

**2nd Interdisciplinary Symposium of
the Research Co-operation “European
Cultures in Business Communication”:
*Dynamics, Development and Processuality in
Business Communication*
in Aarhus (Denmark) on 23.-24. August 2002**

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In spring 2000 the international and interdisciplinary research co-operation "European Cultures in Business Communication" was set up at the Finish-Swedish Åbo Akademi University in Åbo/Turku. Members from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, and the Netherlands were joined by speakers from other European countries at the two conferences held so far. The research co-operation aims at scientific exchange and project work on interdisciplinary solutions for specific problems and business theoretical methods applying linguistic, communication theoretical, psychological and business -scientific/ oriented methods.

The focus has been on specialised communication, intercultural training, internal and external business communication, multilingualism/language policies in companies and advertising/marketing. Two collective volumes have been published (Janich/ Neuendorff 2002, Schmidt 2002); the latter being the conference volume of the first joint conference in Turku, Finland in September 2001 (cf. Engberg 2001, Nielsen 2002).

The second international conference on "Dynamics, Development and Processuality in Business Communication" held at the Aarhus Business School (Denmark) in August 2002 showed that despite the wide range of topics there are close ties between individual areas of business communication as well as different relevant research questions which in their different perspectives of business communication lead to multi-facetted results.

Several of the presentations dealt with advertising communication: *Mailings from a contrastive point of view: Advertising letters in Denmark and Germany*, by Martin Nielsen (Aarhus School of Business) put forward initial definitions and proposals for a typology of advertising letters/mails and on the basis of a German-Danish corpus and initial results, he presented possible research questions. *When Ads Tell Stories: Finish Ads in flux* by Dagmar Neuendorff (Åbo Akademi University) designed a typology of TV spots showing recent developments towards an "accelerated society" marked by an increase in advertisements and speed in advertising presentation. Also on the subject of narrativity *The Bear and the Bull. Narrative sequences in financial communication* by Claudia Böttger (Hamburg University) analysed the interdependence between the dominance of a specific text form and a company's economic success based on a systemic- functional approach. Samples were German letters to shareholders and English translation.

The close ties between advertisement and corporate culture were another focus. *Theo Bungarten* (Hamburg University) presented an example of an advertising campaign gone wrong due to a semiotic misunderstanding in *Advertisements for the ,Hamburger Royal TS'. McDonald's corporate culture in conflict with its surrounding culture*. The analysis of the relationship between corporate and the surrounding culture identified different types of competence that are crucial for a successful company. *Cultural anchoring as precondition for persuasive texts in the company's external communication* by Christopher Schmidt (Åbo Akademi University) examined the links between a company's external presentation/ advertisements, e.g. on websites and Corporate Identity (CI) applying a cognitive metaphor theory. Also based on cognitive linguistic methods, *Regina Hänchen* and *Johannes Schnitzer* (Business School Vienna) analysed *Metonymies in Business Language* with samples from the business pages of *Der Standard*, *Le Figaro* and *El País* which suggested that irrespective of culture and language barriers similar decoding processes of cognitive metonyms are important for business news texts.

Multilingualism and foreign language policies in companies and their relevance to external and internal corporate communication was another central topic. Focussing on external corporate communication in *Total Quality Management and Language Quality*, *Marianne Grove Ditlevsen* (Aarhus School of Business) presented an ongoing project at the Business School's Centre for Science, Communication and Mediation. Her pilot study showed that there is a gap between language awareness in companies and the theoretical assessment of its relevance in research and the need for research projects to take into account the wishes of companies for operationalisation, assessment criteria and clear concepts for optimisation. *Nina Janich* (Regensburg University) presented a comparative language research programme on European language cultures according to different parameters in *Comparative Language Culture Research - and What it Has to Offer to Business. Language Choice in Multinational Companies. Reflections on the Development of internal Communication in large groups* by *Horst Schumacher* (University of Paris/Sorbonne) provided evidence that English as the dominant lingua franca often leads to conflicts in internal corporate communication and to more importance

being attributed to international corporate identities rather than country of origin principles.

Two papers focused on group communication and excerpts from internal corporate communication. *Culturally determined self- image schemes in e-mail communication* by Rogier Crijns (University of Nijmegen) showed that group dynamics arise out of an interplay of formulating images of self and others, role stereo typifications, self revelations, and carrying out conflicts. Jan Engberg (Aarhus School of Business) illustrated in "*Specialised language – a dynamic and group-related epistemological instrument in specialised communication*" that *specialised language* as an instrument in the sense of a conventionalised usage of *specialised communication* needs to be distinguished from specialised communication denoting an individual's activity. By defining specialised communication as a communicative field in which everyday language competence is used and which when practised implies that knowledge about specialised usages of language is acquired, this perspective on specialised language entails a new perspective on specialised language competence.

The conference volume is due to be published by DUV at the end of 2003 as the third volume in the series „Europäische Kulturen in der Wirtschaftskommunikation“ ("European Culture in Business Communication").

The next conference on "Corporate Identity and Corporate Culture at the intersection between external and internal corporate communication, national culture and globalisation" will be held at the University of Regensburg at the beginning of November 2003.

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