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DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Bachelor Thesis

**The Striving for Credibility in Different
Language Versions of Wikipedia**

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Abstract

The present paper examines differences in credibility creation between the English, German, Icelandic and Swedish Wikipedia language versions. An analysis of policies on verifiability of content was conducted to gain an insight into the language communities' theoretical approach to credibility. The application of these norms was evaluated by comparing differences of usage of sources and maintenance templates in a 30-article sample per language. Content and discourse analysis of the policy and article talk pages explored the editor's concern with verifiability in the different language editions. The study revealed an overall similar approach to credibility leading to a predominant use of academic sources with slight variances between the editions. While the German Wikipedia displays a more practical approach in its policies, the Swedish approach is characterised by an emphasis on a source hierarchy. A source hierarchy is also implied in the English policies but in consideration of the subject context. The biggest influence on the realisation of the theoretical approach to generate credibility is the size of a community. The English Wikipedia is both the biggest and the most active community in contrast to the Icelandic Wikipedia, which is the smallest and least active. Yet, size is not the only factor. The German and Swedish Wikipedias apply its verifiability norms just slightly behind the extent of the English language edition to present knowledge in academic Wikipedia articles as credible as possible.

Keywords: Wikipedia, credibility, verifiability, language community, user-generated content, knowledge representation

Kurzfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit befasst sich mit den Unterschieden der Erzeugung von Glaubwürdigkeit in der englischen, deutschen, isländischen und schwedischen Wikipedia. Um einen Einblick in die theoretische Herangehensweise an die Glaubwürdigkeit der Sprachgemeinschaften zu bekommen, wurde eine Analyse ausgewählter Richtlinien bezüglich der Nachprüfbarkeit von Informationen auf Wikipedia durchgeführt. Die tatsächliche Anwendung dieser Richtlinien wurde durch einen Vergleich der Unterschiede in der Verwendung von Literatur und Instandhaltungstemplates in einer 30 Wikipediaartikel je Sprache umfassenden Stichprobe evaluiert. Durch Inhalts- und Diskursanalysen der Diskussionsseiten der Richtlinien und Artikel wurde untersucht, mit welcher Intensität die Wikipediaeditoren der unterschiedlichen Sprachversionen eine Nachprüfbarkeit der Information erreichen wollen. Die Studie kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass sich die Sprachversionen, trotz stellenweiser Unterschiede, in ihrer Herangehensweise ähneln. Die deutsche Wikipedia ist bereits in ihren Richtlinien von einer praxisnahen Herangehensweise geprägt, während die schwedische eine Quellenhierarchie hervorhebt. Eine solche Hierarchie ist auch in der englischen Wikipedia enthalten, die jedoch von dem Kontext des Themengebietes abhängt. Der stärkste Einfluss auf die Herangehensweise, Glaubwürdigkeit zu erzeugen, ergibt sich aus der Größe der Community. So umfasst die englische Wikipedia sowohl die größte als auch die aktivste Community im Gegensatz zu der isländischen Wikipedia, die die kleinste und am wenigsten aktive Community ist. Dennoch ist die Größe der Community nicht der einzige Faktor in Bezug auf Glaubwürdigkeit. Die deutsche und die schwedische Wikipedia wenden ihre Richtlinien in ähnlichem Ausmaß an wie die englische Wikipedia, um Wissen in Wikipediaartikeln mit akademischen Themen möglichst glaubwürdig zu präsentieren.

Schlagwörter: Wikipedia, Glaubwürdigkeit, Verifizierung, Sprachgemeinschaft, nutzergenerierter Inhalt, Wissenspräsentation

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1 Introduction

The online encyclopaedia Wikipedia has changed the world in the way knowledge is primarily accessed. In the same time that knowledge has become easily available anywhere anytime, the information has to be evaluated differently (Metzger, 2007, p. 2079) To provide readers with trustworthy information, Wikipedia strives to display knowledge in credible ways by enabling users to check the origin and thus truth of its information.

Examination of an exemplary article in several languages suggests that differences exist in the respective approach to credibility. While the Swedish Wikipedia article on the Icelandic politician and comedian Jón Gnarr lists the article as a stub because of missing important information and uses the French, German and English Wikipedia as source for the article, the Icelandic version is not listed as a stub while only using two newspaper references in the whole article ('Jón Gnarr', 2015; 'Jón Gnarr', 2016a). The English version in contrast uses 33 inline references and still marks one specific part of the article with a template, indicating the lack of references ('Jón Gnarr', 2016b).

As the literature review will show, there exists a lot of literature regarding the culture of Wikipedia, both in terms of content coverage and editing behaviour, as well as literature on the credibility of Wikipedia. Some research has focused on how editors strive to establish credibility within Wikipedia, but this research has always only analysed one language version, as for example Sundin in his *Janitors of Knowledge* (2011). Thus, the current paper presents a new angle in Wikipedia research in that it compares different language versions' attempt to create and stabilise credibility.

This paper will be concerned with the question if differences in the approach to secure credibility across Wikipedia language versions can be confirmed by analysing the Icelandic, Swedish, German and English Wikipedias. Since the size of the Wikipedia communities range from huge to middle to small both in terms of content and activity, and since there are cultural differences, as already the sheer numbers of Hofstede's cultural dimensions suggest (see Table 1), differences in credibility establishment are expected to be found.

Wikipedia as a universal encyclopaedia, both in content and availability, is often used as a quick guide or search entry to new topics across different cultural settings. Thus it is interesting to research differences regarding credibility creation in different language versions. Especially for multilingual users, including education from University level on and research, it could be interesting to be able to judge a Wikipedia version's reliability in certain contexts on grounds of their approaches to credibility. This paper will thus draw attention to language edition specific weaknesses of credibility creation.

As credibility is a complex concept resulting from many different aspects, it is not possible to consider credibility as a whole within the scope of the current paper. Since expertise is the

credibility aspect, which can be observed by rather simple means in comparison to more subjective dimensions of credibility, the current paper will focus on source credibility and cognitive authority. Drawing on Sundin's *Janitors of Knowledge* (2011), the current research will focus on the use of references to create source credibility, but in four different language versions. Even though revision history and talk page give insight into the credibility creation of any article, references to external sources are the strongest approach to justify content on Wikipedia. Especially as references are directly visible within the article, eliminating the need to access additional pages.

To embed the current paper into the context of Wikipedia and Wikipedia research, some important aspects of Wikipedia will be introduced before an overview of Wikipedia research in regard to culture and credibility as well as credibility definitions will be presented. To examine differences in the approach to create credibility, important Wikipedia policies and guidelines in regard to referencing will be analysed and compared between language versions. The realisation of those policies and guidelines will be tested by an analysis of a sample of articles and their talk pages. The approach to that analysis will be introduced in detail in the methodology section.

To allow a better reading flow, titles of non-English Wikipedia content will for the most part be given in a translated form.

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long-term orientation	Indulgence vs. Restraint
Sweden	31	71	5	29	53	78
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	40
Iceland	30	60	10	50	28	67
Great Britain	35	89	66	35	51	69
USA	40	91	62	46	26	68

Table 1: Values for the six cultural dimensions according to Hofstede (2016a-e)

2 Wikipedia and Language Communities

Today, Wikipedia is the standard online encyclopaedia, which hardly needs to be introduced. Yet, some facts about Wikipedia, which are fundamental to understand the present study, will be outlined in short.

Wikipedia is a multilingual online encyclopaedia available in 283 active language versions (Wikimedia Meta Wiki, 2016a). The availability of independent language versions is made possible by the MediaWiki software (Massa & Scrinzi, 2012). These language versions differ not only in number of articles but also in number of users and activity, which can be interpreted by the numbers of edits and the number of active users (see Table 2). Having a Wikipedia version's size in mind is important because size can influence the similarity of its content with other language Wikipedias as well as the management of quality (Stvilia, Al-Faraj, & Yi, 2009, p. 237f; Warncke-Wang, Uduwage, Dong, & Riedl, 2012).

The size of the four Wikipedia language versions analysed in the current paper can be described by number of articles, resulting in two groups: Large language versions on the one end, English being the largest with about 5,2 million articles followed by Swedish with 3,3 million articles and German with 1,9 million articles, and the small Icelandic language version on the other end with about 41,000 articles (see Table 2). Based on the number of active Wikipedians, four different sizes emerge. First, the English Wikipedia with more than 112,000 active Wikipedians as the largest version, second, the German Wikipedia with about 18,000 active Wikipedians distinctively smaller, third, Swedish with more than 2,000 active Wikipedians as a medium sized Wikipedia, and fourth, Icelandic with only 89 active Wikipedians as a small version (see Table 2).

Language Version	Articles	Edits	Users	Active Users ¹
English	5,221,944	844,869,440	28,899,590	112,321
Swedish	3,363,789	36,483,515	505,361	2,083
German	1,970,512	162,232,057	2,468,734	18,039
Icelandic	40,988	1,593,219	49,313	89

Table 2: Size of Wikipedia language versions ('List of Wikipedias', 2016)

The same distribution of activity between language versions can be observed when looking at the most active contributors ('WP Statistics', 2016b). These differences in the size of the Wikipedia communities might affect the way of creating credibility, sometimes even making changes to the approach to credibility necessary, as a smaller number of Wikipedians is just

¹ Active users are defined as those having performed at least one edit within the previous 30 days.

not able to control content to the same extent as a larger group of editors. This becomes clear when the number of active users is counted against the number of articles in each language version. While of the 112,321 users of the English Wikipedia each has to take care of a manageable 47 articles to maintain a good quality, these number goes up to 110 articles per German editor, 461 articles per user for the Icelandic Wikipedia community and even 1614 for the Swedish community.

The number of administrators per user enables assumptions about the importance of hierarchy in language versions. A higher percentage of administrators hints at a less hierarchical system (Nemoto & Gloor, 2011, p. 184). In the current paper the percentage is calculated with active users to obtain numbers based on the current composition of Wikipedia. The results are that the English and German Wikipedias are the most hierarchical with 1,15 per cent and 1,28 per cent administrators of active users respectively. The Swedish language version is less hierarchical with 3,31 per cent. The numbers are similar to the ones obtained by Nemoto & Gloor (2011, p. 184). The Icelandic Wikipedia, which contains 28,09 per cent administrators of active users, was not included in Nemoto & Gloor. This high amount is probably due to the low number of active users, but even so it is hinting at a very low importance of hierarchy in the system. These numbers correlate with the culture index, as Table 1 shows that the English speaking countries and Germany have a higher score on the power distance dimension, which describes the acceptance of hierarchy within a society (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 46). The Swedish and Icelandic numbers in contrast suggest less importance of hierarchy.

Language Version	Editors per million speakers	Admins	Bot edits	Human edits by un-registered users
English	20	1,291	9%	32%
Swedish	63	69	56%	21%
German	30	231	11%	21%
Icelandic	76	25	55%	20%

Table 3: Participation and activity in Wikipedia versions ('WP Statistics', 2016a)

Bot activity is another indicator of a Wikipedia community's activity. Niederer and Dijck have found that in small language versions bot activity, that is automatic editing such as connecting articles to other language versions and to related articles, tends to be much more important (2010, p. 1382). The numbers in Table 3 thus support the above statements about size and activity. Even though the participation in Wikipedia is higher among the less active language editions in view of the overall number of speakers of the respective language, these small language communities cannot muster the amount of active editors as the bigger language communities, especially the English Wikipedia. Additionally, the Swedish Wikipedia edition uses

bots to automatically create articles, such as a bot explicitly creating articles about flora and fauna as well as geography ('Användare:Lsjbot', 2016). This explains how the Swedish Wikipedia is able to possess the second most articles while counting less than 2100 active users. The aforementioned bot is also actively creating articles for the language version of Cebuano, explaining its third place in article count ('Användare:Lsjbot', 2016; 'List of Wikipedias', 2016). Edits by unregistered users, being only occasionally active but rather focused on content edits, have been described to be important to article quality (Niederer & Dijck, 2010, p. 89). Except for the English language version, the numbers do not differ much (see Table 3), so that the contributions by unregistered users could only set the English Wikipedia apart from the other three in regard to article quality.

V · T · E Wikipedia key policies and guidelines	
Overview	Five pillars · Policies and guidelines · List of policies and guidelines (List of policies · List of guidelines)
Project-wide principles	Consensus · Dispute resolution · Editing policy · Ignore all rules · What Wikipedia is not · Wikipedia is not a dictionary
Core content policies	Neutral point of view · No original research · Verifiability
Other content policies	Article titles · Autobiography · Biographies of living persons · Image use
Content guidelines	Citing sources · Don't create hoaxes · Do not include copies of primary sources · External links · Fringe theories · Identifying reliable sources · Notability · Patent nonsense
Behavioural policies	Child protection · Civility · Courtesy vanishing · Edit warring · Harassment · No legal threats · No personal attacks · Ownership of content · Sock puppetry
Behavioural guidelines	Assume good faith · Conflict of interest · Disruptive editing · Do not disrupt Wikipedia to illustrate a point · Etiquette · Gaming the system · Please do not bite the newcomers
Editing guidelines	Article size · Be bold · Disambiguation · Hatnotes · Set index articles · Signatures · Subpages · Talk page guidelines · User pages · Vandalism · WikiProjects
Style conventions	Manual of Style (Contents) · Accessibility (Understandability) · Dates and numbers · Images · Layout · Lead section · Linking · Lists
Classification guidelines	Categories, lists, and navigation templates · Categorization · Template namespace
Deletion policies	Attack page · Criteria for speedy deletion · Deletion policy · Oversight · Proposed deletion · Proposed deletion of BLP · Proposed deletion (books) · Revision deletion
Wikimedia Foundation	List of policies · Licensing and copyright · Privacy policy · Values
 Book ·  Category: Policies / Guidelines	

Figure 1: Overview of key principles ('WP:Policies and guidelines', 2016)

The Wikipedia community can be described as a community of practice, as editors share the interest of developing the online encyclopaedia, some of them even being members, and for the purpose of learning how to make Wikipedia better they communicate via talk and user pages (Hara, Shachaf, & Hew, 2010, p. 2097; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). A complex system of policies and guidelines supports this community of practice with a set of norms. These rules are developed and improved by the Wikipedians themselves. Both breadth and depth varies between language versions. As these norms are connected to several projects and maintenance lists and categories, it is at times hard to keep track of all guidelines. To get an idea of the complexity of the system see Figure 1, which only lists key policies and guidelines of the English Wikipedia. Yet, there is a set of norms that are fundamental to Wikipedia and exist in all language versions, the so-called Five Pillars. These describe Wikipedia as an encyclopaedia, whose content anyone can use and edit, whose editors cooperate respectfully

and whose rules are not set in stone ('WP:Five Pillars', 2016). Additionally and most importantly for the current paper, one of the pillars describes Wikipedia's content as displaying a neutral point of view, which is achieved by striving "for verifiable accuracy, citing reliable, authoritative sources, especially when the topic is controversial or is on living persons. Editors' personal experiences, interpretations, or opinions do not belong" ('WP:Five Pillars', 2016). These interdependent norms are recorded in separate policy documents – *Verifiability* and *No original research* –, which together with the policy *No original research* make up the core content policies (see Figure 1). The latter policy states that original research can be avoided by abiding by the *Verifiability* policy ('WP:No original research', 2016).

Wikipedia offers several ways to deal with content that does not comply with the community's norms. First of all, every Wikipedia article has a talk page, where amongst other things content and verifiability issues are discussed by Wikipedians. Secondly, articles can be marked with various templates, some of them indicating problems with references. Additionally, since every edit leads to a new article version, each previous version can be restored and manipulations thus easily be reverted. Articles can also be rated regarding their overall quality and thus be categorised as excellent or good articles on the upper end of the scale, and stub class articles on the lower end (see for example 'Wikipedia:Statistics', 2016, for a statistic of quality assessment in the English Wikipedia).

3 Literature Review

In the following, existing Wikipedia research in regard to content preferences of different cultures as well as culture-dependent editing behaviours will be presented. To complete the review of the existing literature relevant to the current study, the concept of credibility will be defined before giving an overview of credibility research concerning Wikipedia.

3.1 Cultural Influence on Content and Editing Behaviour

Research on culture in Wikipedia can roughly be divided into two groups. So far, mainly the differences in content between language versions have been examined as well as differences in editing principles.

Every language version is unique in aspects of content, which is made possible by the aforementioned fact that each language has its own domain within the Wikipedia-network. Because of cultural differences between the language communities, both the number of articles as well as the length of articles can vary, as the amount of information deemed important to be represented in Wikipedia varies between language communities (Samoilenko, Karimi, Edler, Kunegis, & Strohmaier, 2016). These differences have been described as cultural bias (for example in Callahan & Herring, 2011), self-focus (Yasseri, Spoerri, Graham, & Kertész, 2013), or linguistic point of view (Massa & Scrinzi, 2012), since language communities tend to preferably focus on material related to their own culture. The reason for these cultural preferences have been attributed to geographical, historical and language relations (Aragon, Laniado, Kaltenbrunner, & Volkovich, 2012) as well as additional factors such as shared religion and population attraction (Samoilenko et al., 2016). All in all, Wikipedia has to be seen as an agglomeration of cultural memories due to different language versions, which do not have an overlap significant enough to allow a definition of a global encyclopaedic basis, a must-have of concepts common to all Wikipedia language versions (Hecht & Gergle, 2010, p. 291).

Editing behaviour in Wikipedia has been researched in general, as the language communities' way of arriving at decisions through discussion and finally consensus are important for content production in Wikipedia and important in regard to its quality assurance (Osman, 2013). Furthermore, Reagle has focused on Wikipedia's good-faith culture, openness and social structure, concluding that despite the necessity of these aspects to the success of Wikipedia, also "more autocratic forms of authority" will be necessary to keep Wikipedia from negative influences (Reagle, 2010, p. 172). It is important to note that Reagle's research concentrates on the English language Wikipedia only. Wikipedia's online culture has been defined as different from real world culture on grounds of differing editing behaviour of featured articles as the score on the cultural dimensions would have suggested (Park et al., 2015, p. 680). Even though different than offline culture, editing behaviour is dependent on national culture, resulting in distinct so-

called national online cultures (Park et al., 2015, p. 681). These differences in online cultures have been researched in regard to the assessment of information quality (Stvilia et al., 2009), creation of featured articles, editing and communication behaviour (Nemoto & Gloor, 2011) and the editing behaviour of multilingual users of Wikipedia, whose influence is said to diminish the self-focus of content (Hale, 2014, p. 106). Multilingual Wikipedians are furthermore described to be indispensable in adding information to other language Wikipedias through building bridges between languages (Kim et al., 2016, p. 18).

An analysis of norms of behaviour in talk page discussions in different sized language Wikipedias led to the conclusion that communication varied in accordance with Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hara et al., 2010, p. 2102). For example, a higher level of politeness was found in the Japanese Wikipedia than in the English Wikipedia, in accordance with the higher score on the power distance index, which implies the importance of hierarchical structures which in turn demand respect (Hara et al., 2010, p. 2103). Another study researching the influence of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on type of article edits concludes that it is possible to transfer these cultural dimensions not only to Wikipedia but to the virtual world in general (Pfeil, Zaphiris, & Ang, 2006, p. 108). Findings include that language versions originating from countries with a high score on the power distance index perform the lowest amount of deletions of content but a higher amount of spelling corrections (Pfeil et al., 2006, p. 103).

It has to be kept in mind that Wikipedia is open to the influence of several national cultures within one language version, since it is an online culture with no access barriers other than language, especially no geographic restrictions, hence even enabling edits by bilingual users (Stvilia et al., 2009, p. 238). This observation is predominantly valid in regard to the English language Wikipedia since English can be seen as a lingua franca of Wikipedia (Warncke-Wang et al., 2012). As stated by Kim et al., English is also the only version where non-primary English speakers' edits become complex enough to contribute to the content on an elevated level (2016, p. 18). Exceptions are groups of languages with strong linguistic relationships, which also result in the Wikipedia content being more similar to each other than to other editions (Samoilenko et al., 2016).

Some research has based its analysis on the simplification that language is assumed to be equivalent to a single culture on the grounds that language is the main component by which cultures can be distinguished (Eom & Shepelyansky, 2013; Massa & Scrinzi, 2012). This means for example, that both German and Austrian contributions to the German language Wikipedia would be assumed to be from the same culture. In accordance with this previous research, the present paper will apply the language-culture simplification.

The cultural influences on Wikipedia content, editing and decision making and the resulting differences between the Wikipedia language versions highlighted by the research literature suggests that differences between language versions will also be found regarding the striving for credibility.

3.2 Credibility

Wikipedia's credibility has been an on-going debate in Wikipedia research. To fully understand this debate it is necessary to understand the concept of credibility and how credibility can be constructed.

Credibility is a concept that entails different dimensions, such as believability, reliability, trustworthiness – which in turn is based on a source's truthfulness and objectivity –, expertise, accuracy and validity (Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008, p. 1474; Rieh, 2010, pp. 1337–1338). Credibility judgments are a process of assessing several of these dimensions and are thus subjective since being based on a person's background, knowledge and experience (Rieh, 2010, pp. 1337–1338). Additionally influencing the outcome of credibility assessment is how much the information is needed and what the information will be used for, as information for an educational context will demand a higher standard of credibility than information intended for leisure time usage (Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008, p. 1480; Metzger, 2007, p. 2081). Credibility evaluation can already differ within the academic context, as credibility is assessed differently in natural sciences than in history (Sundin, 2011, p. 854).

Several forms of credibility have been established by communication research, two of which are of interest to the present study. First, there is source credibility, which relates to the believability, trustworthiness and expertise of the producer of content (Rieh, 2010, p. 1339). Second, there is message credibility, which is referring to the influence of content, structure, language and presentation on credibility (Rieh, 2010, p. 1339). Even though the latter types of credibility are strongly interwoven as they might influence each other – a text with good message credibility because of well written and well structured content and good coverage of the topic might get attributed to a credible source and the other way round –, source credibility is less subjective, since expertise is easy to check (Rieh, 2010, p. 1339). Expertise is one part of the concept of cognitive authority, which defines a person or source influential on others, the other part being known for that expertise through reputation (Rieh, 2010, p. 1337; Wilson, 1983, pp. 15, 22). The concept of cognitive authority can be related to source credibility in that cognitive authorities are for example respected researchers with certain accomplishments in a subject, publishing houses and journals well known for qualitative publications, transferring their expertise to the source in question (Rieh, 2010, p. 1340).

Since quality of content is an integral part of (message) credibility, studies focusing on the overall quality of Wikipedia can be related to credibility research. The first article to research Wikipedia quality is a 2005 article comparing Wikipedia to the online edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, reporting similar quality regarding natural science articles (Giles, 2005). But not all subsequent literature has credited Wikipedia with good quality. For example, Rector examines Wikipedia in regard to historical articles and reports a low accuracy rate for Wikipedia, especially on the grounds of non-referenced information or usage of sources with low credibility, for example out-dated sources (2008, p. 20). Another study examining credibility problems within Wikipedia draws attention to the lack of a definition of reliable references and the

heavy usage of internet sources (Luyt & Tan, 2010, pp. 716, 719). A more recent study, comparing Wikipedia to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, highlights the shift of credibility assessment models. While in the past quality was guaranteed by so-called gatekeepers, for example publishing houses, in an online world it is rather the task of the user to rate a source's credibility and choose the best sources accordingly (Messner & DiStaso, 2013, p. 482). An important conclusion of Messner & DiStaso is that differences in credibility between conventional encyclopaedias and Wikipedia are shrinking since policies and guidelines are strengthened and refined in the open online model to close the gap to the gatekeeping model (2013, p. 483). This last observation is more important to the current study than the detailed back and forth argumentations of the Wikipedia quality research, as a general progression of Wikipedia towards a better credibility, a professionalisation of Wikipedia has been witnessed (Sundin, 2011, p. 854). Due to its use of sources external to Wikipedia, mainly even relying on printed sources, Wikipedia can be seen as a bridge between the open digital culture and print media (Haider & Sundin, 2010).

Another area of Wikipedia research has focused on readers' credibility judgements, often from the point of view of education. Sundin and Francke in this context observe the aforementioned shift of quality control by gatekeepers to a system where recipients themselves have to evaluate information credibility (Sundin & Francke, 2009). In the case of Wikipedia this means that in contrast to traditional encyclopaedias, which are established as being credible, the online content is seen as less credible due to its changeability and thus lower reliability (Sundin & Francke, 2009). Yet, students are seldom aware of talk pages, revision history or Wikipedia policies and guidelines, not least their focus on verifiability, as an aspect influencing credibility assessments (Menchen-Trevino & Hargittai, 2011, p. 38; Sundin & Francke, 2009). Menchen-Trevino and Hargittai add that students know they should double-check content found on Wikipedia because of its lower reliability level, but seldom do so in reality (2011, p. 37). Even Wikipedia itself is pointing out that its content is not to be used as a credible source ('WP: Wikipedia is not a reliable source', 2016). After drawing attention to the fact that authorship is not necessarily clear in Wikipedia, Rowley and Johnson point out that readers verify Wikipedia articles by comparing information to external sources as well as by comparison to their personal knowledge (2013, p. 506).

A research paper about credibility judgements of Wikipedia editors reveals that their way of evaluating credibility is closely related to traditional credibility evaluations of print media (Francke & Sundin, 2010). Additionally to comparisons of information to external sources, Wikipedia editors use talk page and revision history as well as authorship aspects to assess credibility, rating unregistered and newly registered users less credible than experienced users (Francke & Sundin, 2010). Furthermore, among Swedish Wikipedia editors examined by Francke & Sundin, the English Wikipedia edition is seen as more credible on average, because of the bigger network of contributors and its presumably better developed content (Francke & Sundin, 2010). The returning focus on verifying content via external references by Wikipedia's

users leads to the observation that its editors should verify Wikipedia content preferably with sources from academic publications (Haider & Sundin, 2010).

In his article *Janitors of Knowledge*, Sundin highlights the importance of external sources to Wikipedia's credibility, with trustworthiness of sources mainly being assessed by academic criteria (Sundin, 2011, pp. 851–852). The inclusion of references is an activity so important that the search for sources at times become inseparable from the editing process (Sundin, 2011, p. 849). Sources are part of a hierarchy of trustworthiness, which persuades editors to update references constantly – to add sources or replace less reliable sources –, with the aim to include those sources in the articles which belong to the upmost class in the hierarchy (Sundin, 2011, pp. 852–853). According to participants of the study, the pressure to include references has risen during the years previous to Sundin's research (Sundin, 2011, p. 854), showing the increasing emphasis on striving for credibility through verifiability. Besides giving users the chance to check Wikipedia's content, references help to root the openness of Wikipedia to anonymous and lay contributions in a wider, often academic context and give opportunity to justify the inclusion of specific content (Sundin, 2011, pp. 855–856).

All in all, there has been research on differences of the culture implicit in Wikipedias' content as well as cultural differences in editing behaviour on the one hand, and research on Wikipedia's credibility, thus far always with focus on one specific language version on the other hand. Differences in Wikipedia culture suggest that there might also be differences in credibility creation between the different language Wikipedias. Though, as shown above, credibility creation in Wikipedia has been researched, there is no such research in regard to differences in credibility creation between Wikipedia language versions. The task of the current paper is a first step towards filling this gap in Wikipedia research and thereby drawing attention to language edition specific credibility problems.

4 Methodology

To understand the importance of referencing within Wikipedia, the first step will be an analysis of Wikipedia policies and guidelines regarding referencing in the four language editions. The focus will be on the policy *Verifiability* and the guideline *Identifying reliable sources* and their counterparts in the German, Swedish and Icelandic Wikipedia, since they are concerned with referencing, and thus with the incorporation of external expertise. The texts will be analysed with a close reading to be able to compare the content of the language versions' policies and guidelines.

To get a more complete picture about the cultures' stance on referencing, the talk pages used to discuss the policy and guideline will be analysed, on the one hand regarding their content – what topics are discussed – and on the other hand how participants discuss. The latter will be done with a discourse analysis, which is used to analyse language-in-use (Gee, 2011, p. 8). As editors are discussing different points of view they will be trying to highlight several aspects to stress their opinion. With the help of the discourse analysis, talk page discussions will be examined in regard to how language is used to built significance (Gee, 2011, p. 17). Two main aspects will help to determine emphasis through language. First, the use of adjectives, and to a lesser degree adverbs, will be observed, as adjectives often are subjectively evaluating information from the author's point of view (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 3). Second, intertextuality, which either means referencing directly or merely alluding to other texts, will be considered (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 64), as it is to be expected that editors will refer to other guidelines or examples from Wikipedia content. Additionally, attention will be paid to evaluative nouns, such as insults as well as striking formulations. Together with the observations on the usage of adjectives this will yield an outline of the tone of discussions.

Talk pages, especially in the English and German Wikipedia, contain more discussions than can be analysed within the scope of the current paper. Therefore, the close reading of the discussion content will only consider up to the 25 most recent discussions per language. Since Wikipedia's current credibility creation is most interesting, examining recent discussions is reasonable. Additionally, since discussions can become quite long in Wikipedia, only three discussions of each language version will be analysed with a cut after ten comments per discussion to be able to perform a thorough analysis. The choice to analyse three shorter examples was made to diminish the risk of analysing just one lengthy but rather atypical discussion.

To understand how these policy documents are applied in creating Wikipedia articles, a set of 30 articles per language will be examined, each sample on the same lemmata. These articles were chosen from the field of Old Norse studies, comprising literature, history and mythology, on the grounds of the current author's own expertise in this field due to his education in Scandinavian Studies. Additionally, Wikipedia articles are available for this subject in all languages

studied in this paper as all four communities have a historical and cultural interest in this topic (Batey & Graham-Campbell, 1998, pp. 8–9). The articles will be examined in regard to their use of references. References will be categorised in several groups, including academic publications, news publications or institutional websites. The distribution of sources in these categories will be analysed and compared between the language editions based on Sundin's observations of source hierarchy (2011, p. 852). External links, which are listed separately in articles, are defined by Wikipedia as access points to further information which is related to the topic but not necessary to verify an article's content ('WP:External links', 2016). Therefore, these lists of external links are not part of the current analysis.

The use of maintenance templates and inline tags will be examined in regard to the frequency of usage in the language editions. In the same time the contrary, that is articles that lack sources and still are not marked with any template, will be considered. Additionally, the reaction to the templates will be analysed, mainly in respect to the time span since the placing of specific templates.

The talk pages of this group of 30 articles per language will be examined via a content analysis (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 21). There the keywords "source", "reference", "citation" and "literature" and their respective translations will be applied in a full text search to get an idea how important the issue of verifiability is within the article discussions of the four language editions. Some discussions consist of a lone comment by a bot, announcing the fixing of issues such as broken links. As these are contributions to article credibility, these comments cannot be excluded. In order to stay in the scope of the current paper, only up to ten discussions per article will be analysed. Furthermore, to see if and how editors strive to follow the norms to create credibility in Wikipedia, discourse analysis with the same approach as regarding the analysis of policy and guideline discussions will be used. Here again, only three exemplary articles per language will be analysed to enable a thorough analysis.

A third aspect, which might give an insight into credibility creation, is the aspect of authorship. Each language editions' five most active editors' user pages will be examined to see if they reveal enough information about the editor to lift the veil of anonymity. In the best-case scenario, the editor's expertise in Old Norse studies would become apparent and thus the knowledge of appropriate academic sources. Another way to create trust in an editor would be the availability of reference libraries, which can be used in creating reliable Wikipedia content.

Finally, a sample of random articles was chosen as a comparison group. The comparison group will be analysed regarding the same four aspects as the original sample – use of references, templates, talk page discussions and most active contributors. Only a third discourse analysis will be left out, since the first group's discourses can already be compared to the policy and guideline discourses, so that no new insights are expected. The results of the comparison group analysis are used to exclude conclusions only applicable to Wikipedia articles in the field of Old Norse literature, history and mythology, which might be written and maintained by a special group of editors, a sub-community of practice.

5 The Wikipedias' Credibility Creation in Theory

5.1 Policies and Guidelines

Wikipedia's policies and guidelines have been described as so-called "obligatory passage points" in that they help regulate how content is created in Wikipedia by any editor (Sundin, 2011, p. 842).

As described above, there is a myriad of policies and guidelines, resulting in a complex system of norms. This system varies between language versions. This can already be seen at the fundamental policies, as established by the *Five Pillars*. The English, Swedish and Icelandic versions of the *Five Pillars* contain five principles, as the title suggests ('WP:Five Pillars', 2016). One of these pillars defines that even though Wikipedia relies on policies and guidelines, these are not fixed as they can be edited as any Wikipedia content as well as the interpretation of these principles can change ('WP:Five Pillars', 2016). The German Wikipedia in contrast only lists four pillars, leaving out the "no firm rules" pillar ('WP:Grundprinzipien', 2016). Yet, the German Wikipedia refers to another guideline that suggests that rules can be foregone if there is a reason for it ('WP:Ignoriere alle Regeln', 2016). The German community describes this policy as controversial ('WP:Grundprinzipien', 2016), hinting at a preference for firm rules. The other language editions also contain a version of this *Ignore all rules* guideline, but mark it as an official policy and include several essays connected to the policy (see for example the English version 'WP:Ignore all rules', 2016).

Another point of difference between the language versions, worth drawing attention to, is the concept of sighted versions. This means that any change of article content by a non-registered user has to be looked over by a registered Wikipedia editor before it becomes the version shown to the reader ('Hilfe:Gesichtete Versionen', 2016). An article that still has to be sighted is marked with the symbol of a golden eye and the version including the changes can be accessed via the tab "Ungesichtete Änderungen", as can be seen in Figure 2. With this concept content manipulations can be prevented and thus contributes to message credibility. This feature has only been implemented in the German Wikipedia edition, even though its introduction has been discussed both in the Swedish and English language versions ('WP:Flagged revisions', 2013; 'Wikipedia:Flagged revisions/Sighted versions', 2015).



Figure 2: Example of an article to be sighted ('Anton Olegowitsch Kasanzew', 2016)

To create credibility by drawing on external sources the *Verifiability* policy is the most central norm, defining that any information in Wikipedia has to stem from a reliable source ('WP: Verifiability', 2016). Thus, an analysis of the differences between *Verifiability* versions will of all policies and guidelines most likely reveal different credibility creation attempts between the language versions. Additional insight into the differences between Wikipedia language versions will be gained by analysing a second principle related to referencing, the guideline *Identifying reliable sources*.

5.1.1 Verifiability

Verifiability is one of Wikipedia's main content policies. It highlights the importance of external sources to validate all information to be found on Wikipedia ('WP:Verifiability', 2016). Its centrality is strengthened by the aforementioned fact that referencing information is the only way to write articles from a neutral point of view as well as to provably avoid original research. Thus, the other two main content policies, namely *Neutral Point of View* and *No Original Research*, are dependent on *Verifiability*.

Not surprisingly, the English and German versions of the policy are the most elaborate ones, but they also are the ones differing the most from each other. Still, all four language versions share the main ideas of the *Verifiability* principle. These basics are that all content to be published on Wikipedia has to be referred to external sources, so that users of Wikipedia can reconstruct where information stems from and are able to check the information ('WP:Verifiability', 2016). Additionally, the policy defines that the editor adding or changing content is responsible to include references. Common to all language versions is the definition of reliable sources and in contrast to that, what is not regarded as a reliable source. As Sundin points out, sources that are assumed to be reliable in the Wikipedia context are most often also judged reliable in academic contexts (2011, p. 852). The English *Verifiability* policy for example directly states that academic peer-reviewed articles are to be preferably used ('WP:Verifiability', 2016).

The Icelandic version is a translation of the English policy in a May 2006 version ('WP:Sannreynanleikareglan', 2016). While the English version has changed a lot since 2006, the Icelandic version only underwent marginal changes. All in all, there are just 30 versions of the *Verifiability* policy in Icelandic, while there are 6,353 versions of the English policy (X!'s Tools, 2016a; X!'s Tools, 2016b). The only difference between the Icelandic version and the 2006 English version of the policy is the reference to Icelandic examples when explaining the policy, such as the newspaper *Morgunblaðið* ('WP.Sannreynanleikareglan', 2016). Compared to the English version, the Icelandic version of the policy is missing newer content such as the accessibility section and the description of related principles, other than the *No original research* policy. This lack of newer content in comparison to the English version together with the little amount of updating activity of the Icelandic version on its own suggests that this policy is not very much developed by Icelandic Wikipedians.

Even though the Swedish *Verifiability* guideline is not a translation of the English version it approximately covers the same content as the Icelandic version. Still, the Swedish *Verifiability* is much more discussed than the Icelandic policy, as the discourse analysis will show. A unique feature of the Swedish version is the indication of the possibility to improve articles by adding better sources to verify information ('WP:Verifierbarhet', 2015). This advice to find references higher up a sorts of hierarchy of sources as established by *Trovärdiga källor*, the Swedish version of *Identifying reliable sources*, has already been observed by Sundin (2011, p. 853).

A unique feature of the English *Verifiability* policy mainly is its description of related principles. Thereby, it becomes clear that referencing to sources excludes the risk of conducting original research, helps avoiding copyright issues and makes sure that article content is relevant ('WP:Verifiability', 2016). By this contextualisation, the policy makes clear why it is so important to refer to external sources. Attention is also drawn to the fact that sources might be biased and thus that it is necessary to bring together what different relevant sources say to achieve the principle of *Neutral point of view* ('WP:Verifiability', 2016). Furthermore, the English policy includes a section on the usage of non-primary language sources and a clause that determines that verifiability of information is not the only reason for inclusion in an article, since that could lead to the inclusion of minority points of view ('WP:Verifiability', 2016).

The German policy differs from the other three already in the name of its title. Whereas all other policies are translations of the word "verifiability", the German title reads "Belege", which in this case means "references", thus shifting the focus from the general requirement to verify information of content to the usage of and referencing to sources. Accordingly, the German policy is unique in the respect that it introduces and elaborates on techniques of formatting references, quotes and literature lists ('WP:Belege', 2016). By demanding that no sources should be used, which an editor did not read himself, the use of other Wikipedia language versions of the same lemma and the literature it is based on as a source is questioned ('WP:Belege', 2016). The German version stresses the importance of verifiability by stating that on the one hand information lacking sources will be removed, and that on the other hand content with good referencing will faster be sighted and approved by editors with the rights to do so ('WP:Belege', 2016). Another focus of the German policy, contrasting it with the other language versions of *Verifiability*, is its urging editors to compare sources to other sources to ensure the use of reliable high quality information ('WP:Belege', 2016). *Verifiability* is also set in the context of the *No original research* policy, but without describing that policy, so that the editors are forced to look up that policy themselves.

5.1.2 Talk Page Discussions Regarding *Verifiability*

Wikipedia's many policies and guidelines are not only a complex way to ensure quality of content, they are, as every article, editable by anyone. Thus, already differences in these policies between the language versions hint at different approaches to create credibility. In the same time, to achieve consensus on how to improve these policies, aspects of *Verifiability* are dis-

cussed on the policy's talk pages. Via a close reading of the content and a discourse analysis, differences between the language versions' ways to discuss the policy will be analysed.

The Icelandic talk page on *Verifiability* is only existent because of a comment of an editor, expressing happiness about the use of a Tacitus-quote ('Wikipediaspjall:Sannreynanleikareglan', 2006). This finding confirms the observations from the policy page analysis and its version history that there is not much of activity regarding the guideline. This can be attributed to the very small community of practice producing the Icelandic language edition. Even though there is not much activity surrounding the *Verifiability* policy, this does not automatically mean that the community is not aware of the importance of referencing. It could be that the rule as it is stated in its current version is clear enough to the community and is used as it is. How well the policy is applied by the Icelandic community will be part of the examination of the sample of 30 articles. But since the Icelandic *Verifiability* talk page does not contain any actual discussion, a discourse analysis is not possible.

Discussions of the *Verifiability* policy are parallel in some parts in the other language editions, even though English and German editors discuss more than their Swedish counterparts. All three versions discuss at some point what reliable sources are, sometimes by means of specific sources, such as *Al Jazeera* in the German Wikipedia ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a), or in regard to a specific genre, such as governmental publications in the Swedish language edition ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet', 2016). All three language communities discussed at approximately the same time in 2010 the meaning of "verifiability, not truth", which was the policy's former formulation to define which content to include in Wikipedia ('Verifiability, not truth', 2016). These discussions show concern about truth being pushed to the background ('WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 44', 2012; 'WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016d; 'Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2010', 2015). Additionally, it can be observed that earlier in the lifetime of each policy, discussions have been more general, regarding the use and extent of the policy. For example, each language version discusses early on about the necessity of extending the policy from being mandatory for disputed topics and articles to being mandatory for all Wikipedia content ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2014; 'WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 43', 2014; 'Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2010', 2015). This can be seen as one of the steps leading to the professionalisation of Wikipedia, as observed by Sundin (2011, p. 854).

As observed earlier, one of the unique aspects of the English *Verifiability* policy is its coverage of how to use non-English sources. The Swedish version does not include a clause on non-Swedish sources, but it has been discussed on the policy's talk page twice (an aggregated activity of more than 100 answers to the discussion), the second time unsuccessfully suggesting to disallow all languages other than Scandinavian languages and English ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2010', 2015). Another discussion, quite unique to the Swedish policy's talk page concerns the question of accessibility of sources. While the Swedish *Verifiability* states that accessibility has to be weighed in when deciding on which sources to use in Wikipedia ('WP:Verifierbarhet', 2015), a discussion evolved around a demand, which would

only have allowed the use of sources with easy accessibility, in the beginning even questioning the use of sources behind pay walls ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifizierbarkeit:Arkiv 2011', 2015). This discussion did not lead to changes in the policy. A third discussion unique to the Swedish policy's talk page is the aspect of the use of sources in translated articles, which most probably gained importance because of the aforementioned automatic translations special to the Swedish Wikipedia. A main focus of the discussion without reaching a real consensus lay on the question if it is acceptable to use the same sources as the original, without controlling them again ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifizierbarkeit/Arkiv 2014', 2015).

Discussing specific sources in regard to their credibility takes up prominent space in the German *Verifiability* policy. One of the aforementioned examples would be *Al Jazeera*, which is listed in a comment together with other specific sources that have been discussed in the German community ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a). In a more general type of source discussions, the reliability of popular press is a returning topic. A discussion entitled "Fachliteratur vs. Bildzeitung", for example, compares the reliability of the popular press to academic literature ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a). It is interesting to note that German editors are also recurrently interested in the credibility of video material, mainly accessible via YouTube ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a). The outcome of these discussions leads to arguments that exclude video channels as a source, as they are merely distributing material and often are only temporarily accessible. Another discussion among German editors centres on the question if the decision, which sources are defined reliable, is dependent on a power system ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a). This discussion leads to the deletion of sources that should not have been used, before the discussion comes back to the problem of defining good sources. Also worth notifying in this respect is an attempt to start a discussion in regard to establishing a source hierarchy, which did not meet any interest in the community, as the idea has not been answered ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016e). Yet in general, the German *Verifiability* version concentrates very much on the applicability of the policy, mainly in regard to debating specific sources' reliability but also in regard to the technicity of citing. This latter aspect is discussed for example in regard to the preferred usage of the more exact inline citations versus general references under the title "Erst einmal hier" ('WP Diskussion:Belege', 2016a).

The English language version of the policy is concentrating on the content and formulations of the policy, which especially contrasts with the German *Verifiability*. English editors also discuss the reliability of specific sources in a few instances, but the majority of discussions evolve around policy revision. Two of the most heated discussions take place in regard to the "responsibility for providing citations" or short *BURDEN* section. In the first case, discussion participants are striving to clarify who is responsible to add references in the event of information being restored, while in the second case a contradiction to the "assume good faith" principle has to be fixed ('WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64', 2016d & 2016a). In both cases a consensus is reached, resulting in a change of formulation of the policy. The third most contested discussion evolves around the re-formulation of another policy section, with the new version insisting on

Wikipedia editors supplying more precise inline citations instead of general sources ('WP talk:Verifiability', 2016c). While the German version is trying to solve application problems by directly discussing them, the English community of practice tries to constantly improve its policy, so that it becomes clear enough to not cause application problems.

3) The second edit, about removing **large** amounts of text: The "**recent event**" **was here**, where an editor had misunderstood **WP:BURDEN** to mean that he could go around removing so much text that he was **effectively** blanking the article, or blanking **whole** sections. That misunderstanding is **reasonable**, because a **literal** reading of **WP:BURDEN** as **currently** phrased doesn't put any kind of limit on **how much** text an editor can remove. I was trying to capture the idea that if someone adds, say, 2,000 words of **unsourced, implausible** text to an article, then you can immediately revert them under **WP:BURDEN**, but going up to an **old, often-viewed** article and taking out the same amount of text is stretching **WP:BURDEN** **farther** than it was ever intended to go. **BURDEN** isn't for doing an end-run around the **AfD** process. So it's not an abstract or **theoretical** concern. It's a **preventive** response to something that's recently happened, and it's enacting an **ANI** consensus.—**S Marshall** T/C 21:37, 13 July 2016 (UTC)

Figure 3: Discourse analysis of an exemplary discussion comment, marking adjectives green and intertexts yellow ('WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64', 2016c)

In regard to the tone of the discussions, the discourse analysis shows some differences. In general, discussions on English talk pages tend to be longer than on German and especially than on Swedish talk pages. Certain recurring formulations used to state opinions reveal differences in communication behaviour. The Swedish conversation style is quite reserved, usually avoiding direct negations. Formulations like "I agree in principle, but ..." state agreement before adding differing opinions, or formulations like "I think ..." or "it feels like ..." soften critique ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2007', 2015). In the material examined only one exception is found, when three editors directly try to influence each other by way of so-called directive speech acts (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 138). In this example, at first still indirectly, reading the policy is demanded: "Be welcome to read [a part of the policy]", answered with the more direct "Same to you!" again answered with "Focus on the results!" ('Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2014', 2015). This example shows that Swedish editors can become more direct when they think they are right. German formulations are quite direct from the beginning. If a comment of an editor is not right in the opinion of another editor, s/he will quite frequently say so. For example, one editor is told that he "confuses a great deal" and that his critique is "incorrect to a large extent" ('WP Diskussion:Belege' 2016b). English discussion formulations tend to be close to the Swedish in style, quite often using the "I think ..." approach ('WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64', 2016a). Yet, if there is disagreement, participants might also state them directly, without saying that the other participant is wrong: "It's not about the quality of the source ... It just doesn't say what one or more Wikipedians claim it

does.” (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016a). But even though the style differs across language versions, the overall tone of discussion never gets insulting in none of the Wikipedias.

Across all language versions adjectives are consistently used to describe the quality of sources and content or to stress the importance of policies. Information is for example often described as “unreferenced” (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016c) and sources as either “reliable” or “unreliable” (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016b). Equivalent terms are found in the Swedish adjectives “verifierbar” in regard to information and “kvalitativ” in regard to sources (‘Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Arkiv 2010’, 2015) as well as in the German adjectives “verlässlich” and “reputabel”, both used to describe sources (‘WP Diskussion:Belege’ 2016c).

In English discussions, adjectives also highlight concerns regarding the policy’s formulations as well as the community’s application of the guidelines in article creation. In the discussion on the wording of a footnote in the “Responsibility for providing citations” section of the English policy one comment includes the sentence: “Setting the standard to actual sufficiency is meaningless if two people can’t agree on what is sufficient” (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016a). The adjective “meaningless” is used to state the opinion that a difference in the wording of the policy is of no use, because the underlying problem remains. Editors arguing verifiability issues still have to reach a consensus on what “sufficient” references are. Another use of adjectives, or adverbs to be precise, to describe the application of the guideline can be observed in a comment stating concerns about editors “... who recklessly or negligently remove text that is verifiable from articles” (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016a). Instead of just referring to editors, who remove information, the negative aspect of removal is stressed by the adverbs “recklessly” and “negligently”, contrasting it with the information, which is further described with the adjective “verifiable”, to stress the quality of the deleted material.

The Swedish discussions make a similar use of adjectives. So, for example, one comment not only draws attention to the fact that more references are needed but that “more accurate” references are needed (‘Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet’, 2016). Still, the adjective “realistic” is used to describe the form of the policy, which works best in the commenter’s opinion (‘Wikipediadiskussion: Verifierbarhet’, 2016). With this adjective the comment is linking back to the contrasting idea that the policy should describe the “ideal” approach to writing articles, which is too “strict” in the commenting editor’s opinion. So, here adjectives are used to differentiate between forms of policies.

Comments on the German talk page also partly refer to the communities application of the guidelines, for example when a comment states that not all Wikipedia editors always follow the guidelines and that the community is not able to “effectively” correct this due to its “open structure” (‘WP Diskussion:Belege’ 2016b). Here the adverb “effectively” is used to highlight that the community, even though able to correct misbehaviours, will need a certain time until correction. This is the case because of the community’s structure, described by the adjective “open”, implying the problems caused by the principle that anyone, even unregistered users can edit Wikipedia. The next sentence of the same comment confirms the more strict language

of the German discussion when stating, that this is “definitely the wrong page” to discuss violations of the *Verifiability* policy (‘WP Diskussion:Belege’ 2016b). The adverb adjective combination “definitely wrong” is a very strong rejection of parts of the preceding comments. The formulation of something or someone being wrong can be found in numerous occasions in German talk page discussions, thus displaying a more negative tone than the English and Swedish versions.

In regard to intertextuality, discussions in all three languages are similar, as each discussion relates to the *Verifiability* policy. Additionally, intertextuality links to specific changes discussed on talk pages, sometimes even being the origin of a discussion, such as the Swedish discussion surrounding a change of formulation in the overview of the policy. In this case a link to the diff, a juxtaposition of the critical content before and after the change, is included in the comment (‘Wikipediadiskussion:Verifierbarhet/Archive 2010’, 2015). Another example linking to a diff is the English discussion about changes in its version of the policy (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016c). Furthermore, references are made to other policies, if they are connected to the *Verifiability* policy. Discussing YouTube-videos’ reliability, German Wikipedians refer to the *Neutral point of view* and *No original research* policies to point out the problematic of YouTube, as for example an interpretation of a video can already be seen as original research (‘WP Diskussion:Belege’ 2016c). As in this example, most often policies are referred to via an abbreviation, in this case WP:NPOV to refer to the *Neutral point of view* policy. In the English Wikipedia even specific sections of policies can be referred to via an abbreviation, as in the English discussion about a wording in the “Responsibility for providing citations” or short WP:BURDEN (‘WP talk:Verifiability/Archive 64’, 2016a). The availability of these shortcuts suggests that the English community expects discussions to evolve around specific parts of the documents. By providing abbreviations, English editors can be more precise in referring to policies and guidelines.

All in all, the topics of the *Verifiability* discussions support the findings of the close reading of the policy, as German editors tend to primarily discuss more specific sources and their reliability, while the English Wikipedia is more concerned about the policy as such. Swedish Wikipedians, while also discussing types of sources, are also concerned with the application of the policy to specific Swedish issues, such as the translations of articles. The tone of the discussions, even though some slight differences can be detected, especially the directness of German editors, does not vary to an extent which would allow an assumption of a higher importance of the policy to any one of the language versions.

5.1.3 Identifying Reliable Sources

A problem already directly approached by all four language versions in specific sections of the *Verifiability* policy is how to decide which sources are reliable, a problem that resurfaced in the corresponding discussions either in regard to the reliability of specific sources or to types of

sources. To help editors assess the quality of sources an *Identifying reliable sources* guideline has been established by three language versions.

The German Wikipedia is the exception to the rule in this case as it is only touching aspects of *Identifying reliable sources* in related guidelines. Additional to the section in its *Verifiability* policy, importance of sources is the central part of a *Literature* policy, which also informs about the most successful search strategies ('WP:Literatur', 2016). Even though different projects aim at helping each other finding and getting access to reliable sources (for example 'Wikipedia:Bibliothek', 2016; 'Wikipedia:Bibliotheksrecherche', 2016), the main way to decide on a sources reliability is discussing individual cases, which has already been observed during the *Verifiability* talk page analysis. Another project supports this conclusion, since it has been established only for the purpose of discussing the reliability of specific sources, both in general as well as in the context of the creation of new Wikipedia articles ('WP:Belege/Fließband', 2016).

Common to all three language versions of *Identifying reliable sources* is the ranking of sources, with peer-reviewed academic articles being the most reliable source, whereas Wikipedia articles are ranked among the non-reliable sources ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014; 'Wikipedia:Identifying reliable sources', 2016; 'Wikipedia:Trovärdiga källor', 2016). Thus, general consensus across language versions is the categorisation of sources in academic, news organisational and self-published and commercial sources, with the latter ranking the least reliable, only to be used in some specific cases. All communities also agree on the importance of the age of sources, though it depends on the subject at which point age becomes a negative aspect. For example, the English version in its "Age matters" section draws attention to the need for recent sources in medicine ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016).

The Icelandic *Reliable sources* page is defined as a help page, not as a guideline ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014). Despite the implication that its content has not the same significance as a guideline, the text leaves no doubt regarding the importance of verifying information through reliable sources. This is done on the one hand in the introduction by restating that any information must be verified, and on the other hand by relating to the three core content policies ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014). As a rule of thumb the Icelandic version defines that content of academic articles should also be referenced to sources that are out of the same academic subject, thereby emphasising the importance of specific academic sources in the context of academic articles ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014). Exclusive to the Icelandic *Reliable sources* page is a very exact hinting at access points for reliable sources. This is possible in the Icelandic context because of the so called *Landsaðgangur*, which means that all Icelandic citizens with access to the internet have access to several high quality databases and e-journals, such as EBSCOhost, ProQuest and Web of Science ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014). These access points are displayed in a table. A second table presents more local and Scandinavian access points ('Hjálp:Áreiðanlegar heimildir', 2014).

As Sundin found out, Swedish editors try to enhance Wikipedia's credibility by constantly updating sources, which means to insert sources that are more reliable (Sundin, 2011, p. 853).

The level of reliability is defined in the Swedish *Reliable sources* essay, which establishes a hierarchy of sources ('WP:Trovärdiga källor', 2016). The most reliable sources are here defined to be peer-reviewed academic publications, but even further differentiated, for example by indicating that a high impact factor, depending on the number of citations of a source by other academic publications, strengthens a source's position in the hierarchy ('WP:Trovärdiga källor', 2016). Sources, which are self-published or produced by a community where authorship is not always obvious, such as blogs, YouTube or Wikipedia, rank among the lowest in the source hierarchy ('WP:Trovärdiga källor', 2016). This source hierarchy can be said to equal academic assessment of sources (Sundin, 2011, p. 852). Through the source hierarchy, Wikipedia editors are encouraged to find and use the sources ranked highest on the hierarchy. Even though *Reliable sources* is only listed as an essay, it still guides editors effectively in their usage of sources. Another page directs editors to databases for sources with a good standing ('WP:Deltagarportalen/Bra källor', 2016). In contrast to Iceland it is not possible for everyone to access academic sources, so that none of the three EBSCOhost, ProQuest or Web of Science are accessible via this portal.

Instead of just establishing a hierarchy of sources, the English *Identifying reliable sources* guideline emphasises the importance of context. Still, again peer-reviewed academic sources are defined as the most reliable ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). Additionally to the group of academic, news and self-published sources, commercial and biased sources are included, pointing to several critical aspects in regard to each group ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). For example, in the section on academic literature editors are encouraged to handle dissertations with care, as they might partly be primary sources and are not always peer-reviewed ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). Another warning in regard to academic literature concerns low quality journals, which might even be predatory publications ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). The emphasis on context becomes clearest in a section describing which kind of sources are most reliable in specific contexts, such as biographies on living persons, medicine or breaking news ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). Especially in the last case it is not possible to use academic or other high quality sources. To be up to date, Wikipedia allows the use of news reports on current events but demands them to be replaced with better sources as soon as these exist ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016). Instead of defining reliable sources in general, the English *Identifying reliable sources* policy defines the context to be the main factor in deciding on the best fitting sources.

5.1.4 Talk Page Discussion Regarding *Identifying sources*

In the Swedish version discussions mainly evolve around specific forms of publications and their reliability, such as private websites ('Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor/Arkiv 2012', 2014). But also specific sources such as the journal Expo and Twitter have been discussed ('Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor', 2015). Additionally to discussing types of publications, the English *Identifying reliable sources* guideline is discussed regarding formulations of the

policy text as well as the use of certain templates ('WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52', 2016). The German discussions in regard to its *Literature* policy also reflect reliability of types of publications as well as the formulation of the policy. German discussions again differ from the other languages regarding the application of the guideline. One discussion for example centres on the formatting of doctoral dissertations ('WP Diskussion:Literatur', 2016a).

In general, discussions in regard to this policy take less space than *Verifiability* discussions in all languages with approximately the same distribution of activity between language editions. English editors are discussing most actively, followed by German and again Swedish editors as the least active. The Icelandic talk page contains just one remark, concerning the addition of Iceland specific content to the guideline ('Hjálparspjall', 2010), thus again rendering a discourse analysis of the Icelandic talk page impossible. That the *Verifiability* policy is a more debated issue, due to its comparatively supreme importance, can also be gathered from the smaller number of discussion participants. Consequently all language versions contain longer passages of dialogue. An extreme example is the beginning of a discussion on investigative journalism where two users take turns, spread over the first nine comments of the discussion, before other users are blending in ('WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52', 2016b).

In regard to the overall tone the observations from the *Verifiability* policy can be confirmed. The Swedish formulations are again quite reserved, using such formulations as "In my opinion ..." or "In my experience ..." ('Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor/Arkiv 2012', 2014). As in the *Verifiability* discussion, one exception can be found in the analysed material. In the "Expo är oacceptabel" discussion one editor accuses another not to have read a third editor's comment ('Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor', 2015). The language of the German version is straightforward in fewer instances than before, but still participants are told if they are wrong or that it is the readers' problem if they will be able to access sources presented in Wikipedia articles ('WP Diskussion:Literatur', 2016b & 2016c). Even though stating agreement or disagreement openly, English discussion participants, as in the *Verifiability* discussions, state differing opinions without directly telling the other to be wrong: "Reliable is the requirement; other stuff doesn't meet that ..." ('WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52', 2016a).

The use of adjectives replicates that of the *Verifiability* discussions as well. Sources are described as "reliable", "formally fact-checked" or "poor" ('WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52', 2016a), with equivalents in German such as "dubious" or "flawless" ('WP Diskussion:Literatur', 2016c) and "relevant" or "reliable" in Swedish ('Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor', 2015). One exception to that use of adjectives is included in the discussion about new content on investigative journalism. There an editor tries to persuade the other editors to support his new text by diminishing the importance of his addition. He uses the expression "reasonable measured and helpful clarification ..." to talk of his contribution, for example ('WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52', 2016b). By doing so he stresses the positive sides of his additions, they are "helpful", as well as downplaying their impact on the

guideline by using the adjective “reasonable” in front of the verb “measured”, implying only minor changes.

In regard to intertextuality it can be summarised that as in the *Verifiability* discussion, all languages version connect directly to parts of the *Identifying reliable sources* guideline, as these discussions are trying to develop this guideline. To that end also the *Verifiability* policy and other related policies and guidelines are used as intertexts. For example, the Swedish discussion on the popular press as a source in regard to biographies is repeatedly referring to the *Bibliographies of living persons* policy (‘Wikipediadiskussion:Trovärdiga källor/Arkiv 2012’, 2014). The English version stands out again as its editors often are connecting to specific policy or guideline sections via abbreviations, thereby being able to be more precise, for example when referring to WP:BIASED or WP:NEWSORG, which are sections of the *Identifying reliable sources* guideline on biased sources and news organizations respectively (‘WP talk:Identifying reliable sources/Archive 52’, 2016b).

In contrast to the *Verifiability* policy, *Identifying reliable sources* is discussed to a lesser extent in all language editions. Yet, the observations from the former discourse analysis can be supported. While the Swedish and English versions discuss specific sources and the formulation of the guideline to some extent, the German edition is concerned with the practical application of its *Literature* policy. That the German Wikipedia does not include some general policy on how to define reliable sources is in accordance with the German behaviour of discussing specific sources one by one. The tone of *Identifying reliable sources* discussions is also reminiscent of *Verifiability* discussions, with the German tone being most direct and the others more reserved, with exceptions both in Swedish and English where editors become direct or even partly insulting.

5.2 Template Messages

Wikipedia communities have several ways to track and improve articles whose content does not comply with the *Verifiability* policy and related guidelines. On the one hand, each article has its talk page where issues concerning the article’s content can be discussed, also in regard to verifiability issues. With the help of version histories and watch lists Wikipedians can monitor specific articles (Hammwöhner, 2007), also articles with recurring referencing issues. On the other hand, maintenance templates exist, which are directly visible within the article. In this way not only the editors are alerted to improve the article, but also readers are warned of possible content issues.

Figure 4 gives a good insight into the importance of verifiability issues in the English Wikipedia. Almost half of all existing inline cleanup tags are concerned with verifiability. These inline tags appear directly within the article’s text, marking the statement to be verified. Additionally, there are maintenance templates, which precede the whole article or the article’s section in question. Examples for both inline tag and template message concerning the whole article can

be gathered from Figure 5. On the one hand, the *Viking Age* article is preceded by a template stating that it lacks citations, on the other hand, the statement rather at the end of the introduction is marked with a `{{citation needed}}` tag.

V · T · E		Inline cleanup tags	[hide]
Attribution		<code>{{According to whom}}</code> · <code>{{Attribution needed}}</code> · <code>{{By whom}}</code> · <code>{{From whom?}}</code> · <code>{{To whom?}}</code> · <code>{{Who}}</code> · <code>{{Whom2}}</code>	
Clarity		<code>{{Ambiguous}}</code> · <code>{{Clarify}}</code> · <code>{{Clarify span}}</code> · <code>{{Clarify timeframe}}</code> · <code>{{Context inline}}</code> · <code>{{Expand acronym}}</code> · <code>{{Incomprehensible inline}}</code> · <code>{{Non sequitur}}</code> · <code>{{Who2}}</code>	
Miscellaneous		<code>{{Chinese script needed inline}}</code> · <code>{{Disambiguation needed}}</code> · <code>{{Original research inline}}</code> · <code>{{Pronunciation needed}}</code> · <code>{{Siadn}}</code> · <code>{{Synthesis inline}}</code>	
Neutrality		<code>{{Lopsided}}</code> · <code>{{Peacock term}}</code> · <code>{{POV statement}}</code> · <code>{{Weasel inline}}</code>	
Precision		<code>{{By how much}}</code> · <code>{{Definition}}</code> · <code>{{Definition needed}}</code> · <code>{{Elucidate}}</code> · <code>{{Example needed}}</code> · <code>{{Examples}}</code> · <code>{{How}}</code> · <code>{{Quantify}}</code> · <code>{{Specify}}</code> · <code>{{Vague}}</code> · <code>{{When}}</code> · <code>{{Where}}</code> · <code>{{Which}}</code> · <code>{{Why}}</code> · <code>{{Year needed}}</code>	
	Excessive	<code>{{Duplication span}}</code> · <code>{{Importance inline}}</code> · <code>{{Relevance inline}}</code> · <code>{{Undue weight inline}}</code>	
Time-sensitivity		<code>{{Clarify timeframe}}</code> · <code>{{Update after}}</code> · <code>{{Update inline}}</code> · <code>{{Anachronism inline}}</code>	
Verifiability	Dubious	<code>{{Contradict-inline}}</code> · <code>{{Disputed inline}}</code> · <code>{{Dubious}}</code> · <code>{{Inconsistent}}</code>	
	Missing or problematic reference	<code>{{Better source}}</code> · <code>{{Citation needed}}</code> · <code>{{Citation needed lead}}</code> · <code>{{Citation needed span}}</code> · <code>{{Additional citation needed}}</code> · <code>{{Citation not found}}</code> · <code>{{Cite quote}}</code> · <code>{{Failed verification}}</code> · <code>{{Failed verification span}}</code> · <code>{{Irrelevant citation}}</code> · <code>{{Nonspecific}}</code> · <code>{{Overcite}}</code> · <code>{{Primary source inline}}</code> · <code>{{Request quotation}}</code> · <code>{{Retracted}}</code> · <code>{{Self-published inline}}</code> · <code>{{Source needs translation}}</code> · <code>{{Third-party inline}}</code> · <code>{{Unreliable source?}}</code> · <code>{{Verify quote}}</code> · <code>{{Verify source}}</code>	
	Incomplete or broken citation	<code>{{Author incomplete}}</code> · <code>{{Author missing}}</code> · <code>{{Bare URL inline}}</code> · <code>{{Date missing}}</code> · <code>{{Dead link}}</code> · <code>{{Edition needed}}</code> · <code>{{Episode needed}}</code> · <code>{{Full citation needed}}</code> · <code>{{Incomplete short citation}}</code> · <code>{{ISBN missing}}</code> · <code>{{Page needed}}</code> · <code>{{Place missing}}</code> · <code>{{Publisher missing}}</code> · <code>{{Season needed}}</code> · <code>{{Time needed}}</code> · <code>{{Title incomplete}}</code> · <code>{{Title missing}}</code> · <code>{{Volume needed}}</code> · <code>{{Year missing}}</code>	
Wording		<code>{{Awkward}}</code> · <code>{{Buzzword inline}}</code> · <code>{{Technical statement}}</code>	
		Inline cleanup templates · WikiProject Inline Templates	

Figure 4: Inline cleanup tags in the English Wikipedia ('Template', 2016)


Viking Age

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Viking age)

This article has multiple issues. Please help [improve it](#) or discuss these issues on the [talk page](#). *(Learn how and when to remove these template messages)*

- This article **needs additional citations for verification**. *(June 2011)*
- This article's **introduction section may not adequately summarize its contents**. *(August 2013)*

The **Viking Age** is the period A.D. from late 8th century to mid 11th century in [European history](#), especially Northern European and [Scandinavian history](#), following the [Germanic Iron Age](#).^[1] It is the period of history when Scandinavian [Norsemen](#) explored Europe by its seas and rivers for trade, raids and conquest. In this period, the Norsemen settled in [Norse Greenland](#), [Newfoundland](#), and present-day [Faroe Islands](#), [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Scotland](#), England, Ireland, Germany, Ukraine, Russia, and Turkey. Though [Viking](#) travellers and colonists were seen at many points in history as brutal raiders, many historical documents suggest that their invasion of other countries was retaliation in response to the encroachment upon tribal lands by [Christian missionaries](#), and perhaps by the [Saxon Wars](#) prosecuted by [Charlemagne](#) and his kin to the south,^{[2][3][4][5][6]} or, were motivated by overpopulation, trade inequities, and the lack of viable farmland in their homeland.^[*citation needed*] Information about the Viking Age is drawn largely from what was written about the Vikings by their enemies, and [primary sources](#) of archaeology, supplied with [secondary sources](#) like the Icelandic Sagas.



This article is part of a series on **Scandinavia**

Figure 5: Introduction section of the Viking Age article ('Viking Age', 2016a)

The combination of inline tags and templates allow for a very nuanced feedback on what kinds of problems exist in regard to referencing. This in turn makes improving the articles' verifiability easier for the editors, as they exactly know what they have to look out for. In regard to inline tags, editors can choose between tags indicating the complete lack of sources for a statement, the need for a better source or that just an aspect of the source is missing, such as the author (see Figure 4). Templates can draw attention to the overall lack of sources for the whole article or a section of an article by the `{{unreferenced}}` or `{{unreferenced section}}` templates respectively, or to the unreliability of sources with the `{{unreliable sources}}` template ('WP:Template messages', 2016). Even more specific templates include markers for an article's reliance on only one source or on primary sources ('WP:Template messages', 2016). It is even possible to ask for expert help via the `{{expert needed}}` template, to address the credibility of an article ('WP:Template messages', 2016). These templates are also the basis for extensive lists about articles with verifiability issues, such as the *All articles lacking sources* list, which includes 213,775 articles at the time of writing ('Category', 2016).

In the German Wikipedia only one template, the `{{Belege fehlen}}` template, and no inline tags exist regarding referencing issues ('WP:Bewertungsbausteine', 2016). Instead, the German template is customisable to a certain degree. It is possible to use the template for the whole article or just for specific sections as well as adding comments ('Vorlage', 2016). Still, it is less exact than the English variety of templates, which also can be customised to a certain degree (see for example 'Template', 2015). Especially the lack of inline tags results in editors having to read the complete marked section and having to interpret which information lacks citations. This means more work for German editors before they are able to start looking for better sources. This precision issue can only be diminished if editors add a comment, exactly pointing out the problem. Otherwise the template is pointing quite generally at the lack of sources. As the German Wikipedia only uses this one template exclusively, it is quite surprising that only 28,975 articles are listed as having been tagged with the `{{Belege fehlen}}` template ('Kategorie', 2015). This is about a tenth of the number of articles on one of several lists of the English Wikipedia.

As the German language version, the Icelandic Wikipedia possesses only one maintenance template, but additionally, the inline cleanup tag `{{heimild vantar}}` exists ('WP:Listi yif snið', 2013). This inline tag is equivalent to the English `{{citation needed}}`. Both of these maintenance tools are used in 198 articles at the moment of writing ('Flokkur', 2012). This would mean that only 0,48 per cent of all Icelandic articles are lacking sources. Thus, if the Icelandic Wikipedia community applies its principles consistently, the result of the analysis of the Icelandic article sample would rather find these articles to be well referenced on average.

The Swedish Wikipedia is more elaborate than both the German and Icelandic, without reaching the English language version's variety and depth in regard to templates. Here, three inline tags exist, demanding a direct quote from the original source to verify a statement with the `{{Begär citat}}` tag, `{{Ifrågasatt uppgift}}` to express doubt regarding a statement, and equal to

the English `{{citation needed}}` tag to ask for a source for a specific statement with the `{{Källa behövs}}` tag ('WP:Layoutlista', 2015). Additionally, Swedish templates include `{{Källor}}` which is used to highlight articles without any source – of this template also a version for article sections exists – and `{{Fler källor}}` to mark articles that are in need of more sources ('WP:Layoutlista', 2015). Especially the `{{Källor}}` template is customisable, allowing the editor to comment on the referencing problem ('Mall', 2014). The list of Swedish Wikipedia articles that are in need of sources, marked with any one of the inline tags or one of the templates, comprises 28,256 articles at the time of the writing ('Kategori', 2014). If an article's information is based on particular sources, the Swedish Wikipedia uses specific templates. These tags are not necessarily meant to trigger Wikipedians to find different sources but to alert the reader of these aged sources, which include the *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon* and the *Nordisk familjebok* ('WP:Layoutlista', 2015). Additionally, translations from other Wikipedia languages are marked.

To reduce this list of articles lacking sources, projects exist in three language editions, which try to coordinate work on referencing issues. In the German Wikipedia this project merely lists which articles have to be improved ('WP:WikiProjekt', 2014). The Swedish and English Wikipedia additionally try to help editors by standardising the approach to improving articles ('WP:Projekt källhänvisningar', 2016; 'WP:WikiProjekt', 2016). The Icelandic Wikipedia does not have a specific project for articles regarding verification issues. Only a general proof reading coordination page exists, which is not very active, as only ten articles are listed ('WP:Yfirlestur', 2014).

All in all, the English language Wikipedia displays the most varied congregation of inline clean-up tags and article templates. The other language editions possess a far smaller number of templates, with the German Wikipedia providing the least options with only one article template. Thus, in theory, the English Wikipedia community is in advantage over the other language communities. Part of the analysis of the 30-article sample will be to explore if English editors put this opportunity into practice to make their Wikipedia edition more credible than the other language editions.

6 The Wikipedias' Credibility Creation in Practice

Wikipedia communities define their own rules to create content at a certain quality and credibility level. In the following, the application of these norms of behaviour will be examined. To that end 30 Wikipedia articles from the subject of Old Norse literature, history and mythology will be analysed in regard to their use of sources and the communities' efforts to solve referencing issues in specific articles revealed by talk page discussions and maintenance templates.

6.1 Article Pages: Transfer of Expertise

To observe differences in the actual use of sources between language versions, sources used to create the 30 articles were categorised into source types. The full corpus of articles is listed in Appendix A. Wikipedians distinguish between sources used to validate information published in a Wikipedia article and sources which readers can use for further reading to gain more insight into the topic of the article. Since Wikipedia policies and guidelines focus on validation of article information to create credibility, only literature from the bibliography was counted as well as literature used for inline citations, which was not listed in the bibliography. Each publication was counted the first time it was named in an article.

Bibliography [edit]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antonsen, Elmer H. (1965), "On Defining Stages in Prehistoric Germanic", <i>Language</i>, 41: 19, doi:10.2307/411849 ↗, JSTOR 411849 ↗. 	Academic publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bammesberger, A; Waxenberger, G, eds. (2006), <i>Das fupark und Seine Einzelsprachlichen Weiterentwicklungen</i>, Walter de Gruyter, ISBN 3-11-019008-7. 	Recent academic Publication (in German)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blum, Ralph (1932), <i>The Book of Runes – A Handbook for the use of Ancient Oracle: The Viking Runes</i>, Oracle Books, New York: St. Martin's Press, ISBN 0-312-00729-9. 	Reference book
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brate, Erik (1922), <i>Sveriges Runinskrifter</i> ↗ (in Swedish). 	Academic publication (digital scan)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Düwel, Klaus (2001), <i>Runenkunde</i> (in German), JB Metzler. 	Academic Publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foote, P. G.; Wilson, D. M. (1970), <i>The Viking Achievement</i>, London, UK: Sidgwick & Jackson, p. 401, ISBN 0-283-97926-7. 	Academic Publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jacobsen, Lis; Moltke, Erik (1941–42). <i>Danmarks Runeindskrifter</i>. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaards. 	Academic Publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larrington, Carolyne trans (1999), <i>The Poetic Edda</i>, <i>Oxford World's Classics</i>, ISBN 0-19-283946-2. 	Primary literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looijenga, JH (1997), <i>Runes Around the North Sea and on the Continent AD 150–700</i> ↗ (dissertation), Groningen University. 	Academic Publication (dissertation, might be less reliable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MacLeod, Mindy; Mees, Bernard (2006), <i>Runic Amulets and Magic Objects</i> ↗, Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, ISBN 1-84383-205-4. 	Academic Publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markey, TL (2001). "A Tale of the Two Helmets: Negau A and B". <i>Journal of Indo-European Studies</i>. 29: 69–172. 	Academic Publication

Figure 6: Exemplary categorising of sources ('Runes', 2016)

The overall number of sources used across language versions resembles the activity of Wikipedia communities in its distribution (see Table 4). This distribution is also evident in the amount of articles without any source. While the English sample does not contain articles with a com-

plete lack of sources, the German sample contains three articles without any source supplying its information. Two of these articles at least list sources related to the article, even though not being used to verify content, such as translations of the original texts discussed in the article or external links ('Angelsächsische Chronik', 2016; 'Ginnungagap', 2016). The third article without any source is marked with a template linking it to a project's quality assurance ('Gleipnir', 2016). A remark on this project page draws attention to the lack of sources ('WP:WikiProjek', 2016). While one of five Swedish articles without sources is marked with a "lacks important information" template at the bottom of the article page ('Slaget vid Stamford Bridge', 2015), and one article is marked as a translation from the English Wikipedia article ('Anglosaxiska krönikan', 2016), three articles miss any indication that the community has taken notice of the lack of sources (for example 'Danelagen', 2016). In all five instances the Swedish talk page is either non-existent or only including one short discussion, which is not related to referencing.

Source type	English	Swedish	German	Icelandic
Recent academic publication	87	10	24	1
Older academic publication	327	81	179	21
Reference work	105	36	49	1
Organisational website	54	5	8	3
News organisation	18	8	6	3
Non-accessible source	26	2	2	0
Wikipedia	2	6	1	7
Primary Source	121	26	40	9
Other	28	11	4	2
Overall number of sources	768	185	313	47
Articles without source	0	5	3	20
Translated articles	0	5	0	6

Table 4: Use of sources by absolute numbers

Still, the highest amount of articles without sources is to be found in the Icelandic Wikipedia. Two thirds of the sample's articles display no source at all. Even when leaving out articles, which are translations from other language Wikipedias, 14 articles are left without a single source. Some of these articles display a couple of external links (for example 'Vínland', 2015) and several articles are marked as stub class (for example 'Danalög', 2015). Still, four articles

do neither contain any source or external link nor are marked with a template. Additionally, none of these four articles possesses an active talk page. Furthermore, the classification of an article as stub class does not seem to be consistent. This is exemplified by two articles, which both only consist of five sentences, but while one article is marked as a stub ('Huginn og Muninn', 2015), the other is not (Valhöll, 2016).

To gain an insight into the distribution of the types of sources used by the language communities, references were categorised into several groups. The most important group includes academic publications, subdivided into recent academic publications – which in the present case means literature beginning from the year 2005 –, older research publications and reference works – such as encyclopaedias, handbooks or dictionaries. The second group contains institutional websites, such as university and museum websites. Other sources used by Wikipedia editors originate from news organisations and Wikipedia as well as blogs, corporate websites and information panels for tourists. The latter three are subsumed under the “other” category, as they are not very common in the present sample. Additionally, primary literature was used in the sample's articles, especially in articles with a literary topic, and thus included as an own group.

The aforementioned high number of Icelandic articles without any sources can be seen as an explanation of the proportionally low number of academic sources in the Icelandic language version, since this leads to Wikipedia as a source for translated articles to play a more important role with 15 per cent (see Figure 7). All other language versions use more than 50 per cent academic publications, indicating the preferred use of academic sources. The German Wikipedia sits atop the list with 81 per cent. The English and Swedish Wikipedias are fairly even in the use of academic sources with 68 per cent and 69 per cent respectively. The English Wikipedia displays the heaviest use of more recent literature, which can be explained by the fact that more and more literature is published in English. Even though English literature is used in the other Wikipedias, too, it is not the primary language of these communities. Thus, editors with another language than English as their mother tongue might still prefer the use of literature, which is in their primary language.

In both the English and the Swedish *Identifying reliable sources*, the use of reference literature has been defined as less reliable than academic publications ('WP:Identifying reliable sources', 2016; 'WP:Trovärdiga källor', 2016). Based on the numbers of the 30-article sample, the context emphasis of the English Wikipedia seems to be a bit more successful than the Swedish source hierarchy approach. While the number is up to 20 per cent in usage of reference literature in the Swedish sample, it is only 14 per cent in the English sample. This finding indicates that the overall use of literature higher up the source hierarchy is to be found in the English sample. The German approach of defining a source's reliability on a rather case-by-case basis leads to a result of 16 per cent usage of reference literature in the present sample, in the same time leading to an avoidance of non-academic sources at a higher rate than in the other language samples.

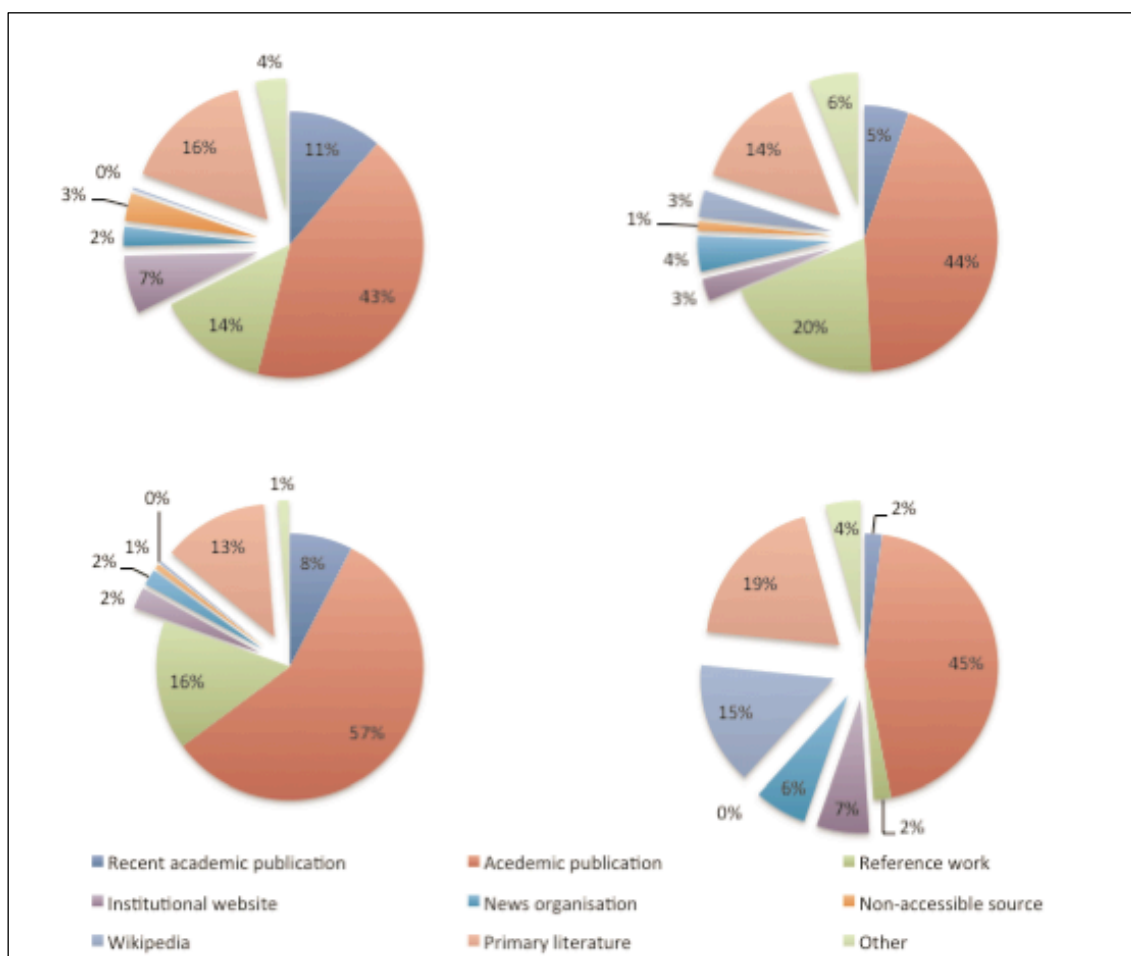


Figure 7: Distribution of source types in the English (upper left), Swedish (upper right), German (lower left) and Icelandic (lower right) Wikipedias

Altogether, Wikipedia editors seem to do a good job in avoiding less reliable sources. With the exception of the Icelandic Wikipedia, a combination of Wikipedia articles as a source, non-accessible and other sources, which include the likes of blogs and tourist information boards, no language version reaches more than ten per cent (Swedish), with the German Wikipedia at a low two per cent. The Icelandic version in contrast displays a use of 19 per cent sources of that combined group. A similar observation of low usage can be made about newspapers as a source. Even in the Icelandic language edition publications of news organisations do not surpass six per cent. Though differences can be observed, they should not be overestimated, as the numbers do not suggest a strong deviation. The overall use of academic sources in the English, German and Swedish Wikipedias reaches a high amount.

The quite extensive use of primary literature can be attributed to the subject of the sample, which includes articles on literary topics. When summarising the content of a medieval Icelandic saga, for example, it is inevitable to cite a primary source, quite often using several translations of the text. Additionally, part of what is known about the past depends on written Viking Age and medieval sources, such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, which in turn is com-

pared to archaeological findings (Batey & Graham-Campbell, 1998, p. 125; McTurk, 2005, pp. 9–10). Because of the inevitability of primary sources, it is interesting to have a look at the distribution of source types without primary sources. Numbers in Figure 8 are even more conclusive. For example, the importance of using other-language Wikipedia articles for the Icelandic Wikipedia becomes even more obvious, as the number is then up to 20 per cent. Another example is the number of academic sources in the German Wikipedia, which is up to 93 per cent without primary sources from 81 per cent when including primary sources.

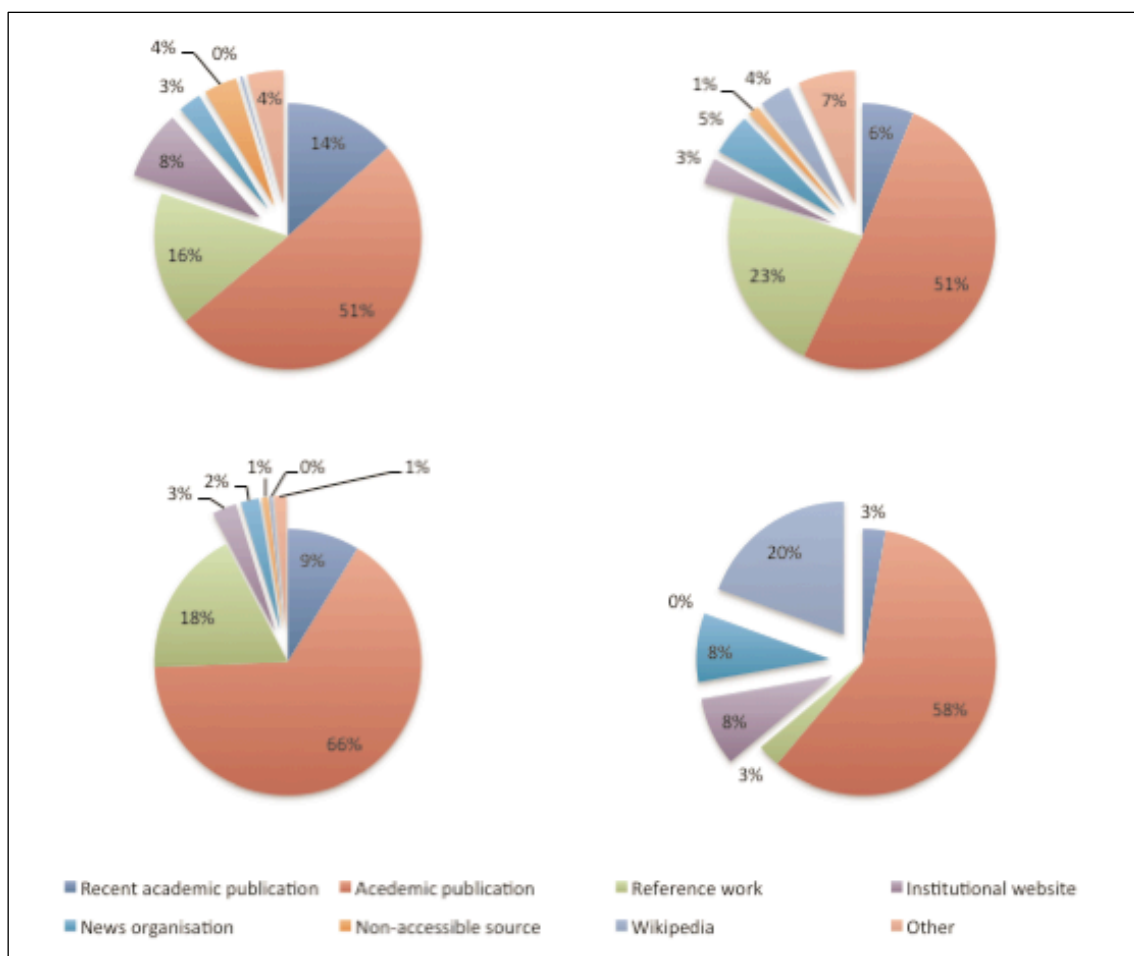


Figure 8: Distribution of source types in the English (upper left), Swedish (upper right), German (lower left) and Icelandic (lower right) Wikipedias without primary sources

That the Icelandic Wikipedia community is capable of producing high quality articles, also in regard to verifiability, can be seen when analysing the *Rúnir* article. The article's reference lists contains 16 sources, which are also used for inline citations ('Rúnir', 2016). While one of those sources has to be categorised as not very reliable, since it is a private website, half of the sources can be categorised as academic publications. Additionally, reference books are used three times. This article is listed as a good article, the second highest level of quality in the Icelandic Wikipedia ('Spjall', 2010). Thus, it can be observed that in a high quality article, the

Icelandic community is using sources according to its own policies and guidelines, just as the other language communities do. The fact that the article has been judged by its community to be a good article shows that Icelandic Wikipedians honour the thorough use of sources to verify content. Interestingly, sources comprise publications not only in Icelandic and English, but also Norwegian, Danish and Swedish.

By comparison, the English *Valhalla* article lists no academic publication particular to the subject of Norse mythology but, apart from two reference books, uses mainly primary sources in its inline references ('Valhalla', 2016). This article is also marked as a good article on the article page itself, being the second highest level of quality in the English Wikipedia ('Valhalla', 2016). Another article from the English Wikipedia, also rated as a good article, is the Ragnarök article, which uses a lot more sources ('Ragnarök', 2016). Among the 24 sources used, the reference list names 15 academic publications, among them three more recent publications. Combined with the use of four reference books, the focus is much more on academic sources than on primary literature. That both articles have been rated good article in the same year shows that the community is not always consistent in their assessment of articles, not always applying the same high standards. Despite this inconsistency, the English Wikipedia still is more consequent in its use of sources over all 30 articles of the sample in comparison to the Icelandic Wikipedia.

The articles' topics of the present sample tempt to rely on primary literature as sources for their content. Yet, the German *Danelag* article demonstrates that it is possible to rely less on primary sources. This article lists fourteen academic publications, one of which qualifies as a recent publication, and one reference book in its references section, while only referencing to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle a few times for inline citations and some verbatim quotes ('Danelag', 2016). Despite its extensive use of academic sources, the corresponding *Danelaw* article in the English Wikipedia does contain a chronology section, which is stating facts that are not easy to verify ('Danelaw', 2016). It can only be guessed that this information directly stems from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, as it reads like an excerpt of a synopsis of that primary source, but the article does not support this assumption by including references for that section. Still, the chronology section is not marked for its lack of sources. In contrast to the German article, the English *Danelaw* article is not rated a good article, rather as start-class, which is the second lowest quality level in the English Wikipedia.

The Swedish article *Vilhelm Erövraren* is graded as an "utmärkt" article, the highest quality level in the Swedish Wikipedia ('Vilhelm Erövraren', 2016). This is reflected in the number of sources used to verify the article's information. Overall the reference list contains 34 sources, which are also used for the vast majority of the 147 inline citations. Of these sources 20 are categorised as academic publications, three as more recent publications and another 14 as reference works. Even though a high amount of the sources are reference works, all except for one source are from the top three categories of the Swedish Wikipedia's source hierarchy. Thus, in the present best-case example the Swedish Wikipedia community at least partly lives up to the demands of its own norms. Only by replacing the reference works by academic publi-

cations and these in turn by more recent publications, the demands of the *Reliable sources* essay could be better fulfilled.

As can be seen in these examples, the credibility creation varies not only between language versions but can also vary within a Wikipedia language edition. The overall numbers extracted from the 30-article sample show that the German language version is most firmly based on reliable sources and Icelandic Wikipedia the least. Still, articles rated as high quality articles predominantly display a very close application of the *Verifiability* policy and *Reliable sources* guideline as these articles display extensive reference lists, mainly containing academic publications. This observation is true for all Wikipedia language versions.

6.2 Templates: Urging Policy Compliance

As described before, templates are used in Wikipedia to alert both readers and editors of the lack of sources or citations amongst others. Templates additionally urge editors to revise and improve articles.

The numbers show that within the present sample, the English Wikipedia is the one with the most frequent use of templates, even though not including any article without sources (see Table 5). The high overall number of inline tags is brought about by a few articles marked with many inline tags, such as the *Beowulf* and *Battle of Stamford Bridge* articles, both tagged about 15 times ('Beowulf', 2016a; 'Battle of Stamford Bridge', 2016a). In light of the fact that the Icelandic sample contains 20 articles without sources, the lack of any verifiability template creates the impression that the Icelandic Wikipedia community is not very active in applying its policies in practice.

Article attribute	English	Swedish	German	Icelandic
Article without source	0	5	3	20
Article / section template ²	4	0	2	0
Inline cleanup tag	53	5	0	0

Table 5: Use of maintenance markers in the Wikipedia language versions

In both the Swedish and German Wikipedia, not the articles without sources are those in which verifiability templates or inline tags are used, but articles that do not use enough sources or sources with low reliability rating. For example, the German *Asgard* article, which is only using two references to a primary source for inline citations, is marked with an article template ('Asgard', 2016). Two articles in the Swedish sample lacking sources are at least marked as stub

² In the present case only templates and inline tags were counted that indicate a verifiability issue.

class ('Anglosaxiska krönikan', 2016; 'Slaget vid Stamford Bridge', 2015) and one article in the German sample is marked as undergoing quality control ('Gleipnir', 2016). That leaves three Swedish and two German articles without a reference list that are not marked with a template at all (such as 'Danelagen', 2016; 'Ginnungagap', 2016). This shows that even though the community is more active than the Icelandic, some articles in need of reliable sources can remain undetected. The relatively advanced age of the Swedish inline tags suggests that their impact is rather low, the newest being from 2015 ('Beowulf', 2016b), the oldest being from 2010 ('Hravnkel Frösgodes saga', 2016)

After a template has been placed, the English Wikipedia community takes varying time to react. In the case of the *Hrafnkels saga* article, which has been marked as lacking inline citations in March 2009, only in the year 2016 new academic sources were added to the references list ('Hrafnkels saga', 2016). But the issue indicated by the tag, the lack of inline citations to prove specific statements has yet to be solved. Similar observations can be made with the *Olaf Tryggvason* article. Onto this article an {{Unreferenced}} section template was placed in July 2012 only to be changed to a template indicating the need for more sources a month later, without any sources having been added ('Olaf Tryggvason', 2012a & 2012b). At the time of writing there has been no activity regarding referencing of the marked section. In the case of the *Battle of Stamford Bridge* article an addition of sources in the marked section can be observed. The paragraph "Location" was marked as unreferenced in late 2010 ('Battle of Stamford Bridge', 2010). Sources were not added before April 2014, but then academic sources were added ('Battle of Stamford Bridge', 2014), whereupon the section template was changed from "no source" to "more sources needed for verification" in November 2015 ('Battle of Stamford Bridge', 2015). Since January 2016 two inline tags indicate two passages, which need a secondary instead of a primary source ('Battle of Stamford Bridge', 2016b).

The English Wikipedia community shows a faster reaction to the June 2011 placement of an {{Additional citations needed}} template in the *Viking Age* article ('Viking Age', 2016a). The first reference was added within four months, in October, with more references added in 2012 ('Viking Age', 2011 & 2012b). The article's references were improved occasionally, with the latest addition in 2016 ('Viking Age', 2016b). Additionally, new information was added using sources, such as in November 2014, with the editor's remark: "I don[']t understand why they were left out. Now I have put many sources there" ('Viking Age', 2014). In the meantime other edits were reverted on the grounds that they introduce unreferenced material. For example, one editor remarks his reversion: "We'd need a source for such a big change" ('Viking Age', 2012a). The article also includes nine inline tags requesting sources for specific statements. One of these tags was added October 2011, while all others were added in 2015 ('Viking Age', 2016a). Though, in contrast to the other three examples, there are more attempts to improve the article, only few sources were added, especially in view of the five years since the placement of the template.

The German Wikipedia community's reaction to a verifiability template is similar to the English behaviour. The *Asgard (Mythologie)* article was marked due to the lack of sources in December 2011 ('Asgard', 2011). Four months later a source was added to the reference list, but was deleted a day later together with a reversion of content changes on the grounds of using an out-dated source from the 19th century ('Asgard', 2012). The same editor changes further information on the same day, pointing out the source in a comment accompanying his edit, without naming the source in the article ('Asgard', 2012). At last in December 2015 two statements were verified by primary literature ('Asgard', 2015). A section of the German article *Runen* has been marked with a template indicating the lack of sources in February 2016 ('Runen', 2016a). In this article reversions deleting information without reliable sources can be observed. Once an earlier edit is reverted with the additional remark that theories have to be verifiable ('Runen', 2016b). All in all, one source has been added since the placement of the template. Yet, this reference together with a new statement has been added to a part of the section in question, which already is quite well referenced. Because the other sections are still lacking sources, the verifiability of that content has not been improved since the placement of the template. Furthermore, the addition of this statement was not undisputed, since one editor did not accept the sources as supporting the corresponding statement in the Wikipedia article, which he even verifies with the page number in that same source ('Runen', 2016c). In the end the original quote was used to reach consensus and use the source ('Runen', 2016d).

Even though these observations have to be treated with caution since they are only a few individual examples, it can be said that templates are preferably used and answered in articles that are already of a better quality. This can be the result of the interest in certain topics, which attracts editors above average, who then in turn try to further improve an already higher-level quality article. An article of less general interest will be less under observation and thus the lack of sources might remain unnoticed. The Wikimedia numbers support that the articles with a (faster) response to verifiability templates are also those with a higher number of observing editors. The German *Runen* article has 129 observers in contrast to the less than 30 of the *Asgard* article (X!'s Tools, 2016c; X!'s Tools, 2016d). The English *Viking Age* article has 239 observers, unmatched by *Hrafnkels saga*, whose template has not been acted upon at the time of the writing, with only 31 observers (X!'s Tools, 2016e; X!'s Tools, 2016f).

6.3 Talk pages: Arguing Referencing Issues

The content and tone of discussions regarding credibility of an article, which amongst others means verifiability of its information, might reveal further differences between the language versions in their application of *Verifiability* and *Identifying reliable sources*. Since the use of sources in an article is not the only concern to be discussed on article talk pages – other issues are which content to include, article structure or language issues – also the amount of source related discussions are an indicator of the importance of referencing. A content analysis is used to get an idea of how much sources play a part in talk page discussions overall, before

some in depth observations regarding the discussion topics will be named. Finally, another discourse analysis is used to examine the tone of discussions about verifiability issues.

Language edition	Inactive talk pages	Number of discussions	"Source" ³	"Reference" ⁴	"Citation" ⁵	"Literature" ⁶
English	0	221	231	113	31	21
Swedish	8	73	175	11	2	16
German	2	161	141	13	27	30
Icelandic	19	12	6	0	2	1

Table 6: Content analysis of talk page discussions of the Old Norse sample

As expected the English editors are the most active in discussing, followed by the German and Swedish editors (see Table 6). But if the sum of the four keywords is related to the number of discussions, the Swedish Wikipedia reaches the highest average with 2,79 keyword namings per article. This leads to the conclusion that Swedish editors discuss the most of the language versions about sources or with the help of sources. English and German discussions follow with 1,79 and 1,29 keyword namings per article. Icelandic editors did not discuss enough to be statistically relevant, which is in accordance with previous observations on Icelandic activity on Wikipedia. Yet, content analysis fails to register the naming of specific sources. An editor referring for example to a reference work might not introduce his comment with "I'm now going to name a source ..." but might just say "see ...". Thus, the actual use of sources within discussions might be different. Therefore, a close reading on the sample basis of up to ten discussions per article is inevitable.

19 of the Icelandic talk pages connected to the articles of the present sample are inactive. On the remaining eleven talk pages many discussions are just statements or unanswered questions and if there are answers, they are few, as for example on the Icelandic *Beowulf* talk page. This page only contains one thread with two answers, the first of which is by the original editor herself ('Spjall', 2009). These conversations are hardly to be called discussions as they are rather used to help each other. In the example of the *Beowulf* talk page the original speaker suspects having violated copyright by publishing a source to the open access WikiSource, which the second speaker confirms and helps by deleting the source from WikiSource ('Spjall', 2009). The same behaviour of helping each other can be observed in two other conversations on the talk pages of the *Brennu-Njáls* saga article and the *Rúnir* article. The only lengthy discussion is

³ Translations of "source": Quelle (German); heimild (Icelandic); källa, plural: källor (Swedish)

⁴ Translations of "reference": Referenz (German); tilvísun, plural: tilvísanir (Icelandic); referens (Swedish)

⁵ Translations of "citation": Zitat (German); tilvitnun, plural: tilvitnanir (Icelandic); citat (Swedish)

⁶ Translations of "literature": Literatur (German); bókmennt (Icelandic); litteratur (Swedish)

about a content question. While the *Vikingar* discussion is not about referencing as such, sources play an important role as they are used to verify information and opinions discussed in the conversation ('Spjall', 2012).

Eight of the Swedish sample's talk pages are inactive. A sample of 73 discussions was gathered from the remaining talk pages. Discussions surrounding source issues often have direct influence on the content of the article in question. For example, content may be deleted if no sources are included to verify information, as in the article on *Njáls saga* ('Diskussion:Njáls saga', 2009) or sources may be requested, as in the example of the *Beowulf* article, in which case after a period of four months without sources being added, the "Spekulationer" section was deleted from the article and included on the talk page, in hope for sources ('Diskussion:Beowulf', 2010a). Verifiability also impacts the discussion of content. In case of the article *Viking*, one editor has questioned the equation of the terms Viking and Varjager, which leads to sources being brought forth in the argumentation both for and against the truth of this equation ('Diskussion:Viking', 2016). Because some sources verify the equation, the statement can still be found in the article. At times, also the quality of sources is discussed. In a discussion on referencing of a statement in the *Beowulf* article, the quality of the respective articles in three different encyclopaedias is reflected upon ('Diskussion:Beowulf', 2010b). Of these three encyclopaedias, only one is still used for the "Datering" statement. The other encyclopaedic sources have been replaced by academic publications ('Beowulf', 2016a). This replacement can be interpreted as a result of the Swedish Wikipedia's demand to improve article credibility by adding sources higher up the source hierarchy.

In the German Wikipedia, which is more active on talk pages, both in amount and length of discussions, the importance of sources can become even more obvious. One editor openly states that he cannot help in adding content to the related *Wessex* article as he has neither own expertise nor any subject literature ('Diskussion:Danelag', 2014). Thereby, this editor indicates that in his opinion, expertise is as helpful in writing good Wikipedia articles as subject literature, which can be used to learn about new topics and reproduce that knowledge in Wikipedia. Another remark regarding credibility is the general demand to use more academic sources instead of private websites ('Diskussion:Völuspá', 2015). A discussion in regard to the *Tyr* article shows that in the German Wikipedia statements are excluded if they are not verifiable, too. In this case the content is not supported by the listed sources and subsequently deleted ('Diskussion:Tyr', 2015). In another discussion, an editor is directly told that his statement cannot be referenced to any source and does not belong in Wikipedia ('Diskussion:Wikingerzeit', 2016). German editors also use sources to stress and verify their opinions. A *Viking Age* discussion exemplifies this. Mainly two participants exchange arguments without referring to sources, before one of the editors includes a source to highlight his point in the eleventh post of the discussion, but by referring to a professor in Old Norse, thus a cognitive authority of the subject, the second editor doubts the reliability of that source (Diskussion:Wikingerzeit/Archiv1, 2015).

Discussions on English talk pages are similar to the German edition. Even though the formulations mostly are less direct, the importance of verifying information is evident. One editor, for example, remarks in a discussion that Wikipedia editors do not have “a choice, when there is already a specific consensus in academia ...” (‘Talk: Vikings’, 2016). Another editor is told that he needs academic sources for his information instead of “amateur websites” (‘Talk:Runes’, 2016a). In a different discussion on the same article it is pointed out that “these articles shouldn't have references as some sort of bonus - they need to be entirely referenced and lock-solidly ...” (‘Talk: Runes’, 2016b). Aside from discussing the need of referencing as such, the English Wikipedia talk pages also employ sources to discuss specific content. This can be seen in a discussion regarding the *Valhalla* article. There the interpretation of a number used in the article is reinforced with references (‘Talk:Valhalla’, 2016). The assessment of sources can be gathered from the same example, as the statement from the first reference is not taken seriously, being just a non-referenced statement in a primary source. This problem is fixed by the naming of a reference work and the subsequent change of wording in the article itself (‘Talk:Valhalla’, 2016). Thus, as in all Wikipedia language versions, content is influenced by discussions between its editors, up to the deletion of information.

Yet, one aspect sets the English talk pages apart from all other language versions. In the head section of the talk page, article achievements are listed, as well as projects, which the article is part of (see Figure 9). With a quick look at this head section, editors and readers can easily gather how the quality of the respective article has been rated. In the case of the depicted example, the article has been rated as a “good quality” article. The list of projects gives an idea of the interest in an article. The more projects are linked to an article and the higher the interest is rated by these projects, the more editors are supposedly connected to the article in question, improving its credibility by regular updating.

Talk:Valhalla

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

+ **Valhalla** has been listed as one of the *Philosophy and religion good articles* under the *good article criteria*. If you can improve it further, [please do so](#). If it no longer meets these criteria, you can *reassess* it.

Date	Process	Result
September 17, 2008	Good article nominee	Listed

? A **fact from this article** appeared on Wikipedia's Main Page in the *"Did you know?"* column on September 11, 2008.

W This article is of interest to the following **WikiProjects**: [hide]

WikiProject Religion / Interfaith	(Rated GA-class, Top-importance)	[show]
WikiProject Norse history and culture	(Rated GA-class, Top-importance)	[show]
WikiProject Mythology	(Rated GA-class, High-importance)	[show]
WikiProject Death	(Rated GA-class, Mid-importance)	[show]

Figure 9: Head section of the *Valhalla* talk page (‘Talk:Valhalla’, 2016)

Regarding the tone of discussions, Icelandic Wikipedians are very polite and realistic as far as the small sample reveals. Most formulations use verbs such as “think” (þykja) or “believe” (halda) as in “Ég held að ...” and “Mér þykir ...” (‘Spjall’, 2012). The original editor in the aforementioned copyright discussion kindly asks for help to correct her supposed error (‘Spjall’, 2009). The editor correcting the mistake calls her supposition “very right”. By agreeing on the correctness of the observation instead of stressing that she made a mistake, a positive atmosphere is created. Even when Icelandic editors are of opposite opinions they use very reserved language. When discussing a definition an editor uses the comparative “more right” (réttara) to share his opinion instead of calling the other opinion “wrong”, and later the same editor uses the subjunctive form “I would like to ...” (Ég mundi gjarnan ...) (‘Spjall’, 2012). Additionally, adjectives are used to assess statements, which are described as “controversial” (umdeild) or “interesting” (athyglisverður) (‘Spjall’, 2011). Concerning intertextuality, Icelandic editors use references in the *Vikings* discussion mainly to academic websites and one example of academic literature to highlight opinions (‘Spjall’, 2012).

Swedish Wikipedia editors are also quite reserved, but can become more direct if necessary. Formulations such as “I wonder if ...”, “you are right” and “in all probability” exemplify this observation (‘Diskussion:Viking’, 2016). In a *Beowulf* discussion, where one editor accuses another of wrongly deleting a good source, the language becomes less reserved when the deed is deemed “not acceptable” (‘Diskussion:Beowulf’, 2010b). Yet, the accusation is not directly directed at the other editor, as the formulation “... then he should know that ...” shows (‘Diskussion:Beowulf’, 2010b). Adjectives are mainly used to assess the quality of sources or statements, which are described as “academic” or “easily accessible” and “lacking sources” respectively (‘Diskussion:Beowulf’, 2010b; ‘Diskussion:Viking’, 2016). Another use of adjectives is to highlight points of view. So, instead of asking for a source, an editor asks which source “explicitly claims just that” (‘Diskussion:Viking’, 2016). By using “explicitly” the stress is on verifying one specific statement, a statement that the editor does not believe can be verified. In all three discussions analysed in detail, intertextuality plays an important role, as specific sources are named to argue for including content or to highlight one’s opinion.

One of the English discussions is especially focused on discussing quality of sources. Even if only counting distinct academic literature (in contrast to primary literature and their translations) four intertexts to sources can be counted, whose applicability in verifying specific Wikipedia content is discussed (‘Talk:Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, 2016). This discussion gives the impression of collaborative production, as the aim is to find better sources or to find the most reliable presentation of information respectively, in contrast to just trying to prove one’s own opinion by the use of sources. The same feeling of positive collaboration can be gathered from another article, where participants try to find a source for the interpretation of a number (‘Talk:Valhalla’, 2016). Because of the form of these discussions, the use of adjectives is restricted to describe the quality of sources, using “scholarly”, “bibliographic” or “academically checked” amongst others (‘Talk:Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, 2016; ‘Talk:Valhalla’ 2016). Only one

post stating the untrustworthiness of a source is subjective: "Haha, wow, yeah, she just flatly states ..." before drawing attention to the fact that another scholar argues for a different interpretation of said number ('Talk:Valhalla', 2016). As a reaction to this statement another source is brought up and the formulation changed in the article to avoid presenting wrong information.

A discussion on the *Danelaw* talk page contrasts with these quite objective discussions. Here one editor is trying to convince other editors by polarising with his use of adjectives. While his contributions are "significant", "positive" and "humble work", the opposing editor is described as "blind revert warring" and "negative" ('Talk:Danelaw', 2016). Additionally, rather provocative formulations are used such as: "...would you whine and cry so bitterly that ..." ('Talk:Danelaw', 2016). Even though confronted with this language, the opposing editor primarily uses adjectives that describe the article's content, such as "unrelated", "poorly sourced" ('Talk:Danelaw', 2016). Still, he states clearly what is asked of a Wikipedian, especially verifiability via reliable sources: "While all contributions to wikipedia are welcome, keep in mind that this is a collaborative enterprise. One should be prepared to offer references for statements in the articles" ('Talk:Danelaw', 2016).

While German discussions on article talk pages are at times also focusing on discussing content with the help of sources, they can become quite direct. In a first example, an edit revert is reverted because no definite sources regarding that statement exist ('Diskussion:Wikinger/Archiv/2', 2016). After the other editor protests, the reverting editor demands sources in an aggressive tone: "Gib hier und jetzt einen Beleg dafür an, ansonsten ist es nach Regeln der de:wp keine valide Aussage für einen Artikel" ('Diskussion:Wikinger/Archiv/2', 2016). Besides demanding the statement to be immediately supported by a source, this editor also refers to the *Verifiability* policy. This editor further strengthens his demand for a source by repeating it, in combination with the threat to use the revert button ('Diskussion:Wikinger/Archiv/2', 2016). He is met with yet another intertext, as the other Wikipedian refers to the same policy, drawing attention to the fact that the editor changing content is the one that needs to include a reference ('Diskussion:Wikinger/Archiv/2', 2016). By using the adjectives "reliable" and "academic", the editor further specifies what kind of source he expects the other editor to use, what in the same time he does himself, when adding three sources to the discussion, proving his point to be right ('Diskussion:Wikinger/Archiv/2').

Another discussion leading to deletion of content because of the lack of sources, ends with the deleting editor citing sources to show that the deleted statement is not true ('Diskussion:Tyr/Archiv', 2015). The deletion occurred already within one week of demanding the statement to be referenced ('Diskussion:Tyr/Archiv', 2015). This is quite a contrast to the Swedish version's month long waiting before deletion of content and also to the observation that reactions on templates take months. The follow-up discussion, which has nothing much to do with the previous argument of reverting content, further shows that adjectives are used to describe sources and statements. Sources are described with adjectives such as "reputable"

and “relevant” (‘Diskussion:Tyr/Archiv’, 2015). Another statement shows an editor’s frustration with the use of private websites as sources instead of academic publications in general (‘Diskussion:Völuspá’, 2015).

All in all, the activity on talk pages resembles activity distribution between the language versions observed before. Already the inactivity of talk pages follows the same pattern, Icelandic being the least active and English the most active community, while Swedish Wikipedians are more active than Icelandic but less than German Wikipedians. The same distribution can be observed of the overall amount of verifiability discussions as well as discussion participation. Except for the Icelandic Wikipedia, where helping each other is the red thread, editors in all other language editions discuss the reliability of sources or discuss content, especially what content to include in articles, with the help of sources. Even though there are exceptions and German editors are more direct in general, the tone of discussions is not specifically different between language versions to argue for a language community to be more strict about verifiability norms.

6.4 User Pages: Authorship in Wikipedia

Based on previous research, the current paper shows that the best way of transferring expertise to Wikipedia articles is the use of academic literature to verify article content. That means that Wikipedia editors need to be actively looking for the best sources to support their contributions to the encyclopaedia. Thus, having expertise of their own can help editors in finding these sources. This kind of expertise can be gained by previous studies or everyday jobs. The following chapter analyses the user pages of the five most active contributors of the four language versions within the present sample of articles. The aim is to determine if these editors present information about themselves that reveals connections to the field of Old Norse studies or if they include other personal information that establishes trust in their contributions to Wikipedia. The full sample of user pages is listed in Appendix D.

Four of the top five active Icelandic editors list their language proficiencies, and all list articles they have worked on, are working on or subjects they are interested in (see for example ‘Notandi:Maxí’, 2015; ‘Notandi:Jóna Þórunn’, 2009). One editor gives her profession, picture included, thus revealing her subject expertise, which is not connected to Old Norse studies since she is an agronomist (‘Notandi:Jóna Þórunn’, 2009). Still, she can be seen as a general expert in Wikipedia as she is listed as an administrator not only for the Icelandic Wikipedia but also for the Norwegian (‘Notandi:Jóna Þórunn’, 2009). Another editor includes the link to his personal website where his areas of expertise are revealed (‘Notandi:Maxí’, 2015). This editor possesses expertise in Old Norse studies, as his digital CV states that he studied Icelandic culture, literature and history amongst others (‘Max Naylor’, 2016). A third editor gives his full name on his user page, allowing for a search on the Icelandic information website [já.is](http://ja.is), which may reveal further information to Icelanders who might be able to match the name with the right entry or even know him. It is interesting to note that all of the top five active editors are administrators

in the Icelandic Wikipedia. This can again be seen as resulting from the overall low number of active Icelandic editors, while also indicating the aforementioned low importance of hierarchy in the Icelandic Wikipedia.

Except for one user, who was blocked and does not exist any longer in the Swedish Wikipedia, the most active Swedish editors reveal their language proficiencies and list interests as well as articles they have been contributing to (see for example 'Användare:Hedning', 2016). Additionally, all editors state the city they live in. Three of the Swedish editors' user pages reveal more information, though none of them lists own expertise that can be connected to the field of Old Norse. One editor lists some of his work experiences, revealing expertise in flora and fauna, which is also the main area of his Wikipedia contributions ('Användare:Dan Koehl', 2016). The fact that he has been the first ever administrator of the Swedish Wikipedia characterises him as a reliable Wikipedian, and as he also includes a picture and a Skype contact, he further personalises his profile, creating trust ('Användare:Dan Koehl', 2016). Another editor lists the number of academic points he gained during his studies, but as the subject remains undisclosed, no area of expertise can be defined ('Användare:Hedning', 2016). A third editor reveals his profession, which being a physicist does not link to the area of Old Norse ('Användare:Andejons', 2013). Yet, in a subpage he lists all literature, predominantly academic publications, which he uses to create content for Wikipedia ('Användare:Andejons/bibliotek', 2016). The importance that reliable sources play in his contributions becomes also clear from an essay he has written on Wikipedia, which includes a section on sources. There he states that he always uses references when introducing new material and that while in his opinion not every single sentence has to be referenced, statements, for which presumably no sources exist, should not be included in Wikipedia ('Användare:Andejons:Käpphästar', 2012). Even though the most active Swedish editors do not possess explicit expertise in the field of Old Norse, they still personalise their profiles in a way that creates trust in their abilities. Additionally, two of the editors have been administrators and a third one still is an active administrator.

While two of the most active users of the German sample do not include any personal information on their user pages, the other three users reveal distinct expertise. One editor is living in Iceland according to her user page and works as a tourist guide during summers, which requires knowledge that can also be used in the current sample's subject area ('Benutzer:Reykholt', 2015). Another user, who is also the only German user to showcase his language proficiencies, draws attention to his reference library containing several hundred books, which are used in Wikipedia contributions ('Benutzer:Fingalo', 2016). He also indicates that his contributions originate in teamwork with his wife, who has researched Icelandic religious history and thus possesses expertise relating to the subject of the present sample ('Benutzer:Fingalo', 2016). Though the third user does not reveal his current profession, he lists Old Norse literature, history and mythology among his research areas, and his status as academic researcher is further strengthened by a list of his academic publications ('Benutzer:Hjard', 2016). Thus, this editor possesses expertise that can directly be used for contributions

in the current sample's subject. Even one of the two editors without personal information on their user pages is able to create trust in his ability, by indicating that he prefers academic literature and has free access to De Gruyters publications via The Wikipedia Library ('Benutzer: Alexander Leischner', 2016). This Wikipedia Library is a project to help Wikipedians "access reliable sources to improve Wikipedia" ('WP:The Wikipedia Library', 2016). Trust is further created by users adding their e-mail address for direct communication ('Benutzer:Hjard', 2016; 'Benutzer:Reykholt', 2015) as well as stating their motivation for contributing to Wikipedia ('Benutzer:Fingalo', 2016).

Surprisingly, the most active editors within the present sample of the English Wikipedia are the least revealing on their user pages in comparison to the other language editions. Three of the five considered users do not include any personal information on their user pages. One of those three editors draws attention to the ideal of Wikipedia to become a universal encyclopaedia ('User:WikieWikieWikie', 2014). This shows what s/he is trying to achieve and why Wikipedia is important. But this statement does not indicate that verifying content with sources is important to this editor. Another user states that s/he edits and creates articles according to the good article criteria, before listing both interests and achievements ('User:Bloodofox', 2016). One of these achievements is an award especially creating trust in this user's strive for credibility as it was awarded for improving articles in regard to their verifiability by excluding non-referenced material ('User:Bloodofox', 2016).

The two editors who reveal personal information possess expertise on the subject area of the current sample. One editor, who also reveals her full name, studied Medieval English history, which equals one of her interests and gives her expertise for Old Norse related contributions in Wikipedia, ('User:Ealdgyth', 2016). Through listing her achievements extensively, especially the lists of her contributions to featured and good articles, trustworthiness is created, as the user's ability of producing good quality content is highlighted. Notably, the user with the deepest expertise is of Icelandic origin, which he reveals on his user page together with his full name ('User:Haukurth', 2014). He discloses his expertise by naming his profession as scholar of Old Norse at the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík ('User: Haukurth', 2014). To verify this claim, he provides a link to his academic publications, which redirects to a list hosted by the University of Iceland. The content of the listed publications corresponds exactly with the subject area covered by the current sample ('Haukur Þorgeirsson', 2016).

Across all language versions, information about Wikipedians on their user pages contrasts with the presumption that contributors are anonymous. This assumption has already been contested since even non-registered users can be tracked by their IP address (Niederer & Dijck, 2010, p. 1376; Reagle, 2010, p. 83). Though there are differences between the Wikipedias in how much and which information editors reveal about themselves, all in all the feeling of trustfulness is created since all language editions contain editors with expertise, which in turn can be used to find sources fitting to the subject. The editors of the German Wikipedia display the deepest expertise in the subject, while Swedish Wikipedians are generally concerned with

sources. Icelandic and English editors reveal less about themselves but still expertise is present. In cases where editors do not reveal expertise regarding Old Norse studies, user profiles are more or less personalised, creating some sense of trust.

6.5 The Comparison Group

All previous observations have been made regarding a specific group of articles with a specific subject, created by a community, which might be a sub-community of practice of Wikipedia. Conclusions drawn from that group might not be transferable to a broader context. An attempt to avoid a restriction of the present conclusions is made in the following by comparing the previous conclusions with a sample of 30 random articles per language. For the corpus of the first sample of random articles see Appendix B.

Unfortunately, the easiest way of collecting random articles via the “random article” algorithm does not work smoothly, as this approach is resulting in too many articles that do not use any sources or are primarily referencing to newspaper articles. This can be explained by the fact that usually no academic literature exists on subjects such as celebrities, sport teams and random villages or on products of popular culture, such as music records and films. In regard to current events it is not possible to refer to academic literature, since its production takes time and thus does not exist yet. Additionally, the random article algorithm seems to prefer articles of lower quality (see Table 7). This becomes either evident by the lack of sources or stub class ratings.

Article attribute	English	Swedish	German	Icelandic
Articles without source	5	7	8	20
Article / section template ⁷	9	0	0	0
Translated articles	0	7	0	2
Stub class articles	10	6	0	16

Table 7: Sources and templates in the first random sample of articles

Most of the articles that do not refer to any source are rated stub class in the Swedish Wikipedia. Even though the Swedish sample does not use templates nor inline tags, the articles are still marked as being of low quality. In the case of the English Wikipedia articles lacking sources are marked with a maintenance template indicating verifiability issues, except for one article that has not been marked with a template ('111 Brigade (Sri Lanka', 2012)) and a second one that has only been marked with a non-verifiability related template ('Kasagi Dam', 2015).

⁷ In the present case only templates and inline tags were counted that indicate a verifiability issue.

While the present sample of Icelandic articles confirms the first sample's high amount of articles without sources as well as the lack of the use of templates, the German sample's unreferenced articles are not once marked with a template. This could either be a result of the articles' content being of less general interest or being contributed by other than predominantly academically trained editors among the most active contributors.

The reaction time to the templates can be described as being similar between the two samples of English articles. In the first sample, the time span since the placing of a template was rather long, indicating a slow reaction. The present sample's most recent template dates to August 2015 ('Excel Homes', 2016) meaning that it is already more than a year old, while the oldest has been placed six and a half years ago in March 2009 ('Brian Haberlin', 2016). In both cases there have neither been sources added nor is there a verifiability discussion to be detected after the placement of the respective template. Thus, the slow reaction to templates is confirmed by the random sample.

As the first group of articles was from the academic field of Old Norse studies, the usefulness of the comparison group would be increased if the sample was taken from random academic subjects. Thereby, the need to use academic literature will be similar and can be compared between the samples. Thus, the random article algorithm was used again to find 30 articles per language that include at least one academic source. To make sure that articles of low and high quality were included in this sample, as they have been in the very first sample, three articles of the day were chosen per language as well as three random articles marked with an {{Unreferenced}} template. In case of the Icelandic Wikipedia, which does only publish articles of the month, not necessarily being of the two highest quality classes, three high quality articles were blindly picked from the associated lists. For the full corpus of articles see Appendix C.

As the articles' subject was random and not necessarily familiar to the author of the present paper, academic sources in this case were defined to be those that either have a clearly academic title, such as "analysis of", are an obvious reference work, bearing a marker such as "encyclopaedia" in the title, or publications of either well-known academic journals or by academic publishing houses, such as Oxford University Press. Online publications by academic institutions, such as university were also accepted as sources granting inclusion into the random sample, since this type of online publications ranks quite high on the source hierarchy.

To allow a fair comparison, primary sources were left out, as they naturally are more prominent in articles with a literary topic, which were part of the original sample. As Figure 10 shows, the overall contribution of sources is similar to that in the original sample. Except for the German language version, which slipped to 74 per cent usage of academic sources, all Wikipedias show a higher amount of academic sources. Again, it is the Icelandic Wikipedia, which uses the least sources, even though in the present sample the amount of academic sources surpasses the 50 per cent mark, which is a result of one guaranteed academic source per article. The English Wikipedia has taken over the first place with 89 per cent usage of academic sources, followed by the Swedish version with 86 per cent.

These slightly higher amounts than in the first sample can be explained with the dominance of natural science (see Table 8), which not only leads to an extended use of academic sources but also to a dominance of recent publications. This is exemplified by the references section of the English *Isopoda* article and the Swedish *Växternas evolution* article ('Isopoda', 2016; 'Växternas evolution', 2016). In the same time, the lower number of natural science topics can explain the lower amount of academic sources in the German articles. Four articles of the German sample are biographies of persons from the more recent past, which include several references to news (see for example 'Elisabeth von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (1912–2010)', 2014). Additionally, an article on a contemporary novel references to newspapers to verify critique of the novel ('Tynset (Roman)', 2016). Together with another article, which rather unnecessarily uses press releases as a source to verify information ('Tamlische Kultur', 2016), these articles can be seen as the reason for the high amount of references to news organisations in the German sample. Thus, a small number of articles are diminishing the overall importance of academic literature within the sample. The high amount of institutional websites in the Icelandic sample can be explained by the fact that Icelandic articles are frequently referring to academic publications on the websites of the University of Iceland, sometimes exclusively depending on them (see for example 'Fjalldalaffill', 2015).

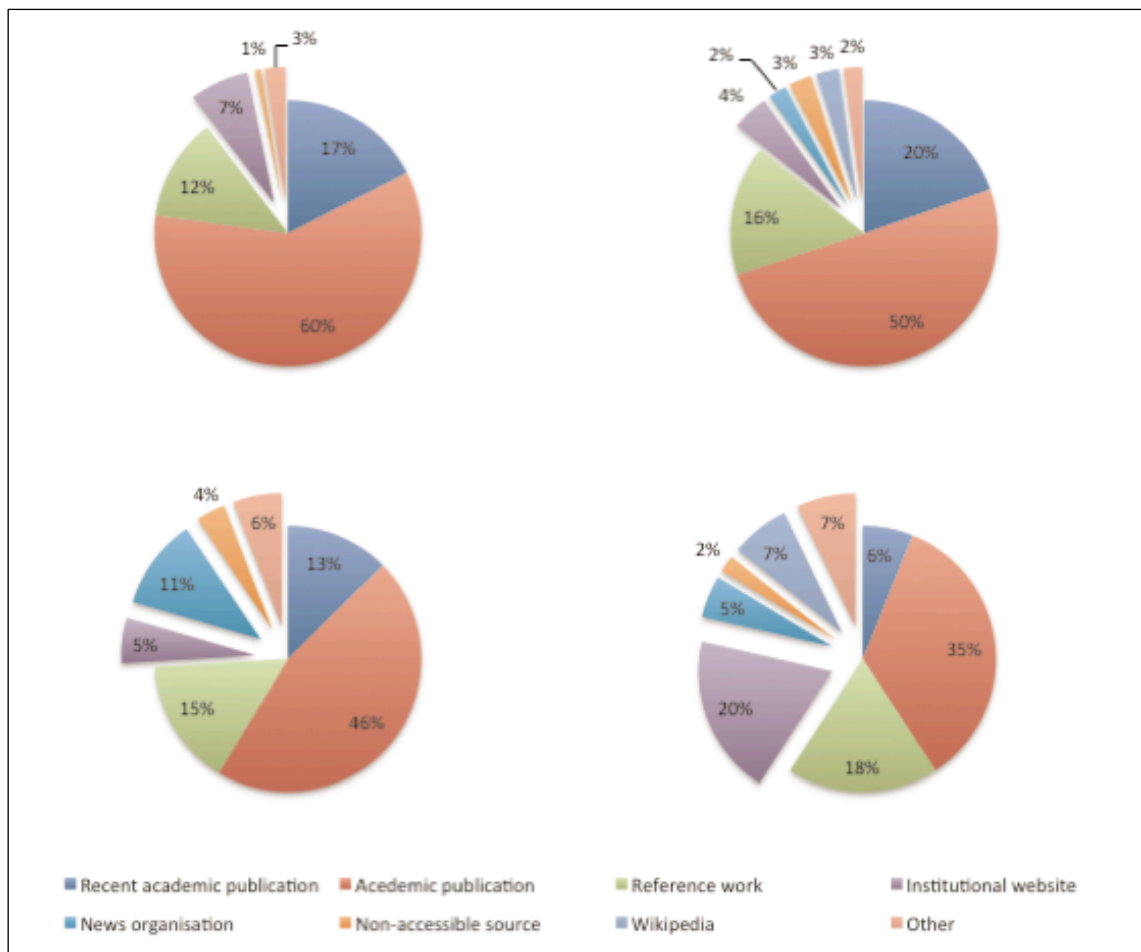


Figure 10: Distribution of source types in the English (upper left), Swedish (upper right), German (lower left) and Icelandic (lower right) comparison group articles

Subject	English	Swedish	German	Icelandic
Natural Science	16	13	8	11
History	9	8	12	12
Culture	4	8	7	5
Geography	1	0	1	2
Technology	0	1	2	0

Table 8: Subject categories of the second comparison group

The discourse analysis of the first sample of 30 articles has already supported observations made in regard to discussions regarding the verifiability rules. Thus, no new findings are expected of a third discourse analysis, which was subsequently left out for the present sample. Yet, the discussions of the present sample were analysed in regard to their amount of verifiability discussions.

The overall number of discussions is far smaller in all language versions in the comparison sample, except for the Icelandic edition (see Table 9). Still, the amount of discussion in the Icelandic sample is too small to be statistically relevant, thereby confirming the conclusion on Icelandic editors' slim activity. Of the other Wikipedias only the English and German editions are statistically relevant. In these the average naming of keywords differs from the original sample. While the German discussions name the keywords slightly less with 0,75 per article compared to 1,29 in the original sample, English editors use the keywords 5,97 times per article instead of 1,79. Even though the numbers could come closer to the original sample with the examination of a higher number of discussions, they still suggest that observations of the behaviour of the first sample have to be taken with care. Reasons for the different discussion behaviour, especially in the English sample, can be seen in the subject and the associated group of editors. Again, a close reading of the content of discussions will reveal more details.

Language edition	Inactive talk pages	Number of discussions	"Source"	"Reference"	"Citation"	"Literature"
English	2	34	135	35	21	12
Swedish	19	29	13	2	1	1
German	9	53	11	2	5	22
Icelandic	18	21	12	0	3	0

Table 9: Content analysis of talk page discussions of the comparison group

The Icelandic Wikipedia is once more not very active with 18 inactive talk pages. Yet, out of 21 discussions overall, some of which use sources to answer questions, four were directly relating to verifiability. While three of those are demanding sources without getting an answer delivering a source, such as the *Vísindaleg aðferð* article ('Spjall:Vísindaleg aðferð', 2009), one discussion explicitly discusses the credibility of a specific source. There, one editor assesses the aforementioned contributions of scholars to the websites of the University of Iceland to be of the same reliability as personal blogs ('Spjall:Hanastélsáhrif', 2009). The answering editor argues for the credibility of these publications as the contributors are scholars of the University, who thus are cognitive authorities transferring their expertise to the source, while admitting that these contributions are not to be compared to the credibility of academic journals ('Spjall:Hanastélsáhrif', 2009). The second editor's opinion is not contested as the discussion returns to the issue of finding a source for the term of the lemma. As these discussions show, Icelandic Wikipedians can become more active regarding referencing issues than the first sample of article discussions suggested.

The other three language Wikipedias display less discussions in comparison to the original sample, but an equally high concern with verifiability. The German Wikipedia is the most active within the current sample, with only nine inactive talk pages and 53 discussions overall (see Table 9). Of these several are amongst others concerned with verifiability, either demanding sources or discussing and defending content by using sources, as in a discussion about an article's categorisation as "worth reading", the German Wikipedia's second highest quality level ('Diskussion:Kleinwüchsige im Alten Ägypten', 2016). The Swedish sample contains 19 inactive talk pages. In the few talk page discussions, Swedish editors mainly refer to sources to discuss the inclusion of content (for example in 'Diskussion:Possitronisk', 2011). While the English sample only contains two inactive talk pages, 21 talk pages just display templates revealing the projects, importance and rating of the respective article, resulting in a low number of discussions (see Table 9). This observation is in consent with previous research that draws attention to differences in talk page usage (Hammwöhner, 2007). Still, the English sample contains 34 discussions with many of them being concerned with verifiability, even if at times only as a side issue, for example when being part of a good article review, where additional sources are demanded ('Talk:Neaira (hetaera)', 2016). Furthermore, the concern of referencing and its influence on other policies becomes clear in English discussions: "... we don't do original research. All we do is present what reliable sources have to say" ('Talk:Ziggurat of Ur', 2016). The analysis of the discussions of the present sample support the original sample in that discussions reveal an overall concern with verifiability of content with the addition that this concern becomes also evident in Icelandic discussions.

Since the comparison group does not consist of a coherent subject, it does not have a specific sub-community of practice and thus there are almost no recurring contributors. Still, looking at the most active editors by numbers of edits reveals a similar picture as in the original sample. For the full list of editors examined see Appendix D. Swedish editors of the comparison group

also personalise their profiles, for instance by revealing their profession or region they live in (see for example 'Användare:Tostarpadius', 2016). One Swedish Wikipedian, who also is the only administrator in this group of editors, lists his library, which he uses for verification of his contributions ('Användare:Nordelch/Bra att ha', 2016). English editors also reveal similar information on their talk pages, including profession and education, as is exemplified by a user who also draws attention to the influence of verifiability on other policies when he reveals that he updates "articles from a NPOV [neutral point of view] using reliable sources" ('User:Ret.Prof', 2016). Both Swedish and English editors often list articles they have worked on, so that it is possible to gather their interests from these contributions as well as the quality of their contributions, which in turn creates trust.

The most active Icelandic editors of the comparison group include two editors, who already have been among the most active editors of the original group, hinting at the small Icelandic Wikipedia community. Of the three new editors, one is not active anymore, but the other two editors display the same pattern of personalising user pages as the original group. Both of them give their full name and education, one editor adding a link to her CV ('Notandi:Gdh', 2013; 'Notandi:Heiða María', 2012). The only group of editors that contrasts with the original sample is the German one. These editors do not give up much personal information, but merely list articles they have worked on (such as 'Benutzer:Gestumblindi', 2016). Only one user includes his e-mail address, which is just visible for registered Wikipedia editors, as well as a quick guide for Wikipedians with tips for editors from his experience and opinions about Wikipedia ('Benutzer:Helge Sternke', 2012). Even though five editors are a small sample of an already small sample of articles, a correlation between less obvious user expertise and the reduced amount of academic sources can be suspected. Because of the difference between the information about German editors between the original and the present sample, conclusions about these editors have to be treated with caution.

With some exceptions, the comparison group can confirm the observations of the original sample. The use of academic sources is similarly high, even though the German Wikipedia dropped from its high standard, with the least amount of academic sources still to be found in the Icelandic sample. The other aspects are also reminiscent of the original sample. Reaction to templates seems to be slow, discussions include arguing for content with the help of sources or demanding sources to verify information and, with the exception of the German edition, editors reveal similar information about themselves on their user pages.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Discussion

Even though the language versions differ in the development of the respective standards and their active application, the overall approach to credibility is similar across the four language versions English, Swedish, German and Icelandic, with some exceptions in the theoretical approach of the German Wikipedia and, as a result of the small community, a very low activity in the Icelandic edition.

The similarity of the approach can be seen in the fundamental principles, which are existent in all four language versions, but differ partly in focus and development. While the German Wikipedia's policies have a strong focus on practical application, the English and Swedish Wikipedias are more focused on a more general formulation of the *Verifiability* policy and highlight the policy's importance. Via the *Identifying reliable sources* principle an implicit hierarchy of sources is created in the English version with an emphasis on the context of application. A scientific article demands different sources than a bibliography of a contemporary musician. The Swedish version of *Identifying reliable sources* creates an explicit hierarchy of sources. Thus, in contrast to earlier findings (Luyt & Tan, 2010, p. 716), Wikipedia policies and guidelines define quite well what a good source is, even though grey areas exist. Only the German Wikipedia is lacking a clear definition of reliable sources, since it does not contain an *Identifying reliable sources* policy. Thus, German editors discuss source reliability in detail one source or type of source at a time. The Icelandic policies are least developed. The community's *Verifiability* policy is even marked as a translation of an early English version with evidently only minor changes, thus hinting at little activity in the Icelandic Wikipedia. With these norms, Wikipedia tries to meet its readers' needs, who often verify Wikipedia content by comparing it to other sources (Rowley & Johnson, 2013, p. 506).

The editors of the different language versions apply these principles within their possibilities: The smaller the language community, the higher the amount of unreferenced articles. Thus, the present research can support the assumption that a Wikipedia community's size can influence its quality (Stvilia et al., 2009, pp. 237–238; Warncke-Wang et al., 2012). The examination of the types of sources used to verify article information shows that the use of academic sources is quite high. The more practical approach of the German policies in combination with discussing nearly each source's credibility separately, leads to the highest amount of academic references. Yet, since the comparison group could not support this high standard it is not possible to conclude an advantage of the German approach. In view of the pressure to update articles by adding references with a better reliability (Sundin, 2011, p. 853), it is surprising at first sight that the use of more recent academic publications is only in the Swedish comparison

sample higher than in the other language versions. But this can partly be explained by the different evaluation of the age of sources between subjects, which in the English policy is drawn attention to by highlighting the importance of context to decide a source's reliability. The lower activity of the Icelandic Wikipedia can be seen in the extent of the sample's articles as well as the use of sources, which is the lowest of all four language editions.

The analysis of talk page discussions shows that verifiability of information is a topic in all language communities. In policy discussions the German edition shows the aforementioned focus on discussing reliable sources, while the English Wikipedia mainly strives to achieve a clear formulation of the policy text. The Icelandic policy discussions are quasi non-existent and the Swedish discusses both sources and formulations but also questions specific to the Swedish Wikipedia, such as regarding automatic translations. Article talk pages discuss the reliability of specific sources and, in accordance with Sundin's observations, use sources to argue for inclusion or exclusion of content (2011, pp. 855–856). In all discussions the distribution of activity follows the same pattern as before, with the English Wikipedia being the most active in discussing verifiability issues, followed by German and Swedish Wikipedias. The Icelandic Wikipedia scarcely discusses sources. Some source discussions are found in the comparison group, while the original sample is rather characterised by editors helping each other to fix problems with specific sources. The discourse analysis does not show great linguistic difference between language editions. German discussions are mostly direct throughout, while the other language discussions are more balanced. These differences, though they can be observed in all discussions, are not striking enough to conclude that verifiability is more important to one language version or the other, nor did the present analysis reveal prominent cultural differences.

The usage of templates supports the previous findings regarding activity. In theory, the English Wikipedia is in advantage, since it offers a great variance of templates, each defining specific verifiability issues. Thereby, a precise marking of the problems is possible, which should make it easy for editors to identify the problem and solve it. Yet in practice, the reactions on the placement of templates, if any, were mostly slow. The German Wikipedia offers only one general template to address all verifiability issues. Reaction to this template is similarly slow as in the English sample. The Swedish Wikipedia, offering the broadest variety of templates after the English Wikipedia, and the Icelandic Wikipedia, offering one template and one inline tag, do not make much use of this possibility even though they display the most articles lacking sources.

Examination of the five most active editors reveals that most of these editors across all language versions personalise their user page. Thereby, trust is created in their ability in creating Wikipedia content. Especially those editors who in one way or the other show that they possess expertise in the topics they contribute to, hence in the case of the original sample expertise in Old Norse literature, history and mythology. The comparison group has supported these observations with the exception of the German group of editors, which displayed far less personal information than in the original sample. This difference reminds to take care when draw-

ing conclusions. Though, editors aside from the most active editors might not reveal much of personal information, the examination of these most active Wikipedians shows that authorship in Wikipedia is not as anonymous as generally assumed. Especially when taking into consideration that it is technically possible to trace IP addresses.

All in all the main difference between the language editions is activity, presumably triggered by the different size of the language communities. The Icelandic Wikipedia displays the least activity in all aspects, except for the self-presentation of its editors. Even though they have the same approach and thus policies and guidelines as the English version, these norms are less developed and their application is far less frequent, as are discussions on verifiability issues. The difference between the other three language Wikipedias is not as big, yet the English Wikipedia is the most active and thus also the most elaborate language version in the theoretical credibility approach. This helps create trust in the English Wikipedia, which supports previous findings of user research (Francke & Sundin, 2010). In practice both the German and the Swedish Wikipedia are applying their standards similarly well to creating content, depending on the article even better.

7.2 Restrictions and Future Work

Because of the nature of the present study as an explorative study, the conclusions drawn from the article samples have to be handled with care. Even though the comparison group supports most of the findings of the original sample, more research has to be conducted to safely transfer the findings of the current small samples to Wikipedia overall. The issue of sample size has also to be transferred to the analysis of the user pages, which had been restricted to five editor profiles per language in the current paper. Furthermore, the present study has focused on academic articles, while Wikipedia contains a large amount of biographies, topics on popular culture, sports and much more, requiring different credibility assessments. Thus, examining a larger sample of articles, including articles on non-academic topics, could help to support and expand the present conclusions. The conclusions presented in the current paper are only valid for Wikipedia articles covering academic subjects.

The restriction on four language versions is another point that has to be expanded before applying the present conclusions to Wikipedia globally. Not only are four out of 283 Wikipedia language editions just a fragment of the Wikipedia universe, the chosen languages are mainly spoken in countries, which might share too many cultural preferences, as they possess geographical, historical and linguistic relations. By examining Wikipedias whose language communities are more distant and do not share any of these aspects, possibly a more diverse approach to verifiability would emerge. This method could also make use of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as previous research has shown that they can correlate with discussion behaviour (Hara et al., 2010, p. 2102). Thus, expanding the sample to more language editions in number and to more diverse underlying communities of practice, both in size and in cultural back-

ground, will give a better idea of differences in Wikipedia's credibility approach. Thereby, also the credibility approach of the current language Wikipedias might be seen in a different light.

In the same time that concentrating on a small sample of academic Wikipedia articles and on a few language editions enables only a partial view of credibility creation, the focus on verifiability, meaning the transfer of expertise of cognitive authorities to Wikipedia content, has the same effect. Expanding research on further aspects of credibility by examining other policies and guidelines or differences of content development between language versions might help to round out the picture of Wikipedia editions' approach to create credibility. Interesting would also be the inclusion of the credibility approach of the mobile Wikipedia version, which at the time of writing does neither display maintenance templates nor inline tags.

Other restrictions concern the methodology of the current paper. Even though simplified to a low number of broad categories, categorisation of sources still has been partly subjective since their content at times can be ambiguous. For example, a translation, categorised as primary work, could include an analysis or academic introduction to the translation. The other way round, an introductory work could include original research. A second author categorising the sources and comparing the results could solve this issue. In cases of great difference, the source in question could be examined more closely.

Aspects such as verifiability templates, which had been placed and deleted again after references were added, are not detected with the present approach because of its concentration on articles and their talk pages, while only examining version histories when templates or specific discussions suggest further insights by such an analysis. Thus, future research of version histories could identify more activities to verify information and thereby help giving a more complete overview of the language versions' verifiability approach. Research of version histories could also expand Pfeil et al.'s observations of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the online world (Pfeil et al., 2006) to their influence on verifiability edits. A problem that this research would still have to solve in the online world is the entanglement of several cultures within a single language community. As has been noted earlier, English can be seen as the lingua franca of the World Wide Web, making it possible for non-English users to contribute. Even within one of the current samples, an Icelandic editor was ranked among the five most active contributors in the English Wikipedia. Therefore, to be able to conclude more on the specific cultural influences on the respective credibility approaches, future research would have to treat multilingual editors and same-language editors with different cultural backgrounds separately.

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Appendix C: Comparison Group

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- Magyarab.** (2015, January 18). Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Magyarab&oldid=29331078>
- Mogens Andersen.** (2016, January 4). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mogens_Andersen&oldid=32224304
- Musculus coccygeus.** (2015, November 12). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Musculus_coccygeus&oldid=30991271
- Ode till en grekisk urna.** (2015, September 26). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ode_till_en_grekisk_urna&oldid=30600963
- Peroryctes broadbenti.** (2013, March 14). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Peroryctes_broadbenti&oldid=20669976
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- Positronisk.** (2013, March 12). Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Positronisk&oldid=20370551>
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- Rudolf Höss.** (2016, August 27). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rudolf_H%C3%B6ss&oldid=36608566
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- Strimmig buskekorre.** (2016, June 5). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Strimmig_buskekorre&oldid=35538604
- Typ III-sekretionssystemet.** (2016, August 8). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Typ_III-sekretionssystemet&oldid=36538413

Växternas evolution. (2016, September 29). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=V%C3%A4xternas_evolution&oldid=37400278

William Howe, 5:e viscount Howe. (2015, July 26). Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=William_Howe,_5:e_viscount_Howe&oldid=30277154

Zulu. (2016, August 21). Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Zulu&oldid=36584564>

Appendix D: User Profiles

All user pages retrieved 9 October 2016.

Original Sample

English Editors

User:Bloodofox. (2016, August 22). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Bloodofox&oldid=735739937>

User:Dbachman. (2006, October 3). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Dbachman&oldid=79248087>

User:Ealdgyth. (2016, September 12). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Ealdgyth&oldid=739047349>

User:Haukurth. (2014, September 6). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Haukurth&oldid=624457620>

User:WikieWikieWikie. (2014, February 4). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:WikieWikieWikie&oldid=593857385>

German Editors

Benutzer:Alexander Leischner. (2016, July 10). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Alexander_Leischner&oldid=156010650

Benutzer:Fingalo. (2016, September 26). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Fingalo&oldid=158236853>

Benutzer:Hjard. (2016, August 24). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Hjard&oldid=157349919>

Benutzer:Reykholt. (2015, March 22). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Reykholt&oldid=140179590>

Benutzer:Sigune. (2009, May 18). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Sigune&oldid=60170614>

Icelandic Editors

Notandi:Akigka. (2015, October 15). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Akigka&oldid=1513344>

Notandi:Cessator. (2012, July 26). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Cessator&oldid=1267829>

Notandi:Jóna Þórunn. (2009, May 18). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:J%C3%B3na_%C3%9E%C3%B3runn&oldid=680183

Notandi:Maxí. (2015, November 20). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Max%C3%AD&oldid=1517327>

Notandi:Moi. (2012, July 2). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Moi&oldid=1258330>

Swedish Editors

Användare:Andejons. (2013, June 10). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Andejons&oldid=21696983>

Användare:Dan Koehl. (2016a, September 30). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Dan_Koehl&oldid=37408536

Användare:FöredettaMH. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anv%C3%A4ndare:F%C3%B6redettaMH>

Användare:Hedning. (2016b, May 10). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Hedning&oldid=34726380>

Användare:Peterappelros. (2016c, August 4). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Peterappelros&oldid=36514196>

Comparison Group Sample

All user pages from the comparison group retrieved

English Editors

User:Choemin99. (2013, October 15). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Choemin99&oldid=577353976>

User:Cwmhiraeth. (2016, October 5). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Cwmhiraeth&oldid=742786750>

User:Deatonjr. (2008, May 29). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Deatonjr&oldid=215816460>

User:Peter coxhead. (2016, October 8). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Peter_coxhead&oldid=743182614

User:Ret.Prof. (2016, September 19). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Ret.Prof&oldid=740161361>

German Editors

Benutzer:Carstor. (2014, June 14). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Carstor&oldid=131293271>

Benutzer:Dieter Schuh. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benutzer:Dieter_Schuh

Benutzer:Gestumblindi. (2016, August 22). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Gestumblindi&oldid=157297615>

Benutzer:Helge Sternke. (2012, September 11). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Helge_Sternke&oldid=107930264

Benutzer:Zenit. (2014, May 31). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Benutzer:Zenit&oldid=130910337>

Icelandic Editors

Notandi:Akigka. (2015, October 15). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Akigka&oldid=1513344>

Notandi:Cessator. (2012, July 26). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Cessator&oldid=1267829>

Notandi:Gdh. (2013, November 22). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Gdh&oldid=1434168>

Notandi:Heiða María. (2012, February 22). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://is.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Notandi:Hei%C3%B0a_Mar%C3%Ada&oldid=1193614

Notandi:Sigrunn. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://is.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notandi:Sigrunn>

Swedish Editors

Användare:Ettrig. (2016, August 21). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Ettrig&oldid=36584352>

Användare:Knoppson. (2011, August 18). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Knoppson&oldid=14748947>

Användare:Nordelch. (2016, May 1). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Nordelch&oldid=34334021>

Användare:PH Edgren. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anv%C3%A4ndare:PH_Edgren

Användare:Tostarpadius. (2016, July 29). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <https://sv.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anv%C3%A4ndare:Tostarpadius&oldid=36481771>

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich versichere, die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig ohne fremde Hilfe verfasst und keine anderen Quellen und Hilfsmittel als die angegebenen benutzt zu haben. Die aus anderen Werken wörtlich entnommenen Stellen oder dem Sinn nach entlehnten Passagen sind durch Quellenangabe kenntlich gemacht.

Hamburg, 22. Oktober 2016

Ort, Datum

W.R.Zim

Unterschrift