the two participant groups. While 34 % of the NNS agreed that these sentences were easy to understand, only 11 % of the NS were of the same view. The same pattern appeared for each sentence in this category. The NS replied “disagree” to a much larger extent than the NNS. The discrepancy between the two groups was particularly noticeable in relation to sentence (12), see Table 10. Appendix E includes a detailed account of the replies. Sentences (4), (8) and (12), were translated more or less literally from Swedish. Familiarity with Swedish language and society may therefore have been an advantage in relation to these examples. This possible correlation is investigated in section 4.3.

4.2.3.2 Category C – acceptance of wording

A majority of the participants disagreed that the wording of these sentences was acceptable. The responses resembled those referring to comprehensibility. There were apparent differences between the replies from the NS and the NNS informants, as shown in Figure 12. The NS respondents were less acceptant of the wording of these sentences. Only 5 % of this group agreed that the phrasing was acceptable, compared to 21 % of the NNS. The NNS also chose the alternative “partially agree” to a larger extent than the NS.

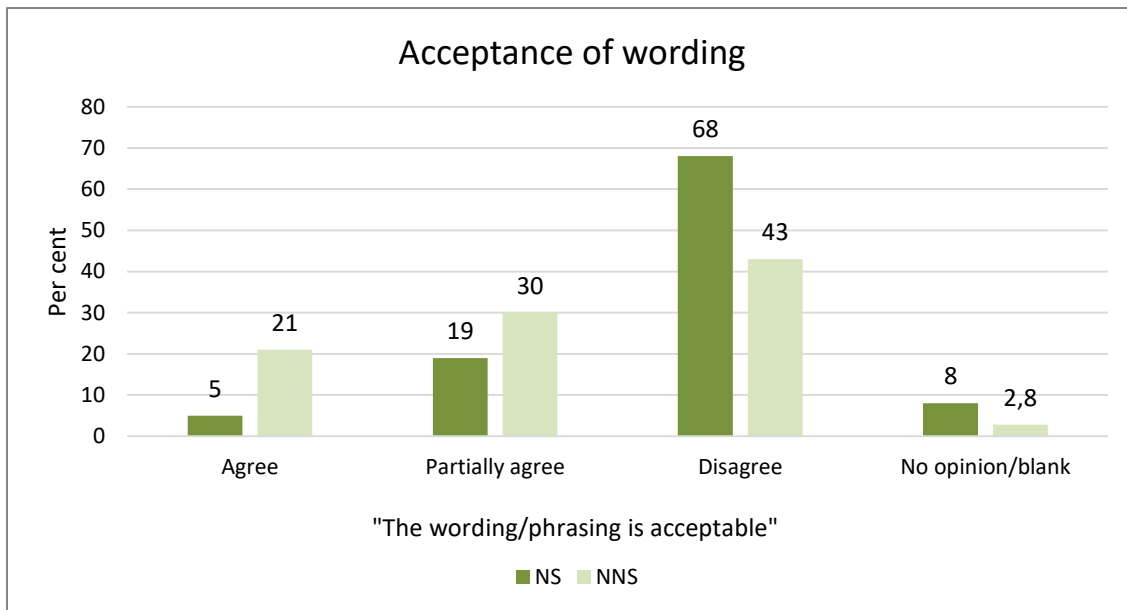


Figure 12. Acceptance of wording for sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies

The participants were not asked to specify what they found problematic about the sentences. It can therefore not be determined if it was the grammatical aspects, the lexical item(s) or the combination of both that generated these responses. Based on the results in 4.1, it is likely that the grammatical inadequacies were the most disturbing.

4.2.3.3 Category C – perceived reliability

A similar pattern reappeared when the participants were faced with the third statement, concerning the perceived reliability of the information. Once more, there were considerable differences between the answers from the two groups. Figure 13 displays that 45 % of the NS disagreed with the statement compared to 25 % of the NNS. This difference in attitude could also be seen on the opposite end of the scale. Only 12 % of the NS replied “agree” compared to 29 % of the NNS.

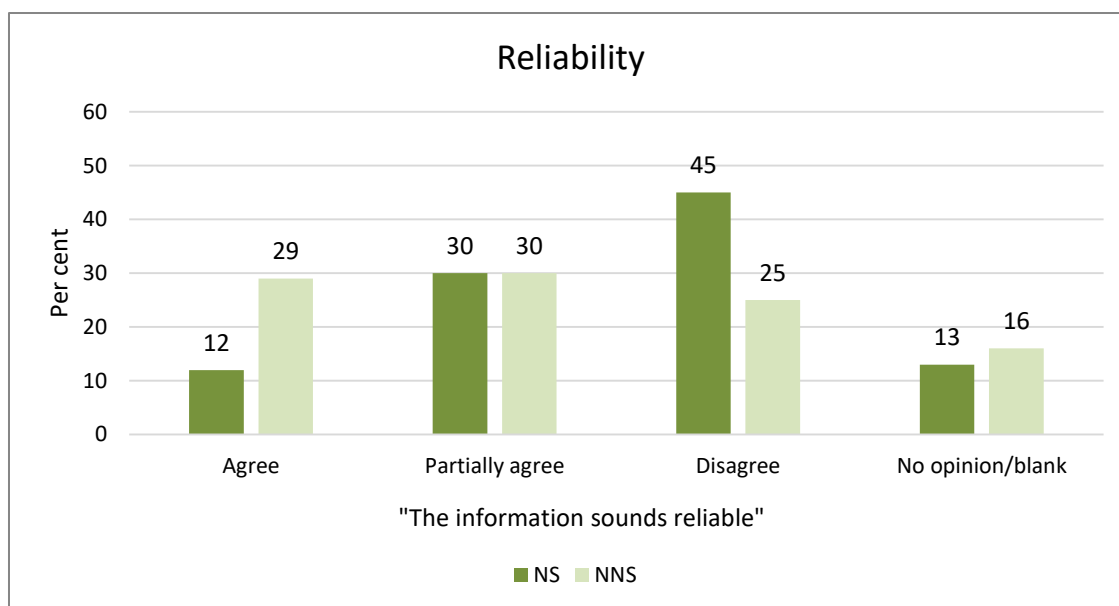


Figure 13. Perceived reliability of information for sentences with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies

The results above resemble the ones presented in Figure 12. This suggests that there may be a correlation between the acceptability of wording and perceived reliability for this sentence category. There were more “no opinion”-responses with regard to reliability for category C than for the other sentence categories. The questionnaire instructions explained that this alternative could be used if the participants preferred to remain neutral or felt uncertain. It cannot be determined which aspects of these sentences made several participants opt for this reply. Among the category C- sentences, number (4) received the most “disagree”-responses (see Table 10). More than one participant raised their eyebrows when they read this sentence, which implies the opposite of what was presumably intended.

4.2.4 Category D – control sentences

The questionnaire also included four control sentences without inadequacies. Three of them were retrieved from texts type (i) and one from type (iii). Table 11 introduces the category D sentences: no. (1), (6), (11) and (16). The results in 4.1 revealed that a majority of the participants were considerably more positive in their reactions to these sentences, but there were differences between the replies from the NS and NNS. The replies from the two groups are presented in 4.2.4.1- 4.2.4.3.

Table 11. Presentation of control sentences

Sentence no.	Text type	Swedish wording	English wording
1	(i)	(not applicable)	The region is renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit and inventiveness and many people are employed in the manufacturing industry. (40)
6	(iii)	Dina skyldigheter som djurägare styrs av lagen om tillsyn över hundar och katter. (15a)	Your responsibilities as a pet owner are governed by the Act on the Supervision of dogs and cats. (15b)
11	(i)	(not applicable)	Rolling fields are intertwined with fixed forest and enchanting lakes, and with a little luck one might see deer, moose or the somewhat shy wild boar in its natural habitat. (23)
16	(i)	(not applicable)	There is also a County Council archive where we save notes and minutes from our meetings. (27)

4.2.4.1 Category D - comprehensibility

Over 70 % of the NS found these sentences “easy to understand”. The replies from the NNS were slightly more differentiated, but the control sentences were generally considered comprehensible. Only very few participants answered “disagree” to this statement.

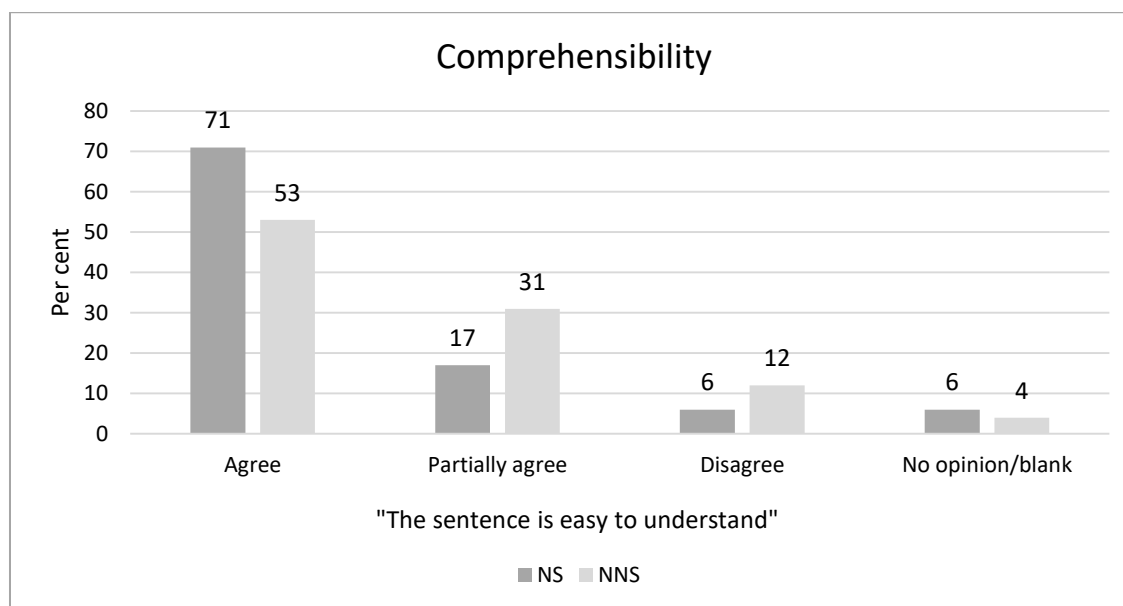


Figure 14. Comprehensibility for control sentences

It was expected that nearly all participants would find these sentences easy to understand. This was not the case. The NNS group replied “partially agree” to a larger extent than the NS, indicating that the sentences were not fully understood. An explanation for this could be the variation in language proficiency. Sentence (11), for instance, included vocabulary that some

NNS may have been unacquainted with. There were participants who asked for definitions of certain words before responding. The lack of context may also have contributed to the results.

4.2.4.2 Category D - acceptance of wording

Despite their relatively high ratings for comprehensibility, the category D sentences were not perceived as fully satisfactory with regard to their wording. The responses are presented in Figure 15.

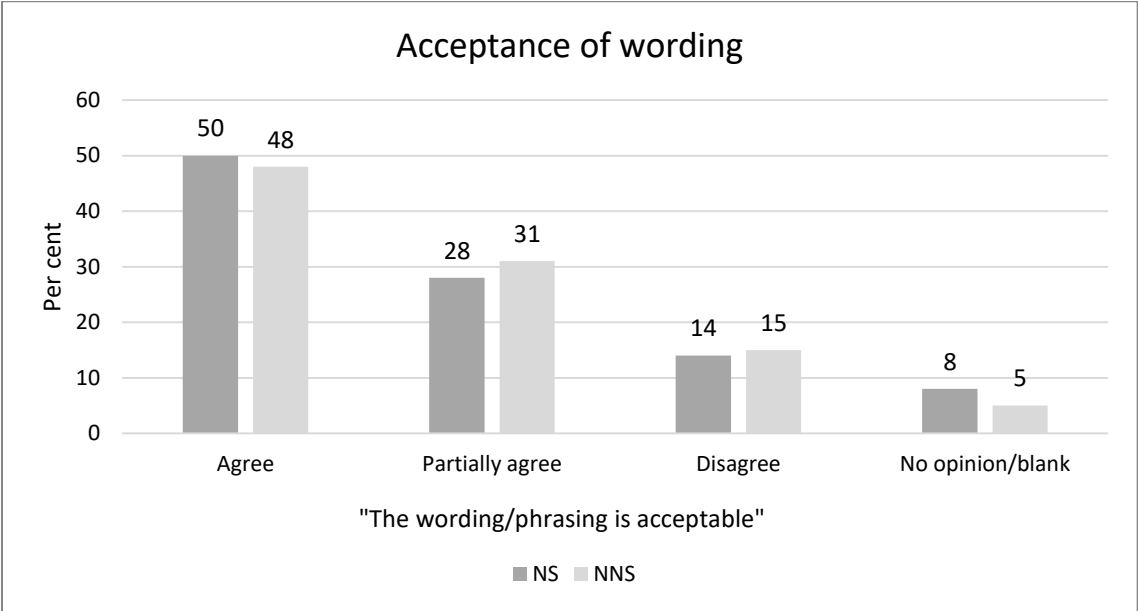


Figure 15. Acceptance of wording for control sentences

Only half of the participant group fully agreed that the phrasing was acceptable. The results in Figure 15 show only minor differences between the responses from the two groups. The participants were not requested to specify why they did not find the wording acceptable or only partially acceptable. It is therefore not possible to determine the reasons for this result. Sentence (16) generated the most “agree”-replies with regard to acceptance of wording.

The final section (4.2.4.3) presents the results regarding the perceived reliability of the information. According to my hypothesis, linguistic inadequacies will have a negative impact on the trustworthiness of the content. Conversely, sentences without (aggravating) inadequacies will not give rise to such doubts. Based on the findings above, category D sentences are therefore expected to generate many “agree”-replies, indicating a high degree of perceived reliability.

4.2.4.3 Category D - perceived reliability

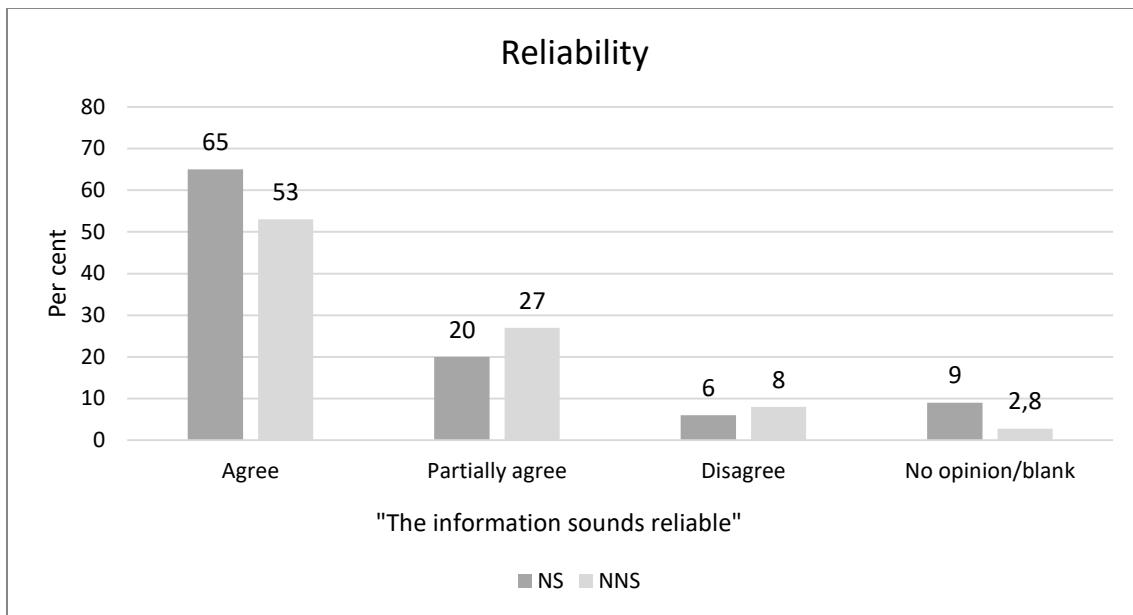


Figure 16. Perceived reliability of information for control sentences

Figure 16 confirms this expectation. In fact, compared to the results for comprehensibility and acceptance of wording, the replies concerning reliability were even more positive for this sentence category. A vast majority of the respondents agreed that the information in these sentences sounded reliable. Once again, sentence (16) generated the most positive responses. It was perceived as the most comprehensible, the most accepted in terms of wording and also the most reliable of all control sentences and of the entire questionnaire.

The coming section will account for the possible correlation between a participant's duration of stay in Sweden and their assessment of the comprehensibility of sentences with cross-linguistic influence from Swedish. This analysis will answer research question 2 a).

4.3 Relation between comprehensibility and duration of stay

In *Community Translations*, Taibi & Ozolins (2016), assert that the longer an individual has resided in a country, the more they are shaped by the language and culture of that country (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016, p. 3). My hypothesis is therefore, that the longer a participant has stayed in Sweden, the easier they will find it to understand wordings containing Swedish transfer errors. It is likely that participants who have spent more time in Sweden are not only more familiar with its customs and culture, but also with the Swedish language. These participants may therefore more readily be able to identify the intended meaning than those who have little or no knowledge of Swedish and Swedish society. This is, of course, a

generalization. The participants' background knowledge was not measured in this study and there may have been participants with a shorter duration of stay who were highly proficient in Swedish.

One of the background questions in the questionnaire related to the participants' duration of stay in Sweden. The responses to this question made it possible to divide the participants into four groups, see Table 6 in section 3.2.5. Many of the participants that had arrived relatively recently, one month ago or less, were exchange students. Among the 25 participants whose duration of stay exceeded five years, some had lived and worked in Sweden for over 20 years. The four groups were, fortunately, relatively even in size.

Some questionnaire sentences were more suitable than others for the purpose of this section of the study. I selected three sentences that included clear examples of cross-linguistic influence from Swedish. These were studied more closely with regard to how the four groups had replied to the statement "The sentence is easy to understand". There was no discrepancy made between NS and NNS in this comparison because Swedish is an L2 (or L3) for both participant groups.

4.3.1 Example 1.

The first example was a category B-sentence containing a lexical inadequacy caused by cross-linguistic influence. (My italics).

"Common problems students *seek for* are anxiety, stress, sleeping difficulties, crisis, relationship problems, difficulties in concentrating or completing assignments, loss of energy, homesickness or difficulties in adjusting to life in Sweden." (12)

In this example, a student welfare centre describes some of the problems and difficulties that students may contact them for. This sentence is worded in a way that suggests that students are looking for difficulties, rather than help and support. The latter was most certainly the intended meaning. The Swedish phrase *söka för* has been translated as 'seek for'. This literal translation is an example of cross-linguistic influence. The expression is commonly used in health care contexts in Sweden, for instance when a patient is asked what they are suffering from or requesting health care for (i.e. seek care for). The phrase is an example of a so called "false friend", as defined by Gabrielsson (2011) in section 2.4 (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 32).

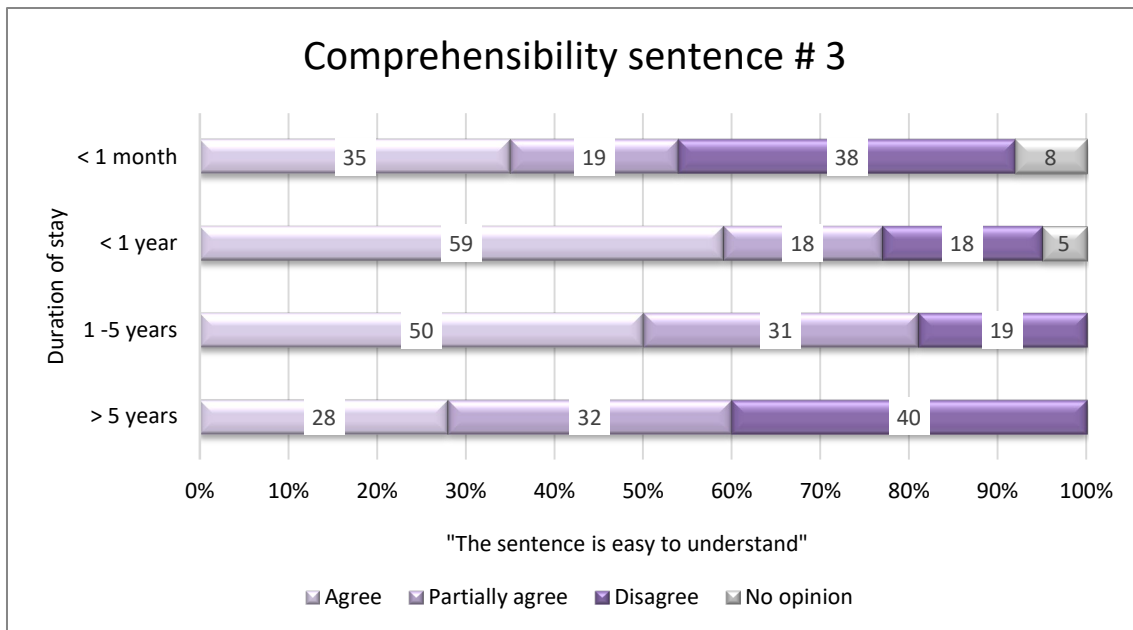


Figure 17. Comprehensibility for sentence (3)

Figure 17 presents the replies to the statement referring to comprehensibility. Since the groups were unequal in number, the results are indicated in percentages of the total number of replies in each group. The results reveal that those who had resided in Sweden for more than five years, disagreed that the sentence was easy to understand to the same extent as those who had recently arrived.

4.3.2 Example 2

The next example (9) was a category A-sentence including grammatical inadequacies. In this example, a municipality describes its surroundings and opportunities for outdoor activities. The word order is highly influenced by Swedish and is therefore another example of L1 transfer.

“Wintertime is embarking on a dog sled trek and experiencing the forest’s stillness and quiet a real adventure.”(39)

Contrary to my expectation, the participants’ replies showed that all four groups found this sentence equally confusing. Figure 18 demonstrates that half of the respondents, regardless of their duration of stay, disagreed that the sentence was easy to understand. Among those who had lived in Sweden the longest, only 8 % replied “agree”.

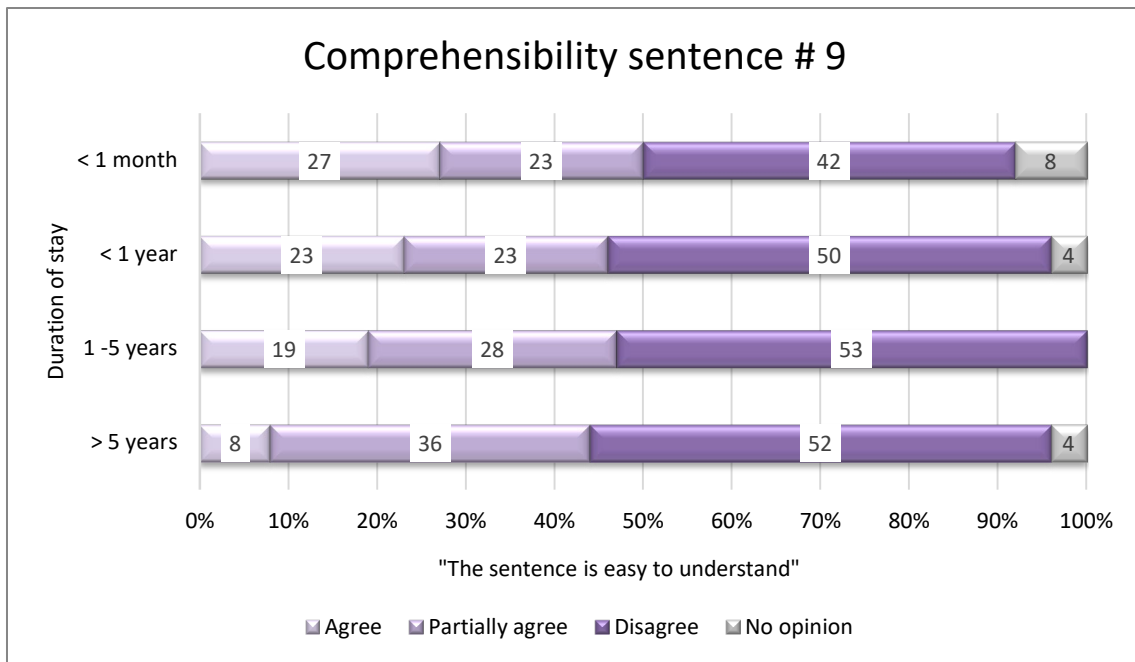


Figure 18. Comprehensibility for sentence (9)

4.3.3 Example 3

The third sentence (12), from category C, included both grammatical and lexical inadequacies. In this sentence a municipality describes different duties of pre-school substitute teachers. This sentence was machine translated, text type (iii), and the inadequacies can therefore not be explained by transfer from L1. I chose to include this example due to its literal translation from Swedish and because it contains references to everyday situations in a Swedish day-care centre. The expression *ha samling*, translated as *'have the collection', is very common in day-care centres, primary schools and recreational centres. It is the time when the teacher assembles the group, often sitting in a circle on the floor. The word *samling* is translated as 'collection' in many other contexts (e.g. *frimärkssamling*, 'stamp collection'). The mistranslation in this sentence may be explained by the MT-system's choice of the most common meaning, as described in 2.3. In addition to this lexical inadequacy, there were also grammatical inadequacies in this sentence, see Table 10.

"Taking responsibility for a child group means, for example, together with other staff have the collection, gymnastics, go to the forest, dressing, washing, changing diapers, help with toileting and more."(3b)

The replies from the four groups are presented in Figure 19.

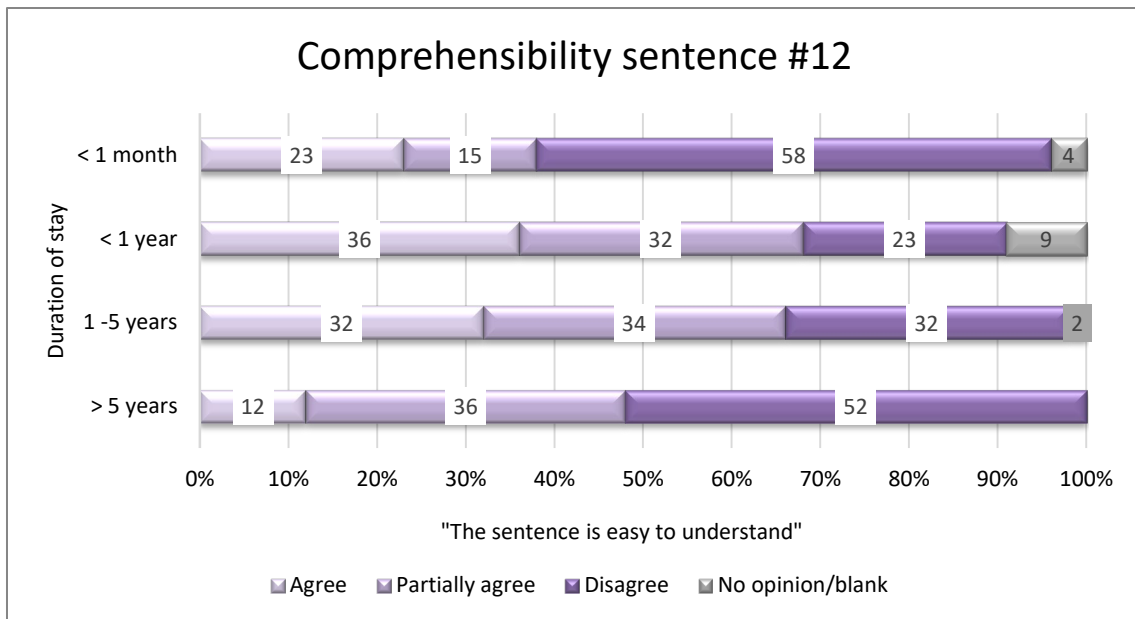


Figure 19. Comprehensibility for sentence (12)

The participants responded to this example in the same way as for sentences (3) and (9). There was no indication that those who had spent the most time in Sweden found this sentence easier to understand. The conclusion that I draw based on the analysis of these three examples, is that there does not seem to be any correlation between comprehensibility of sentences with transfer-related inadequacies and duration of stay.

4.4 Relation between acceptance of wording and perceived reliability

The second subordinate research question concerns the possible link between the acceptance of wording/phrasing and the perceived reliability of the sentence content. According to my hypothesis, sentences without inadequacies will be perceived as more reliable than sentences with inadequacies. In other words, an acceptable wording will enhance the perceived reliability of the informational content. The correlation between these two aspects was studied by listing first the five sentences that received the most positive reactions (“agree”-replies) to the statement “The wording is acceptable” together with the five sentences that generated the most “agree” replies to the statement “The information sounds reliable”. Should the same sentences appear on both lists, this suggests a connection between the two statements. Table 12 lists the five sentences that were considered the most acceptable with regard to wording.

Table 12. Sentences with the most accepted wording/phrasing

Sentence number	Category	Number of agree replies
16	D	61
6	D	61
15	B	52
1	D	47
5	B	41

It comes as no surprise that most of the category D sentences appear on this list. There are also two sentences with lexical inadequacies (category B). These inadequacies may have been undetected or overlooked for other reasons. Table 13 ranks the sentences that were perceived as the most reliable and received the most “agree”-replies.

Table 13. Sentences perceived as the most reliable

Sentence number	Category	Number of agree replies
16	D	70
6	D	63
15	D	62
11	D	57
1	B	54

The comparison between Tables 12 and 13 shows that, with only one exception, the same sentences occur on both lists. This outcome suggests that when the wording of a sentence is acceptable, the content is also deemed trustworthy.

In a second comparison, the sentences that received the most “disagree”-replies with regard to acceptability of wording were listed together with the corresponding sentences that generated the most negative reactions with regard to perceived reliability. Table 14 presents the five sentences with the highest number of “disagree”-responses with regard to acceptability of wording. Table 15, in turn, includes the sentences with the most “disagree”-replies relating to reliability. Only the “disagree”-answers were taken into account in this analysis. The “partially agree”- responses were not as clear-cut and exhibited some degree of acceptance.

Table 14. Sentences with the least accepted wording/phrasing

Sentence number	Category	Number of disagree replies
8	C	64
12	C	62
9	A	58
7	A	56
4	C	55

Among the sentences that were viewed as the least acceptable in terms of wording, three included both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C). As we can see in the Table 15, the same sentences were also perceived as the least reliable with regard to their content, although with a lower number of “disagree” replies.

Table 15. Sentences perceived as the least reliable

Sentence number	Category	Number of disagree replies
4	C	47
8	C	44
9	A	37
14	C	33
12	C	30

With only one exception, the same sentences appear in both Tables 14 and 15. Only one of the five sentences contained grammatical inadequacies (category A), while four included both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C). It cannot be determined whether it was the lexical or the grammatical inadequacy that triggered these negative responses. The results in 4.3.1 established that grammatical inadequacies were deemed less acceptable than lexical ones. Tables 12 and 13 confirm that sentences with lexical inadequacies (category B) were largely accepted and trusted by the participants in this study. The comparison in this section therefore suggests that there may be a correlation between the acceptance of wording and the perceived reliability of the informational content. This answers research question 2 b).

5. Analysis and Discussion

Study I included text material from three types of web site versions: adapted (i), partially translated (ii) and fully translated MT texts (iii). The aim of this study, in response to the first research question, was to investigate which inadequacies were the most common in the selected texts. The analysis of the compiled material, including 6,000 words, revealed that grammatical inadequacies were more common than lexical inadequacies in all text types. The nature and distribution of the grammatical inadequacies were comparable in the three categories, but type (iii) texts contained a greater number of inadequacies than text types (i) and (ii), which were generally of a better linguistic quality. The challenges and shortcomings of MT compared to other solutions were described in section 2.3 and study I confirms this

picture. The outcome is also in line with the report by the Language Council and Funka Nu (2011), which concluded that regardless how advanced an MT tool is, it cannot compare to human translators in terms of quality (Funka Nu, 2011). The results were however based on limited material and can only provide a general indication of the frequency and nature of the linguistic inadequacies. The study I results are therefore not representative for all web sites within a given category and the findings would have been different if other text samples had been retrieved.

For the reader, the way the text was produced is likely to be of little interest. It is above all the informational content, worded in a comprehensible, acceptable and reliable way, that matters. On these grounds, the main study did not focus on the origin of the texts, but exclusively on their linguistic features. Study I indicated that grammatical inadequacies were more common than lexical ones, but study II analysed the implications of both variants. The questionnaire included an equal number of authentic example sentences containing grammatical and/or lexical inadequacies retrieved from the text material in study I. The two studies were therefore connected, but independent from each other.

The questionnaire sentences were presented independently without any reference to source or context. The omission of this background information inevitably had an impact on the participants' reactions. There were, however, well-founded reasons for not disclosing the sources as this background knowledge could potentially have raised (or lowered) the participants' expectations of linguistic accuracy. Another reason for omitting the references, was to avoid putting blame on any authority, none of which would intentionally include inadequacies in their informative texts. Furthermore, if the participants had known which examples were machine translated, they would perhaps have been more tolerant towards the inadequacies in those sentences. In this study, however, the essential issue was not by whom or by what means the text was produced, but whether linguistic inadequacies matter to the reader. The questionnaire contained positive statements, to avoid triggering negative responses.

The second research question concerned the implications of inadequacies with regard to comprehension, acceptability of wording and perceived reliability. The Language Act (2009) states that official language should be comprehensible (SFS 2009:600). Accordingly, informative sentences should be "easy to understand". The comparison between the sentence categories in section 4.1 with regard to comprehensibility revealed that grammatical and lexical inadequacies combined (category C) caused the most confusion. This sentence category was the least comprehensible according to the participants in this study.

Furthermore, grammatical inadequacies (category A) were considered less easy to understand than lexical inadequacies (category B). This result differs from previous studies. Johansson (1978) asserted that NS find lexical errors more difficult to understand than grammatical errors (Johansson, 1978). Similarly, Gabrielsson (2016) referred to the lexical errors as being more confusing, due their impact on meaning (Gabrielsson, 2016). The statement “The sentence is easy to understand” does not, however, guarantee that what the reader has understood is identical to what was intended. The questionnaire can therefore not claim to measure the actual comprehension of information, but the *perceived* comprehension.

The respondents rated the acceptability of wording of the sentences in a similar way. Category C sentences were viewed as the least acceptably phrased, followed by category A and B sentences. The replies differed between NS and NNS participants. The NS were, in general, less acceptant of the phrasing in all sentence categories. These respondents disagreed with the statement concerning acceptability of wording to a larger extent than the NNS. This result concurs with the study by Kobayashi (1992), which asserted that NS determine the acceptability of the wording by using their intuitive knowledge, while NNS rely on their explicit, learned knowledge (Kobayashi, 1992, p. 82). This could explain why NS were less acceptant of the wording in all sentence categories, including the control sentences.

The final questionnaire statement referred to the perceived reliability of the information. Figure 4 (section 4.1.3) showed that sentences including both grammatical and lexical inadequacies (category C) were considered the least reliable with regard to their content. This sentence category generated the most “disagree” replies. The control sentences (category D) received the most “agree”-replies, which suggests that sentences without inadequacies are perceived as more reliable. There were only minor differences between the responses from the two groups for all sentence categories, with the exception of category C, to which 45 % of the NS group replied “disagree” compared to 25% of the NNS.

In summary, the questionnaire results suggest that linguistic inadequacies lead to negative consequences. Category C sentences generated the highest number of negative responses with regard to comprehensibility, acceptability of wording and perceived reliability. Conversely, the category D sentences received the most positive reactions in relation to the three questionnaire statements. Study II has shown that linguistic inadequacies are detrimental for comprehension, acceptance of wording and perceived reliability of information. As expected, sentences with both lexical and grammatical inadequacies (category C) were the most problematic for both NS and NNS with regard to comprehensibility, acceptability and

reliability. The NS were generally more negative to the linguistic inadequacies in the questionnaire than the NNS. This answers the second research question.

The first subordinate question related to whether familiarity with Swedish society would facilitate comprehension of sentences with cross-linguistic influence or transfer. The analysis in section 4.3 accounted for the possible connection between the participants' duration of stay in Sweden and their readiness to comprehend sentences with transfer from Swedish. My hypothesis was that participants who had lived in Sweden for a long period of time would find sentences with inadequacies caused by cross-linguistic influence easier to understand. The comparison between the groups of participants, however, revealed only minor differences. Contrary to my expectation, there was no clear connection between the duration of stay, or familiarity with Swedish society, and how comprehensible inadequacies caused by transfer were found. The findings indicated that cross-linguistic influence has a negative impact on comprehension for all participants, regardless of their duration of stay. The conclusion and answer to the first subordinate question is therefore that these sentences were not considered easier to understand for participants who had lived in Sweden for a long time.

The second subordinate research question concerned the possible relation between acceptability of wording and perceived reliability. Section 4.4 listed the five sentences that received the most "agree-" and "disagree-" replies for acceptance of wording and perceived reliability respectively. The category D sentences generated the most "agree" -replies for both acceptance of wording and perceived reliability (Tables 12 and 13). Category A sentences were also represented on these lists. As mentioned earlier, lexical inadequacies are not always apparent to the reader and may have remained undetected. Category C sentences (with both grammatical and lexical inadequacies) received the most negative reactions, "disagree" -replies, both with regard to acceptance of wording and perceived reliability, see Tables 14 and 15. This result contrasts with the findings of other error evaluation studies, referred to in section 2.5.

Beede & Mulnix (2017) studied the connection between the occurrence of language errors and perceived credibility of news providers. Contrary to the expected outcome, their results did not establish any correlation between these two parameters (Beede & Mulnix, 2017). The results above also differ from the findings of Wolfe et al. (2016), as described in section 2.5. Their study related to employers' perceptions of errors in letters from prospective job applicants. Wolfe et al. (2016) concluded that NS readers will allow certain errors, depending on the writer. Moreover, pragmatic or stylistic deficiencies were judged more

severely than pure linguistic inadequacies, particularly when these were caused by a NNS (Wolfe et al. (2016). There is an essential divergence between these two studies and the present one. While the previous studies focused on the credibility of the source, this study was concerned with the credibility of the (limited) informational content only and the sources were undisclosed to the participants.

The outcome presented in section 4.4 revealed that the sentences with the most accepted wordings were also perceived as the most reliable. The opposite was true for the least accepted wordings, which were in turn perceived as the least reliable. In answer to the second subordinate research question, this comparison indicates that there could be a correlation between the acceptance of wording and perceived reliability of the information in the questionnaire sentences.

5.1 Limitations of the study

Even under the best of circumstances, attitudes are difficult to measure with any degree of precision. There are many limitations to this study, both with regard to the source material, the number of participants and the questionnaire structure. Firstly, the respondents were asked to state their opinion of sentences out of a purely linguistic perspective, without knowledge of the sources nor the context. Their views on the degree of comprehensibility, acceptance or wording and perceived reliability may have been different had this information been disclosed. In an authentic situation the reader would of course be familiar with the background context and the linguistic features would not be assessed in isolation. The source, context and linguistic aspects combined would have contributed to the comprehension, acceptance of wording and perceived reliability of the informational content. The responses may also have differed if the text examples had been longer.

Secondly, the participants in this study were limited in number and, despite my efforts to find a diverse and representative group, it was not possible to find equally many respondents from each age group. With only a few exceptions, the participants were all academically trained, making the participant group homogeneous in that respect. An explanation for this could be that most persons from English-speaking countries living in Sweden either study or work within various academic professions. The participants' knowledge of Swedish may also have influenced the results. It was not possible to determine their level of proficiency, which would have required a separate test and would have been

beyond the scope of this study. A self-assessment scale could have been included in the questionnaire, but would still not have given trustworthy results.

The questionnaire, although carefully constructed, included instructions that may have been misunderstood. The second questionnaire statement, “The wording/phrasing is acceptable”, was confusing for a number of participants. This statement was occasionally interpreted as “the wording is correct”, which was not the intention. A sentence could very well be worded acceptably, without being completely accurate. This was clarified to all participants, emphasizing that they should assess what was acceptable to them. This statement could have been worded more clearly to avoid such ambiguities.

The statement “The information sounds reliable” caused the most confusion. A number of respondents felt unsure about their answer, due to the lack of context. Some argued that it was difficult to determine the reliability, when both the source and context were missing. This was a justified objection. I clarified that they should consider whether the provided message was likely to be the same as the intended message. With this explanation, most respondents selected an answer to this statement as well.

The participants were not requested to explicitly identify the inadequacies, nor to specify what was difficult to understand or unacceptable to them in terms of phrasing/wording. In some instances it may have been the terminology itself that was confusing. No sentence was completely incomprehensible, because otherwise it would not have been selected. Depending on the inadequacy, a sentence could be regarded as partially comprehensible and acceptable to one participant, but incomprehensible and unacceptable to another. The alternative “partially agree” may have been interpreted more or less positively. Partially agreeing is equal to partially disagreeing. A more detailed response scale would have accounted for nuances in the responses.

The questionnaire unfortunately did not include any room for comments. After the questionnaire had been completed, many participants willingly shared their views and experiences of similar texts. These viewpoints would have given the study an added value. Johansson (1978) stated that the characteristics of the receiver influence the reactions to errors (Johansson, 1978). This became apparent during the completion of the questionnaire, when participants displayed signs of (mild) annoyance as well as confusion and amusement. The precise cause of these reactions was not possible to establish within the scope of this study.

5.2 Suggestions for future studies

As mentioned above, it would have been beneficial to gather more knowledge about the reasoning and motivations behind the participants' responses. This study did not account for consistency between their replies. The correlation between acceptance of wording and comprehension, for example, is not clear-cut. In some instances, the same participant found a sentence easy to understand (answered "agree"), yet worded unacceptably (answered "disagree"). The opposite also occurred; a sentence was found difficult to understand but worded acceptably. A qualitative study including personal interviews would allow the participants to motivate their answers. This would shed more light on the perceived gravity of different forms of inadequacies as well as provide explanations for possible inconsistencies.

The participants' L1 may have influenced their replies relating to comprehensibility. There are likely to be differences between the NNS, depending on their respective L1. This study was unable to establish that participants with a long duration of stay perceived sentences with Swedish transfer as easier to understand. There may be other background factors that play a more important role in this context. It is, for instance, possible that a person with a Germanic L1 will more readily interpret sentences with transfer from Swedish. Further studies are needed to investigate this aspect.

The respondents' L1 may have influenced not only how comprehensible the sentences were found, but also how the gravity of different inadequacies was assessed. This study indicated that NNS generally have a more lenient attitude than NS, but there are likely to be important individual differences. There are further individual characteristics that may have significance regarding how inadequacies are evaluated, such as age, profession or educational background. The connection between academic training and acceptance of inadequacies is a candidate for further research.

The outcome of the main study shows that NS and NNS evaluate the gravity of linguistic inadequacies differently. While a NNS might ignore some inadequacies, a NS could instead find these both conspicuous and disturbing. The control sentences (category D), intended to exemplify correct wording, were not unanimously accepted by the NS participants in this study. Only half of the NS group found the phrasings fully acceptable. These sentences were selected because they were accurately translated from the Swedish original. The results of the questionnaire survey revealed that some of these sentences were perhaps not considered correct by NS. Wordings that a NNS, like myself, find quite acceptable may be perceived as understandable but idiomatically or pragmatically inappropriate to a NS. What may seem

correct is apparently not always right, at least not to everyone. A qualitative study, including interviews with NS, could shed light on this intriguing matter.

6. Conclusion

The two studies have attempted to highlight the nature and consequences of linguistic inadequacies in a selection of informative web-based texts in English published by Swedish authorities. State authorities primarily publish their English information in adapted or partially translated text versions, while most regional councils and municipalities use machine translations. The comparison between the text types revealed a considerable difference between them in terms of linguistic quality. Study I indicated that inadequacies relating to grammar were more common than lexical inadequacies in all three text types. These are therefore the kind of inadequacies that potential readers most likely will encounter.

The questionnaire responses in study II showed that the most frequent inadequacies were also the ones that caused the greatest confusion. The results suggest that the more inadequacies there are in a sentence, the more negatively it will be perceived by the reader. The sentences that included both grammatical and lexical inadequacies caused the most difficulties and were not only considered to be the least comprehensible and the least acceptable in terms of wording, but also the least reliable with regard to their content. The control sentences, on the other hand, generated the highest number of positive responses to the three questionnaire statements. The conclusion drawn from the results in study II is therefore that linguistic inadequacies in informative texts lead to adverse effects with regard to comprehension, acceptability of wording and perceived reliability of the content.

The first subordinate question concerned the possible link between the duration of stay in Sweden and comprehension of sentences with transfer from Swedish, but the results established no such correlation. The similarities between the participants' reactions indicate that accuracy is of significance for all readers. The second subordinate research question related to the possible connection between acceptability of wording and perceived reliability of the content. The sentences that generated the most positive replies with regard to acceptability were identical to the ones perceived as the most reliable. The opposite was true for sentences with the highest number of negative replies for acceptability and reliability. The comparison was limited, but indicates that a correlation may exist between these two aspects.

The present study does not investigate why quality assurance of informative texts may be neglected. There could be a number of reasons for this, such as financial considerations and time constraints. The Language Council of Sweden mentions the quality aspect in their guidelines for multilingual web sites and recommends that authorities recruit professional translators when needed (Språkrådet, 2012). Proofreading and editing prior to publishing would undoubtedly also resolve many of the detrimental effects that are presented in this study. The Language Council's suggestion implies that quality and relevance should be prioritized over quantity.

It may not be realistic or even necessary to strive for informative texts without any language inadequacies, but the level of accuracy must be sufficient to convey the intended information in an accessible way. The outcome of this study gives reason to conclude that linguistic quality is of importance, not least for the purposes of fulfilling the aim of equal access of information to all citizens and complying with the requirements of the Language Act (SFS 2009:600). In consequence, it is a justified ambition for both democratic and communicative reasons.

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Appendix A - Primary sources

The primary sources used for both study I and II are listed below. The web sites that are machine translated share the same web-address as the original Swedish language version. These sources (text type III) are therefore differentiated by the letters a) and b), where a) represents the Swedish version and b) the MT version via Google Translate (GT).

- 1a. Arjeplogs kommun. (n.d.). *Vuxenutbildning*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://arjeplog.se/kommun--politik/forskola-och-skola/vuxenutbildning.html>
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12. Linnéuniversitetet. (n.d.). *Student Welfare Office*. Retrieved 21 January, 2019, from <https://lnu.se/en/education/during-your-studies/student-welfare/>
13. Linnéuniversitetet. (n.d.). *Student rights and responsibilities*. Retrieved 21 January, 2019, from <https://lnu.se/en/education/during-your-studies/Students-rights-and-responsibilities/>
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- 14b. [via GT] Länsstyrelsen Dalarna. (n.d.). *Val*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/dalarna/privat/livshandelser/val.html>
- 15a. Länsstyrelsen Stockholm. (n.d.). *Tillsyn över hundar och katter*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm/privat/djur-och-natur/skotsel-av-djur/tillsyn-over-hundar-och-katter.html>
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- 24a. Region Jämtland-Härjedalen. (2019). *Om Region Jämtland-Härjedalen*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://regionjh.se/omoss.4.1ac2dc59158699366d112e21.html>
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- 25a. Region Jönköpings län. (n.d.). *Sjukresor i Jönköpings län*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://www.rjl.se/Folkhalsa-och-varld/regler-och-rattigheter-i-varden/sjukresor-i-jonkopings-lan/>
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- 26a. Region Jönköpings län (n.d.). *Hjälp om du mår dåligt psykiskt*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://www.rjl.se/Folkhalsa-och-varld/nar-du-behover-varld/hjalp-om-du-mar-daligt-psykiskt>
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- 28b. [via GT] Sjöbo kommun. (n.d.). *Budget och skuldrådgivning*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://www.sjobo.se/omsorg-och-stod/ekonomi-och-forsorjningsstod/budget--och-skuldradgivning.html>
- 29a. Sjöbo kommun. (n.d.). *Missbruk och beroende*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <https://sjobo.se/omsorg-och-stod/missbruk-och-beroende.html>
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- 34b. [via GT] Stockholms stad. (n.d.). *Elda och grilla utomhus*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <http://www.stockholm.se/KulturFritid/Park-och-natur/Friluftsliv/Elda-och-grilla-utomhus/>
- 35a. Stockholms stad. (n.d.). *Här kan du lämna din julgran*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from https://www.stockholm.se/Nyheter/avfall--Atervinning/OST_Har-kan-du-lamna-din-julgran/
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- 36b. [via GT] Strömstads kommun. (n.d.). *Bostadsanpassningsbidrag*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <http://www.stromstad.se/byggaboochmiljo/bostaderochoffentligalokaler/bostadsanpassning.106.389fb914148552742d4684a6.html>
- 37a. Strömstads kommun. (n.d.). *Företagslots*. Retrieved 22 January, 2019 from <http://stromstad.se/naringslivocharbete/foretaglots.4.7b0a4812160da2760b97914b.html>
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42. Örebro Universitet. (n.d.). *Säkerhet*. Retrieved 21 January, 2019 from <https://www.oru.se/student/sakerhet/>
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Appendix B - List of authorities

A. State administrative authorities' (*statliga förvaltningsmyndigheter*) web sites, in alphabetical order:

<u>Web address</u>	<u>Text type category (January 2019)</u>
1. www.arbetsgivarverket.se	I
2. www.barnombudsmannen.se	I
3. www.bth.se (Blekinge Tekniska högskola)	I
4. www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se	II
5. www.csn.se	I
6. www.ekobrottsmyndigheten.se	II
7. www.ekn.se (Exportkreditnämnden)	II
8. www.energimyndigheten.se	I
9. www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se	I
10. www.levandehistoria.se	I
11. www.forsakringskassan.se	I/II
12. www.hh.se (Högskolan Halmstad)	I
13. www.ifau.se (Institutet för arbetsmiljö)	II
14. www.ivo.se (Inspektionen för vård & omsorg)	I
15. www.kammarkollegiet.se	I
16. www.kommerskollegium.se	II
17. www.konsumentverket.se	I
18. www.kronofogden.se	II
19. www.kkh.se (Kungl. konsthögskolan)	II
20. www.kulturadet.se	I
21. www.kustbevakningen.se	II
22. www.lnu.se (Linnéuniversitetet)	I
23. www.livsmedelsverket.se	I
24. www.lansstyrelsen.se/dalarna	III
25. www.lansstyrelsen.se/jonkoping	III
26. www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholms	III
27. www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasternorrland	III
28. www.mau.se (Malmö Universitet)	I
29. www.migrationsverket.se	II

30. www.mprt.se (mynd.för press,radio.tv)	II
31. www.mucf.se (Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällsfrågor)	II
32. www.nrm.se (Naturhistoriska muséet)	I
33. www.prv.se (Patent- & registreringsverket)	I
34. www.pensionsmyndigheten.se	I
35. www.polisen.se	I
36. www.rekryteringsmyndigheten.se	I
37. www.raa.se (Riksantikvarieämbetet)	II
38. www.riksgalden.se	II
39. www.rmv.se (Rättsmedicinalverket)	I
40. www.skatteverket.se	I
41. www.skolinspektionen.se	I
42. www.socialstyrelsen.se	I
43. www.shm.se (Statens Historiska muséer)	II
44. www.spv.se (Statens Pensionsverk)	II
45. www.statskontoret.se	I
46. www.svff.se (Sveriges författarförbund)	I
47. www.sakerhetspolisen.se	II
48. www.umu.se (Umeå universitet)	I
49. www.val.se (Valmyndigheten)	I
50. www.oru.se (Örebro universitet)	I/II

B. County councils

<u>Web address</u>	<u>Text type category</u> (January 2019)
1. www.sll.se (Stockholms län)	I/III
2. www.lul.se (Region Uppsala)	I/III
3. www.regionsormland.se (Region Sörmland)	I/III
4. www.regionostergotland.se (Region Östergötland)	III
5. www.rjl.se (Region Jönköpings Län)	III
6. www.regionkronoberg.se (Region Kronoberg)	III
7. www.ltkalmar.se (Landstinget Kalmar Län)	III
8. www.gotland.se (Region Gotland)	III

9. www.ltblekinge.se (Landstinget Blekinge)	Swedish only
10. www.skane.se (Region Skåne)	I
11. www.regionhalland.se (Region Halland)	I
12. www.vregion.se (Västra Götalandsregionen)	I
13. www.regionvarmland.se (Landstinget i Värmland)	I
14. www.regionorebrolan.se (Region Örebro Län)	I
15. www.regionvastmanland.se (Region Västmanland)	III
16. www.ltdalarna.se (Landstinget i Dalarna)	I
17. www.regiongavleborg.se (Region Gävleborg)	III
18. www.rvn.se (Region Västernorrland)	I
19. www.regionjh.se (Region Jämtland Härjedalen)	III
20. www.vll.se (Västerbottens Läns Landsting)	I
21. www.norrbotten.se (Region Norrbotten)	I

C. Municipalities (1-47 in alphabetical order, 48-50 three largest cities)

<u>Web address</u>	<u>Text type category (January 2019)</u>
1. www.arjeplog.se	III
2. www.berg.se	III
3. www.borgholm.se	III
4. www.bracke.se	III
5. www.danderyd.se	III
6. www.eskilstuna.se	III
7. www.falun.se	III
8. www.grastorp.se	III
9. www.gavle.se	III
10. www.habokommun.se	III
11. www.haninge.se	III
12. www.hjo.se	III
13. www.habo.se	III
14. www.hoganas.se	III
15. www.jonkoping.se	III
16. www.karlskrona.se	III
17. www.klippan.se	I

18. www.kumla.se		III
19. www.koping.se		III
20. www.lerum.se		III
21. www.linkoping.se	I/III	
22. www.lulea.se	I	
23. www.mala.se (Malå)		III
24. www.morakommun.se		III
25. www.monsteras.se	I	
26. www.nordmaling.se		III
27. www.nykoping.se		III
28. www.orust.se		III
29. www.partille.se		III
30. www.rattvik.se		III
31. www.sjobo.se		III
32. www.smedjebacken.se	I/III	
33. www.staffanstorp.se		III
34. www.stromstad.se		III
35. www.svalov.se		III
36. www.soderhamn.se	I/III	
37. www.tidaholm.se	I	
38. www.torsby.se	I	
39. www.trosa.se		III
40. www.umea.se	I	
41. www.vaggeryd.se	I	
42. www.vellinge.se		III
43. www.vingaker.se		III
44. www.vaxjo.se		III
45. www.ange.se (Ånge)		III
46. www.almhult.se	I	
47. www.odeshog.se		III
48. www.stockholm.se		III
49. www.goteborg.se		III
50. www.malmo.se	I	

Appendix C - Questionnaire

LUND UNIVERSITY
Centre for Languages and Literature
Lena Persbeck
MA English linguistics student

Spring 2019

QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information

This questionnaire contains authentic sentences that have been retrieved from the web sites of Swedish authorities (national agencies, regional councils and municipalities). The purpose is to study how information from authorities is perceived by people who seek information there. We are interested in how information is conveyed through language and how clear the information is with regard to its content.

We kindly ask you to state your consent to participate in this study. Your answers will be detached from the consent form to make sure that you remain anonymous. Before completing the questionnaire, please answer the background questions below.

Thank you very much for your kind participation!

Participant Profile

Please indicate the following:

Your age (circle appropriate category): 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 or older

Your first language / mother tongue? _____

Your present occupation? _____

Your highest completed level of education? _____

For how long have you been in Sweden? _____

Do you have any knowledge of Swedish? _____

Instructions

You will be presented with 16 sentences, each followed by three statements. Please indicate whether you agree, partially agree or disagree with the statements by ticking the appropriate box. If you are unsure or prefer to remain neutral, tick "no opinion".

Agree Partially agree Disagree No opinion

1. The region is renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit and inventiveness and many people are employed in the manufacturing industry.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Growing industries and young entrepreneurs with a global outlook is based in the region.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Common problems students seek for are anxiety, stress, sleeping difficulties, crisis, relationship problems, difficulties in concentrating or completing assignments, loss of energy, homesickness or difficulties in adjusting to life in Sweden.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agree Partially agree Disagree No opinion

4. Upper secondary school should continue to implement the skills of students around cannabis.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. For some trips, you can get some compensation but you always pay a customs fee regardless of mode of transport.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Your responsibilities as a pet owner are governed by the Act on the Supervision of dogs and cats.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. It is important that you have access the email address you give your employer until you have received a decision regarding your application.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agree Partially agree Disagree No opinion

8. For debt that does not meet the debt settlement legal requirements or who want to have other types of payment arrangements, the adviser calculate the payment proposal.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Wintertime is embarking on a dog sled trek and experiencing the forest's stillness and quiet a real adventure.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. In the Municipality Center, you can schedule a brief meeting in 30 minutes with our officers.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Rolling fields are intertwined with mixed forest and enchanting inland lakes, and with a little luck one might see deer, moose or the somewhat shy wild boar in its natural habitat.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agree Partially agree Disagree No opinion

12. Taking responsibility for a child group means, for example, together with other staff have the collection, gymnastics, go to the forest, dressing, washing, changing diapers, help with toileting and more.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Hose or buckets and spray cans are suitable firefighting gear.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Again, cheeky thieves have been at university and there are reason to believe they will come back in the next few days.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. General professionals, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, physio- and psychotherapists and many other professionals provide an excellent service.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. There is also a County Council archive where we save notes and minutes from our meetings.

The sentence is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information sounds reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix D - Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided on the front page of the questionnaire; that you willingly agree to participate, but may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty; and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. You will be provided a copy of this form along with a debriefing form if so desired.

Full name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Centre for Languages and Literature

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MA student Lena Persbeck le8327pe-s@student.lu.se

Appendix E – Complete questionnaire results

Number of replies: XX = native speaker (XX) = non-native speaker

1. The region is renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit and inventiveness and many people are employed in the manufacturing industry.

	agree	part.agree	disagree	no opinion
The sentence is easy to understand	31 (26)	12 (21)	5 (8)	2 (0)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	20 (27)	20 (20)	7 (5)	3 (3)
The information sounds reliable	28 (26)	14 (19)	4 (5)	4 (5)

2. Growing industries and young entrepreneurs with a global outlook is based in the region.

The sentence is easy to understand	14 (28)	19 (15)	15 (11)	2 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	3 (14)	13 (14)	31 (24)	3 (3)
The information sounds reliable	10 (17)	21 (19)	12 (15)	7 (4)

3. Common problems students seek for are anxiety, stress, sleeping difficulties, crisis, relationship problems, difficulties in concentrating or completing assignments, loss of energy, homesickness or difficulties in adjusting to life in Sweden.

The sentence is easy to understand	13 (31)	13 (13)	22 (10)	2 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	8 (21)	13 (17)	28 (16)	1 (1)
The information sounds reliable	18 (26)	16 (16)	11 (13)	5 (0)

4. Upper secondary school should continue to implement the skills of students around cannabis.

The sentence is easy to understand	5 (18)	13 (14)	31 (21)	1 (2)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	2 (15)	9 (18)	36 (19)	3 (3)
The information sounds reliable	4 (8)	13 (19)	28 (19)	5 (9)

5. For some trips, you can get some compensation but you always pay a customs fee regardless of mode of transport.

	agree	part.agree	disagree	no opinion
The sentence is easy to understand	25 (34)	11 (12)	12 (8)	2 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	19 (22)	17 (22)	12 (10)	2 (1)
The information sounds reliable	23 (30)	12 (16)	12 (6)	3 (3)

6. Your responsibilities as a pet owner are governed by the Act on the Supervision of dogs and cats.

The sentence is easy to understand	37 (40)	9 (9)	1 (5)	3 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	27 (34)	12 (12)	6 (8)	5 (1)
The information sounds reliable	32 (31)	7 (16)	6 (5)	5 (3)

7. It is important that you have access the email address you give your employer until you have received a decision regarding your application.

The sentence is easy to understand	11 (22)	19 (18)	17 (14)	3 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	4 (14)	14 (13)	29 (27)	3 (1)
The information sounds reliable	16 (20)	14 (13)	12 (17)	8 (5)

8. For debt that does not meet the debt settlement legal requirements or who want to have other types of payment arrangements, the adviser calculate the payment proposal.

The sentence is easy to understand	0 (7)	9 (14)	37 (29)	4 (5)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	1 (6)	7 (18)	38 (26)	4 (5)
The information sounds reliable	1 (6)	14 (21)	27 (17)	8 (11)

9. Wintertime is embarking on a dog sled trek and experiencing the forest's stillness and quiet a real adventure.

	agree	part.agree	disagree	no opinion
The sentence is easy to understand	6 (14)	20 (9)	21 (31)	3 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	1 (11)	13 (16)	34 (24)	2 (4)
The information sounds reliable	6 (13)	21 (12)	16 (21)	7 (9)

10. In the Municipality Center, you can schedule a brief meeting in 30 minutes with our officers.

The sentence is easy to understand	16 (30)	22 (19)	11 (5)	1 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	10 (23)	13 (14)	24 (15)	3 (3)
The information sounds reliable	20 (30)	13 (14)	10 (7)	7 (4)

11. Rolling fields are intertwined with mixed forest and enchanting inland lakes, and with a little luck one might see deer, moose or the somewhat shy wild boar in its natural habitat.

The sentence is easy to understand	34 (21)	11 (26)	4 (6)	2 (2)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	21 (18)	16 (19)	11 (15)	2 (3)
The information sounds reliable	29 (28)	15 (14)	2 (4)	4 (9)

12. Taking responsibility for a child group means, for example, together with other staff have the collection, gymnastics, go to the forest, dressing, washing, changing diapers, help with toileting and more.

The sentence is easy to understand	1 (26)	17 (15)	30 (12)	2 (2)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	2 (12)	8 (14)	36 (26)	4 (3)
The information sounds reliable	9 (27)	15 (15)	19 (11)	7 (2)

13. Hose or buckets and spray cans are suitable firefighting gear.

	agree	part.agree	disagree	no opinion
The sentence is easy to understand	17 (26)	22 (14)	9 (12)	2 (3)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	14 (14)	10 (24)	23 (13)	3 (4)
The information sounds reliable	14 (16)	16 (21)	16 (12)	4 (6)

14. Again, cheeky thieves have been at university and there are reason to believe they will come back in the next few days.

The sentence is easy to understand	15 (33)	22 (15)	13 (6)	0 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	4 (13)	14 (24)	27 (16)	5 (2)
The information sounds reliable	9 (15)	18 (18)	18 (15)	5 (7)

15. General professionals, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, physio- and psychotherapists and many other professionals provide an excellent service.

The sentence is easy to understand	30 (45)	13 (8)	6 (1)	1 (1)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	16 (36)	26 (12)	5 (7)	3 (0)
The information sounds reliable	29 (33)	11 (14)	7 (5)	3 (3)

16. There is also a County Council archive where we save notes and minutes from our meetings.

The sentence is easy to understand	42 (37)	3 (13)	1 (3)	4 (2)
The phrasing/wording is acceptable	33 (28)	8 (18)	4 (7)	5 (2)
The information sounds reliable	39 (31)	6 (14)	0 (6)	5 (4)