GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES ENGLISH

LANGUAGE WORK AT A SWEDISH MULTINATIONAL

Employees' Perceptions of Language Management and Policy

Katarina Honkanen

Essay/Degree Project:	BA thesis, 15 hec
Program or/and course:	Language Consultancy Program, 180 hec
Level:	First Cycle
Term/year:	Spring Term 2019
Supervisor:	Joe Trotta
Examiner:	Anna-Lena Fredriksson
Report nr:	

Abstract

Title: *Language Work at a Swedish Multinational. Employees' Perceptions of Language Management and Policy*

Author: Katarina Honkanen

Supervisor: Joe Trotta

Abstract: This study investigates language workers' perceptions of the implementation and possible outcomes of new guidelines aimed to increase consistency in communication. A needs analysis establishes both present and target levels of consistency in the company's written communication. Means to close the gap between the present and the target situations are investigated. The study makes use of qualitative textual analysis, questionnaires and interviews. The present situation analysis reveals that there is substantial variation in the company's written communication, but that the new guidelines are perceived as an important step towards the target situation. However, the results also show that employees believe that policy alone will not be enough to reach the target situation, but that additional language management measures need to be taken.

Keywords: Language management, Standardisation, Needs analysis, Writing guidelines, Employee perceptions

Table of contents

1 Introduction

Market communication can be summarized as the collected efforts of a company to communicate their brand identity to external stakeholders. In market communication, the importance of consistent brand messaging has often been emphasised. Companies aiming for consistency can use language management strategies and policies as tools to streamline their communication activities (Cornelissen 2011). Research on organisational language management has, however, shown that many different factors can affect the development, implementation, and results of new language policies. Among these, organisational distances (Tange 2007) and habits in discourse communities (Lund 2014) can be mentioned. To investigate whether language management initiatives have reached satisfactory outcomes, needs analyses can be performed (Sanden 2016).

This study incorporates needs analysis to investigate perceptions of the implementation of new language policies at a Swedish multinational manufacturing company. Active in numerous branches of technical engineering, the company had previously focused most of their standardisation efforts on technical information, leaving consistency in customer communication largely overlooked. This had over time led to a large degree of variation in the company's customer messaging. At the time of this research, the company had, however, launched an extensive rebranding initiative. One of the aims of the rebranding initiative was to increase consistency in customer communication. To achieve this, the company had created new language policies and writing guidelines. Through the implementation of these, the company had taken important steps to achieve higher levels of consistency. But would this be enough to raise the levels of consistency in the company's customer messaging? The present work investigates how the employees perceive the language initiative, and to what extent they think the guidelines will help the company reach the aim of consistent customer communication.

2 Aim and research questions

The aim of this exploratory study is to investigate employees' perceptions of the implementation of writing guidelines at a Swedish multinational manufacturing company. An inventory of the company's website shows that several types of inconsistencies have appeared in the web material over time. Can these inconsistencies be eliminated, or at least reduced, by implementing guidelines aimed to help writers create more consistent content? Or are additional measures needed to ensure higher levels of consistency in the company's web communication?

Such questions are explored in the present work. The company's current web material and language management efforts, as well as language workers' perceptions and use of guidelines are investigated through a present situation analysis. The findings in the present situation analysis are compared to a target situation of desired levels of consistency in web messaging. The aim of the comparison is to identify potential gaps between the present and target situations. Possible means to reach the target situation are also investigated. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What is the current level of inconsistencies in the company's web communication?
- What is the perceived target level for consistency in the company's web communication?
- Do employees think that inconsistencies in the company's web material can be eliminated – or at least minimised – with the implementation of writing guidelines, or are additional language management measures needed?

3 Previous research

This section reviews previous research that is relevant for the present study. The section starts with an overview of research in the field of language planning in multinational corporations. This is followed by a brief discussion of a key concept in corporate communication. The last subsection is directly linked to the methodologies of this study, as it outlines the concept of needs analysis.

3.1 Language planning in multinational corporations

Language planning in multinational corporations is a growing field of study. Linn et al (2017) compare corporate language planning in multinational corporations to language planning on a national level. In their study, the authors discuss how language standardisation in international business ventures can be "described as a model of language standardization drawn from sociolinguistics" (2017:21). From a sociolinguistic perspective, language planning can be seen as an ideological act in that it is "a way of minimizing language diversity in a multilingual society by selecting, developing and implementing one variety as the standard language" (2017:26). Additionally, as in sociolinguistics, where 'standard' language behaviour is seen to be under constant negotiation, language standardisation in international business alike is "not a 'once and for all' act, but an ongoing process" (2017:23).

Cobarrubias (1983:63ff) describes four different ideologies that have dominated language planning on national levels: linguistic assimilation, where everyone in a society is required to learn the same, dominant language; linguistic pluralism, where multiple languages co-exist as official languages; vernacularisation, where an indigenous language is reinforced and granted official status; and internationalism, where a "neutral", non-indigenous language is adopted as a lingua franca. Historically, national language planning has often entailed selecting a solution that "ameliorates or diminishes a variety's status relative to others" (Dhir & Pariola, 2002:242), leading to empowerment of those in possession of proficiency in the chosen variety. It has been argued that this can be equally true in language planning in multinational corporations (e.g. Vaara et al 2005).

Political, professional, or societal empowerment through linguistic capital is, however, not the focus of this study. Nevertheless, as concluded by Linn et al (2017) corporate language planning can be seen as having many of the same goals as language planning on a national level, not least when it comes to providing a "long-term, sustained and conscious effort to alter a language's function […] for the purpose of solving communications problems" (Whitman, in Dhir and Pariola, 2002:242). In the case of multinational corporations, internationalism and the adoption of English as a lingua franca has often been the preferred solution.

In international business research, language planning and standardisation commonly refer to policy making, or "some form of language regulation in a business organisation" (Linn et al, 2017:27). Sanden (2016:33) describes how language regulations in international business often focus on so called "company specific language". On the strict end of the scale, a company "imposes a restriction on vocabulary and syntax rules in order to reduce the complexity of the language" (2016:33). Sanden continues to explain that "a much milder side of the same concept can be found in specific writing guidelines, which set a standard for how written communication should be handled in the company" (2016:33). Examples of the milder type are 'tone of voice' documents, focusing on company specific styles of communication. Other types of guidelines can "include relevant terminology or issues particularly relevant to the firm, or […] a dictionary of industry-specific terms in order to maintain consistency in language use" (Sanden 2016:33).

An influence for the present work is Tange's (2007 study), as it investigates language workers and their attitudes towards language management in a local context – the principal office of a Danish multinational company. Tange examines organisational distances, and to which extent "language workers' perception of organisational distances reflects on the way they evaluate the act of language policy making" (2007:132). According to Tange, geographical, functional, and social distances to policy makers are influential factors in how a member of an organisation perceives their role in a language initiative. In her study, Tange concludes that those in close proximity to policy makers are likely to perceive language improvement initiatives as being of significant importance. More peripheral members of the organisation on the other hand are more detached from the initiative and feel that "language management is hardly the main concern of an engineering company" (2007:138).

In contrast to many other studies of multinational corporations – which tend to focus on language management in transnational communication – Tange's study focuses on "policy effect and implementation from the perspective of individual members" (2007:133) in a local context. The research is therefore relevant to this study as it presents an example of a locally situated, micro-level investigation. Tange's work has also provided inspiration for some of the themes in the interviews conducted in the present research. Finally, the social constructionist perspective also contributes to the theoretical framework of the present study, in which the participants' perceptions of their working realities play a key role.

3.2 Corporate communication

Brand identity and consistent communicative profiles are key concepts within marketing. Cornelissen (2011:10) states that a key factor for success for many companies is the presence of a strong, clear and uniform visual profile. According to Cornelissen, all layout, logos and fonts used in corporate communication should be integrated in order to achieve a readily recognisable visual profile (2011:10). Furthermore, Cornelissen holds that in addition to a uniform visual profile, consistency in communication on the linguistic level is equally important. The linguistic profile is a major aspect of the brand, as consistent communication on all levels gives a unified impression and increases the company's credibility (2011: ff).

This monophonic approach has been questioned to some extent. In a conceptual article on polyphony in corporate communication, Schneider and Zerfass (2018:25) declare that "[t]he way communication is managed must inevitably be revised in a digital world". According to Schneider and Zerfass, the rise of new media has changed the

communicative landscape and prepared the way for multiple contributors to corporate communications. They state that “the main challenge for corporate communications lies in the integration of these different voices (plurality) into perceptible values of communication (unity) as well as in the alignment to strategic goals of the organization” (2018:19). However, they also conclude that it is likely that “a polyphonic approach to communication is easier to implement in nonprofit organizations,
in which members are less strictly bound to a codified regulatory framework and operational goals” (2018:24).

For corporations aiming for consistency, Cornelissen suggests that a “mechanism for […] integrating work processes of communication practitioners involves the use of communication guidelines” (2011:29). An important point for the present study is Cornelissen’s conclusion that companies that have used standardisation, writing guidelines and other work process optimisation tools have succeeded in making “corporate communication processes more visible and consistent across the company” (2011:33).

3.3 Needs analysis

Linguistic needs analysis in often associated with language teaching and curriculum development in English for specific purposes (ESP). In ESP research, needs analyses are used to establish language learners’ needs for linguistic improvement. Needs analyses are also a commonly used tool for language consultants, since linguistic needs analyses can be helpful for identifying opportunities for improvement of organisational communication. Lund (2014: 61) states that members of an organisation often write in a manner that does not necessarily reflect their skills as writers, but instead write as they perceive they should in the organisational culture they are a part of. This perception is often based on what is considered to be “organisational habits”, “unwritten rules”, or colleagues’ opinions on “the way we do things around here” (2014:62). These issues tend to be below the level of awareness and something that is perpetuated in training of new members of an organisation. (2014:62) In large, multinational corporations, where parts of the organisation inevitably exist at great distances from policy makers, these unwritten rules and ways of doing things are likely to have been adapted to the local context. Furthermore, it is not certain that individual members have the same ideas of how the organisation should communicate as for example policy makers or management (2014:66). Needs analyses can therefore be a useful tool to measure whether the perceptions of how one “should” write in fact matches the ambitions of the organisation or is in line with best practice in their operational category.

Sanden (2016) describes language needs analyses as a useful tool in corporate language management. Sanden's model (see figure 1) is based on four continuous steps, where the conducting of a needs analysis is the first. It serves to "determine the company's current language situation" upon which the second step can be initiated. The second step entails that "a language policy or language strategy is […] developed in order to regulate the company's internal modes of communication" (2016:283). The next step is to implement language management tools to "address existing and expected language needs" (2016:283). And finally, "continuous revision ensures strategic learning and reduces the risk of unsatisfactory language management outcomes" (2016:283). If the results of a language management initiative are unsatisfactory, a new language needs analysis can be conducted, and the subsequent steps be taken in a new attempt to reach the desired results. This ties in with Linn et al (2017) in their discussion of language management being an ongoing process. The present study can be considered as a combination of steps four and one in Sanden's (2016) model, since the study both revises the effects of new language management tools as well as aims to identify areas of improvement through a needs analysis.

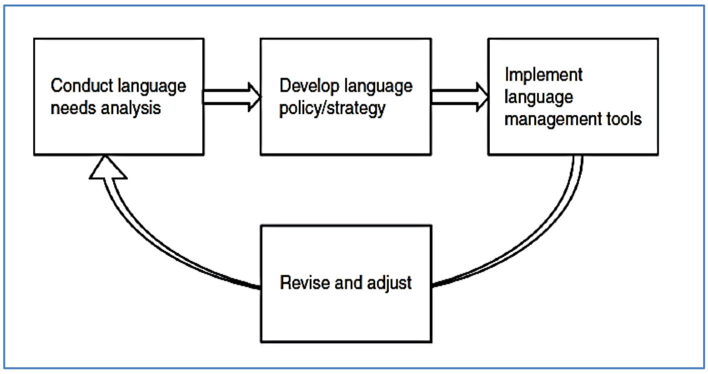


Figure 1: Sanden G.R. (2016:238). Successful language management stages

Needs analyses commonly combine quantitative and qualitative methodology. Data collection is achieved through e.g. text analyses, surveys, interviews and observations. The needs analysis conducted in this study builds on Dudley Evans' and St John's (1998) model[1], which was originally developed for language teaching in ESP. In their model, Dudley-Evans and St. John divide the concept of "needs" into perceived/objective needs and felt/subjective needs. Perceived/objective needs correspond to "what is known and can be verified", whilst felt/subjective needs correspond to "cognitive and affective factors" (1998:123). The objective needs are categorised as "product-oriented", and the subjective needs as "process-oriented" (1998:123). By investigating these needs in a language learning situation, a *target situation* and a *learning situation* can be established. In addition to these two, Dudley-Evans and St. John suggest that it is necessary to analyse the *present situation*.

[1] For other examples of research where Dudley Evans and St John's model is applied, see e.g. Wu & Chin (2010).

Table 1: Needs Analysis, Dudley-Evans & St John (1998:123ff)

Needs Analysis	
Target situation analysis (TSA)	Focuses on objective/perceived needs. Establishes which activities language users need to be able to perform.
Learning situation analysis (LSA)	Focus on subjective/felt needs. Establishes what learners want to be able to use language for.
Present situation analysis (PSA)	Establishes current proficiency. Estimates strengths and weaknesses to deduce lacks.

According to Dudley- Evans and St John's (1998:125) concept, a needs analysis in ESP should establish:

1. professional information about the learner, and what activities language users need to be able to perform = objective needs – TSA.
2. personal information about the learner = factors that may affect learning, reasons for attending, attitudes etc. = subjective needs – LSA.
3. language information about the learner = current language skills – PSA.
4. learner's lacks = the gap between (1) and (3).
5. language learning information = effective ways to address (4).
6. insight into required skills in (1).
7. what is wanted from the course.
8. information about the course environment (means analysis).

When all the above factors are established, a workable course design can be developed (1998:124).

Dudley-Evans and St John point out that "[t]he findings from a needs analysis are not absolute but relative and there is no single, unique set of needs" and that "findings depend on who asks what questions and how the responses are interpreted" (1998:126). Since this study if not focused on language learning, but on language management tools, the model has been adapted to fit this purpose. Therefore, the categories of present situation analysis, target situation analysis and means analysis are applied, and instead of course design, the objective is raised levels of consistency in written web material.

4 Material and method

In this section, the material and methodologies used in this study are presented. However, before these can be correctly understood, the study needs further contextualisation. Therefore, this section starts with an introduction to the context in which the research has been conducted.

4.1 Research context

During my final term at the Language consultancy program, I did an eight-week internship at the communications department of a Swedish multinational manufacturing company. The company, a business-to-business venture, is one of the world's largest in their field, currently employing around 45 000 people across 130 countries. At the time of my internship, the company had launched an extensive rebranding initiative, through which both visual and linguistic communicative profiles were being updated. During the internship, I was given the opportunity to assist with developing content for the new company website[2] that was being built as part of the rebranding initiative.

In preparation for this task, and to familiarise myself with the material, I examined the current company website. In the process, I discovered that there was quite a large degree of variation in the messaging. Different English varieties (British versus American English), tone of voice, ways of addressing the reader, as well as inconsistent orthography in product names and other common terms were among the variables that stood out. I made inquiries and learned that there was an ambition to address these issues in conjunction with the rebranding initiative, and that they would be amended in the content for the new website.

4.1.1 Language workers at the communications department

The company that this research is conducted at is, as previously mentioned, a Swedish multinational company active in technical industries. The company has employees with advanced educational backgrounds within various fields of engineering. Historically, however, there have been few employees with backgrounds in linguistics or communication. Until quite recently, most of the company's external communication activities were outsourced to external agencies. Some years ago, however, an in-house

[2] The company that this study focuses on has business activities in many countries, of which most have their own, localised webpages. In this study, however, the term "website" refers to the company's English, global website.

communications department was developed to – amongst other things – handle many areas of the company's external communication.

Consisting of around 40 people, the department are responsible for strategizing, developing and executing external communication activities for the company. The majority of the department are located at the company headquarters, but some are located at offices in other countries in Europe. Some of the members have roles as project coordinators, illustrators, photographers and art directors. These members, even though they certainly are active participants and contributors in communication activities, are not creating written content. As the focus of this study is on written content, they are not included as language workers in the present research.

The department also includes a team of technical informers and writers, who by definition are language workers. The technical writers produce and edit product-related materials[3] that are of a very different nature than the type of customer communication present on the website. As the more technical areas of the company's written content are highly standardised, these writers adhere to their own, separate guidelines. Therefore, these writers have also been excluded from this research.

Even though most of the external communication activities are designed and developed at the department, much of the actual content writing is still outsourced to copywriters at external agencies. The company's senior copywriter, however, is an in-house employee. Besides his role as senior copywriter, he also has other responsibilities, that extend those traditionally associated with copywriters: the senior copywriter has an important role in language management, as he is highly involved in the development of content guidelines and language policy at the company. He is also responsible for implementation of policy, as well as for training in-house and external language workers. Both the externally sourced copywriters and the in-house senior copywriter have been included in this study as language workers.

Moving on, the department also has a number of employees who work as market communication (MarCom) managers. They function as links between the company's marketing department, the project and the creative teams, experts from the organisation's business areas, and contacts in other countries of operation. In addition, they have an editorial role in their contacts with external copywriters. As such, they are also considered language workers and have been included in this study.

Additionally, the department has a web editor in chief. She is an in-house employee, but her main location of work is at another company office in Europe. Her responsibilities include maintaining the company website's overall messages, and to give

[3] Examples of such materials are product specifications, catalogues, or manuals.

linguistic and editorial support to content contributors. She has also had an active role in discussions of standardisation, as well as development of language policy at the company. The web editor in chief has also been included in this study as a language worker.

4.1.2 The language initiative

As mentioned, a decision had been made to update the company's communicative profile – both on visual and linguistic levels. On the linguistic side, the company initially focused on changing their present tone of voice in customer messaging. The aim was to develop a more customer-centric tonality; the customers' needs and realities were to be the focus of the communication. However, as the rebranding initiative proceeded, the company became aware of the extent of variation on the current website. This led to the additional ambition of raising the level of consistency in the communication.

To reach these aims, the company had developed new writing guidelines to help language workers adhere to the new communicative profile as well as to write more consistent material. Both tone of voice documents and other company-specific language documents of the types that Sanden (2016) refers to had been created and introduced. At the time of this research, improvements and additions were still being made to the writing guidelines. However, many of the language workers had been briefed and were working with the new guidelines.

4.2 Material

The material analysed in this study is of three types: Firstly, written material on the company's current website was investigated. Variation in the web messaging was categorised and quantified, and qualitative textual analyses were performed on the texts. To ensure that the texts selected for analysis were comparable in terms of purpose and readership, only promotional product or service information texts from the first and second level of the website were selected.

Secondly, a questionnaire was circulated to 11 of the company's externally sourced and 15 in-house language workers. The responses were analysed and summarised. (For the full questionnaire, see appendix.)

Thirdly, qualitative interviews were held with four key language workers at the company, and the answers analysed and summarised.

4.3 Methods

Although more commonly used in language teaching and curriculum design in ESP, "language needs analyses may also be valuable for companies to get an overview of their language situation" (Sanden 2016:34). Companies can "conduct smaller-scale analyses by e.g. reviewing existing data on the company's language and communication practices" (Sanden 2016:338). For this study, a needs analysis based on Dudley- Evans and St John's (1996) model, was designed and adapted in order to review the existing data at the company. The aim of the needs analysis was to establish the present and the target situation for consistency in the company's web material, as well as identifying any potential gaps between the two. Additionally, to investigate possible means of closing the gaps, a means analysis investigated the organisational environment in which the study was conducted. For triangulation purposes, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used, e.g.: inventory of the company's current website, interviews with key members of the communications department, and a questionnaire that probed language workers use of, needs for, and perceptions of writing guidelines.

4.3.1 Inventory of the current website

As part of the present situation analysis conducted in this study, text analyses were done of material on the current company website. The aim was to investigate the present level of consistency in the material. To map out discrepancies, the categories of choice of English varieties (in this case British versus American English), choice of suffixes (-ise versus -ize, or -yse versus -yze), and orthography in product names and other important terms were selected. By performing searches on selected items on the company's website, it was possible to quantify the number of pages on which each item occurred, as well as which varieties and items were dominant.

In addition, the sender's tone of voice of in the web material was investigated through qualitative textual analyses. The analyses build on Hellspong and Ledin's (1997) model of textual analysis. More precisely, an analysis of sender/addressee referral (1997:173) was done to see if the texts constructed a close or distant relationship to the addressee. The texts were also analysed to see how the sender and addressee were portrayed in terms of agency (1997:150).

4.3.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire focusing on the perceptions and use of the new writing guidelines was sent to 26 language workers at the company (15 in-house and 11 externally sourced language workers). Constructed in Google's survey tool, the questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions and was circulated via email[4] to the language workers (for full questionnaire, see appendix). The aim was to investigate both the present and the target situation, and the answers were analysed accordingly. Additionally, the questionnaire was designed to investigate whether the language workers were looking for information regarding the previously occurring areas of inconsistency in the web material. Lastly, it also contained questions designed to identify needs for improvement of the writing guidelines.

Long (2005:38) concludes that questionnaires are a good way of attaining "focused, standardized, organized data […] relatively quickly and cheaply". He continues to state that they are beneficial as a complement to interviews, since they reduce risks for interviewer bias, and that as opposed to in interview situations, "the questions asked, the order in which they are asked, and the precise way they are asked can all be carefully planned and fixed" (2005:38). Long also mentions drawbacks to the method: response rates can be low, and the range of responses are limited due to the restricted nature of questionnaires. (2005:38). However, open-ended questions can "elicit a wider range of information" even though they are "more difficult and time-consuming to code and interpret" (2005:38). Nevertheless, in a survey of such limited scope as the present one, a combination of both closed and open questions was deemed manageable.

Tying in with Tange's (2007) research on the effect of organisational distances, the first question established whether the participants were in-house employees or external consultants. This made it possible to map out potential differences in answers between the two groups. It could also indicate whether any patterns in answers could be due to geographical or functional proximity to policymakers in the organisation. The second question established how long the participants had been working for the company. Tying in with Lund's (2014) theory of organisational habits, this question examined whether more recent members had adopted the new work processes and tools more readily than those who had been present in the organisation for longer periods of time.

The third and fourth questions, "How important do you think consistency is in company X's customer communication?", and "How important do you think consistency is for company X's customers?", corresponded to the TSA and investigated the participants' opinions on target levels of consistency. The answers to these questions could also indicate whether the participants' opinions were at least roughly in line with those of the company's policy makers (Lund 2014), and if there were differences in the opinions of in-house and external workers (Tange 2007).

[4] I was provided with contact information to relevant language workers by a senior member of the organisation. An email describing the purpose of the survey, as well as information regarding participants' anonymity was sent to the language workers. The email also contained a link to the survey. No sign-ups or similar were required to participate.

Questions five and six, “Are you aware that company X recently updated their writing guidelines?” and “Have you been briefed on the new writing guidelines?” were part of the PSA and examined to what extent information about the new language policy had reached members of the organisation. Questions seven to ten, “How often do you refer to the writing guidelines in your work for company X?”, “How easy do you think it is to find company X's writing guidelines?”, “What type of information are you typically looking for in company X's writing guidelines?”, and “How often do you find the information you are looking for in company X's guidelines?” examined the present use of the guidelines. These questions on frequency of use and accessibility, what type of information is typically sought, and whether the language workers are able to find the needed information in the guidelines tied in with both the PSA and the TSA.

Question eleven, “Have company X's updated writing guidelines improved your working situation?”, was part of the PSA and investigated the participants’ general opinions; had the new guidelines has had a positive impact on their daily work?

Question twelve, “Are you missing any type of information in company X's writing guidelines?” probed the participants’ wishes or needs for additional information in the guidelines. The final question, “Do you have any more comments on Company X’s new writing guidelines” was included to collect any additional feedback on the new policy documents. This could benefit the company’s policy makers in their efforts to optimise the guidelines.

4.3.3 Interviews

Four qualitative interviews were conducted with language workers at the company. The interviews investigated both the present and the target situations for consistency, as well as possible means to improve the present situation. The interviews also investigated whether organisational distances would have significance in how the language initiative was perceived.

Informants were selected from different groups of language workers in the organisation:

Table 2: Informants in interviews

Informant	Function	Role in language initiative	Organisational position
1	Senior copywriter	Policy maker	In-house/main office
2	MarCom manager	Policy user	In-house/main office
3	Web editor in chief	Policy maker	In-house/remote office
4	Copywriter	Policy user	Externally sourced

The interview design in this study were based on Kvale's (2007) seven-stage model for qualitative interviews. The interviews were exploratory and were therefore only loosely structured (2007:38). Interviews 1-3 lasted for approximately 30-40 minutes, and the informants in these interviews all gave written consent to being recorded. These interviews could therefore readily be transcribed[5]. Interview 4 was conducted over the telephone, and unfortunately there were no technical solutions at hand for recording that interview. It was, however, much shorter, around ten minutes long, and more thoroughly scripted beforehand. Notes were taken during the interview, and a transcription, albeit not verbatim, was made immediately after the interview. Nonetheless, this meant that the reporting of interview 4 would not include any direct quotes.

The analyses of the interviews were done through qualitative meaning interpretation (Kvale 2007:107-109) and are reported in relation to the needs analysis in the results section

5 Results

In this section, the results of the three categories of research are reported. Firstly, the results of the qualitative textual analysis of web material are described. After that, the results of the questionnaire, and lastly, the analysis of the interviews are reported. The section ends with a summary of the combined results.

5.1 Inventory of the current website

In this subsection, the results of the inventory of the current company website are presented. The four categories of: choice of English variety, use of suffixes, orthographic discrepancies in product names and important terms, and tone of voice, are presented individually.

5.1.1 Choice of English variety (British vs American English)

The inventory showed that there is variation in which English variety is chosen (Table 3). British English is dominant for most lexical items, but there are exceptions (see for example *colour* vs. *color*, where the American spelling is clearly dominant, or *travelling* vs. *traveling*, where the numbers are near equal).

[5] Interviews 1-2 were conducted and transcribed in Swedish, as the informants were native Swedish speakers. Relevant extracts have thereafter been translated by me. Interviews 3-4 were conducted and transcribed in English.

Table 3: Choice of English variety: BrEn/AmEn

British English	Pages[6]	American English	Pages
Aluminium	136	Aluminum	55
Catalogue	907	Catalog	6
Colour	86	Color	1182
Fibre	66	Fiber	50
Labour	286	Labor	8
Litre	24	Liter	14
Travelling	19	Traveling	18
Tyre	13	Tire	8

5.1.2 Choice of suffixes

The inventory showed that the -ize and -yze varieties are favoured. However, the -ise and -yse varieties occur as well (Table 4).

Table 4: Use of suffix: -ise/-yse vs -ize/-yze

Term	Pages, -ise/-yse	Pages, -ize/-yze
Analyse/Analyze	58	168
Customise/Customize	10	72
Minimise/Minimize	41	386
Optimise/Optimize	47	2313
Realise/Realize	6	96
Utilise/Utilize	27	162

Consistent patterns were also found in nominalisations (i.e. *optimisation* vs. *optimization* etc.) and in forms with suffixes (i.e. *customised* vs. *customized* etc.).

5.1.3 Orthographic discrepancies in product names and other common terms

The inventory revealed a significant amount of variation in product names and other common terms (Table 5). Most common are variations in capitalisation[7] and hyphenation:

[6] Searches on the selected items were performed on the company's website, and the number of individual webpages on which each item occurred were counted.
[7] Capitalisation here refers to word-initial capitalisation where the words are not the initial words of sentences.

Table 5: Variation in product names/ common terms

Variation in product names and common terms
Condition Based/ condition based/ condition-based/ conditionbased
Deep Groove Ball Bearings/ Deep groove ball bearings/ deep groove ball bearings/ deep-groove ball bearings
Oil Injection Method/ Oil injection method/ Oil injection Method/ oil injection method
Self-Aligning Ball Bearings/ Self-aligning ball bearings/ self-aligning ball bearings/ self aligning ball bearings
Three-Barrier solution/ Three-barrier solution/ three-barrier solution
X[8] Remote Diagnostic Services/ X Remote diagnostic services/ X remote diagnostic services

5.1.4 Tone of voice

The focus of this part of the inventory was tone of voice issues. More precisely, analyses of how (or if) the company addresses the reader and refers to itself (Hellspong & Ledin 1997:173ff), as well as analyses of which entity has agency (1997:150) in the web texts were done. Since these factors can vary depending on the purpose of the material and who the presumed reader is, texts analysed in this portion of the inventory all came from the same types of material on the web site. The selected texts contain information about products and services and can be considered as promotional texts.

5.1.4.1 Sender/addressee referral

Text analyses showed that there are instances where the company refers to itself in third person[9], as in (1) and (2):

(1) X offers solutions that enhance reliability and performance […].

[8] X = Company name.
[9] Here, by referring to themselves by the company name.

(2) When you partner with X, you are […]

In some texts, the company refers to itself with first person plural, as in (3) and (4):

(3) We identify the strategic and operational capabilities […].

(4) With our advanced calculations and simulations tools, we can increase the knowledge […]

The reader is sometimes addressed in second person form, as in (5) and (6):

(5) We can help you reduce your operation’s energy usage and improve its sustainability

(6) Get the most from your rotating equipment […]

The texts frequently refer to the addressee in third person[10] forms, as seen in (7) and (8):

(7) After discussion with the customer, X Engineering Consultancy Services brings the right knowledge and tools together […]

(8) In the end, the benefits for the client are […]

The sender/addressee referral, through the use of first and second person forms, sometimes implies a close relationship between the sender and the addressee. Other times, the relationship is construed as more distanced through the use of third person, indirect forms such as “the customer” (Hellspong & Ledin 1997:173ff).

5.1.4.2 Agency

In the current web material, the company has several different tones of voice when it comes to who has agency and are central in the texts. In examples (9) and (10), the central actor is the company itself, and the tone is hyperbolic and inwardly focused:

(9) In committing itself to excellence in products and performance, X puts its expertise acquired through years of research and commitment in every industrial segment.

(10) Our training courses are backed by over 100 years of experience and knowledge of rotating machine reliability that is unmatched in the world. Close working partnerships with our clients have given us a unique and intimate understanding of the processes and challenges specific to every major industry.

[10] Here, defined as not referring directly to the reader.

There are also some examples of a more customer-centric tone, where the customer has agency and is in control of events. In these cases, the company instead takes a supporting role, as seen in (11):

(11) Choose from flexible supply or performance-based contracts, access data-driven insights into your machine performance from anywhere, and connect to our expertise directly to solve your problems.

5.2 Questionnaire

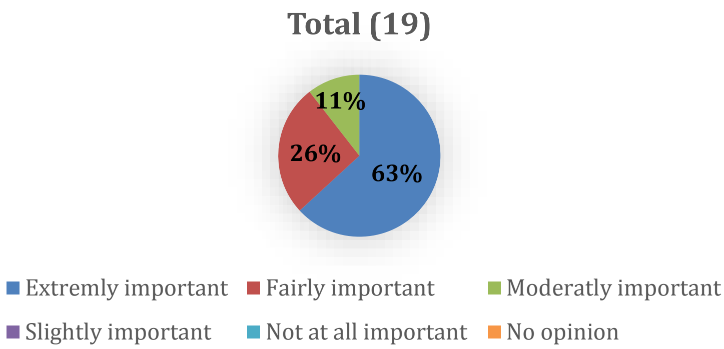
In this subsection, the results of the questionnaire are presented. The answers to the questions are reported in numerical sequence, and the subsection ends with a summary of the results.

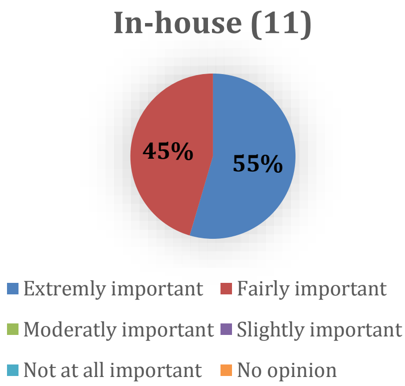
5.2.1 Questionnaire – results

The questionnaire was sent to 26 (15 in-house and 11 externally sourced) language workers. 19 responses were returned, of which 11 (≈ 52%) were from in-house employees and 8 (≈ 42%) were from externally sourced language workers. This gives a return rate of ≈ 73% (in-house = 73.3% and external = 72.7).

Questions three and four of the questionnaire were aimed at investigating how language workers thought the target levels of consistency should be, and whether this would vary between in-house and external employees. The results are shown in Diagram 1 - Diagram 7:

Diagram 1: How important do you think consistency is in company X's customer messaging?





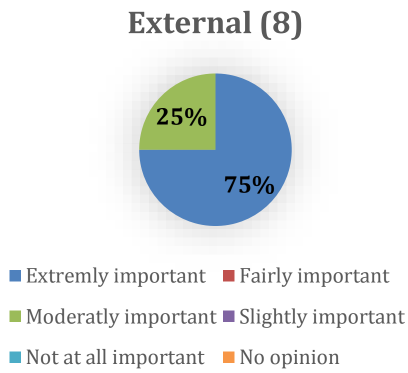
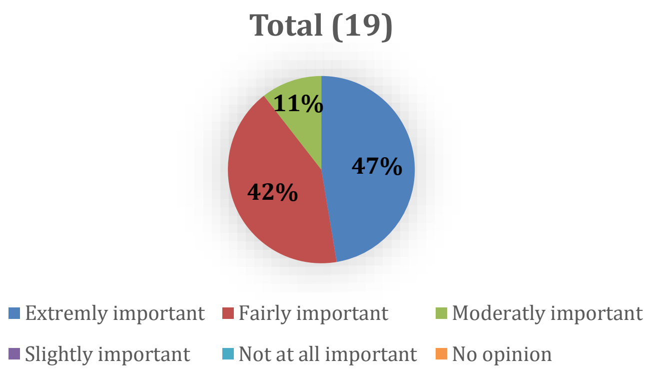
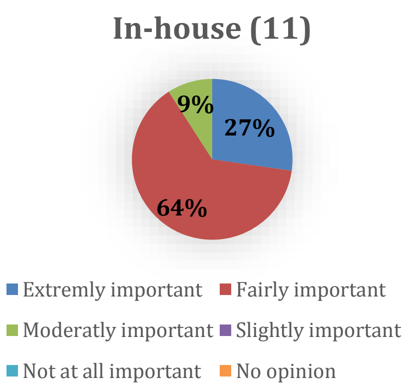
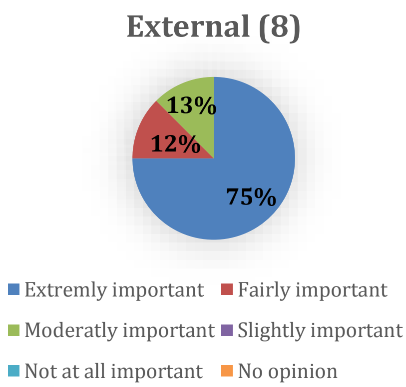


Diagram 2: How important do you think consistency in messaging is for company X's customers?







As part of the PSA, questions five and six were aimed to investigate whether language workers had received information about the guidelines being updated, and if they had been briefed on how to use them:

Diagram 3: Are you aware that company X recently updated their writing guidelines?

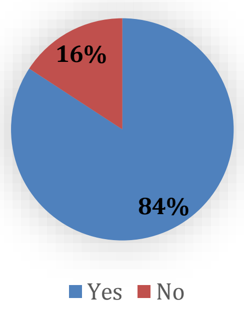
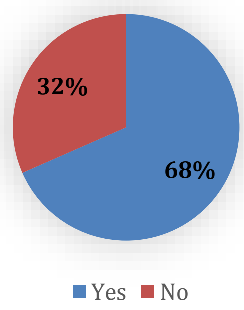
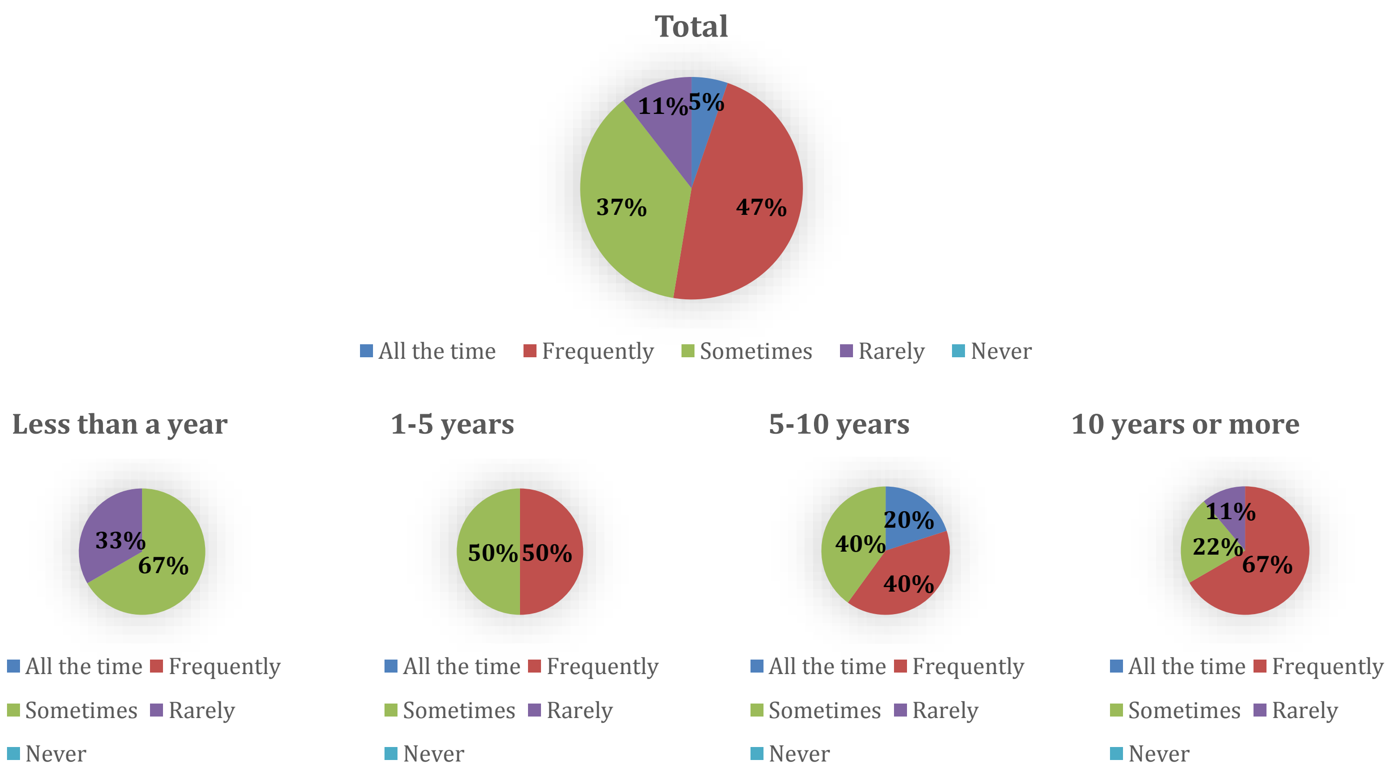


Diagram 4: Have you been briefed on company X's new writing guidelines?



Question seven examined the frequency of use of guidelines. This was both part of the PSA, and to test Lund's (2014) theory of organisational habits. When matched with question 2, it was possible to see if newer members of the team were more likely to adopt new processes and tools than older members:

Diagram 5: How often do you refer to the writing guidelines in your work for company X?

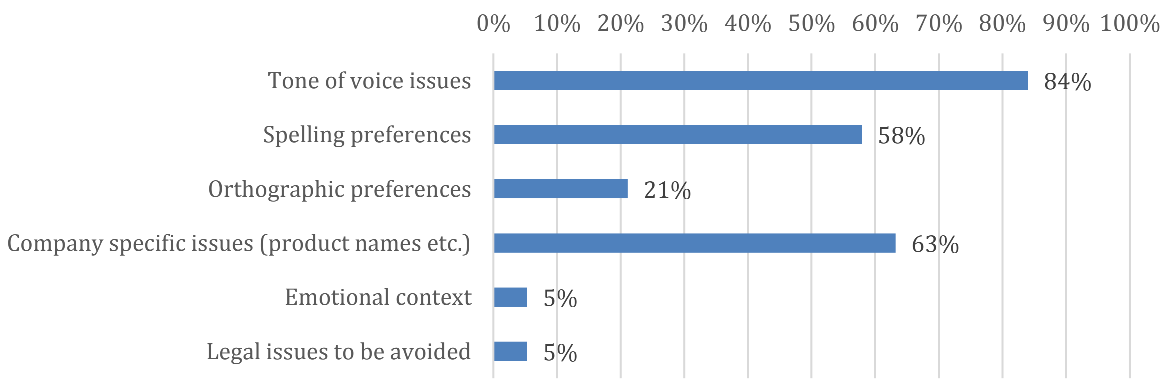


Question eight investigated the accessibility of the guidelines; how easily the language workers could locate them on the web. Nearly 75% stated that they were very easy or fairly easy to find. However, nearly 16% stated that they were very difficult or fairly difficult to find.

Question nine investigated what the language workers are typically looking for in the guidelines. This could establish whether they were looking up things that had been inconsistent in the web material in the past. As part of the PSA, it could help establish lacks in the guidelines.

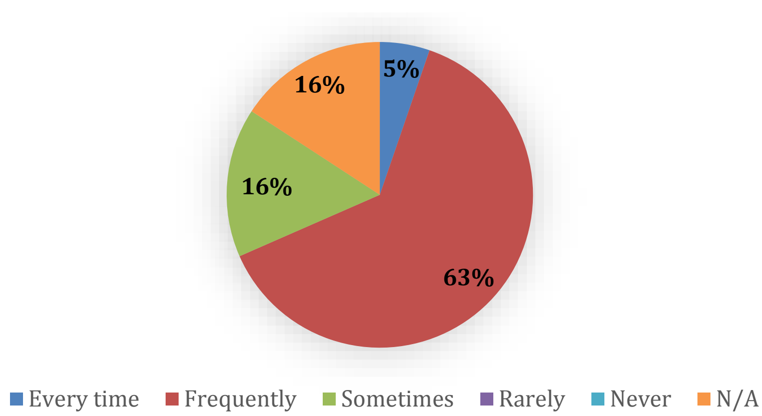
The four categories in the textual analysis of the webpage were given as alternatives, and the option “other” was available. (Two participants described additional categories of inquiry, which can be seen last in the diagram):

Diagram 6: What type of information are you typically looking for in the guidelines (you can choose several options. If you choose "Other", please specify.)



As part of the PSA, question ten had to do with to what extent the language workers were able to find the needed information in the guidelines:

Diagram 7: How often do you find the information that you are looking for in the guidelines?



Question eleven also dealt with the present situation analysis, as it investigated whether the new guidelines had infact improved the working situation for the language workers. 74% said that their working situation had been improved by the guidelines, whereas 26% had no opinion. Of the group that stated they had no opinion, 50% were not aware that there had been an update of the guidelines.

As part of the target situation analysis, questions twelve and thirteen were open questions, where participants could give feedback on the guidelines; if they would like to see something added to them, or if they had any further comments on them. On the question if something was missing in the guidelines, replies said that more information about target audiences, as well as emotional context would be helpful. Other participants wanted clearer directives on product names, and company-specific vs. “common language”- information. For the final question, there were comments like “The new guidelines are an important step forward in improving consistency across all media” and “Easy to understand”.

5.2.2 Questionnaire - summary

The questionnaire distributed for this study had a very high response rate: ≈ 73%. The high interest could have several explanations: many of the in-house employees had met me during my internship and were aware that I was planning to do a study of the new guidelines. It is likely that they had anticipated being approached as part of the study and were therefore prepared for it. For the externally sourced workers, it is a possible that they might have seen this as an opportunity to get feedback across to the company. Additionally, since the language initiative at the company was an ongoing process at the time, the guidelines were likely to be a relevant and topical issue for both in-house and external language workers.

Since the percentages for in-house and external participants were virtually the same, in this study, organisational distances (Tange 2007) did not seem to have affected the interest to participate. As previously mentioned, organisational distances can be viewed as both functional and geographical. Given the organisations size, many of the in-house as well as the external employees are geographically distant at almost all times. Functional proximity is perhaps more relevant in this case; they are all language workers who can benefit from well-functioning language management tools, and therefore ready to invest their efforts in language management issues.

Interestingly enough, 55% of in-house employees thought that consistency in customer communication was extremely important, while 75% of the external workers believed this to be the case (Diagram 1). The numbers for how important they thought consistency was for the customers were 64% for in-house and 75% for external workers (Diagram 2). The difference could perhaps be explained by occupation; the externally sourced language workers are copywriters who deal with various markets, whereas the in-house employees work with industries where correct technical information has traditionally been the main priority.

At the time of this research, 84% of the language workers had been informed about the update of writing guidelines (Diagram 3), and 68% had had briefing sessions on how to use them (Diagram 4). These numbers are likely to have been on the increase, as the language initiative was still ongoing, and more and more people were getting involved. However, the numbers also indicate that there were people in close functional and geographical proximity to policy makers who had not received information about the initiative. Consequently, it is likely that quite substantial efforts are required to transfer knowledge to more peripheral parts of the organisation.

Going against the organisational habit theory (Lund 2014), those who reported referring to the guidelines frequently or sometimes (89%) were language workers that have been with the company for ten years or more (Diagram 5). This category of participants was, however, the largest in the survey (9 participants). The remaining categories had very few participants (3, 2, and 5 participants respectively), so it is unlikely to be statistically relevant.

75% of the participants reported that they could locate the guidelines very easily or fairly easily. This number was of course also likely to be on the increase as the briefing sessions continued. It is evident that the categories of information they were looking for in many cases matched the categories of inconsistencies investigated in the textual analysis portion of this study (Diagram 6). As far as finding the needed information, 68% said that they could find what they were looking for every time or frequently (Diagram 7). This indicates that there is still room for improvement, or that there is information the language workers need that is difficult to convey via traditional writing guidelines.

Nearly three quarters of the participants said that their working situation had been improved by the writing guidelines (82% for in-house and 62% for external), suggesting that the guidelines really were a successful initiative. The answers to the open questions, however, also indicate that there is need for further standardisation and discussions in additional areas of the company’s content.

5.3 Interviews

Four exploratory interviews were conducted with selected language workers at the company. The analysis is presented in the following subsections. The section ends with a summary of the interviews.

5.3.1 Interview 1: Senior copywriter – policy maker

Informant 1 had been at the company for about one and a half year during the time of this research. He had been hired to be a part of the creative team as senior copywriter. In addition, he was asked to help the company create and implement guidelines for written content as part the language initiative.

When asked to describe the process, he explained that when he started working at the company, very few written guidelines existed. Additionally, almost no language management was in place, apart for in the technical areas of the company's written content. Consequently, in the beginning the main focus was to develop guidelines for the company's new tone of voice. However, as work with the new company website began, it became evident that there were further areas in need of standardisation. Therefore, guidelines addressing various formatting, orthographic and other "practical" issues had also been developed. Relevant for the PSA, at the time the interview was conducted, the guidelines had been published for use, and during briefing sessions with writers the informant had felt that they had been well received.

Also corresponding to the PSA, the informant was asked what importance he thought the organisation outside of the language department placed in consistency in the more practical issues, he responded:

> If we weren't doing a new website, I don't think it would have come up. But now, we've pointed these things out, and people have noticed the problem. And it does trouble them, since this is a company that puts high value in accuracy.

When asked about how language management and standardisation is perceived elsewhere in the organisation, the informant replied that he believed that "it's not on the top of the list, there are other priorities". He however continued to state that after the discovery of inconsistencies, additional resources had been allocated towards standardisation and language work.

Regarding the target situation for consistency, the informant pointed out that "it [the written material] should be good, and as consistent as possible. But there are other things that are more important". The communication material that was produced should ideally be of a nature that it could be used for several different purposes, and function as an effective support for sales and marketing:

> If we could convey what it takes to make succinct, concise, and adequate materials for someone who is going to meet the customer […] that we could sharpen their tools and make them much more efficient by working with the language, then I think we could get far.

When discussing what long term effects the language initiative could have, the informant expressed his conviction that the new guidelines were an important step in the right direction. Nevertheless, in order to achieve any real results, language policy makers at the company would have to keep raising awareness of the issues. Furthermore, guidelines alone would not be enough; an important factor would be to transfer knowledge to other members of the organisation. One example of means to achieve this, he thought would be to train other members of the organisation; this could enable them to in turn function as ambassadors:

> We need to raise awareness within the organisation. Project managers, for example: we should train them in these issues, since they are our points of contact with external writers. […] This might require a redefinition of roles to some extent. […] The project managers should ideally not only be in touch with the agencies and brief the writers; they should be knowledgeable of the contents of the brief as well[11].

The informant also expressed a belief that for language management to be successful, it needs to be authorised and endorsed by higher levels of the organisation.

5.3.2 Interview 2: Market communication manager – policy user

Informant 2 was selected since she works in close proximity to, but is not directly involved in, policy making at the company. One of her responsibilities is to monitor content to ensure that it adheres to the guidelines. As such, her work is directly affected by changes in language policy.

Informant 2 reported that the language initiative had improved the present working situation, at least for her personally. By having access to an in-house text specialist, the department had already started streamlining and improving their content. The senior copywriter had helped them realise how they can structure texts for added consistency, as well as provided valuable input on writing on a daily basis. Informant two added that the presence of the senior copywriter had led to the realisation that there is a higher demand

[11] Since this interview was conducted, briefing sessions with additional categories of employees have started.

for linguistic expertise than one person could possibly provide. She said she believed that the department would really benefit from having additional trained writers in their in-house staff.

Regarding the new guidelines, informant 2 stated that one of the main advantages was that they facilitated contacts with external writers; she did not have to try to explain the company's vision for writing in her own words every time. If external writers were to actively refer to the guidelines in their work, the need for editing would likely be reduced and consistency increased. She also expressed the opinion that additional areas of her work could benefit from standardisation efforts, e.g. communication with distributors etc.

When asked about her opinions on the target situation for consistency at the company, she replied that her impression was that those working with communication felt it was very important to raise levels of consistency. She pointed out that while it is impossible to oversee all material – especially things that are produced in other countries, in other languages – at least the content that is published through the department should be consistent to a high degree. However, she emphasised that she believed it would be farfetched to simply creating the guidelines will achieve that:

> One of the main problems is that we're sitting here at headquarters, thinking that everyone out there is aware of what we do. […] It's one thing to create and use guidelines here, but to really get them out there, to make people realise the value of them and to start using them – that's the biggest challenge.

Informant 2 also reported that a dilemma sometimes was conflict of interests. Different stakeholders in the communication had different opinions; it was sometimes hard to reach consensus on which information should be included in different materials and channels etc. There were some uncertainties as to who had the final say in these issues; was it the communications department, who were officially responsible for the content, or was it e.g. the subject matter experts who contributed with technical information? These issues would, in her opinion, benefit from further definition.

Informant 2 also stated that it is necessary to transfer knowledge of language policy and management to other parts of the organisation. One way to succeed with this, she suggested, could be that language management was promoted by members in higher levels of the organisation. This could entail that management hosted meetings or workshops devoted to language issues.

5.3.3 Interview 3: Web editor in chief – policy maker

Informant 3 is the web editor in chief for the company's website. She is responsible for maintenance of the company website. A long-time employee at the company, she has always been a contributor and an active voice in discussions regarding language policy.

In relation to the PSA, informant 3 was asked about her thoughts on the impact of the new guidelines. She commented that they will most likely help increase consistency on the website, both in the writing and the editing phases. For her personally, they had already proved to be beneficial. She explained that due to the size of the company, and the amount of content that is being produced, there is simply not enough time to actually read through everything. Therefore, in her work she uses a content management software to monitor the company website. One of the functions of the software is that you can filter out unwanted content and deviations based on programmable criteria. Prior to the implementation of the guidelines, she would have to try to "anticipate" labels for unwanted content. Whereas now, by having the writing guidelines to refer to in setting the parameters for the editing software, deviations were much more likely to be spotted and amended before publishing.

When discussing target levels for consistency, informant 3 stated that it was important to have a common source as a norm, and that the company's source of choice had traditionally been the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). This had, however, proved to be problematic to uphold to an absolute extent. She exemplified this with the word *analyse*. In this case, a dilemma had occurred when products that were developed in the U.S. had been trademarked with the American -yze spelling. The products were globally available; it was therefore difficult to enforce the OED approved form *analyse* as the company standard. She however continued to state that having a few words that deviate in spelling on the website (i.e. *colour* versus *color*) was "the lowest priority" and should by no means be the main focus. However, she explained, the tone of voice issues mattered more, and standardised use of first- and second-person pronouns should be on top of the list of priorities.

Informant 3 was also asked about whether she believed that the writing guidelines would help the company achieve the wanted long-term effects. She replied that she thought that they could, but that it would require that language workers across the whole company gets involved. For example, all content managers should ideally be monitoring their own sections of the company's business and start incorporating the guidelines in their daily work (e.g. by using the same content monitoring software, since "a lot of the consistency is built into [it]"). She added that "I do believe that the content managers see the importance of it. […] But they also feel like they can't do much because they're so burdened with the workload".

5.3.4 External copywriter – policy user

Informant 4 is an external copywriter who has been working with the company for about a year. He was selected for this study due to his distance to language policy makers. Located in another European country, he had been working on various campaigns for the company for about a year. During the time of the interview, he had not yet started working with anything that had required him to use the new guidelines. He was, however, soon going to be involved in content creation for the new company website and had therefore been briefed.

Informant 4 stated that he had gotten a good impression of the guidelines, and that they seemed solid and comprehensive. He explained that it would be helpful in his work to have clear directives on "practicalities" (orthographic preferences, numerals etc), and therefore would be an improvement for his working situation. He also believed that the guidelines could be an important step in the right direction for raising consistency overall on the website.

Regarding target levels of consistency for web material, informant 4 said that while the company should of course aim for higher levels of consistency, not every page needed to sound exactly the same. In his opinion, lack of guidelines could often be a disadvantage; however, he explained, in his previous assignments with the company, there had always been constructive discussions in which he could give his input on how to frame the messaging. A balance between consistency and creativity would according to informant 4 therefore be ideal, since it would allow writers to adjust the messaging towards the target audience.

5.3.5 Interviews – summary

Corresponding to the PSA, the informants reported that the new writing guidelines had brought with them an improvement of their working situation. Additionally, all informants thought that the guidelines would help increase consistency in the company's web material. Also tying in with the PSA, policy users thought that the guidelines were useful and comprehensive.

Correlating with the TSA, the informants agreed that raised levels of consistency was an important objective, with increased consistency in tone of voice as the main priority. Additionally, material should ideally be designed to be useful on several occasions and for different purposes.

Informants 1-3 all expressed the belief that to achieve any real, long-term results, it is important to transfer knowledge and include other parts of the organisation in language management issues.

5.4 Summary of results

As part of the PSA, and in response to the first research question, " What is the current level of inconsistencies in the company's web communication?", qualitative textual analyses have shown a substantial amount of variation. This has been exemplified in the present study by an analysis of the categories: choice of English varieties (in this case British versus American English), choice of suffixes (-ise/-yse versus -ize/-yze) and orthography in product names and other important terms. In addition, several tones of voice are present in the company's web material.

The PSA has revealed that information about the new writing guidelines had not at the time reached all language workers included in this study. However, the majority had been informed and the new writing guidelines had been well received. A majority of the language workers also thought that their working situation had been improved through their implementation. Additionally, the PSA has shown that language workers are looking for – and on most occasions finding – information that covers the areas of inconsistencies on the current website. This could then potentially lead to a reduction of inconsistencies in the company's written material.

In response to the second research question, "What is the perceived target level for consistency in the company's web communication?", the TSA has shown that the language workers in this study have a shared ambition to increase consistency in the web material. However, not all categories of inconsistencies are of equal priority; according to the informants, the main focus should be tone of voice issues. Additionally, tying in with the TSA, the interviews indicated that there are further areas (besides customer communication) where standardisation and language management efforts could be beneficial.

Corresponding with the third research question, "Do employees think that inconsistencies in the company's web material be eliminated – or at least minimised – with the implementation of writing guidelines or are additional language management measures needed?", informants in the interviews expressed the opinions that guidelines alone were not likely to have the desired long-term effects; additional measures would be necessary in order to achieve and maintain the goals of the language initiative. The means analysis showed that possible means to achieve these could be to transfer knowledge to more people in the organisation. More people should also be involved in continuous language management and discussions; not least members in higher levels of the organisation. Additionally, the importance of a consistent use of language management processes and tools (software) was underlined.

Tange's (2007) research on organisational distances was an influential on the design of the present study. However, very little indicates that proximity or distance to policy makers has affected the way the language initiative has been perceived by members of the organisation. Nor has there been anything that would indicate of that organisational habits (Lund 2014) could make long-time employees more reluctant to adopt new work processes.

6 Discussion and conclusion

This exploratory study has investigated language workers at a Swedish multinational company and their perceptions of writing guidelines and language management. The results have shown that the implementation of the guidelines have been an important step towards increasing consistency in the company's web communication. There is, however, reason to believe that the guidelines alone will not be enough to achieve the desired long-term results. Instead, it has been suggested that means of achieving these goals are further transferral of knowledge, more coordinated work processes (e.g. use of software and other tools), as well as getting additional levels and areas of the organisation involved in continuous language management efforts. Language management should also ideally be promoted and endorsed by higher levels of the organisation.

The research has also given insight into some of the realities facing language policy makers at the company. For example, standardisation issues are not just a matter of referring to dictionaries (see e.g. interview 3 and the example of *analyse*); over time, company-specific language deviations are likely to occur in the communication. Nor can language management be expected to of equal importance to everyone in the organisation; conflicts of interest and differing priorities are always going to have to be considered. Nevertheless, the perception of language management as something important seems to be on the increase at the company.

Previous studies have shown that "a language policy or strategy is likely to be more successful if it is developed in response to and in harmony with the language needs of the organisation" (Sanden 2017:281), and these needs are likely to change over time. Reoccurring needs analyses like the one in the present study could be used as a continuous revision tool to ensure that the language management efforts at the company are responding to the current challenges. This also corresponds with Linn et al, and their discussion on language management as a model of sociolinguistics; what is – or should be – seen as standard or preferred linguistic behaviour is – and should be – under constant negotiation. Language management is, after all, “not a ‘once and for all’ process”.

As future research, it could be interesting to do a similar study in other parts of the organisation; what importance do members of e.g. management or marketing place in language management and standardisation issues? Do they feel that standardisation could be beneficial in other areas of the company’s communication? Another, more obvious research project would be to do a comparative analysis of the company’s website in a few years’ time, to see if the language initiative has achieved any long-term results in terms of raised consistency in customer communication.

References:

Cobarrubias, J. 1983. Ethical issues in status planning. In J. Cobarrubias and J. Fishman (eds.) *Progress in language planning: International perspectives*. pp. 41-85. Berlin: Mouton.

Cornelissen, J. (2011). *Corporate Communications. A Guide to Theory and Practice* (5:th ed). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Dhir, K. S. & Pariola, A. G. (2002). The case for language policies in multinational corporations, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(4), pp.241-251, Retrieved 2019-04-24, from: https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280210449822

Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M.J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes. A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hellspong, L & Ledin, P. (1997). *Vägar genom texten. Handbok i brukstextanalys*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Kvale, S. (2007). *Qualitative Research kit: Doing interviews*. London: SAGE Publications, Retrieved 2019-04-30, from: 10.4135/9781849208963

Linn, A.K., Sanden G. R. and Piekkari, R. (2017). 'Language standardization in sociolinguistics and international business: theory and practice across the table', in Nekvapil, J. and Sherman, T. (Eds.). *English in Business and Commerce*: *Interactions and Policies*. pp 19-45. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.

Long, M. (2005). Methodological issues in learner needs analysis. In: Long, M (ed.) *Second language needs analysis*. pp 19-76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lund, A.K. (2014). Analysér kommunikationskulturen og teksterne. In C, Holgård Sørensen, (ed.) *Godt sprog i organisationer.* pp 61-83. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Sanden, G. R. (2016). *Language strategies in multinational corporations. A cross-sector study of financial service companies and manufacturing companies.* Frederiksberg: Copenhagen Business School PhD dissertation.

Schneider, L., & Zerfass, A. (2018). Polyphony in Corporate and Organizational Communications: Exploring the Roots and Characteristics of a New Paradigm. *Communication Management Review*, *3*(2), 6–29. Retrieved 2019-03-04, from: https://doi.org/10.22522/cmr20180232

Tange, H. (2007). "Language workers and the practice of language management", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 Issue: 2, pp.131-143, Retrieved 2019-03-01, from: https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280910953825

Vaara, E., Tienari, J., Piekkari, R. & Säntti, R. (2005). Language and the Circuits of Power in a Merging Multinational Corporation. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42: 595-623. Retrieved 2019-04-25, from: doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00510.x

Wu, R. Y.& Chin, J. S. (2010). "An Investigation into the English Language Needs of Banking and Finance Professionals in Taiwan". In *Proceedings of the 12th Academic Forum on English Language Testing in Asia*. Taipei: The Language Training and Testing Center, 73–87.

Appendix - Questionnaire

Survey - Writing guidelines

This is a short survey investigating the use of writing guidelines at company X.
Choose the options that best describe your opinions.
Participation is voluntary (and extremely appreciated). All answers are treated anonymously.

Thank you!

*Required

1. **Which of the below best describes your position with company X?** *

Mark only one oval.

- In-house employee
- External consultant
- Other

2. **How long have you been working with company X?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

3. **How important do you think consistency is in company X's customer messaging?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremly important
- Fairly important
- Moderatly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
- No opinion

4. **How important do you think consistency in messaging is for company X's customers?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremly important
- Fairly important
- Moderatly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
- No opinion

5. **Are you aware that company X recently updated their writing guidelines?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No

6. **Have you been briefed on company X's updated writing guidelines?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No

7. **How often do you refer to the writing guidelines in your work for company X?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - All the time
   - Frequently
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never

8. **How easy do you think it is to find company X's writing guidelines?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - Very easy
   - Fairly easy
   - Neither
   - Fairly difficult
   - Very difficult
   - N/A

9. **What type of information are you typically looking for in company X's writing guidelines? You can choose several options. (If you choose "Other", please specify your answer.)** *
Tick all that apply.
   - [ ] Tone of voice issues
   - [ ] Spelling preferences
   - [ ] Orthographic preferences (punctuation, capitalization, hyphens etc.)
   - [ ] Company specific issues (product names etc.)
   - [ ] Other: ____________________

10. **How often do you find the information you are looking for in company X's guidelines?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - Every time
   - Frequently
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never
   - N/A

11. **Have company X's updated writing guidelines improved your working situation?** *
Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No
   - No opinion

12. **Are you missing any type of information in company X's writing guidelines? If yes, please specify what you would like to see included.**

13. **Do you have any other comments on company X's writing guidelines?**

11. **Have company X's updated writing guidelines improved your working situation?** *
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

12. **Are you missing any type of information in company X's writing guidelines? If yes, please specify what you would like to see included.**

13. **Do you have any other comments on company X's writing guidelines?**