

Pre-stored phrases make it easier to be part of a conversation

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Researchers at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, have developed a system where pre-stored phrases are used in addition to writing, with a view to making communication faster and more easy-going for people with serious speech disorders.

In her doctoral thesis on general linguistics at the University of Gothenburg, speech and language therapist Bitte Rydeman has studied how these communication aids can be made more user-friendly.

She worked with recorded conversations from various activities and investigated the activity structures and communicative acts that were used in the conversations. [Phrases](#) from the recordings were entered into the communication aids. The phrases were then tested by users in activities such as shopping. The phrases for small talk were the most appreciated.

"The people testing the phrases felt that it was easier and more natural to use the aid in a [conversation](#) when it contained set phrases for greeting, thanking and commenting, for example," says Rydeman.

Using a database of recorded conversations and selecting phrases from it for various activities is a new approach for the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication, to which Rydeman's thesis contributes. So is her use of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory to evaluate activities where communication aids are used.

"The methods worked very well and could have a major impact on the future development of voice output communication aids."

In addition to her research, Rydeman works as a [speech](#) and language therapist for Halland County Council.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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