Excluding the influence of extra-linguistic factors on mutual intelligibility

Suggested factors causing the asymmetry in intelligibility scores

**Extra-linguistic factors:**
- Contact to the language
- Attitude
- Literacy

**Linguistic factors:**
- Prosodic features
- Word length
- “Foreign sounds” etc.

Primary research question

What role do **linguistic factors** play for mutual intelligibility between Danes and Swedes?

- Experimental study
- Control for the extra-linguistic factors
- Between-group comparison of the intelligibility scores

Control for extra-linguistic factors

[Map of Scandinavia showing geographical context]
**Shortest distance to the neighbouring country**

- Odense – Malmö: 200 km
- Växjö – Helsingör: 199 km

**Questionnaire elicitation**

28 tested children with data concerning:

- Literacy
- Previous exposure to neighbouring language
- Positive, negative or no specific attitude towards the neighbouring language

- 12 Danish children from Odense, aged 5-6 yrs. (mean=6.1)
- 12 Swedish children from Växjö, aged 5-6 yrs. (mean=6.0)

**Procedure**

Stimulus-response task

- Auditory presentation of stimulus material: Danish children hear Swedish and vice versa.
- Visual presentation of four pictures per stimulus
- Children are instructed to point to the corresponding item

**Example (Danish subjects)**

1. Swedish bold is auditorily presented, while
2. four pictures are visually presented:

![Image of four pictures]
Results

• No significant asymmetry in intelligibility scores

Conclusion

• Asymmetry in adult intelligibility scores is likely to be caused by extra-linguistic factors