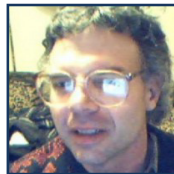


Robert Lindsay

MA, California State University, Fresno



## Some Scientific Intelligibility Studies

I put separate language <90% intelligibility. <90% we have proven that it gets hard to talk about complex and more educated matters. Of course you can discuss the weather. <80% throws a substantial crimp into communication and significantly impairs it.

### Iberian - Oral

Asturian - Spanish	80%
Spanish - Portuguese	54%
Galician - Portuguese	85%

### Italian - Oral

Venetian – Venetian <sup>1</sup>	92%
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### German - Oral

German - Texas German	95%
German - Swabian	40%
German - Badish	40%
German - Kolsch (Ripaurian)	40%
German - Bavarian	40%
German - Moselle Franconian	40%
German - Upper Saxon	40%
German - Luxembourgish	40%
German - Hessian	40%
German - Low German	40%
German - Alsatian	40%
Pennsylvania German - Hutterite	70%
Mennonite - Hutterite	50%
Bavarian – Bavarian. <sup>2</sup>	50%

<sup>1</sup> Maximum distance between any two Venetian dialects.

Kirchröadsj – Hommersch <sup>3</sup>	20%
<b>Dutch - Oral</b>	
Dutch - Groningen	90.5%
<b>English - Oral</b>	
US English - Glasgow Scots	53%
US English - Edinburgh Scots	32%
US English - Scots (average)	42.5%
<b>Scandinavian - Oral</b>	
Norwegian - Danish	71%
Norwegian - Swedish	68%
Swedish - Danish	33%
<b>Scandinavian - Written</b>	
Norwegian - Danish	91.5%
Norwegian - Swedish	87.5%
Swedish - Danish	69%

**Commentary** Clearly, Asturian and Spanish are separate languages, and so are Galician and Portuguese. These two are rather controversial, with Spanish speakers claiming Asturian as a Spanish dialect and Portuguese speakers claiming Galician as a Portuguese dialect. The much-vaunted mutual intelligibility between Spanish and Portuguese leaves much to be desired.

Spanish speakers say that Italian is much lower than Portuguese. I figure 30% for Italian - Spanish.

Venetian is clearly a single language.

All of the German lects listed above” are separate languages except for Texas German, which is a dialect of German.

Groningen is just barely a dialect of Dutch, but Groningen speakers want to see themselves as speakers of a separate language, so the world is going along. Here, sociolinguistics trumps intelligibility testing.

Scots is clearly a separate language from English. There is no debate about that anymore from a scientific point of view. It's simply not intelligible with US English.

The much-discussed mutual intelligibility between the Scandinavian languages leaves much to be desired, though between Norwegian and the rest, it is higher than, say, Portuguese and Spanish. Between Danish and the rest and Swedish and the rest, it is lower than between Spanish and Portuguese. Intelligibility between Swedish and Danish is ridiculously low. It's incredible that people discuss the mutual intelligibility of these two languages as if it were a fact.

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<sup>2</sup> Central Austrian Bavarian vs. Viennese Bavarian.

<sup>3</sup> Ripaurian lects at opposite ends of the Ripaurian dialect chain.

Swedish and Norwegian speakers get subtitles on Danish TV. If they are so intelligible, why use subtitles? Scandinavian speakers often resort to English to speak to each other. If they are so intelligible, why resort to English?

Based on the data, it is completely untrue to say that Danish, Swedish and Norwegian are mutually intelligible, though Norwegians can generally easily understand the other Scandinavian languages if they are written.

## Notes

### Fig. A. Scandinavian understanding of the spoken language

**Norwegians** understand 88% of the spoken **Swedish** language and understand 73% of the spoken **Danish** language.

**Swedes** understand 48% of the spoken **Norwegian** language and understand 23% of the spoken **Danish** language.

**Danes** understand 69% of the spoken **Norwegian** language and understand 43% of the spoken **Swedish** language.

**Norwegian and Swedish** have 68% oral intelligibility.

**Norwegian and Danish** have 71% oral intelligibility.

**Norwegian** has combined 69% oral intelligibility of **Swedish** and **Danish**.

**Swedish and Norwegian** have 68% oral intelligibility.

**Swedish and Danish** have 33% oral intelligibility.

**Swedish** has 48% combined oral intelligibility of **Danish** and **Norwegian**, less than for **Spanish** and **Portuguese**.

**Danish** has 33% oral intelligibility of **Swedish**.

**Danish** has 68% oral intelligibility of **Norwegian**.

**Danish** has 50% combined oral intelligibility of **Swedish and Norwegian**, less than for **Spanish** and **Portuguese**.

**Fig. B. Scandinavian understanding of the written language**

**Norwegians** understand 89% of the written **Swedish** language and 93% of the written **Danish** language.

**Swedes** understand 86% of the written **Norwegian** language and 69% of the written **Danish** language.

**Danes** understand 89% of the written **Norwegian** language and 69% of the written **Swedish** language.

**Norwegian and Swedish** have 87.5% written intelligibility.

**Norwegian and Danish** have 91.5% written intelligibility.

**Swedish and Danish** have 69% written intelligibility.

**Norwegian and Swedish** have 89% written intelligibility.

**Norwegian and Danish** have 93% written intelligibility.

**Norwegian** has combined 91.5% written intelligibility of **Swedish** and **Danish**.

**Swedish and Norwegian** have 86% written intelligibility.

**Swedish and Danish** have 69% written intelligibility.

**Swedish** has 77.5% combined intelligibility of written **Danish** and **Norwegian**.

**Danish** has 69% written intelligibility of **Swedish**.

**Danish** has 89% written intelligibility of **Norwegian**.

**Danish** has 79% combined written intelligibility of **Swedish** and **Norwegian**.

**References**

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