

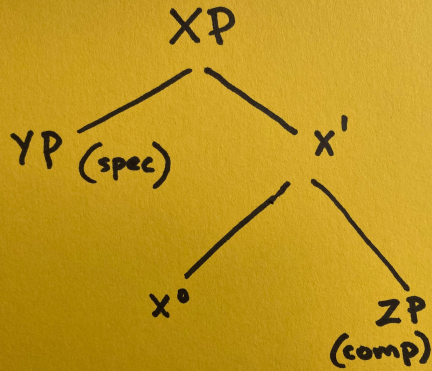


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# A Museum of Language

## – A Survey of the Public's and Language Experts' Views on a Swedish Museum of Language

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# The Thesis

- Linguistics + Communication
- Contributes to a future Museum of Language in Sweden
- Applying a theory from organizational management
- Compares the public's attitude toward language with that language experts





## Why a Museum of Language in Sweden?

1. Highlight the major changes Swedish society is undergoing from a language perspective
2. Use existing collections of language
3. Raise the status of linguistics because of high demands on language skills



# Why compare the attitudes of language experts and the public?

- An attitude gap between linguists and the public was discovered twenty years ago (Josephsson 1999)



# Research questions



1. What does the public want to see in a museum of language?
2. What do different groups of the public find most interesting?
3. What would make the public not want to visit a museum of language?
4. What do language experts think a museum of language should contain?
5. On what points do the public and language experts share the same views, and on what points do they have different views?



# Models for popular science communication (Hetland 2017; 2019)

- Deficit-diffusion model:
  - knowledge needs to be disseminated to the public
- Dialogue model:
  - dialogue with the public
- Participation model:
  - the public's involvement, citizen science



# Two different approaches to communication

- Communication as transmission: essential
    - Relates to the deficit-diffusion model
  - Communication as a process of sharing and sensemaking: socialconstructivist
    - Relates to the participation model and the dialogue model
- (Heide, Johansson & Simonsson 2012)



# Why sensemaking?



- Shifting focus from knowledge to meaning: Sensemaking (Weick 1995)
- Takes social structures into account





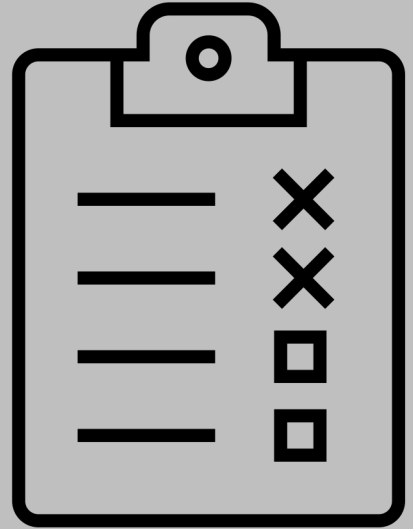
# The sensemaking process

## Process characteristics:

- grounded in identity construction
- enactive of sensible environments
- social
- retrospective
- constantly ongoing
- focuses on extracted cues
- driven by plausibility rather than accuracy

# The survey

- For language experts: one open question
- For the public: questionnaire with multiple-choice questions and optional free-text comments



# Sample groups from the public

## Variables

- Gender
- Age
- Education (culture)

## Groups

- Professionals in the plumbing industry
- Employees at the church of Sweden
- High school students



# Expert sample group



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AKADEMIEN

- Six experts, specialized in different fields of linguistics
  - three men and three women
  - further details not disclosed for the sake of their anonymity



## Results – answers from the survey

1. What does the public want to see in a museum of language?
2. What do different groups of the public find most interesting?
3. What would make the public not want to visit a museum of language?
4. What do language experts think a museum of language should contain?
5. On what points do the public and language experts agree and on what points do they think differently?

# 1 & 2. What does the public want to see in a museum of language?

- **The plumbing professionals:** written language
- **Church of Sweden:** the social side of language
- **Students:** the language of the future, the origin of language
- **Women:** the language of the future, the social side of language (fun and global)
- **Men:** the origin of language, written language (in-depth study and clarity)



### 3. What would make the public *not* want to visit a museum of language?



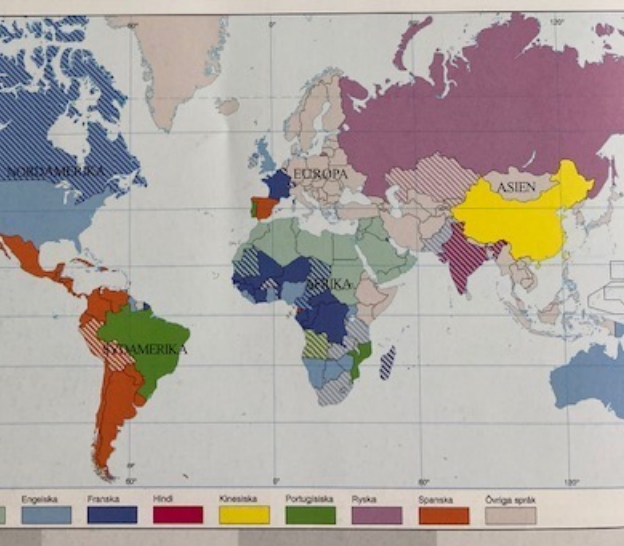
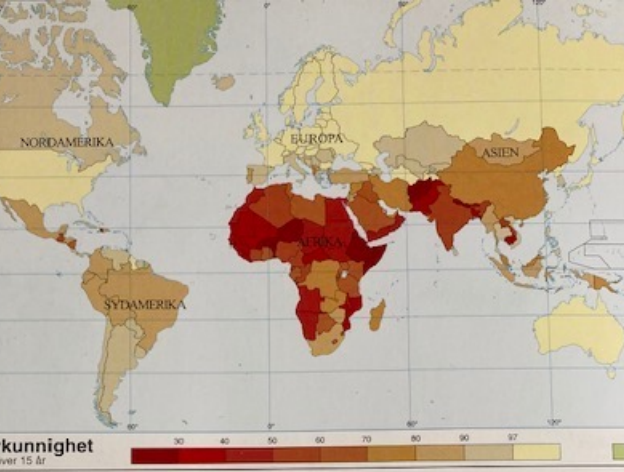
- **Men:** only/a lot of pictures/photos, difficult to get there, cost, small children, obtrusive staff
  - **Women:** only/a lot of text and not interactive, only Swedish and English, history
- culture and identity crucial



## 4. What do language experts think a language museum should contain?

- Everything!
- DIY-stations and quizzes
- Written language
- Dialects





## 5. On what points do the public and language experts share the same views, and on what points do they have different views?

### Similarities:

- Number 1: all the languages of the world
- Written language: DIY-stations
- Language history and the origin of language
- Listen to dialects

## 5. On what points do the public and language experts share the same views, and on what points do they have different views?



### Differences:

- The public: speakers, translation, technology, the language of the future
- The experts: phonology
- Attitudes to the Swedish language
- Perspective: application or descriptive
  - the public: use of language,
  - linguists: the language itself

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