Starting up a business

- a communicative framework for defining and reaching a target audience

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1. Introduction

Communication is not only a fundamental aspect of our everyday lives but also an integral part of any professional activity within the world of business. Communication is thus the basis of all social interaction and is always realised through the exchange of messages, expressed either in the form of verbal or nonverbal signs. Every sign conveys a certain meaning depending on the context in which the communication takes place, in the sense that a specific context determines how a message is interpreted. The notion of context, which functions as the basic setting for any communicative event, is quite complex in that it includes comprehensive concepts such as discourse and culture that are particularly important in connection with communication.

We find the notions of communication, discourse and culture to be closely linked to one another. As a way of gaining the best possible understanding of how communication works, we will therefore start our thesis with a detailed discussion of communication, followed by a detailed discussion of discourse analysis and culture in order to support and elaborate on the concept of communication. Together, these three notions lay the foundation for a discussion of how to communicate effectively and successfully, both in everyday situations and in professional settings.

The purpose of our thesis is to provide a framework for determining how a start-up communications agency\textsuperscript{1} may define and reach its target audience. In order to narrow down the scope of our thesis, we have chosen to present a fictional Danish communications agency, innoVisions, which targets both the Danish and the British markets, however with emphasis on the British market. The above-mentioned framework will be based on a theoretical discussion of selected aspects of communication, discourse analysis and cultural studies and will primarily be dealt with from a communicative perspective. However, it will also be necessary to include certain marketing-oriented theories due to the fact that it is not possible to reach a target audience without first studying the marketing environment of the company as well as analysing and defining the market segments to be targeted. The most useful tools for

\textsuperscript{1} When 'communication' is used as part of a compound, it is either written as 'communication' or 'communications'. Based on the most commonly used combinations found in literature concerning the subject, we have evaluated each case in order to determine which form to use.
this purpose are related to marketing, which is why the best approach includes theories found
within this field.

We will begin our thesis by examining the basic features of communication, including a
discussion of selected aspects that we consider most relevant in connection with defining
communication. Since the study of communication has divided researchers into two different
schools of thought, i.e. the process school and the semiotic school, we will base our
discussion on these two theories. With respect to semiotics, it should be noted that this
discipline may also be referred to as ‘semiology’; however, in this thesis we will only use
‘semiotics’ as this is the most commonly used term in English-speaking countries.

Following the discussion of communication, we will examine the notion of discourse analysis.
Since this is considered a very comprehensive field with numerous theoretical approaches, we
have chosen to focus on the following three approaches: speech act theory, interactional
sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. The reason for including speech act
theory is that an understanding of this approach is very helpful in connection with making
communication as effective and appropriate as possible, thus ensuring that
miscommunications are kept to a minimum. With respect to interactional sociolinguistics and
the ethnography of communication, these approaches will be included because they provide a
detailed insight into the notion of context as well as an account of how language is used in
social and cultural contexts.

In order to understand the importance of culture in connection with communication and
discourse, the next part of the thesis will include a thorough discussion of this subject. From
an overall perspective, the notion of culture will be examined in accordance with
anthropological research since cultural anthropology deals with culture from a humanistic
point of view. In other words, cultural anthropologists seek to understand the cultural
differences and similarities of contemporary peoples throughout the world. Their research
thus provides a sound basis for understanding how to communicate effectively, not only
within one specific culture but also across cultures. This knowledge is particularly important
in connection with the aim of our thesis since we will focus on a Danish company
communicating with a foreign target audience.
innoVisions will not be presented in much detail since such information is not significant to the actual purpose of the thesis. However, it is relevant to give a short introduction to the main characteristics and values of the company as these are important elements in the development of the company’s communications products (as an example, we have chosen to produce a product sheet, which is enclosed in the thesis as appendix 1). After having accounted for the basic features of innoVisions, we will discuss selected aspects that we find important for the company to take into consideration when communicating with the public and defining and reaching a target audience. These aspects will include the company’s mission statement, corporate objectives, SWOT analysis, marketing objectives and strategies.

Furthermore, we will present selected market segmentation bases that provide useful tools for a company when segmenting markets. These segmentation bases include demographic, psychographic, geographic and behavioural segmentation. To some researchers, benefit segmentation is a segmentation base independent of and with no connection to behavioural segmentation. In this thesis we have, however, chosen to include benefit segmentation as a variable to behavioural segmentation since it is closely related to the product itself as are the rest of the variables used in behavioural segmentation. The outline of the different bases for segmentation will be followed by a short analysis that will determine which segmentation bases are best suited for innoVisions.

In the last part of the thesis, we will provide guidelines as to how a company may reach its target audience. In this connection we will start by describing the various buyer-readiness stages at which the customers within each segment may be at any given time. This will be followed by an account of the different communications objectives that a company may choose to concentrate on. Although the buyer-readiness stages might seem very similar to the communications objectives, we have chosen to include both, since buyer-readiness stages focus on the customers, whereas the communications objectives focus on the company. Again, we will use this knowledge to provide a short analysis of the communications objectives that innoVisions should concentrate on as well as the objectives that have been employed in the product sheet produced for innoVisions.
Following the above-mentioned analysis, we will consider the rhetorical strategies that a company may use in order to reach its intended target audience. Here, we will include verbal as well as nonverbal rhetorical strategies as both are important in any communication situation. This discussion will be based on the theories introduced in the chapters dealing with communication, discourse analysis and culture. In the section on verbal rhetorical strategies, we have chosen to elaborate on these theories by including the three variables of register, i.e. field, mode and tenor, since they provide a sound basis for distinguishing between the different components of a text. These variables are thus very useful in connection with producing successful communication products. With regards to the nonverbal rhetorical strategies, these are primarily based on the theory of semiotics, however with emphasis on the role of semiotics in marketing. The reason for including the discipline of ‘marketing and semiotics’ is that it is a useful tool for establishing how a company may communicate effectively within different markets in terms of various signs, symbols and codes. The account of the verbal as well as the nonverbal rhetorical strategies will include a brief analysis of the different strategies employed in the product sheet.

Overall, the subjects of communication, discourse analysis and culture will be thoroughly discussed in accordance with the viewpoints of various researchers within each specific field. The first part of the thesis should thus be considered a basis for the remaining part. The different theories included in the last part of the thesis will not be discussed in detail, but will instead be used for the purpose of analysing innoVisions as well as the product sheet enclosed.

1.1. Theory

In order to realise the purpose of this thesis, the issues raised in the introduction will be discussed on the basis of selected theories relevant for this purpose. The following will account for the theories employed within each chapter.

The theoretical discussion of communication is primarily based on the works of John Fiske, Roy Harris, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, Roman Jakobson, Umberto Eco, Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. The reason for including John Fiske is that he regards communication as being divided into two schools; the process school and the semiotic school.
With this approach, Fiske provides a good overview of the comprehensive field of communication. As regards Shannon and Weaver, they are included in the discussion of communication because they provided the first model of communication to be widely acknowledged. This model has since been developed and discussed by numerous theorists, and new models have emerged. One of these was developed by Jakobson, and due to his profession as a linguist he was more concerned with the internal structure of the message than Shannon and Weaver were, thus taking into account matters such as meaning and function of communication. The section on semiotics is mainly based on the theories of Peirce and Saussure since these are regarded as the founders of this discipline. They do, however, have different approaches to semiotics, and consequently the discussion between the two therefore is relevant.

The chapter on discourse analysis takes selected approaches presented by Deborah Schiffrin as a starting point. Schiffrin discusses six approaches to discourse analysis of which we have chosen to focus on the following three: speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. In this chapter, the discussion of these approaches is mainly based on scholars central to each approach: John R. Searle and John L. Austin in speech act theory, John J. Gumperz and Erving Goffman in interactional sociolinguistics and Dell Hymes in the ethnography of communication. The reason for choosing these particular researchers is that they are all considered the founders of each respective theory. In the definition of discourse, the viewpoints of theorists such as Teun A. van Dijk, James Paul Gee and Neil Thompson are included since they all provide a clear account of the many different elements that constitute the comprehensive field of discourse.

The chapter regarding culture is primarily based on selected theories developed by cultural anthropologists as presented by Gary P. Ferraro, Neil Thompson, Nigel J. Holden and Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasinski. The reason for basing this chapter on the works of these theorists is that they give a detailed description of culture and cross-cultural communication. In connection with communicating across cultures, it is relevant to include Geert Hofstede since he provides a good basis for understanding and measuring cultural differences. In the discussion of the selected theories, a number of other researchers are included in order to demonstrate how the notion of culture has developed over time and how vast an area of study
it is. Finally, the discussion of culture also includes certain viewpoints taken from the Internet, again due to the fact that culture is a constantly changing phenomenon, which means that new theories and definitions will continuously emerge.

Chapter 5, concerning *The Marketing Planning Process*, is primarily based on theories developed by Malcolm McDonald and Adrian Payne since these two theorists have been essential to the development of this model. However, the section dealing with the SWOT analysis is mainly built on theories presented by Michael J. Croft, Sally Dibb and Lyndon Simkin because these theorists provide a clear and concise outline of how to understand and carry out this analysis.

The chapter on how to define a target audience primarily includes theories presented by Dibb and Simkin, Michel Wedel and Wagner Kamakura, Barrie Gunter and Adrian Furnham and Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong, John Saunders and Veronica Wong. The reason for selecting these theorists is that they provide a good insight into the different aspects of market segmentation. For instance, where Kotler et al. provide a clearly structured introduction to market segmentation, Gunter and Furnham go into more detail with the different bases for segmentation.

Chapter 7 deals with issues related to reaching a target audience. The section concerning buyer-readiness stages is mainly based on Kotler et al. since they provide a well-structured overview of the subject. Following this, the theories of Patrick De Pelsmacker, Maggie Geuens and Joeri Van den Bergh are employed in order to describe the different communications objectives in the DAGMAR model. This model is included due to the fact that it provided the first widely acknowledged overview of the different communications objectives that any company should pay attention to.

The next section in chapter 7 is concerned with the rhetorical strategies that a company may employ as a means of reaching its target audience. As regards the verbal rhetorical strategies, these are discussed on the basis of Jakobson’s model of communication. The focus is on the constitutive factors of code and context as well as the different functions of communication. The reason for emphasising code and context is that these elements are particularly important
to the understanding of a message. Furthermore, in order to elaborate on the notion of context, Halliday’s theory of register analysis as presented by Peter Collins and Carmella Hollo is employed since it provides a detailed account of the different levels of text realisation, i.e. field, mode and tenor. Turning to the nonverbal rhetorical strategies, these are mainly based on the theory of semiotics due to the fact that this discipline is a comprehensive study of signs, symbols and meaning. Furthermore, the discipline of marketing and semiotics is employed in order to provide an understanding of communication in relation to the marketing of products and services. Overall, the focus is on theories developed by Peirce and Saussure, elaborated on by Fiske and Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. Again, Halliday’s notion of ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions is included since it provides a good insight into the way semiotic systems work.

1.2. Methodology

Our approach will mainly be theoretical since the purpose is to provide a framework for defining and reaching a target audience, and the basis for this is, as already mentioned, a theoretical discussion of communication, discourse analysis and cultural studies.

In order to develop a communicative approach to realising the purpose of this thesis, a thorough discussion of communication, discourse analysis and culture is included as these three entities are essential to understanding the process of communication. In the first part of the thesis, the selected theories are described in order to account for the most important aspects within each field. Following this description, we will elaborate even further on the different subjects by comparing and contrasting the theories employed. This elaboration gives a deeper understanding of each field as it helps to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the individual theories. In the second part of the thesis, we will use the theories discussed in the first part together with other relevant theories in order to analyse innoVisions and the product sheet, which will be produced on the basis of the theories presented in our thesis.
1.3. Delimitation

Since the areas covered in this thesis are more or less comprehensive, a discussion of all aspects within each area would be beyond the scope of the thesis. Therefore, it has been necessary for us to make certain choices as to which aspects to leave out. In the following, we will account for the most central of these choices.

In the discussion of communication, we chose to focus on Jakobson as a supplement to Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication. In this connection we considered including other models that also covered the aspects lacking in Shannon and Weaver’s model. One of these was Lasswell’s model (1948), which takes the basic shape of Shannon and Weaver’s model and applies it specifically to the mass media. However, what Lasswell lacks compared to Jakobson is the concept of meaning; instead he focuses on the effect of the message. Therefore, since meaning is central to the understanding of communication and thus to realising the purpose of the thesis, we decided only to include Jakobson’s model of communication.

With regards to discourse analysis, our focus was on three of Schiffrin’s approaches, namely speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. The reason for not including the remaining three approaches, i.e. pragmatics, conversation analysis and variation analysis, is that they do not focus on the use of language as socially and culturally relative to the same extent as the selected approaches do. The perception that language is constitutive of social and cultural life is particularly relevant in connection with the process of communicating effectively. The three approaches that we have included thus provide a good basis for the subsequent discussion of the rhetorical strategies.

In the discussion of culture and cross-cultural communication, we considered including the dimension of time since this is particularly relevant in connection with doing business across cultures. However, we decided not to include this aspect due to the fact that it only becomes really important later on in the process when physically conducting business with other cultures. Similarly, we might have elaborated on the concept of globalisation versus
localisation, but we decided against this due to the fact that such a discussion would be more concerned with the actual product(s) than with the target group.

Finally, with respect to the marketing planning process, we decided not to include all nine stages due to the fact that a full account of the marketing planning process would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Also, the stages that we have chosen to leave out are not of direct relevance to realising the purpose of the thesis since these include e.g. financial aspects and tools for measurement and review.

1.4. Structure

As mentioned in the introduction, the thesis is divided into two parts. The first part consists of chapters 2-4 regarding communication, discourse analysis and culture and should be considered a basic framework for both defining and reaching a target audience. This part is fundamental to the second part consisting of chapters 5-7, which constitutes frameworks for defining and reaching a target audience. Together, the two parts form one overall framework, thus realising the purpose of the thesis.

Chapter 2 focuses on communication in its broadest sense, starting with an account of the basic differences between the process school and the semiotic school. This discussion is followed by a more detailed account of the process school as well as a discussion of the basic features of communication. The concluding section in this chapter provides an elaboration on the semiotic school.

Chapter 3 is concerned with discourse analysis and starts with a definition of discourse. The following sections of the chapter are a thorough discussion of three selected approaches to discourse analysis, i.e. speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. The final part of the chapter is a comparison between the three approaches, thus summing up the chapter.

In chapter 4, the concept of culture is defined from an anthropological point of view. In this connection, the role of culture is studied along with cultural differences and universals.
Following this, the area of cross-cultural communication is outlined together with a discussion of how to manage cultural diversities with the aim of providing guidelines for effective cross-cultural communication.

In contrast to part one of the thesis, part two is approached from a more practical angle in that chapters 6 and 7 include analyses of innoVisions and the product sheet. This part is introduced by chapter 5, which discusses the basic communication strategies that are important in order for a company to communicate effectively. The chapter starts with a brief presentation of innoVisions, followed by a discussion of selected elements of the marketing planning process.

Chapter 6 focuses on the process of defining a target audience on the basis of market segmentation. The subjects discussed are, among others, the concept of market segmentation and the different bases for segmenting markets. The concluding section of the chapter consists of an analysis of the segmentation bases most relevant to innoVisions.

Chapter 7 is focused on reaching a target audience on the basis of various communicative strategies. The communications objectives are considered, followed by a discussion of the verbal as well as the nonverbal rhetorical strategies. As already mentioned, this chapter includes an analysis of innoVisions as well as the product sheet.

1.5. Criticism of sources

The following will provide a brief discussion of the main sources used throughout the thesis. We will make a critical assessment of these sources, taking into account the advantages and/or disadvantages of each source.

With regards to Fiske, we have chosen to include his book ‘Introduction to Communication Studies’ since he provides a detailed and well-structured approach to the two main schools in the study of communication, i.e. the process school and the semiotic school, including some of the most important theorists from each school of thought, e.g. Shannon and Weaver, Peirce and Saussure. Fiske’s theories have therefore helped us gain an understanding of the comprehensive field of communication, which has been useful in the process of building the framework mentioned in the introduction. Also, some of Harris’ viewpoints regarding the
study of language and communication have been included as he proposes an explanatory account of communication, which includes some of the central topics within this field. However, we find his discussion of the subjects to be rather subjective in that he expresses his own opinions quite clearly, and it has therefore been necessary to be particularly critical in the discussion of his book ‘Signs, Language and Communication’.

Turning to Schiffrin, her book on discourse analysis ‘Approaches to Discourse’ has provided a solid basis for our discussion of discourse in that she examines a number of essential approaches to this subject in a well-structured manner. However, we find that her style of writing makes her book rather difficult and complicated to read in that the overall meaning of the theories presented is not immediately intelligible. As to van Dijk, he does not discuss the different approaches to discourse in detail but instead provides a good overview of the various aspects of discourse through which he complements the work of Schiffrin. Finally, Gee’s view on discourse analysis comprises various elements from several different approaches, thus offering an introductory overview of the notion of discourse. As opposed to Schiffrin, Gee presents the subject in a manner that is easily understood. Based on the above, we find it safe to say that together these theorists give a complete account of the field of discourse analysis.

Concerning Ferraro, he provides a clear and intelligible account of culture seen from an anthropological point of view. With his conceptual approach to the subject, his book ‘The Cultural Dimension of International Business’ provides the necessary framework for understanding culture and consequently the cultural dimension of international business. Ferraro’s book has therefore been particularly helpful for us in connection with accounting for the most important features of culture. In addition, we have included Thompson’s ‘Communication and Language’ since many of his viewpoints are similar to those of Ferraro, and these two theorists thus complement each other in a way that has enabled us to account for the comprehensive notion of culture in a more straightforward manner. Furthermore, even though it may be argued that the theories presented by Hofstede in ‘Culture’s Consequences’ are outdated, they do, however, form a good basis for understanding and measuring cultural differences, which in turn is a precondition for communicating effectively across cultures.
This is where Holden enters the scene as he provides a solid framework for managing cultural diversities, thus supplementing and taking Hofstede’s theories a step further.

The reason for including McDonald and Payne is that their discussion of *The Marketing Planning Process* gives a clear overview of the different parts that may be included in a well-structured marketing plan. Furthermore, the way in which this model has been divided into different stages makes it possible to choose the specific stages which are relevant to the thesis without going into detail the remaining. With respect to Croft and Dibb and Simkin, we have included these theorists because they complement each other well, and together their theories give a good insight into different aspects of the marketing planning process as well as certain elements of market segmentation.

Regarding Gunter and Furnham, they give a thorough explanation of the different techniques used in market segmentation and account for the way in which these are applied in marketing. Their book ‘*Consumer Profiles*’ is based on a comprehensive review of the available literature in marketing research, and we find that their detailed account of the different bases for segmentation has provided us with a useful tool in the process of establishing how a company may define a target audience. Furthermore, the book ‘*Principles of Marketing*’ by Kotler et al. has been included in connection with the various aspects of marketing. Although some may argue that Kotler in particular treats the different elements of marketing in a somewhat superficial manner, thus lacking a thorough discussion of some elements, we have chosen to include the book by Kotler et al. since this is by many considered central to the field of marketing.

We find that the book ‘*Marketing Communications*’ by De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van den Bergh is a useful contribution to our thesis in that it describes the DAGMAR model in detail. Their presentation of the DAGMAR model considers many relevant aspects which are important for us in connection with establishing the basic framework for how a company may reach its intended target audience.
The reason for primarily focusing on Collins and Hollo in connection with verbal rhetorical strategies is that they provide a well-structured approach to the theory of Halliday, including the most central aspects of the comprehensive field of register analysis.

The book ‘Reading Images’ by Kress and van Leeuwen has been useful to us in connection with the discussion of nonverbal communication since these two theorists give a detailed account of semiotics in marketing, focusing upon the nature and practice of visual rhetoric. Also, the book draws upon theories of e.g. Halliday, Peirce and Saussure, which has been an advantage to us since we have chosen to base parts of the thesis on these theories.

Finally, throughout the thesis we have used sources taken from the Internet. We have made a critical assessment of each source used and consider them all to be reliable in that they are either written by well-known and acknowledged researchers or published by, for instance, universities or recognised organisations.
2. Understanding communication

Imagine a world without communication and language. There would be no music, no conversation, no Internet and no television or radio. And these are just a few of the factors, which would be affected. Communication is a basic feature of social life, and language is a major component of communication. In their book ‘Business Communication: Strategies and Skills’, Lahiff and Penrose emphasise this point with the following argument:

“Human beings are sometimes referred to as social animals, for they need to communicate even when there is nothing urgent for them to express. In fact, much conversation may appear purposeless on the surface but actually satisfies the need to interact with others. To recognize the importance of such communication, we need only to consider what is generally regarded as the ultimate punishment for troublesome prison inmates: solitary confinement. The person placed in solitary confinement is absolutely deprived of the opportunity and right to communicate with others” (Lahiff and Penrose, 1997: 4).

While it can easily be recognised that communication and language are basic components of social life in general, it is important to note that these two factors are also particularly important in a wide variety of work contexts. This is not least true in e.g. the sector of human services, which covers social work, social care, counselling, teaching at all levels and other public services, where communication and language are the basic ‘building blocks’ of practice. Also, people who are employed in marketing obviously rely heavily on language and communication in order to influence others.

Now we have established that communication and language affect all human beings in one way or another. But what is communication really, and how do we define this comprehensive term? Fiske acknowledges the difficulties connected with this when he states that:

“Communication is one of those human activities that everyone recognises but few can define satisfactorily. Communication is talking to one another, it is television, it is spreading information, it is our hair style, it is literary criticism: the list is endless” (Fiske, 1982: 1).
As indicated in this ‘definition’, communication is not just a basic part of our everyday lives but an essential one in the sense that we cannot NOT communicate. We communicate not only through words and sentences, but also through hair style, dress and body language. This again means that we communicate both consciously and unconsciously, although theorists worldwide are discussing this argument – more about this in section 2.3.4. According to Fiske, one might say that communication is social interaction through messages. Given this definition, it is obvious that communication is a very diverse and multi-faceted subject to study, and one might ask if it is at all possible to study all the areas of communication together. The answer to this question is, obviously, that if every area of communication was in fact to be studied, it would be a lifelong occupation. Therefore, in this chapter, we will focus on the main models, theories and concepts used in the study of communication.

2.1. The process school versus the semiotic school

The study of communication is dominated by the views of two different schools: the process school, which regards communication as the transmission of messages, and the semiotic school, which views communication as the production and exchange of meanings (ibid: 2-5). Each school has its own interpretation of the definition of communication as ‘social interaction through messages’ as we will see in the following. The process school is represented by the works of theorists such as Shannon and Weaver, while such theorists as Peirce and Saussure represent the semiotic school.

In this section we will provide a short introduction to the two schools followed by a more detailed discussion of the thoughts of the process school, while the semiotic school will be explained and discussed in more detail in section 2.8.

The process school is mainly concerned with the process of encoding and decoding from both sender and receiver’s points of view and the way in which the sender uses the channels and media of communication. To this school, communication is a process by which one person affects the behaviour or state of mind of another person. If the effect on that other person is not as intended by the sender, the process school regards the communication as having failed and seeks to find out where in the communication process the failure has occurred. To the
process school, social sciences, psychology and sociology are important sources of information, and it deals with acts of communication.

The semiotic school, on the other hand, is concerned with how messages interact with people in order to produce meanings. This school has been given its name because its main method of study is semiotics. The term semiotics derives from the word ‘semiosis’, which means the action of signs. Here, the emphasis is on how signs are used and combined in systems to form the basis of communication. To this school, misunderstandings in the process of communication are not necessarily considered to be a communication failure, but are just as likely considered the result of cultural differences between sender and receiver. The semiotic school tends to draw upon linguistics and the arts subject, and it deals with works of communication (ibid: 2-5).

As mentioned earlier, both schools look at communication as social interaction through messages, but they interpret this definition differently. To the process school, social interaction refers to the process by which a person relates him/herself to others, or the way a person affects the behaviour or state of mind of another person, and vice versa. While the process school defines social interaction according to the everyday ‘commonsense’ use of the word, the semiotic school defines social interaction as that which makes the individual a member of a society or culture. This means that from a person’s way of interacting in a social context, it is possible to tell which society or culture that person is from, e.g. in celebrating Christmas a person is expressing his/her identity as a member of the Christian society.

Not only do the two schools differ in their interpretation of social context, they do not agree on their definitions of what constitutes a message either. To the process school, a message is that which is transmitted through the communication process. Many people within the process school believe that intention is a very important factor in determining the message. The intention may be conscious or unconscious, it may be stated or not, but it should always be possible to define the intention through analysing the situation. This is interesting as far as to determine, for instance, when communicative (voluntary, that is) behaviour develops out of non-communicative behaviour: if a baby cries it might be sending out a message, but ONLY if it cries with the intention of communicating this message, e.g. getting attention – NOT if it
cries with no specific intention (Harris, 1996: 51). We will discuss intention in more detail in section 2.3.4. To the supporters of the process school, the message is what the sender puts into it by whatever means possible (Fiske, 1982: 3).

To the semiotic school, on the other hand, the message is constructed by signs, which produce meaning through interaction. The sender is no longer in focus – now the emphasis is on the text/message and how this is read or interpreted. In reading a text, the receiver interacts and/or negotiates with the text and thereby discovers the meanings in the text. When a reader negotiates with a text, s/he uses his/her cultural experiences in order to discover the meanings of the text. This means that readers with different cultural backgrounds will most likely find different meanings in the same text. But, as mentioned earlier, according to the semiotic school this does not necessarily mean that the communication has failed (ibid: 3-4).

2.2. The process school

Within the process school, the most famous model is that of Shannon and Weaver introduced in their book ‘Mathematical Theory of Communication’ (1949). In the following, we will present the model and subsequently give an account of the different elements of which it consists.

2.2.1. Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication

To Shannon and Weaver the main concern in developing their model was to work out a way in which the channels of communication could be used most efficiently. At their time, the
main channels were the telephone cable and the radio wave. They therefore developed a theory that made it possible for them to figure out how to send a maximum amount of information through a given channel and afterwards to measure that channel’s capacity to carry information. Within the field of engineering and mathematics, in which Shannon and Weaver worked, a theory with that much emphasis on the channel was appropriate and useful.

However, they further claimed that their model and theory could be widely applied over the entire question of human communication. In the following, we will examine their model to establish if they were right.

The model is a relatively simple model, presenting communication as a simple linear process, and although it has been quite influential and does have a number of advantages, it has also been heavily criticised, mainly for being oversimplified. The reason for this is that the model fails to take into account a wide range of factors, such as the social context and the importance of meaning, just as it presents communication as a fairly simplistic process of passing information.

But let us examine the model in more detail. The information source is the decision maker, the one who decides which message to send. The transmitter, then, is the one who changes this message into a signal, which is sent through the channel to the receiver, and the receiver then changes the received signal into a message, which is sent to the destination. If the model is applied to a conversation, the information source can be said to be the mind of the speaker, the transmitter the speaker’s mouth, the signal the sound waves, and the channel the air through which the sound waves pass on their way to the receiver – the ear of the listener. Finally, the destination may be said to be the mind of the listener.

Some of the elements of the model can operate more than once. In a telephone conversation, for instance, the speaker’s mouth is the transmitter of a signal to the handset, which at this point functions as a receiver. The handset, however, immediately becomes a transmitter, which sends the signal through the telephone wire (channel 1) to the listener's handset, which is now a new receiver. Then the listener’s handset becomes another transmitter when it sends the received signal through the air (channel 2) to the listener’s ear – the third and final receiver.
During any process of communication is the risk of noise. Noise is anything which is added to the signal from the moment it leaves the transmitter until the moment when it is received and is thus something which is not intended by the information source. Noise can be distortion of sound, snow on a television screen, background noise, static in a radio signal, etc. In a wider sense, however, noise is anything which makes it harder for the receiver to decode the signal accurately. In this sense it could also be e.g. the receiver’s lack of ability to concentrate on the message, whether it be, for instance, because of lack of sleep, an uncomfortable chair in a lecture or because the receiver has other, more interesting things on his/her mind. Whether the noise originates in the sender, the message, the channel or the receiver, it always makes the intention of the sender harder to analyse. The more noise in a communication situation, the less amount of desired information can be sent (ibid: 8).

In Shannon and Weaver’s model their engineering and mathematical backgrounds are obvious, since the emphasis is on the amount of information/signal, regardless of meaning. And the question now is how useful such a mechanically based theory really is in the broader study of communication. In an attempt to answer this question, we will look at some important factors within communication theories, which are essential in order to understand what communication is all about.

2.3. Meaning in communication

One aspect of communication, which is discussed repeatedly amongst theorists, is the notion of meaning. A message can be characterised as being either meaningful or not, and in order to establish the meaningfulness of a message, theorists use terms such as ‘choice’ and ‘intention’. Not all messages are, however, simply either meaningful or not; it is possible to define a message according to a scale of meaningfulness. At one end is redundancy – at the other entropy. According to Fiske, redundancy is that which is predictable or conventional in a message, whereas entropy is the opposite (ibid: 10-11). Redundancy is defined as the result of high predictability, entropy of low predictability. Accordingly, a message with high predictability is redundant and of low information, whereas a message of low predictability is entropic and of high information.
2.3.1. Redundancy

In layman’s terms, redundant means useless. Fiske, however, says that this use of the term is quite misleading when speaking of communication studies as about 50 per cent of the English language is redundant. He writes:

“The layman’s use of the term to imply uselessness is misleading. Redundancy is not merely useful in communication, it is absolutely vital. In theory, communication can take place without redundancy, but in practice the situations in which this is possible are so rare as to be non-existent. A degree of redundancy is essential to practical communication” (ibid: 11).

Imagine, for instance, walking down the street, meeting a friend. You will most likely greet him by saying something like “Hello” or “How do you do?”. These messages are obvious examples of highly redundant messages as they are both conventional and highly predictable.

Redundancy performs two main types of functions: the technical function and the social function. In the technical function, the receiver is able to decode a message more accurately if the message contains some degree of redundancy than if it is mostly entropic. Redundancy, for instance, enables the receiver to identify spelling mistakes since most languages are highly redundant. In a non-redundant language, it would be much harder to identify errors as e.g. adding a letter to a word could simply add another meaning to that word. Thus ‘beeing’ would be a different word with another meaning than ‘being’, and it would not be possible to identify the former as a spelling mistake. Also, if for instance a person says “A rose is…”, then it is more probable that the following would be “a flower” than, say, “a spicy dish”. In this sense, redundancy also helps us reduce noise in a message (ibid: 11).

Another aspect within the technical function in which redundancy in communication is helpful is that of reaching a target audience. If, for instance, a company has defined its target audience as being a large heterogeneous group, the message designed to get through to the audience would have to have a high degree of redundancy. If, on the other hand, the audience is small and homogeneous, it would be possible to reach it using a more entropic message (ibid: 12). This is very obvious in e.g. television commercials; a commercial promoting, for instance, sanitary towels is much more redundant than one promoting a business computer.
The target audience for the sanitary towels are more or less every woman between the ages of 13-50, whereas the target audience for the business computer is smaller and more homogeneous, consisting of business people who use computers in their job.

In the social function, redundancy helps us maintain and strengthen social relationships as relationships can only exist through constant communication. The kind of redundancy we use in communication in social circumstances is what Jakobson calls *phatic communication*. Phatic communication is defined as “acts of communication that contain nothing new, no information, but that use existing channels simply to keep them open and usable” (ibid: 14). It is used to maintain the relationship between sender and receiver in the sense that it confirms that communication is taking place.

### 2.3.2. Entropy

Whereas redundancy is very helpful in the sense that it is often a means of improving communication, entropy on the other hand often constitutes a communication problem, as it represents maximum unpredictability. One example which best explains the notion of entropy is a pack of playing cards. Imagine that the pack has been well shuffled, and a person shows you each card one by one. Each card, or ‘signal’, will then have maximum entropy, whereas if they are arranged in order in their suits and then showed singly, each card (signal) will have maximum redundancy – provided, of course, that you are able to identify the pattern and structure of a pack of cards. Generally, redundancy can be defined as a force for the status quo and against change, whereas entropy is less comfortable, more stimulating and perhaps more shocking, but also harder to communicate effectively (ibid: 12-13).

### 2.3.3. Choice

Another matter which is much debated among theorists is the notion of choice. Some theorists argue that meaningful behaviour only exists where there is choice. Lyons, for instance, writes:

“An utterance has meaning only if its occurrence is not completely determined by its context. This definition rests upon the widely accepted principle that ‘meaningfulness implies choice’. If the hearer knows in advance that the speaker will inevitably produce a particular utterance
in a particular context, then it is obvious that the utterance gives him no information, when it occurs: no ‘communication’ takes place” (Lyons, 1968: 413).

This can be compared to the matter of redundancy in the sense that a highly conventional and redundant message is often used in a situation where there are not many possibilities to choose from, and without choice, the message should thus be meaningless. Returning to the example of greeting a friend, this is, according to Lyons, a message without meaning. He writes:

“Complete utterances will generally have meaning, since the speaker might in the last resort have remained silent. But there are some socially-prescribed utterances, which are highly, if not wholly, determined by their contexts, and such utterances are theoretically interesting in a number of different respects. Let us assume for the sake of the argument that How do you do? is the sole socially-prescribed utterance in the context of being formally introduced to someone, and that it is mandatory in such situations. If this is so, then it seems quite reasonable to say that How do you do? has no meaning” (ibid: 413-14).

What Lyons seems to overlook in this connection is the social meaning of the message. This means that while “How do you do?” might be *communicatively* meaningless in this connection, the message is certainly very meaningful *socially*, as it enables us to maintain and strengthen our relationship with the person whom we are greeting. Also, by greeting someone (e.g. in the streets) we tell that person that we know and recognise him/her, and that we have seen him/her. Lyons does, however, come up with an additional remark in which he acknowledges that “How do you do?” might be a meaningful utterance. He explains:

“But let us now assume that, although it is the sole socially-prescribed utterance of the context of introduction, it contrasts with silence (or a nod of the head, a smile, a surly look, etc.), in the sense that the person being introduced has all these ‘choices’ open to him. Then, by the definition given above, the result of each ‘choice’ has meaning – it may communicate something to the other person…” (ibid: 414).
Here, Lyons argues that the speaker does have other choices available; they are just not choices of utterance. By saying so, he compares verbal to non-verbal language, arguing that, in this connection, one is as capable of adding meaning to a message as the other. However, this is only true if the person being introduced is aware of these ‘choices’ and deliberately chooses one of them in order to communicate a message to the other person. Later on, in his discussion of communicational choice, Lyons claims that the same ‘rules’ can be applied to pronunciation; the greeting can be pronounced in several different ways, e.g. politely or condescendingly by use of, for instance, tone of voice. Again, he argues, features such as tone of voice and gestures only have meaning if the person conveying them does so deliberately. If, on the other hand, the features are ‘completely determined’, they have no meaning. But how then, may the hearer be able to judge the speaker’s intentions? How do we know, when talking to someone, that his or her condescending tone of voice is not intentional? And what happens if we automatically assume that it is and feel hurt? According to Lyons and his followers, it does not matter whether the hearer is able to ‘read’ the intentions of the speaker, at least not as regards the question of meaning. Lyons states that “it is quite inappropriate to widen the notion of ‘communication’ to include all the ‘information’, which can be ‘inferred’ from an utterance by the hearer” (ibid: 415).

Consequently, he distinguishes between ‘communication’ and ‘information’. In this connection, the distinction may, however, be argued to be somewhat artificial as all information conveyed by one person to another person may in fact be perceived as communication. It thus seems to be a vague argument, set forth simply to defend the notion of choice. Harris is one of the theorists who oppose the notion of choice. He argues the above-mentioned statement as follows:

“First of all, if it really does not matter whether a hearer is able to judge a speaker’s intentions or not, then whether the utterance has meaning cannot matter either. In other words, all the theorist has achieved at the end of the day is the elaboration of a quite pointless distinction. In the second place, if it is true that the principle of choice is what determines whether an utterance has meaning or not, it becomes quite unclear for whom it has meaning (or fails to have meaning)” (Harris, 1996: 40).
It could thus be argued that where the theory about ‘choice’ first begins to halt is when it comes to the fact that in communication the choices may look quite different from the viewpoints of the different participants. In the ‘choice’ theory, it is the speaker’s choice alone which determines what has meaning, thus putting the speaker in control of the communication and undermining and ignoring the hearer. Communication is, however, an ‘act’ that occurs between two or more people, and ignoring the hearer and his or her understanding of the utterances of the speaker will most likely result in communication failure.

For most parts, followers of the process school advocate the choice theory, while theorists from the semiotic school are opposed to it.

2.3.4. Intention

Closely linked to the theory of choice is the theory about intentional and non-intentional signs. Many theorists from the process school recognise a fundamental distinction between these two categories of signs. They believe that only intentional signs count as episodes of communication – if a sign is not made/left deliberately, it is simply a ‘natural event’ with no communicational value. One of the main reasons why these theorists have introduced the notion of intention is that they think that only by this distinction is it possible to adequately distinguish between human communication and animal communication. The difference between human and animal communication is argued to be that animals respond directly to the activities of others, whereas humans respond to their intentions. If it were true that animals have no intentions and are not able to grasp human intentions, then a logical conclusion would be that it is not possible for humans to communicate with animals. This is, however, a much-debated argument. Studies have shown that some monkey species can learn to manipulate arbitrary symbols in order to express their wants. These monkeys are in fact able to communicate. Another example might be a dog standing outside a door, barking and scratching in order to attract attention so that someone comes and lets it in. Some theorists might argue that the dog is acting upon its instinct, which is to some extent probably true, but when the same dog does this every time it wants to come in, then it seems that it does so with the distinct intention of getting someone to open the door. However, the distinction between intention and instinct in this case seems unimportant as it is in fact not the question of anyone’s intentions that should determine the communicational value of a sign. In the words
of Harris: “Anything should count as a sign if the interpreter attributes some signification to it, regardless of whether it was ever intended to be so interpreted or not” (ibid: 48).

This means that even if the dog is in fact acting solely upon its instinct, it is still communicating as the person who opens the door to the dog interprets the dog’s behaviour as if the dog wants to come in.

Returning to the example of the crying baby on p. 20, intention theorists claim that a baby is only communicating a certain message if it cries with the distinct intention of this message. But how would it be possible to determine a baby’s intentions when there are no criteria offered for “having an intention”? In the end it has to rely on the mother’s evaluation of the baby’s intention or lack of intention. If the mother believes that the baby is crying with the intention of attracting attention, she might ignore the cries. But she has no way of knowing if this is true. Even if the baby ceases to cry when the mother ignores him/her, this does not prove that the mother was right since the baby could have actually cried because of a pain somewhere which had disappeared in the meantime. Conversely, if the baby continues to cry, and the mother then finds a genuine source of discomfort, this does not prove that the baby did not originally cry in order to attract attention. In short, this analysis of the baby’s crying is not entirely logical as it assumes that the baby must be crying for either one or the other reason. It does not leave room for the possibility that it could be a mix of the two reasons. Moreover, this interpretation cannot always be applied for adults either. If, for instance, someone says something funny, and you laugh without giving it any thought, you might not even know yourself if the laugh was voluntary or involuntary. Or like Neil Thompson says:

“We should be wary of assuming that communication is only ever intentional. A message can be sent and received even if the person communicating had no intention to do so. For example, if my tone of voice and non-verbal communication indicate nervousness, then it is likely that I will be communicating that nervousness, even though I may not wish to do so” (Thompson, 2003: 11).

So, even though a person might not intentionally communicate a message, in the end it depends on the receiver’s interpretation of that message whether the message is
communicated or not. And even though not all theorists would agree, according to this it is possible to communicate both consciously as well as unconsciously. Or in other words: if a person (A) shows another person (B) something unintentionally a message is nevertheless communicated. When theorists then afterwards cite A’s lack of intention as a reason for claiming that nothing was communicated, it is as bizarre as to say that a window is only broken when someone breaks it on purpose. The only difference between A showing B something intentionally and A showing B something unintentionally is a difference as to whether the communication process was one A originally engaged in with that purpose (regardless of the outcome) (Harris, 1996: 66).

2.4. Identity

At first glance it might be difficult to see the connection between identity and communication apart from the fact that a person’s personality or identity might have some influence on his/her style of communication. For many years, theorists did in fact not acknowledge the close connection between the two concepts as the study of identity was closely linked to psychological studies of personality in which personality was seen as a fixed entity. Contemporary approaches to the study of identity, however, challenge this assumption as they emphasise the fluid or changing nature of identity over time. These recent approaches see identity as a developing process which is influenced by the communications and interactions of the surrounding environment in which a person becomes engaged. Communication therefore plays a key role in constructing and maintaining a sense of identity.

With his notion of the looking-glass self, Charles Horton Cooley was one of the first theorists to acknowledge that identity is fluid and changing over time. The looking-glass self refers to the way our actions and communications are mirrored back to us through the responses of other people. Whenever a person engages in communication with other people, the image that s/he is projecting is either challenged or reinforced by the way in which people respond to that person in their interactions. Cooley’s approach has helped other theorists recognise the interactive nature of the self and thus move away from the notion of identity being a fixed entity (Thompson, 2003: 25).
Apart from the theory of Cooley, existentialism is another long-established approach to identity, which is influential today. A key element for existentialism is that of radical freedom; existentialists believe that freedom to choose is the very core of human existence. One of the most famous of all existentialists is Sartre, who believed that through the choices that a person makes, that person is constructing his/her self. An individual’s identity can therefore be seen as an historical process built up over the years by the choices made by that individual. In the mind of the existentialist, a person not only can choose, s/he must choose. This, however, does not mean that there are no constraints on our ability to choose as we are in fact constrained by a wide range of factors, e.g. biological (a person cannot, for instance, choose to be a man, when that person is, in fact, a woman). Also, other peoples choices can get in the way of a person’s choice; an example of this could be a large queue in an amusement park, where a person’s choice to try a particular amusement could be hampered by the choice of other people wanting to try the same amusement at the same time.

However, in the eyes of the existentialists, the notion of the self is very powerful as we are who we are through our actions and interactions – the responsibility for choice is on the individual. This obviously has great implications for communication since most of the choices we make will to some degree depend on matters relating to communication and interaction; we are in a way communicating our self. Or put differently, our self is created through our communications and interactions with other people and the choices involved in that process (ibid: 26). In connection with existentialism, the notion of choice is, however, somewhat different than that introduced in section 2.3.3. as the existentialist perceives choice as not only communicational choice, but choice in all matters and aspects of life. Thus, these two notions of choice cannot be compared to each other.

Another more contemporary approach to identity, which has much in common with existentialism, is that of postmodernism. To the postmodernist, the search for self-identity is the predominant and most distinctive feature, as postmodernism stresses the uniqueness, diversity, plurality, and idiosynrasy of each and every individual. In postmodernism, the self is not the centre of our being, there is no core self; rather we have a flow of communication and interaction.
The above-mentioned approaches to identity are very different from Shannon and Weaver’s mechanical process approach to communication. According to existentialism and postmodernism, communication is not simply a linear process of passing on information; it is the process through which our self is actually constituted. This means that, in reality, communication has a much more important role than most people would generally realise.

Just as identity is influenced and to a certain degree created by communication and interactions, communication and interactions are also highly influenced and affected by the identity of the individuals engaging in the communication. Imagine, for instance, that a person in a social group sees himself as the natural leader of that group, and the other members of that group do not share his perception. In a situation like this, it is most likely that such a ‘misperception’ would lead to significant communication difficulties and maybe even communication breakdowns and conflicts.

Based on the above, it should be safe to say that the notion of identity is yet another example which shows that communication is a quite complex social matter, and it should not be taken lightly.

2.5. Communication and self

At the beginning of this chapter, Fiske was cited, saying that communication is social interaction through messages. This has been the dominating thought among modern theorists of communication, as most modern theories on the subject assume that ‘standard’ communication is something which involves at least two individuals: the sender and the receiver. Whenever two or more individuals engage in communication, the communication is more likely to succeed if the individuals share some kind of sign system. We will go into more detail with this in section 2.8. If, however, Fiske’s definition of communication as being social interaction through messages was to be challenged, it could be claimed that communication can actually take place outside of social interaction. This would be what is known as self-communication.
When communication involves only a single individual, there is only little if any need for a common sign system. Because of this, self-communication has often been regarded as a “marginal off-shoot of interpersonal communication” (Harris, 1996: 167) when, in fact, these two forms of communication should more correctly be seen as interdependent of each other.

Consider, for instance, the concept of “talking to oneself”. Everybody does it from time to time – some probably more than others – but why? Sometimes a person might do it just to hear his/her own voice, but people also use talking to themselves when they want to rehearse, for instance, the pronunciation of a word or a presentation that they are to present to other people. In the two latter examples, self-communication is used as a preparation to interpersonal communication. Also, interpersonal communication often affects the thoughts of the individual after the communication has taken place. It would be safe to say that most people have experienced, for instance, a discussion or a lecture, which has made them ponder afterwards. This way, interpersonal communication is the source of self-communication.

Self-communication can thus be realised through both speech and thought. It has, though, been widely discussed whether thinking can be characterised as communication, but when recognised as such, it can simply be construed as the private counterpart of interpersonal communication. The term “talking to oneself” was invented by Plato when he referred to the soul “talking to itself” as an interpretation of thinking. Thinking could as such be defined as a kind of speech but with the sound turned off. At this point it is, however, important to note that self-communication is not simply a special case of interpersonal communication as there are some essential differences between the activities and patterns of the two forms of communication. For instance, a person can greet others and say goodbye to them, but people do not greet themselves nor do they bid themselves farewell. Also, the attention of others may be attracted by waving or shouting, but that does not work in order to attract the attention of oneself.

One reason why some theorists may be tempted to perceive self-communication as a special case of interpersonal communication is that both concepts have the same basic structure. About this, Harris writes:
“For almost every case of A showing item x to B, we can imagine a parallel case of A showing item x to A. The semiological difference between the communication process by which (i) A takes document $d$ from a filing cabinet and shows it to B, and that by which (ii) A takes $d$ from the filing cabinet and inspects it without showing it to B does not reside either in the document, which is common to both cases, or in the integrational technique of visual exhibition and visual inspection, which is common to both cases also. (...) It resides in the way in which the employment of that integrational technique is in turn integrated into the overarching communicational sequence of which it is one component. What matters in the circumstances is who does what, and what in turn that signifies” (ibid: 179-80).

What he wants to say with this is that it is possible neither for A nor for B to take each other’s place in the communication, i.e. to play each other’s parts. For instance, it is not clear whether or not B even knew about the existence of the document, and if he did, was A then under his instructions to fetch it?

Consequently, just as self-communication cannot be characterised as interpersonal communication, which is simply restricted to one person, interpersonal communication is not simply self-communication taking place between more individuals than one.

Now, we have looked at some important factors within the study of communication, and it is once again time to look at Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication and evaluate whether or not their model can in fact be widely applied to the entire question of human communication.

2.6. Discussion of Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication

Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication is, as already mentioned, a linear process model, which views communication as a simple process of passing information. However, after having studied communication in more detail, it soon becomes obvious that there is nothing simple about this subject at all. So, with this in mind, it does not seem very likely that Shannon and Weaver’s model is useful within every aspect of communication. But let us examine the communication factors, which have just been studied, only this time with the
model as a starting point. After having done this, we will evaluate how useful the model really is.

### 2.6.1. Discussion of redundancy

Starting with the technical function of redundancy, this function is concerned with the way it helps overcome practical problems in communication. Using redundancy as a technical ‘tool’, it is easier e.g. to detect errors and overcome the deficiencies of a channel with much noise. Also, increasing redundancy in an entropic message makes it easier to get the message through and overcome any problem(s) in transmitting the message; such problems could, for instance, arise when transmitting a message, which is completely unexpected. In order to avoid these problems, the sender can use redundancy in the sense of repeating the message, often in different ways, or s/he could prepare the receiver by saying e.g. that s/he is now going to say something unexpected. Thus, the technical function of redundancy is well defined by Shannon and Weaver in their model as this function helps minimise practical problems in communication – problems that may be associated with channel and noise, with the nature of the message or with the audience.

The second function of redundancy, the social function, is, however, not very well defined in Shannon and Weaver’s communication model as it is. In their model, the social dimension is not mentioned at all; there is no mentioning of the purpose or function of communication. For an overview of this, other theorists have offered more appropriate models, and we will later look at one of these, namely Jakobson’s model of communication.

### 2.6.2. Discussion of choice and intention

Moving on to the notions of choice and intention, it may be argued that Shannon and Weaver have not defined these notions very well in their model as the model does not include any aspect of meaning. However, it might also be argued that the notions of choice and intention, at least to some extent, are included in the aspect of noise. To the supporters of the theories of choice and intention, the absence of choice or intention in a communication situation could be characterised as noise, since it would be more difficult to produce meaningful communication
without these two notions. To the theorists who oppose the two notions, however, it does not really matter if they are defined in any models or not as they believe that, according to a range of communicational choice or intention, communication cannot be defined as being either meaningful or not. But no matter which school you belong to, Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication does not fully cover neither the notion of choice nor intention since these two concepts have to do with meaning, which is not included in the model.

2.6.3. Discussion of identity

Identity through communication is not very well defined in Shannon and Weaver’s model either. In their model, they do not go beyond the specific communication situation, meaning that they do not include the context of the communication situation or any aspect of the influence that communication has on matters relating to communication. As such, the model does not acknowledge that a person’s identity is closely linked to any communication situation – both regarding the communicative outcome of the situation and regarding the sender and receiver’s identity.

2.6.4. Discussion of self-communication

Another communication factor, which we will look at in this evaluation, is that of self-communication. As mentioned in the presentation of Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication, some of the elements of the model can operate more than once. This means that there can be e.g. two transmitters and two channels in a communication situation. However, it is not only possible for two elements to work more than once, the same person can also operate in more than one element, meaning that sender and receiver can in fact be the same person. In this sense, self-communication is well defined in the model. By saying so, we are, however, forgetting that in section 2.5. we concluded that self-communication cannot be characterised as interpersonal communication restricted to one person, just as interpersonal communication is not self-communication taking place between more individuals than one. And since Shannon and Weaver’s communication model does not make any distinction on this part, it is still lacking an important point.
2.6.5. Discussion of channel, code, medium and feedback

Apart from the communication factors which we have looked at in detail so far there are a few other important aspects in the model that we have not looked at yet, namely channel, code and medium. Channel is the easiest of the three concepts to define as it is simply the physical means by which the signal is transmitted, such as a telephone wire, sound waves, etc. Medium is, in short, the technical and/or physical means of converting the message into a signal, which can be transmitted through the channel. A medium is, for instance, the television, the radio, a person’s voice, etc. Finally, a code is a system of meaning, which is common to the members of a certain culture or subculture. A code consists of signs, rules and conventions, and can thus be a verbal language, Morse, sign language, handwriting, etc. (cf. sections 7.1.4.1. and 7.1.4.2.). In Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication, they only use the concept of channel, leaving out the important distinction between the three above-mentioned concepts.

The final concept that we will look at in this evaluation is that of feedback. Basically, feedback is the transmission of the receiver’s reaction back to the sender. Feedback enables the sender to adjust his message to the needs and responses of the receiver, just as it helps the receiver feel involved in the communication. Good speakers are therefore generally very sensitive to feedback. In leaving out feedback in their communication model, Shannon and Weaver are missing a very important factor when it comes to making successful communication.

In conclusion, the communication model made by Shannon and Weaver may be said to be a simple, one-way model. It is very useful for a basic understanding of communication as it includes the most important elements of communication. However, as soon as we begin to move away from the basic points, the model lacks some important factors of communication such as meaning, context, social dimension, function and feedback.

As a supplement to Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication, we will therefore now examine Jakobson’s model of communication as it includes some of the most important aspects which Shannon and Weaver do not cover in their model.
2.7. Jakobson’s model of communication

One model of communication, which takes into account matters such as meaning and function of communication, is that made by Roman Jakobson in 1958. Jakobson is a linguist, and he is therefore more concerned with the internal structure of the message than Shannon and Weaver were. Focusing on meaning and internal structure, he thus bridges the gap that exists between the process school and the semiotic school. Jakobson’s model is a double model in the sense that he looks at both the constitutive factors and the functions of communication. The constitutive factors are six factors that must be present in order for communication to be possible, and each function refers to one of the constitutive factors.

2.7.1. The constitutive factors of communication

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<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Jakobson’s constitutive factors of communication (Fiske, 1982: 37)

When outlining the constitutive factors of communication, Jakobson begins on a linear base; first we have an addresser who sends a message to an addressee. So far, we see the same structure as in Shannon and Weaver’s model. But already at this early point, Jakobson recognises that the message has to refer to something other than just itself, and he calls this context. Now we have a triangle with three points: the addresser, the addressee and the context. The next step for Jakobson is to add two other factors: contact and code. Contact is the physical channel and psychological connections between the addresser and the addressee, and code is a shared meaning system by which a message is structured. He argues that each of these factors determines a different function and that in each act of communication we will find a hierarchy of functions. In order to explain this, he produced the second “layer” of his model (see below), structured in the same way as that of the constitutive factors.
2.7.2. The functions of communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referential</th>
<th>Emotive</th>
<th>Poetic</th>
<th>Conative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phatic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Metalingual</td>
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Each of the functions of communication occupies the same place in the model as the constitutive factor to which it refers. Starting with the *emotive* functions, it refers to the relationship of the message to the addressee, i.e. if the focus of attention in the message is the addressee, the meaning that is being emphasised is expressive of the addressee’s attitudes, emotions, class, status, etc. Some theorists thus refer to this function as the expressive function. In some genres such as poetry, the emotive function is fundamentally important, whereas in e.g. news reporting this function is, naturally, repressed. At the other end of the model is the *conative* function, which describes the effect that the message has on the addressee. This function is also known as the directive function as it is used where the focus of attention is on the addressee, and imperatives and vocatives are clear examples of the conative function. Another more subtle example than the above-mentioned is persuasion, which is most successful when it is not recognised as such by the addressee – this is, for instance, quite clear in the advertising industry. The *referential* function, or the ‘reality orientation’ of the message, is used where the focus of the message is on the subject matter, i.e. on the contents of the message. This function is also known as the informative function, and it is characteristic of non-fictional, objective communication, which is concerned to be ‘true’ or factually accurate. These three functions are easily recognisable and are performed in varying degrees by all acts of communication (ibid: 38).

The last three functions might be less familiar at first sight, although we have already touched upon one of them, the phatic function, in section 2.3.1. As already mentioned, the *phatic* function is concerned with keeping the channels of communication open and maintaining the relationship between addressee and addressee – the focus of the message is on the contact
factor, i.e. the channel and psychological connections between addresser and addressee. The *metalingual* function is concerned with identifying the code used in the message. The focus of attention is on the code, which is of significant importance to the understanding of the message. If, for instance, a person puts a goldfish in some water in a liquidiser and then presses the on-button killing the fish, this is normally considered animal cruelty. But if someone takes the fish and liquidiser and puts it in a museum, then it would be considered art (at least to some people!). All messages have an implicit or explicit metalingual function as they have to identify the code being used. Finally is the *poetic* function, which describes the relationship of the message to itself. The poetic function traditionally uses unexpected collocations and marked thematic structures and patterning, which is striking through its repetitiveness or through the breaking of expectations of repetition. A clear example of this is rhyme- and rhythm-schemes. Jakobson emphasises that this function is not limited to poets alone as many ‘poetic’ uses of language are an everyday occurrence. We say, for instance, ‘innocent bystander’ rather than ‘uninvolved onlooker’ because its rhythmic pattern is more aesthetically pleasing.

According to Fiske, Jakobson uses the political slogan “I like Ike” as an example of the poetic function. The slogan consists of three monosyllables, each with the diphthong ‘ay’. Two of the words rhyme, and between them they only use two consonants, all adding up to a poetically pleasing and therefore memorable slogan. After mentioning this, Fiske takes the analysis one step further, imagining the slogan as a lapel badge. He then argues that metalingually the code must be identified as that of political communication, meaning that the wearer of the badge does not know General Eisenhower and does as such not like him personally. Consequently ‘like’ in this connection means ‘support politically’. This means that ‘Ike’ does not just refer to the individual, but to the political party which he represents. If, however, we were dealing with the code of personal relationships, “I like Ike” would have a completely different meaning. The emotive function in this slogan tells us something about the wearer of the badge, the addresser, about his/her political position and how strongly s/he feels about it. The conative function will be to persuade the person who sees the badge on the addresser (the addressee) to support the same political party and candidate. Its referential function is simply to refer to an existing man and political programme, to make the addressee think about General Eisenhower and his policies. Last, but not least, the phatic function of the
slogan on the badge is to identify the addressee as a member of the group of Eisenhower supporters and to maintain and strengthen the fellow feeling that exists among its members (ibid: 39).

2.7.3. **Discussion of Jakobson’s model of communication**

Jakobson’s model of communication takes several more factors into account than that of Shannon and Weaver as it includes not only the factors of communication but also the functions performed by each factor. This makes it possible to explain the factors of communication in more detail and take important notions such as the effect of the message on the receiver into consideration as well. Using these important factors in any communication situation will most likely enable the sender to be more successful in his/her communication. However, it is important to recognise and remember that no model can be comprehensive. The value of a model is that it highlights systematically selected features of its territory and points to selected interrelationships between these features. Also, the system between the selected features and interrelationships between the features provides a definition and delineation of the specific territory, which is being modelled. Modelling is useful and also necessary, but it is important to remember its limitations.

2.8. **The semiotic school**

Having now discussed the primary principles of the process school as well as some important factors within communication theory, it is time to turn to the science of semiotics.

The science of semiotics is very comprehensive. Much literature has been written on this subject alone, and it would therefore be beyond the scope of this thesis to go into too much detail on this matter. Consequently, this section will only deal with the most important aspects of semiotics presented by the two most important researchers within the field.

Semiotics is an example of the school of social philosophy known as **structuralism**. Indeed, semiotics may be seen as the paradigmatic form of structuralism. The basic premise of structuralism is that societies and sociological or cultural practices can be analysed, along the
lines of a language, as signifying systems. In structuralism, the subject is decentred, meaning that the central focus on the individual in much social analysis is replaced by focus on the structures of which the individual is just another element.

As mentioned earlier, unlike the process school, the semiotic school does not so much emphasise the process of communication as it does communication as generation of meaning. In communication, the receiver more or less understands the message of the sender, because the sender has created his/her message out of signs. The receiver is then stimulated to create a meaning for him/herself, which somehow relates to the meaning generated by the sender. The more sender and receiver share the same codes, the closer these two ‘meanings’ of the message will be (ibid: 42).

A key element within the science of semiotics is the notion of signs, and in semiotics there are three main areas of study, namely the sign itself, the codes or systems into which the signs are organised and finally the culture within which these codes and signs operate. These areas will be studied in more detail later. In the semiotic school, as opposed to the process school, the receiver is regarded an active participant in the communication process, and semioticians generally prefer the term ‘reader’ to ‘receiver’ (even of a painting, photograph or film) and often use the term ‘text’ to ‘message’. This implies that receiving a message (i.e. ‘reading a text’) is an active process of decoding and that that process is socially and culturally conditioned. As Fiske says: “The reader helps to create the meaning of the text by bringing to it his experience, attitudes and emotions” (ibid: 43).

Two of the most influential researchers within the science of semiotics are the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Each has his own definition of semiotics and signs; to Saussure a sign is a twofold entity, consisting of its physical form plus an associated mental concept, whereas Peirce sees it as a tri-relative influence which is not resolvable into actions between pairs. Saussure puts more emphasis directly on the sign itself than does Peirce whose primary interest is in meaning. Furthermore, Saussure distinguishes sharply between intentional, artificial devices (which he refers to as ‘signs’) and other natural or unintentional manifestations (which are NOT ‘signs’). Peirce’s definition of a sign does, however, not demand the qualities of being intentional or artificial.
2.8.1. Semiotics according to Saussure

Saussure is concerned with the way signs or words relate to other signs. He defines the sign as a physical object with a meaning, something which unites a concept and a sound image, or in his own words: a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. The signifier is the form which the sign takes, while the signified is the meaning that people in a given culture attribute to that signifier, or in other words the mental concept which the sign represents. Together, the signifier and the signified create the meaning of the sign. The relationship between these two elements with external reality or meaning is called *signification*. A sign must have both a signifier and a signified; it is not possible to have a meaningless signifier or a formless signified as a sign is a recognisable combination of a signifier with a particular signified. The same signifier, e.g. the word ‘open’, could stand for a different signified (and thus be a different sign) if it were on a push-button inside a lift (“push to open door”) than it would if encountered by someone on a shop doorway (“shop is open for business”). Similarly, many signifiers could stand for ‘open’, e.g. on top of a packing carton, a small outline of a box with an open flap for “open this end” – again, with each unique pairing constituting a different sign. Put into a model, Saussure’s theory looks like this:

\[
\text{sign} \quad \text{signifier} \quad \text{signified} \quad \text{signification} \quad \text{external reality or meaning}
\]

In, for instance, printed language, a sign consists of the printed form of a word and a concept. Fiske illustrates this by the following example:

“For illustration, I might make two marks on the paper, thus: O X. These might be the first two moves in a game of noughts and crosses, in which case they remain as mere marks on the paper. Or they might be read as a word, in which case they become a sign composed of the signifier (their appearance) and the mental concept (oxness) which we have of this particular
type of animal. The relationship between my concept of oxness and the physical reality of oxen is “signification”, it is my way of giving meaning to the world, of understanding it” (ibid: 47-48).

5 Fiske furthermore uses this example to illustrate that the signified is as much a product of a given culture as is the signifier. The signifier (in this case a word) obviously changes from one language to another, so the mistake of believing that the signifier is universal is not made. With the signified, however, it is easier to make this mistake and therefore believe that translating is a simple matter of constituting the word of one language with the word of another. In this connection, we must bear in mind that the mental concept of at least some words is most likely to change from one culture to another, or in the words of Fiske: “The signification of an ox is as culture-specific as is the linguistic form of the signifier in each language” (ibid: 48).

15 One of Saussure's fundamental insights is that sign-systems are arbitrary systems, a set of agreed conventions. Since there is no simple, natural sign/thing relationship between sign systems and reality, it is the reader who is the active maker of meaning. The sign-systems (or codes) which the reader uses provide him/her with sets of meanings. S/he activates the meanings within the repertoire which the code offers him/her.

20 Finally, Saussure points out that the value of signs is culture-specific. The French mouton may have the same meaning as the English sheep, but it does not have the same value. This is because English has the terms mutton and sheep, a distinction which is not available in French. He emphasises that a sign gains its value from its relation to other similar values. Without such a relationship signification would not exist (Internet 1).2

25 2.8.2. Semiotics according to Peirce

According to Peirce, a sign is “something which stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacity” (Eco, 1979: 15). This definition shows that to Peirce the sign is the link in any experience and in all thought, perhaps even in any process whatsoever. He goes on by stating that every sign creates an equivalent sign in the mind of the person who sees it, i.e. it

2 All Internet links will be provided with consecutive numbers, starting with ‘Internet 1’
has an effect in the mind of the user. This equivalent sign is what Peirce calls *the interpretant*. The ‘something’ that the sign stands for is its *object*. A sign can have more than one object; Peirce gives the sentence “Cain killed Abel” as an example of this. He says that this sentence is a sign, and that it refers as much to Cain as it does to Abel, just as he argues that ‘a murder’ is a third object to the sentence/sign. However, the number of objects should be perceived as making up one compound object (Peirce, 1994: 94-96). Peirce consequently defines semiosis as an action or an influence, which is a cooperation of three subjects: a sign, its object and its interpretant. In this triangular structural relationship he finds that which is his primary interest, namely *meaning*.

![Diagram of Peirce's elements of meaning](image)

**Figure 5: Peirce’s elements of meaning (Fiske, 1982: 45)**

The double-ended arrows in the figure emphasise that each term can only be understood in relation to the other terms. An important thing to remember is that the interpretant is not the interpreter of the sign, but rather a mental concept produced by both the sign and the interpreter’s experience of the object. In his *Theory of Semiotics*, Umberto Eco explains the difference between interpretant and interpreter as follows:

> “The interpretant is not the interpreter [...] The interpretant is that which guarantees the validity of the sign, even in the absence of the interpreter. According to Peirce it is that which the sign produces in the quasi-mind which is the interpreter; but it can also be conceived as the *definition* of the representamen (and therefore its intension)” (Eco, 1979: 68).

In order to illustrate this, we could use the word (or sign) ‘school’; the interpretant of ‘school’ will in any case be the result of the interpreter’s experience of that word together with his/her experience of institutions called ‘schools’, which in this case would be the object of the sign. It is therefore not something which can be defined by a dictionary as it will most likely vary...
according to the experience of the interpreter. Here it is important to note that the experience of the interpreter is limited by social convention, which in the case of the word ‘school’ would be the conventions of the English language.

It might seem that the interpretant could be equated with the entire range of connotations and denotations of a sign, but that would be a much too simple explanation. In Peirce’s semiotics, the interpretant is a complex discourse, which translates and develops all the logical possibilities suggested by the sign. Furthermore, the interpretant can be a response, a behavioural habit determined by a sign, etc. However, it is undoubtedly true that all denotations of a sign are its interpretants, whereas a connotation is the interpretant of an underlying denotation, and that a further connotation is the interpretant of the denotation underlying it. But, as mentioned above, the concept of interpretant goes beyond those of denotation and connotation (ibid: 70).

Probably the most popular part of Peirce’s trichotomy is that by which signs are classified as icons, indices and symbols. Icons are signs which are similar to their object, indices are signs which are physically connected with their object and symbols are conventional signs which are arbitrarily linked with their object. The most obvious example of an icon is a picture since it is really a sign of what is depicted, but also many gestures (particularly those concerning eating and drinking) are icons, as they imitate the movements of the processes to which they refer. The second type of signs, indices, has to do with association. This means that e.g. fever is an indexical sign as it is an index that a person is not well. Also, many gestures are indexical signs, such as pointing with a finger in order to identify a particular direction. Finally, conventional symbols bear no similarity of form to their object just as they do not have any immediate association with the object. Symbols are completely arbitrary, and they must be learned. Thus, most words are in essence conventional symbols as there is nothing in the English word ‘dog’, the Spanish word ‘perro’ or the Danish word ‘hund’, which indicates that these signs refer to an animal. Also, gestures, such as nodding or moving the head from side to side in order to indicate either agreement or disagreement, are symbols. Many mistakes have been made when people have assumed that such gestures are universal since e.g. in some countries the above-mentioned gestures have the exact opposite meaning (Nida, 1984: 19-23).
Not all signs are, however, easy to define according to the three basic types. An example used by Peirce in order to illustrate the difficulties connected with this is the footprints which Robinson Crusoe saw on the beach. At first they were an icon of a man’s feet, but also an index that a man had passed the beach at this point, and finally they became a symbol for a human being.

While semiotics is a very recognised discipline within the field of communication, some researchers do not completely agree with the theories of Saussure and Peirce. In the following, some arguments against the semiotic theories will therefore be discussed.

2.8.3. Discussion of semiotics

One of the most serious objections to semiotics is that made by Don Slater, stating that the project undertaken by Saussure is to:

“[describe] the internal structure of systems of meaning, and in answer to a rather new kind of question, not 'Why did she say that?', 'Why are BMWs a status symbol?', 'Why in our society does technology connote masculinity?', but rather 'How does the structure of a sign system make possible, offer certain resources for, certain statements, meanings and associations, and in reliable ways?', 'How is orderly and intelligible meaning sustained?’” (Slater, 1997: 141).

Slater points out that however interesting such a project may be, it is not a project of social explanation. Referring to an analysis by Judith Williamson (1970) of a perfume advertisement, he points out that although the connection between a certain kind of femininity represented by Catherine Deneuve and Chanel No 5 may be ontologically arbitrary (i.e. there is no necessary or natural connection between them), the connection is certainly not socially arbitrary. Thus, the history of social actions and motivations through which they have been connected cannot be discerned simply by examining the connections of the formal elements within a text. As a result of semioticians' attempts to do just that, Slater argues that the structure is treated as a cause, an answer to a social why question rather than a structural how question.
This is to some degree true, but what Slater seems to overlook is the relation between the sign and the external meaning and the mental concept, which both Peirce and Saussure, to some extent, have included in their models. We have already seen that Peirce’s interpretant is closely linked to social convention and according to Peirce, it is therefore necessary to take social questions into consideration in order to understand a text. When it comes to Saussure, however, he is less concerned than Peirce with the relationship between external meaning and the signifier and signified. However, it may be argued that his concept of signification is a social function, and consequently social questions are of some importance to his theory as well.

In conclusion, it could be argued which theory is better than the other, but that would probably turn out to be a lifelong discussion, and it would most likely depend on the purpose for which the theory is to be used. So at this point it suffices to say that both Saussure and Peirce have won great respect for their research, and they are both considered to be founders of semiotics. Also, their backgrounds taken into consideration, it is only natural that they have different approaches to the subject.
3. Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a very comprehensive field and may be characterised as a relatively new cross-discipline which comprises the theory and analysis of written and spoken language in practically all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. Modern discourse analysis emerged in the 1960s, but even before that time, text and talk had been analysed. However, it was only in the mid 1960s that the idea of a more systematic and explicit cross-discipline began to take shape. Discourse analysis as we know it today deals with a broad range of topics and areas, ranging from linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical approaches to psychological and, in particular, social directions of research (van Dijk, 1998: 25-27). In this connection, it is important to be aware that none of the approaches are uniquely right, rather the different approaches often fit different issues and questions better or worse than others. Moreover, even though discourse analysts have different theories about a specific domain and therefore use somewhat different terminologies and methods for their research, the different approaches to discourse analysis may arrive at similar conclusions (Gee, 2000: 5).

The basic aim of this chapter on discourse analysis is to define the concept of discourse and subsequently describe and compare three dominant approaches to the analysis of discourse, i.e. speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. Although these approaches originate in such diverse disciplines as linguistics, social sciences and psychology, they all attempt to answer the same question: how do we use language to convey information about the world, ourselves and our social relationships?

Discourse has often been viewed in two different ways: as a structure (i.e. as a unit of language which is larger than the sentence) and as the realisation of functions (i.e. as the use of language for social, expressive and referential purposes). The social function of language has long been overshadowed by structuralist approaches to language that are concerned with the description and explanation of language structure and which therefore disregard functional relations with the context of which discourse is a part. However, the role of language in social processes has been subject to a recent resurgence of interest among researchers who share the belief that language is an integral part of the social process. There are, of course, numerous ways of approaching this matter, and one of the most dominant methods focuses on variation
in phonological, morphological and syntactic components of the linguistic system, correlating sociolinguistic patterns with components of social identity such as social class, context, gender, region, age and ethnicity. Another approach to the relationship between language and society takes linguistic practices to be the primary medium through which social processes operate, and in this connection it is argued that social and institutional diversity is established and perpetuated through diversity in language use, i.e. different ways of ‘speaking’ (Lee, 1992: preface x). Although speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication incorporate both structure and function into their analyses, this chapter on discourse analysis is primarily based on the functionalist view on language.

The selected approaches to discourse will be described individually in more detail in the following sections, but before we do that, we will first of all give an introductory overview of the concept of discourse.

3.1. Defining discourse

The notion of discourse is a rather complex phenomenon and consequently it is rather difficult to describe. However, the commonsense notion of discourse, which derives from everyday language usage and the dictionary, usually refers to a form of language use, public speeches, or more generally to spoken language or ways of speaking (van Dijk, 1998: 1). But what are the characteristics of language? The term language can be used in a very broad metaphorical sense to refer to any system of communication, but in connection with the discipline of discourse, the focus is on human language.

An often-held belief is that language only serves as a way of communicating information. However, language is a difficult notion to define. It is such an integral part of our everyday lives and consequently not as simple and straightforward a concept as people often assume. Besides serving the function of giving and receiving information, the notion of language has a much deeper meaning, namely that language can be seen as the basis of interpersonal and social communication, and thus language is in many ways the basis of thought, feeling, action and interaction. Montgomery (1995) comments: “Language informs the way we think, the way we experience, and the way we interact with each other. Language provides the basis of
community, but also the grounds for division. Systematic knowledge about language and practical awareness of how it works is fundamental to the process of building mature communities” (in Thompson, 2003: 36).

Furthermore, Montgomery (1995) defines language as “a set of interlocking relationships in which a linguistic form takes on the meaning it does by virtue of its place within the total system of signs” (ibid: 37). Therefore, when referring to language as ‘a set of interlocking relationships’, Montgomery argues that language runs much deeper than its ability to use words to get a particular message across. Language, then, is rather a complex array of intertwining relationships, which form the basis of communication and social interaction.

Montgomery’s point about language as a set of interlocking relationships is further emphasised by Gee, who singles out two primary functions of language, i.e. “to scaffold the performance of social activities (whether play or work or both)” and “to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions” (Gee, 2000: 1). Gee observes that these two functions of language are closely linked since cultures, social groups and institutions together shape social activities, and at the same time, cultures, social groups and institutions are produced, reproduced and transformed through human activities. In other words, when we communicate together, we are interacting with one another, and in so doing we are reproducing the social and cultural patterns on which society depends for its existence. Language is in many ways our window on the world, i.e. it is closely associated with the way we make sense of our lives and of the social world and even how we make sense of ourselves.

It has now been established that ‘discourse’ may be interpreted as a form of language use and that the term ‘language’ entails an interactional aspect, which means that it is possible to introduce a more specific and broad application of the term discourse. Accordingly, van Dijk introduces a more theoretical concept of discourse, which involves other essential components, i.e. who uses language, how, why, and when. Together, these functional aspects of discourse form a complex communicative event implying that people use language in order to communicate ideas or beliefs (or to express emotion), and they do so as part of more complex social events, for instance in such specific situations as an encounter with friends, a phone call, a lesson in the classroom, a job interview, etc. (van Dijk, 1998: 1-2). The notion of
discourse as a complex communicative event implies that the participants do not only communicate ideas or beliefs or simply use language; they interact with each other.

Based on the above-mentioned definition of discourse as a communicative event, van Dijk points at three main dimensions of discourse: language use, the communication of beliefs (cognition) and interaction in social situations. According to van Dijk, the primary task of discourse analysis is to provide systematic descriptions of how these three main dimensions of discourse work in a fully integrated way, i.e. how does language use influence beliefs and interaction, or vice versa, how do aspects of interaction influence how people speak, or how do beliefs control language use and interaction? Van Dijk further argues that another but equally important task of discourse analysis is to formulate theories which explain such relationships between language use, beliefs and interaction (ibid: 2).

Although an overall introduction to the concept of discourse has now been provided, there is, however, a very important aspect of discourse, which has not been included in the definitions noted above, i.e. the written or nonverbal dimension of language use. Consequently, language use is not only limited to spoken language; it also encompasses written language (or written texts), and it is even possible to speak of written communication or written interaction even though the participants do not usually interact face to face. The readers of a certain text are more passively involved in the interaction with the exception of, for instance, an exchange of letters or a media debate. Therefore, although discourse analysts tend to focus on the verbal dimensions of discourse, and despite the differences between spoken and written language use, communication and interaction, the general notion of discourse should include both talk and text (ibid: 3).

The written or nonverbal dimension of discourse is included in Gee’s approach to discourse analysis, and he argues that “discourse analysis is the analysis of spoken and written language as it is used to enact social and cultural activities, perspectives, and identities” (Gee, 2000: 4-5). The notion of identity plays a central role in Gee’s view on discourse, and he observes that people project different identities according to the situation or activity in which they are engaged (cf. section 2.4.). For instance, a person projects a different identity at a formal dinner party than s/he does at the family dinner table. Although these situations are both
characterised as ‘dinner’, they are nevertheless different activities. Accordingly, Gee notes that in order for a written or verbal utterance to have meaning, it must necessarily communicate a who and a what. By a who, Gee refers to a socially situated identity or the ‘kind of person’ one is seeking to be and enact here and now. A what, on the other hand, refers to a socially situated activity that the utterance helps to constitute. It may therefore be concluded that different identities and activities are enacted in and through language (ibid: 13).

When dealing with discourse, Gee distinguishes between ‘Discourse’ with a capital D and ‘discourse’ with a lower case d. The latter definition of discourse refers to language in use, i.e. how language is used to enact activities and identities whereas the former definition of discourse entails how this language in use is melded integrally with what Gee calls non-language ‘stuff’. By using the term non-language ‘stuff’, Gee refers to, for instance, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, places and times. Consequently, depending on what discourse or discourses a person belongs to, be it a ‘regular’ at the local bar, a certain type of African-American, a teacher or a student, a heavy metal enthusiast, etc., language together with non-language ‘stuff’ is used in order to recognise oneself and others as meaningful in certain ways, i.e. to give oneself and others an identity (ibid: 7).

3.1.1. Formalist and functionalist paradigms

So far, the notion of language, and thus discourse, has merely been dealt with from a functionalist point of view. However, according to Schiffrin, it is possible to distinguish between two very different definitions of discourse, which stem from the functionalist and formalist³ paradigms in linguistics. These two paradigms provide different background assumptions about the general nature of language and the goals of linguistics, and as opposed to functionalists, who study language in relation to its social function and view language primarily as a societal phenomenon, formalists study language as an autonomous system and tend to regard language primarily as a mental phenomenon. Consequently, the differences between formalist and functionalist views on language also influence definitions of discourse,

³ It must be noted that the formalist paradigm is sometimes also referred to as the structuralist paradigm, and thus in this chapter the two terms are used interchangeably
and whereas a definition derived from the functionalist paradigm views discourse as ‘language use’, a definition derived from the formalist paradigm views discourse as ‘language above the sentence’ (Schiffrin, 1994: 20-22).

As noted above, the approach to discourse in this chapter is primarily based on the functionalist view on language. However, it may seem relevant to include the formalist view on language due to the fact that the selected approaches to discourse, i.e. speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, all begin with function and end up incorporating structure into their analyses. The relationship between form and function will therefore be touched upon when discussing the selected approaches to discourse, and it will be described in more detail in the concluding section dealing with similarities and differences among the approaches. In order to understand the relationship between structure and function, the formalist approach will be discussed briefly in the following.

From a formalist point of view, discourse may be defined as ‘language above the sentence or above the clause’. The fact that discourse is comprised of units is critical to structural views of discourse, and structurally based analyses generally focus on the way in which different units function in relation to each other, i.e. they identify constituents that have particular relationships with one another and which can occur in a restricted number of arrangements. Consistent with the view that discourse is a level of structure higher than sentences, i.e. that discourse is a structure within which sentences are embedded, many contemporary structural analyses of discourse consequently view the sentence as the unit of which discourse is comprised.

There is, however, one immediate problem associated with this assumption: the units in which people speak do not always resemble sentences. Some analysts suggest that spoken language is produced in units with intonational and semantic boundaries rather than syntactic boundaries. In other words, intonational closure does not always correspond to syntactic closure. Support for this view can be found by examining a transcript of a stretch of speech consisting of chunks of speech which do not fit the traditional notion of sentencehood (ibid: 25). It would, of course, be possible to transcribe this chunk of speech in a way that would make it look more like a sentence. However, as van Dijk points out, discourse analysis is
interested in naturally occurring talk (and text), i.e. real-world data that has not been edited or otherwise ‘sanitised’ and which can be studied in ways that come as close as possible to their actually occurring forms in their customary contexts (van Dijk, 1998: 29). Therefore, by applying editing rules to the non-fluencies and false starts in a chunk of speech, one could argue that this would not really capture the way words and expressions cluster together in spoken language.

According to Schiffrin, another problem arising from the view that discourse is language above the sentence is that discourse may be expected to exhibit a structure analogous to the sentences of which it is comprised. To illustrate this point, we can take Chomsky’s well-known example “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.” Even though this sentence is meaningless in the traditional sense of meaning, it is syntactically well-formed. However, if we take the same sentence but reorganise the words as in “Furiously sleep ideas green colorless” we end up with not only a meaningless but also a syntactically deviant (or ill-formed) sentence. This seems to suggest that “the real syntactic truth underlying the contrasts in grammaticality is that while some sequences of the form adjective-adjective-noun-verb-adverb are syntactically well-formed in English, sequences of the form adverb-verb-noun-adjective-adjective are not” (Schiffrin, 1994: 27). Consequently, structure in this sense does not seem to apply to discourse due to the fact that it is simply not possible to contrast constituent strings of well-formed versus ill-formed discourse in the same way. It may therefore be concluded that identifying structural constituents of discourse is not as clear cut as identifying constituents of sentences (ibid: 27).

3.2. Approaches to discourse analysis

The two very different definitions of discourse discussed above raise important issues, which provide a basis for understanding the differences and similarities among the three approaches to be presented in the following. The aim of this section is thus to provide a general background (including key issues and critical concepts) of each approach, focusing primarily on the work of scholars central to each approach. Finally, we will look at some differences and similarities among the approaches, and this concluding comparison will essentially be centred on two issues which are critical to discourse analysis and about which discourse
analysts must make assumptions: the relationship between structure and function and the relationship between text and context. The reason for focusing on these issues is that the selected approaches take different positions on the relationship between structure and function as well as text and context, simply because these conceptual distinctions are all variants of the dichotomy between what is considered part of language and what is not.

### 3.2.1. Speech act theory

The speech act approach to discourse was developed by two philosophers, John L. Austin and John R. Searle, from the basic insight that language is used not only to describe the world, but also to perform a range of other actions which can be indicated in the performance of the utterance itself. Even though speech act theory was not first developed as a tool for analysing discourse, particular issues in speech act theory (e.g. meaning, use, actions) subsequently lead to discourse analysis (ibid: 49-50). Speech act theory basically focuses on what people ‘do’ with language, i.e. the functions of language, and is essentially concerned with communicative acts performed through speech. Furthermore, the data used to carry out the analyses are “typically constructed utterances in hypothetical contexts that are chosen to illustrate the interplay between text and context that mutually informs production and interpretation of the acts performed through words” (ibid: 12).

According to Searle, the reason for studying speech acts is that all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts, and thus speaking a language is performing speech acts (Searle, 1977: 16). That is, linguistic expressions have the ability to perform certain kinds of communicative acts such as making statements, asking questions, issuing orders, giving directions and apologising, and it may therefore be argued that speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication. Searle proposes: “The hypothesis that the speech act is the basic unit of communication, taken together with the principle of expressibility [whatever can be meant can be said], suggests that there are a series of analytic connections between the notion of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence (or other linguistic element) uttered means, what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are” (ibid: 21). The functions of language that Searle mentions are typically functions similar to communicative intentions, and speech act theory is therefore
concerned with providing a systematic classification of such communicative intentions and
the ways in which they are linguistically encoded in context.

Furthermore, when dealing with speech acts (or communicative intentions), Austin argues that
some utterances which seem like statements, such as “I apologise” or “I warn you” cannot be
verified as either true or false due to the fact that their aim is not to make true or false
statements; rather their purpose is to ‘do’ an action (in van Dijk, 1997: 42). Austin labels
these utterances ‘performatives’ so as to distinguish them from all other utterances in the
language, and he further notes that such utterances must necessarily meet certain textual and
contextual conditions, i.e. felicity conditions, in order for them to achieve their performative
function as e.g. an apology or a warning. Accordingly, performatives require not only the
appropriate circumstances, but the participants and the language must also be felicitous and
appropriate for successful performance. To illustrate this point, we may take the example of a
marriage ceremony: in order for this act to be executed correctly, it involves the existence of
“an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect” and the presence
of “particular persons and circumstances” (Schiffrin, 1994: 50). Similarly, speakers must have
the right intentions: if a person utters “I promise to be there at five” but does not intend to
keep the promise, i.e. the person is not sincere in uttering this sentence, then the utterance
cannot count as a promise.

However, Austin later suggests that performing communicative acts is not limited to
performatives; rather it is an inherent property of all types of utterances. Consequently, any
type of utterance simultaneously performs three types of act, i.e. all utterances perform speech
acts, which are comprised of a locutionary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act.
The locutionary act implies “the formulation of a sentence with a specific sense and
reference”, i.e. what is said; the illocutionary act is “the performing of a communicative
function, such as stating, questioning, commanding and promising”, i.e. what the speaker does
in uttering a linguistic expression; and finally, the perlocutionary act is “the consequential
effects of an utterance on an interlocutor”, i.e. what is achieved by saying something (in van
Dijk, 1997: 42). Consequently, the qualities which Austin initially saw as characteristic of
performatives have now proven to be an inherent property of all utterances, and it may
therefore be concluded that the focus of attention is no longer the sentences, but rather the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation.

Furthermore, Searle introduces several thoughts, which provide important ideas for the application of speech act theory to discourse. For instance, it was noted above that Searle views the speech act as the basic unit of communication. This view seems to suggest that speech acts can be associated with the study of language, meaning and communication, and thus speech act theory becomes incorporated into linguistic theory. What allows this incorporation is Searle’s principle of expressibility, which entails that whatever can be meant can be said. In other words, Searle argues that speakers are (in theory) always able to say exactly what they mean by the use of language, i.e. people may either increase their knowledge of the language or enrich the language by introducing new terms or other devices into it. However, Searle notes that the principle of expressibility does not imply that whatever can be said can be understood by others since speaking a language is engaging in a highly complex, rule-governed form of behaviour (Searle, 1977: 19-20). Put differently, talking is performing acts according to rules, and thus for any speech act to be successful it must necessarily meet its specific contextual conditions. Searle calls the rules (or conditions) which are responsible for speech acts constitutive, and as opposed to regulative rules, which seek to regulate independently existing forms of behaviour, constitutive rules create or define new forms of behaviour (ibid: 31).

Subject to the conditions and rules central to Searle’s framework is the illocutionary act. Searle’s rules and conditions for speech acts draw upon both context and text, and the textual and contextual circumstances allowing speech acts to have an illocutionary force are classified as different kinds of conditions and rules, which vary systematically according to what type of speech act is being performed. Searle therefore categorises speech acts in accordance with the set of preconditions proposed for the performance of speech acts, and he distinguishes between the following conditional parameters: propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions and essential conditions.

Propositional content conditions concern reference and predication, i.e. the propositional act. For instance, promises are usually the predication of a future act whereas apologies
(generally) refer to an act in the past. Furthermore, preparatory conditions specify the necessary contextual circumstances which are required in order for the speech act to be performed, and with respect to promises a preparatory condition involves the hearer’s preference about the speaker’s doing of an act. Sincerity conditions, on the other hand, concern the speaker’s psychological state, e.g. the speaker’s wants and beliefs. A sincerity condition for requests, for instance, concerns the speaker’s wish that the hearer does the requested act. Finally, the essential condition may be characterised as what the utterance ‘counts as.’ With respect to requests, it could be speaker’s attempt to get the hearer to do something (in van Dijk, 1997: 44).

Accordingly, each rule or condition focuses upon a slightly different aspect of what is said: the propositional content condition focuses only on the textual content; the preparatory condition focuses on background circumstances; the sincerity condition concentrates on the speaker’s psychological state; and finally, the essential condition focuses on the (illocutionary) point of what is said. Furthermore, whereas each condition or rule is individually necessary for the successful performance of a given act, it is the set of conditional parameters, which is collectively sufficient for such a performance. Finally, it is also important to know which speech act to perform and subsequently the rules governing it since it is a crucial part of how speakers use language to communicate. Similarly, knowledge of how to identify that particular act is vital to hearers’ understanding (Schiffrin, 1994: 55-56).

Furthermore, although Austin proposes a categorisation of speech acts, Searle argues that Austin’s taxonomy lacks a clear distinction between illocutionary verbs and acts. Searle therefore goes a step further and proposes five classes of speech acts: representatives (e.g. asserting), directives (e.g. requesting), commissives (e.g. promising), expressives (e.g. thanking) and declarations (e.g. appointing). Three main principles differentiate these classes, and the first taxonomic principle concerns the illocutionary point of the act that is derived from the essential condition of an act, i.e. the condition which defines what the act ‘counts as’ (see above). For instance, the illocutionary point of directives is that they are the speaker’s attempts to get the hearer to do something, while the illocutionary act of commissives is that they commit the speaker to some future course of action.
The second taxonomic principle concerns ‘the way that words are fit to the world.’ For instance, if we take again directives and commissives, then these are built upon a *world-to-words* fit. Consequently, in making a request, the speaker attempts to get the hearer to create a world first presented in the words and in making a promise, the speaker attempts to create a world first presented in the words. In contrast, representatives are built upon a *words-to-world* fit implying that the acts of e.g. stating, insisting and concluding are all based upon the way words are fit to a world which is pre-existing (in the sense that it is not being created by those words). Finally, the third principle differentiating the classes of speech acts concerns the expressed psychological state stemming from the sincerity condition. For instance, the expressed psychological state of representatives is ‘belief’ (e.g. speaker believes that X…), whereas the psychological state expressed by directives is ‘want’ (ibid: 58).

To sum up, we have now seen how speech acts can be classified into groups and subgroups by a principled set of criteria, but there is another important feature of speech act performance which deserves some attention, namely that of indirectness.

### 3.2.1.1. Indirect speech acts

The phenomenon of indirect speech acts is concerned with the multiple functions of an utterance, and Searle’s view on indirectness (like his taxonomy of speech acts) is based on his analysis of the conditions underlying speech acts. An indirect speech act may therefore be defined as “an utterance in which one illocutionary act (a ‘primary act’) is performed by way of the performance of another act (a ‘literal’ act)” (ibid: 59). That is, hearers have the ability to interpret indirect speech acts due to their knowledge of speech acts together with general principles of cooperative conversation, mutually shared factual information and a general ability to draw inferences.

As noted above, an utterance may perform more than one act, and to illustrate this, take, for instance, the direct request “Please close the door.” This communicative intent could also be issued indirectly by uttering “Could you please close the door?” Both sentences are examples of directives (i.e. their primary act), but they also perform other acts: the former sentence is a request whereas the latter is a question. The reason why both sentences can be understood as
directives is due to the fact that the literal speech acts, which they also perform (i.e. the request and the question respectively), focus upon an underlying condition that allows the directives to be performed. Accordingly, the sentence “Please close the door” is a speaker-based sincerity condition for requests, implying that the speaker wants the hearer to do something. In turn, the sentence “Could you please close the door?” is a hearer-based preparatory condition, which concerns the hearer’s ability to carry out the act (ibid: 59).

In conclusion, speech act theory analyses the way meanings and acts are linguistically communicated. By focusing on the meanings of utterances as acts, speech act theory offers an approach to discourse analysis by way of segmenting ‘what is said’ into units, which have identifiable communicative functions. Consequently, utterances perform different acts due to their ‘circumstances’ and due to the knowledge that we have of the conditions and rules underlying the production and understanding of an utterance as a particular linguistically realised action. These underlying conditions (or preconditions) furthermore provide an analytical resource for indirectness, i.e. it is possible for a single utterance to perform more than one speech act at a time, and it is therefore the relationship between the underlying conditions that allow utterances to have multiple functions. Finally, although speech act theory is basically concerned with the functions of language, its application to discourse leads to a structural approach; speech act theory leads to the discovery of well-formed sequences of discourse, and this outcome is exactly what structural analyses aim for – despite the fact that the structures are functionally grounded (ibid: 347).

3.2.2. Interactional sociolinguistics

Like other functional approaches, interactional sociolinguistics focuses upon language use, i.e. it is concerned not only with the way people intend language to serve referential meanings, but also with the social, cultural and expressive meanings stemming from how utterances are situated in context. One of the key tasks of interactional sociolinguistics is to describe the contexts in which language is used and to relate the meanings and particular functions of an utterance to those contexts. Furthermore, the interactional approach focuses on the social and linguistic meanings created during interaction; although hearers draw inferences about speakers’ intent (as in speech act theory), the inferences are considerably
broader and more varied, and they are based on a wide range of verbal and nonverbal cues, which are part of cultural repertoires for signalling meaning. Additionally, the interactional approach relies upon actual utterances in social context, and thus the focus of analysis is on how interpretation and interaction are based upon the interrelationship of social and linguistic meanings.

Interactional sociolinguistics stems both from anthropology, sociology and linguistics and shares the concerns of all three fields with culture, society and language. Several approaches to interactional sociolinguistics exist, yet this section draws mainly on the contributions made by the linguistic anthropologist John Gumperz and the sociologist Erving Goffman. Gumperz’s approach to interactional sociolinguistics focuses on how people from different cultures may share grammatical knowledge of a language, but differently contextualise what is said so that very different messages are produced and understood. In contrast, Goffman’s approach to interactional sociolinguistics concentrates on how language is situated in particular circumstances of social life and on how it adds (or reflects) different types of meaning and structure to those circumstances (ibid: 97). In the following, the two different interactional approaches will be described in more detail, beginning with the work of Gumperz and subsequently moving on to Goffman and his contribution to interactional sociolinguistics.

3.2.2.1. The contribution of anthropology

Due to his profession as a linguistic anthropologist, Gumperz’s research is primarily rooted in an assumption basic to social and cultural anthropology. Gumperz views language as a socially and culturally constructed symbol system, which both reflects and creates macro-level social meaning and micro-level interpersonal meanings, and he suggests that “the meaning, structure, and use of language is socially and culturally relative” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 98). Gumperz’s assumption that the use of language is socially and culturally relative is further emphasised by Gee, who argues that the meaning and structure of, for instance, words is integrally linked to social and cultural groups, i.e. the meaning of words is not general and stable; rather, words have multiple and ever changing meanings created for and adapted to specific contexts of use (Gee, 2000: 40).
In his work on differences in regional and social languages, Gumperz includes the notion of code switching. He identifies two types of code switching from one language variety to another of which the first type is labelled ‘situational code switching’. This entails that people may switch from one language variety to another in accordance with “clear changes in […] participants’ definitions of each other’s rights and obligations” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 98). The second type of switching is labelled metaphorical code switching (or conversational code switching) and entails that people may switch language within a single situation in order to express a different view of that situation. In sum, what Gumperz observes is that different forms of social relation may generate very different speech systems or communication codes, and to illustrate this point, Gumperz gives the following example: the form of speech used by members of an army combat unit on manoeuvres will clearly be different from the same members’ speech at a padre’s evening (Gumperz and Hymes, 1986: 473).

The relationship between culture, society, individual and code is highly central to Gumperz’s work, and he argues that “what we perceive and retain in our mind is a function of our culturally determined predisposition to perceive and assimilate” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 99). That is, cognition and language are to a great extent influenced by social and cultural forces, and in this connection Gumperz notes that modern, urban societies are characterised by their heterogeneity, and thus communicative difficulties may arise due to the fact that people’s perceptions of similarities and differences are culture-bound. However, it should be noted that it is not only the grammar of a language which may affect the expressive quality of a message; also signalling mechanisms such as intonation, speech rhythm and choice among lexical, phonetic and syntactic options may result in communicative difficulties and e.g. cause misunderstandings, give rise to racial and ethnic stereotypes or contribute to inequalities in power and status.

The signalling mechanisms just described are what Gumperz calls ‘contextualisation cues’. Contextualisation cues are learned through long periods of close, face to face contact, and they may be characterised as aspects of language and behaviour (including verbal and nonverbal signs) that enable social actors to relate what is said to their contextual knowledge and thus retrieve the presuppositions necessary for the accurate inferencing of what is meant. Put differently, contextualisation cues indicate the speaker’s implicit definition of the
situation and how the propositional content of talk is to be understood. Accordingly, when the hearer shares the speaker’s contextualisation cues, the interaction between the two will proceed smoothly. Furthermore, Gumperz notes that two other concepts are part of the definition of contextualisation cues, namely ‘contextual presuppositions’ and ‘situated inferences.’ Contextual presuppositions refer to “a type of assumed background knowledge that allows the inferencing (during the course of interaction) of two levels of meaning that are themselves related” (ibid: 100). The first level of meaning concerns the communicative activity type, e.g. lecturing or chatting, whereas the second level concerns the particular illocutionary act (cf. section 3.2.1.), which the speaker intends. The contextual presuppositions (with the help of contextualisation cues) are therefore needed in order for the hearer to be able to infer the speaker’s communicative intention.

The second concept that constitutes part of the definition of contextualisation cues is what Gumperz calls situated inferences. Gumperz argues that people have a cognitive capacity to make inferences, and contextualisation cues are therefore critical to this process since they allow conversationalists to “rely on indirect inferences which build on background assumptions about context, interactive goals and interpersonal relations to derive frames in terms of which they can interpret what is going on” (ibid: 101). Another aspect necessary to the process of situated inferences is the maintenance of conversational involvement. Accordingly, Gumperz argues that “understanding presupposes the ability to attract and sustain others’ attention” (ibid: 101) entailing that speaker and hearer must necessarily share linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge in order to sustain conversational cooperation.

In conclusion, the contextualisation cues discussed above are highly central to Gumperz’s sociolinguistics of interpersonal communication, and his work is primarily concerned with how interpretations of context are critical to the communication of information. Gumperz argues that all people are members of social and cultural groups, and thus language not only reflects our group-based identity, it also provides continual indices of who we are and what we want to communicate. Consequently, the ability to produce and decode these indexical processes as they occur in local contexts is part of our communicative competence (cf. section 3.2.3.).
3.2.2.2. The contribution of sociology

Like Gumperz, Goffman also focuses upon situated knowledge, the self and social context, but in different ways and with different emphasis. For instance, even though Goffman does not analyse language in isolation, his focus on social interaction complements Gumperz’s focus on situated inferences. That is, Goffman also places language in the very same social and interpersonal contexts, which provide the presuppositions necessary for the decoding of meaning; yet what Goffman provides is a sociological framework for describing and understanding the form and meaning of these social and interpersonal contexts.

Furthermore, Goffman’s sociology is primarily concerned with social interaction. He views the self as a social (i.e. public) construction or, rather, an interactive construction. Accordingly, the view of the self as a social construction may be reflected in the notion of ‘face’, which Goffman defines as “something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter and becomes manifest only when these events are read and interpreted for the appraisals expressed in them” (ibid: 102). Consequently, Goffman argues that the maintenance of both self and face constitutes part of social interaction, and he notes that a contribution to the maintenance of face (and subsequently the presentation of self) could be, for instance, “the material resources made available through the social establishments and institutions in which people find themselves – resources that not only can be used to symbolize certain favored aspects of self or to show distance from an institutionally allocated role, but can physically facilitate the division of self into a public character and a more private performer” (ibid: 103).

As noted above, Goffman is concerned with the relationship between social structure and interpersonal meaning in context, and it is both form and meaning which provide us with an understanding of the contextual presuppositions figuring in hearers’ inferences of speakers’ meaning. For instance, Gumperz argues that situated inferences require interpersonal involvement and furthermore that the maintenance of involvement requires shared linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge. In contrast, Goffman focuses on the social organisation of involvement, and he emphasises that different social occasions may produce a wide range of expectations for the display of involvement (e.g. greetings require heightened involvement) so
that the very processes of both ‘being’ involved and ‘showing’ involvement are themselves socially situated (Schiffrin, 1994: 103). The social organisation of involvement as proposed by Goffman is therefore relevant to Gumperz’s theories about involvement due to the fact that if interactions impose their own rules of involvement, then also the inferences, which are based on involvement, are governed by broader rules of social engagement.

Another example that illustrates Goffman’s concern with form and meaning in context concerns the contextual presuppositions underlying hearers’ inferences of speakers’ meanings. In this connection, Gumperz’s contextualisation cues discussed above may be characterised as a sort of framing device that indicates the frame (e.g. chat, serious, business) in which an utterance should be inferred. However, Goffman’s work on frame analysis seems to suggest that the organisation of framing activity is itself socially situated. Goffman’s work consequently contributes to the notion that people both use and construct contextual presuppositions during the inferencing process, and his work furthermore offers a view of the means by which those contextual presuppositions are “externally constructed and impose external constraints on the ways in which we understand messages” (ibid: 104).

In sum, Goffman’s work focuses on how the organisation of social life (in institutions, interactions, etc.) provides contexts in which both the conduct of self and interpersonal communication can be decoded. Furthermore, what Goffman’s work adds to Gumperz’s sociolinguistics of interpersonal communication is a more detailed view (whether speaking of form or meaning) of what in a context may provide a situated presupposition together with a view of the organisational and empirical frames which can be indicated through contextualisation cues. However, despite the two different interactional approaches noted above, there are two central issues underlying the works of both Gumperz and Goffman which provide a unity to interactional sociolinguistics, i.e. the interaction between self, other and context and the view of language as indexical to a social world.

Interactional sociolinguistics thus provides an approach to discourse which focuses upon situated meaning, and discourse is viewed as a social interaction in which emergent construction and negotiation is facilitated by the use of language. Furthermore, even though

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4 Frames are the organisational and interactional principles by which situations are defined and sustained as experiences
interactional sociolinguistics is basically a functional approach to discourse, Goffman’s work provides structural attention to the contexts in which language is used; language and context co-constitute one another so that language not only functions in context, it also forms and provides context (ibid: 134).

3.2.3. The ethnography of communication

The final approach to discourse analysis included in this chapter is the ethnography of communication. The ethnographic approach originates in linguistics and anthropology, and it shares with traditional anthropology a concern for holistic explanations of meaning and behaviour. The theoretical roots of ethnographic methods reach back to the anthropological and ethnological works of Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas and in the linguistic studies of Edward Sapir. However, in linguistics, the key figures responsible for the development of this approach are Dell Hymes and John Gumperz, who presented their ‘ethnography of communication’ (or ‘ethnography of speaking’) in a series of papers written in the 1960s and 1970s, both as a method and a theory that regards patterns of communication as part of cultural knowledge and behaviour.

Much of the impetus for the ethnography of communication was Hymes’ challenge to Chomsky’s well-known refocusing of linguistic theory on the explanation of competence, i.e. tacit knowledge of the abstract rules of language. Hymes criticised Chomsky for “analysing language without reference to communication, where only grammaticality has to be explained” and furthermore for his “nativistic tendency to postulate universals” (in Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, 2000: 90). Consequently, what Hymes proposed instead was that scholarship focus on communicative competence, i.e. the tacit social, psychological, cultural and linguistic knowledge governing appropriate use of language including, but not limited to, grammar. Knowledge of abstract linguistic rules is included in Hymes’ communicative competence, but communicative competence also comprises the ability to use language in concrete situations of everyday life such as the ability to engage in everyday conversation, to shop in a store, to joke, to argue, to tease, etc. as well as other culturally constructed speech events such as prayer and public oratory (van Dijk, 1997: 232).
The ethnography of communication is the most encompassing of the three approaches considered in this chapter due to the fact that it focuses upon a broader range of communicative behaviours, i.e. it discovers and analyses the patterns (structures) and functions of communicating which organise the use of language in the conduct of social life.

In addition, the ethnography of communication focuses on language and communication as cultural behaviour, and this entails that the status and significance of any particular act can be discovered only as part of a matrix of more general meanings, beliefs and values, which extend far beyond the knowledge of the grammar of one’s language. According to Hymes, the communicative patterns may be analysed by using the traditional method of anthropological research, i.e. participant observation. Hymes states: “By participating in a wide range of activities endemic to the life of a particular group of people, one attempts to replace one’s own way of thinking, believing, and acting with a framework in which what is done by the members of another group starts to seem ‘expected’ and ‘natural’” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 137-140). Consequently, one of the primary goals for ethnographers is to learn what members of a culture know about how to ‘make sense’ out of experience and subsequently how they communicate those interpretations.

As noted above, the ethnography of communication is rooted in both linguistics and anthropology. Linguistics and anthropology are disciplines whose data, methods and theories are often seen as clearly distinct from one another; however, one area in which both fields share an interest is that of communication. The understanding of communication is an important goal for linguists due to the fact that language is the central means by which people communicate with one another in everyday life. Understanding communication is also important for anthropologists, who argue that “the way we communicate is part of our cultural repertoire for making sense of – and interacting with – the world” (ibid: 138). Hymes claims, however, that anthropologists often pay little attention to language as cultural behaviour and/or knowledge and consequently ignoring the fact that language is a grammatical system, which is an integral part of culture.

As you will see in chapter 4, the notion of culture is a rather complex phenomenon and consequently numerous definitions of culture exist. Even anthropologists do not always agree as to what comprises culture; however, the view that Hymes seems to adopt is that culture is a
system of ideas and beliefs, which underlies and gives meaning to behaviour in society. Even so, Hymes argues that not every aspect of culture, e.g. knowledge and behaviour, needs to be shared by all members of a certain culture; rather, members of a culture may be differentially competent in the way they draw upon a communicative repertoire. Hymes proposes: “What is distinctively cultural, as an aspect of behaviour or of things, is a question of capabilities acquired or elicited in social life, rather than a question of the extent to which the behaviour or things themselves are shared” (ibid: 139).

Furthermore, it was noted at the outset of this section that language can be characterised as a system of use whose norms and rules are an integral part of culture (cf. section 4.2.4.), and it may therefore be argued that the way we communicate with each other is constrained by culture, yet at the same time it also reveals and sustains culture. Culture is thus continuously created, negotiated and redefined in concrete acts between people who are participating in some type of interactive situation. Similarly, it may be argued that language use in speech situations “helps realize the cultural norms that underlie the way we act toward one another” (Schiffrin, 1994: 139), and furthermore that language use constitutes part of social behaviour in many different institutions (e.g. economic, religious, political and family), which are themselves culturally bound. It might therefore seem reasonable to propose that the underlying norms that guide communication also reflect, and help constitute, social institutions.

As noted above, the ethnography of communication provides a framework within which both anthropological and linguistic studies of communication can be carried out, and one key concept which bridges the two different disciplines is communicative competence, i.e. what we say and do has meaning only within a framework of cultural knowledge. The methods for studying communicative competence are therefore also integrative, and the ethnographic approach shares with anthropology “an emphasis on how meanings and behaviours need to be understood in an analytical framework in which comparisons establish not only what is different in different cultures, but also what is potentially the same” (ibid: 140). Another aspect which is shared with anthropology is, as already mentioned, a concern for holistic explanations of meaning and behaviour, i.e. explanations which place particular behaviours (including utterances) in a wider framework of beliefs, actions and norms. Accordingly, the
particularities which ethnographers seek to discover are particularities of language use that also exist in the linguistic form and structure itself; the form of a message is as crucial to the understanding of particular functions as its content.

Consequently, what Hymes suggests is that speech must be analysed as a linguistic structure within a relativistic (i.e. emic) and holistic (i.e. ethnographic) mode of inquiry, and he argues that “the essential method […] is simply persistence in seeking systematic co-variation of form and meaning. The spirit of the method is ‘structural’ in the sense of Sapir’s linguistics, ‘emic’ and ‘ethnographic’ in the sense of concern for valid description of the individual case” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 141). Therefore, when analysing communicative patterns, Hymes proposes a methodology by which to discover ‘what counts’ as communicative events. Hymes’ methodology is based on the distinction between ‘emic’ and ‘etic’: linguists who study the sound system of an unknown language seek to discover phonemic patterns (i.e. which sounds are ‘meaningful’ in a particular language) with the help of a phonetic classification (i.e. which sounds are physically possible). This classification system makes it possible to discover communicative units since it divides communication into the components of which it may be potentially comprised (van Dijk, 1998: 239). The classificatory grid as proposed by Hymes is known as the SPEAKING grid where each letter is an abbreviation for a different possible component of communication:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Setting, scene</th>
<th>Physical circumstances, subjective definition of an occasion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Speaker, sender, addressor, hearer, receiver, audience, addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Ends</td>
<td>Purposes and goals, outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Act sequence</td>
<td>Message form and content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Tone, manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Instrumentalities</td>
<td>Channel (verbal, nonverbal, physical), forms of speech drawn from community repertoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>Norms of interaction and interpretation, specific properties attached to speaking, interpretation of norms within cultural belief system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Textual categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: SPEAKING grid (Titscher et al., 2000: 95)
The SPEAKING grid provides a basic framework for analysing speech, and it is used to identify a local (i.e. culturally relative) categorisation of communicative units. The units of analysis are speech situations, speech events and speech acts. The largest communicative unit is the speech situation, which involves the social occasion in which speech may occur (e.g. conferences, meals); the second largest unit is the speech event that may be characterised as activities, or aspects of activities, which are directly governed by rules or norms of the use of speech; and finally, the smallest communicative unit is the speech act. It must be noted, however, that Hymes does not explicitly define speech acts; instead he distinguishes between acts, which can be defined through their illocutionary force and acts, which cannot be so defined. Thus, the larger units in the set embed the smaller, and to illustrate this point we may take Hymes’ example: a party is a speech situation; a conversation during the party is a speech event; a joke within the conversation is a speech act. Even though discourse is important to all the units, it seems to be the speech act level, which is most fundamental to discourse. Hymes proposes: “Discourse may be viewed in terms of acts both syntagmatically and paradigmatically: i.e., both as a sequence of speech acts and in terms of classes of speech acts among which choice has been made at given points” (in Schiffrin, 1994: 142).

In sum, the ethnography of communication seeks to describe modes of speech according to the ways in which they construct and reflect social life within particular speech communities, and examples of this approach show that even so fundamental a notion as communication cannot be assumed to be constant across cultures. This is due to the fact that cultural conceptions of communication are closely linked to conceptions of person, cultural values and knowledge of the world – so that instances of communicative behaviour are never free of the cultural belief and action systems in which they occur. In other words, rather than assuming a closed set of language functions which apply equally to all languages and all speech communities, the ethnographic approach assumes diversity: e.g. a single speech community is itself an organisation of diversity.

Also, the ethnography of communication is basically a functional approach to discourse since it is categories of language use (e.g. acts and events), and not language structure, which have theoretical priority. In addition, an ethnographic approach to discourse in general can combine speech act and interactional approaches within a larger framework of inquiry; our knowledge
of the conditions by which we recognise a speech act constitute part of our cultural knowledge, and this is also true for the principles by which we organise our interactions and display our identities. In conclusion, what the ethnography of communication adds to speech act theory and interactional sociolinguistics is not only the dimension of culture; rather, it seeks to define the basic constructs of the other approaches to discourse as aspects of communication whose identities and interrelationships all reflect particular cultural meanings (Schiffrin, 1994: 143-144).

3.3. Comparisons among approaches

We began this chapter by observing that discourse analysis is a very comprehensive field, and we saw in previous sections that one reason for this is that our understanding of discourse is based on scholarship from a number of academic disciplines which are in fact very different from one another. The examples in the previous sections revealed some of the most important features of speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, and despite the fact that two of the approaches, i.e. interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, overlap in the work of scholars, we have already seen that they differ in several important ways.

First of all, the most significant characteristic of all three approaches may be said to be their diverse origins. That is, the origin of an approach provides different theoretical premises, which influence assumptions, concepts and methods. Different origins may be responsible for different assumptions and beliefs about language, for instance assumptions about the degree to which language is designed for communicative purposes and the contribution of linguistic meaning to interactive meaning. Other differences that can be at least partially traced to diverse origins include beliefs about methods for collecting and analysing data. For instance, while interactional sociolinguistics focuses intensively on a few fragments of talk, the ethnography of communication requires a great deal of social, cultural and personal information about the interlocutors.

Furthermore, it was noted above that there are two central issues which are critical to discourse analysis, i.e. the relationship between structure and function and the relationship
between text and context. These conceptual distinctions will be described in more detail in the following.

3.3.1. The relationship between structure and function

We noted in section 3.1.1. that it is possible to distinguish between two very different paradigms in linguistics, i.e. the formalist and the functionalist paradigms, which consequently provide different background assumptions about the general nature of language. We also noted that speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication all try to combine the two analytical worlds of structure and function, and whereas some approaches to discourse begin with structure and end up incorporating function into their analyses, others take the opposite route. For instance, the approaches to discourse that we have chosen to include in this thesis are examples of approaches, which begin with function and end up bringing structure into their means of analysis.

Accordingly, speech act theory begins by basing its units of analysis in a system outside of language, i.e. in speaker intonation and action and in our knowledge of constitutive rules. Speech acts are discovered by examining texts and contexts, and the conditions underlying the realisation of a particular act are the basis for the way that speech acts are categorised, for the way that an utterance can have multiple functions and finally for the patterns formed by the use of utterances as acts during social interaction (ibid: 346). Consequently, there are several reasons why the functional thrust of speech act theory leads to discourse structure. For instance, in order to identify the speech act function of an utterance, it is often required to look at where it occurs in relation to other utterances, i.e. its position in what is assumed to be an orderly arrangement of other units. Another reason why the speech act theory subsequently leads to discourse structure is due to the fact that an utterance can have multiple functions. That is, a single utterance is able to perform more than one act at a time, and thus different response options are created for the subsequent utterance. This implies that “whatever sequence results may be the outcome of very different underlying functional relationships” (ibid: 347). In conclusion, the speech act theory assumes that it is the text-context relationships encoded within an individual utterance which creates structures across utterances.
Interactional sociolinguistics focuses upon language use, and one of its main tasks is to describe the contexts in which language is used. Furthermore, interactional sociolinguistics allows a variety of functions, e.g. face strategies and the creation of involvement, and the reason why the interactional approach allows a wider range of functions than the other approaches has to do with the theoretical belief in the importance of context. In other words, the addition of more information about the contexts in which a single form occurs subsequently allows us to identify more functions of that form (ibid: 350). Moreover, as opposed to speech act theory, which relies upon constitutive rules, the interactional sociolinguistic view of structure is based on rules concerning norms of conduct: instead of the fixed knowledge states assumed to underlie speakers’ meaning, the interactional approach views speakers’ meaning as situated. However, it must be noted that interactional sociolinguistics is less eager than the other approaches to rely upon structure either within or across clauses. Rather than discover well-formed structures across clauses, the interactional approach is interested in sequential expectations emerging from both verbal and nonverbal aspects of what is said (ibid: 350-351).

Finally, the ethnography of communication views language as constitutive of social and cultural life. The meanings and functions of language are thus personal, social and cultural functions, which interlock with other systems of actions and beliefs. What allows language functions to interconnect with context is the fact that context is assumed to have a communicative structure that is built from a variety of communicative components which co-occur with one another. An ethnographic approach to discourse consequently discovers the function of a specific unit (e.g. a speech act) by locating that unit within a context, which is partially structured as another unit (i.e. speech event). In other words, the communicative structure of a speech event reveals the function of constituent acts, and the function of the act itself contributes to the structure of the event. This seems to suggest that there is an intentional interdependence between the communicative structures of context and the function of individual utterances (ibid: 349-350).
3.3.2. The relationship between text and context

The second central issue critical to discourse analysis concerns the relationship between text and context, and the three approaches to discourse discussed in this chapter consider both text and context as crucial for identifying the communicative content of an utterance. However, the approaches vary in their definitions of context and in their views of how text is related to context, and in order to compare different views of text and context, we therefore need to define both terms in a way general enough to apply to all the approaches.

Accordingly, with respect to utterances, the term ‘text’ refers to the linguistic content, or, more precisely, to the ‘what is said’ part of utterances. Context, on the other hand, is not as easy to define in a way that covers all the approaches to discourse, and it may be argued that it is precisely the treatment of context, which most clearly differentiates the approaches. However, it was noted above that text provides for the ‘what is said’ part of an utterance, and context then combines with ‘what is said’ to produce an utterance. Context may thus be defined as people who produce utterances and who interact with one another in various socially and culturally defined situations.

Speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication make different assumptions about which aspects of context are relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances. In speech act theory, context is primarily viewed as ‘knowledge’ (i.e. what speakers and hearers can be assumed to know and how that knowledge guides the use of language and the interpretation of utterances), and although a key part of such knowledge is ‘knowledge of situation’, it seems reasonable to propose that ‘situation’ remains largely unanalysed by speech act theory. Furthermore, an emphasis on knowledge pervades the application of speech act theory to discourse: speech act theory locates coherence in the linguistic rules which constitute part of the speaker’s and the hearer’s mutual knowledge, and it is mutual knowledge of these rules which allows hearers to discover the speaker’s intended speech act (ibid: 364-367).

Like speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication also view context as ‘knowledge’; however, in contrast to speech act theory, which relies so
heavily upon mutual knowledge as a way of locating coherence, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication avoid the assumption of mutual knowledge and search instead for coherence in a behavioural context, i.e. they study a speaker’s own utterance and the utterance issued by someone else in response to that utterance.

Furthermore, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication also include ‘knowledge of situation’ in the notion of context; these approaches, however, propose frameworks for analysing ‘situation’ as part of ‘knowledge.’ For instance, context as ‘situation’ is critical to interactional sociolinguistics due to the fact that it provides a richly textured view of social interactions and social situations, and even the cognitive contexts, which are considered by interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Goffman’s frames) are socially grounded. It may therefore be argued that ‘knowledge’ is knowledge of social circumstances or expectations about social conduct. Similarly, the ethnography of communication views context as both social and cognitive, and just like Gumperz’s contextualisation cues in interactional sociolinguistics provide a way to analyse social context, the same is true for Hymes’ SPEAKING grid, which segments social context into different components of communication (ibid: 369-371).

As regards the notion of text, it was noted earlier in this section that ‘text’ may be defined as the linguistic content of utterances. It was also noted that all the approaches discussed in this chapter make different assumptions about how text is related to context. Thus, although all the approaches to discourse are concerned with context and utterances, not all the approaches are concerned with text and utterances. For instance, speech act theory does not consider how to analyse multiple utterances, and this theory is therefore less likely to offer an explicit way to focus on text in itself as a source of background information. It seems possible, though, to extend speech act analyses from ‘utterance’ to ‘utterances’ by extending the distinction between propositional content and illocutionary force from sentence to text. For instance, it would be possible to consider how each sentence within a text has its own illocutionary force, and furthermore how (or if) those embedded speech acts contribute to a text-level illocutionary force. Another possibility is to find that not all sentences in a text perform their own independent speech acts. For instance, one speech act may provide information about the speech act being performed by another utterance, and it is consequently the propositional
meaning of a prior utterance which helps perform a subsequent act. It may therefore be concluded that although speech act theory does not begin with a focus on utterances, the ideas that it offers for the analysis of a single utterance can be extended to multiple utterances (ibid: 379-381).

As opposed to speech act theory, which did not begin from the analysis of multiple utterances, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication are contextual approaches to text, and they offer “more explicit concepts and methods by which to relate what is said in a text to the context in which it is said” (ibid: 381). For instance, interactional sociolinguistics views language (including text) as inherently contextualised and contextualising, i.e. all aspects of language reflect and construct the participation frameworks, identities, situations, etc. in which a single message is situated. These contextualisation processes are thus achieved through the relationship between language and participants’ knowledge of situation, or put differently, language provides links to context through contextualisation cues.

With respect to the ethnography of communication, we noted above that it is a contextual approach to text. The ethnography of communication views language as always constitutive of some portion of social and cultural life. As opposed to the interactional approach, which assumes that language is inherently contextualised and contextualising, the ethnography of communication makes few assumptions about the degree to which language (or aspects of language) is constitutive of context. However, the functions of language which do interlock with context and the linguistic functions that can be discovered through analysing context “are due to the fact that context itself has a communicative structure comprised of a variety of components that co-occur and alternate with one another” (ibid: 382). In conclusion, the relative autonomy of text from context cannot be assumed; it must necessarily be discovered through empirical investigation.
4. Culture

As mentioned in the introduction, it is important to study the notion of culture in the process of gaining an understanding of how communication works and subsequently how to achieve successful and effective communication. The aim of this chapter is therefore to provide a definition and an understanding of the concept of culture and subsequently use this as a background for studying cross-cultural communication and finally providing guidelines for effective cross-cultural communication.

4.1. Culture defined

Just as communication is linked with language and the study of semiotics, culture is an intrinsic part of the entire process of communicating and interacting with one another. There does not appear to be a uniform or widely-agreed definition of the term culture, and the breadth of the meaning attached to the term seems to be increasing more and more over time.

In everyday usage, the term culture is often used when referring to the finer things in life, such as arts, literature and philosophy – also called ‘highbrow culture’. However, this narrow definition has evolved immensely over time, and cultural studies have been a constituent part of various forms of research for many years. Since a thorough discussion of all the different forms of cultural research would take us beyond the scope of this thesis, the best way of understanding the notion of culture is to select one theoretical approach and use this as a basis for all discussions. A popular theoretical approach is that of cultural anthropologists, which deals with culture from a humanistic point of view. Even though there has been a long-held popular view in the past that cultural anthropology is only of little use in helping to understand the world around us, cultural anthropologists have been persevering in their work, and today culture is more often than not seen in the light of anthropological research.

Cultural anthropology, also called socio-cultural anthropology, is one of the four commonly recognised fields of anthropology, i.e. the study of humanity. In short, cultural anthropology

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5 The four fields of anthropology are: (1) archaeology, (2) physical anthropology, (3) anthropological linguistics, (4) cultural anthropology (Ferraro, 1994: 4)
seeks to understand how and why contemporary peoples of the world differ in their customary ways of behaving, on the one hand, and how and why they share certain similarities, on the other. In other words, it is a comparative study of cultural differences and similarities found throughout the world (Ferraro, 1994: 1-4).

The term ‘culture’ was first used in its current anthropological sense in 1871 by the British anthropologist E.B. Tylor. After hesitating to use the term ‘civilisation’, Tylor borrowed the word ‘culture’ from the German language where it had been used as early as the eighteenth century to refer to civilisation. Tylor defined this notion as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society” (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952: 81). Originally, the word is derived from Latin ‘cultura’, from the verb ‘colere’, which means to tend or cultivate (ibid: 62).

Tylor’s modern technical definition of culture has been extended considerably since he first proposed it, and researchers all over the world have attempted to create exhaustive universal lists of the concept and content of culture. One of the most comprehensive studies was carried out in 1952 by the American anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, who analysed 164 definitions of culture and subsequently compiled a list of almost 300 definitions in their book ‘Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions’ (ibid: 291).

According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, the key definitional features are that culture is learned and habitual behaviour and values; that culture is knowledge that transcends the individual; that culture is the way of life of a people; and that culture is a process and product of history, ordered and organized in certain ways. In other words, culture is a way of life based on a system of shared meanings that are passed on from generation to generation and includes everything that can be communicated (ibid: 81-92). This suggests that culture is transmitted through the process of learning and interacting with one’s environment rather than through the genetic process. Children are thus born into an already existing culture in which they have to learn how to behave according to the ideas, values and behaviour patterns of that particular culture. These behaviour patterns may differ widely from culture to culture, which is why
people are often confronted with serious problems and dilemmas when trying to adapt to a culture different from their own (cf. section 4.3.).

Going a step further than Kroeber and Kluckhohn, the American anthropologist Ward H. Goodenough (1971) defines culture as “a set of beliefs or standards, shared by a group of people, which help the individual decide what is, what can be, how to feel, what to do and how to go about doing it” (Usunier, 2000: 5). With this statement, Goodenough argues that culture as a concept should not necessarily be equated with the whole or one particular society, but may be more related to activities shared by a particular group of people within society. In other words, individuals may share different cultures with several different groups, and when in a particular situation, they will switch into the culture that is operational. Human culture as a whole may thus be divided into an indefinite number of subcultures that apply in different countries, different religious groups, different political groups, different interest groups, etc., according to the shared value systems. In turn, each subculture may be divided into further subcultures until the individual level is reached. The term culture may therefore be used to describe any shared set of meanings of at least two or more people, and there are thus no rules or regulations determining what may or may not be labelled a culture (Thompson, 2003: 5).

4.1.1. Anthropological approaches to culture

As mentioned above, cultural anthropologists seek to understand different cultures through comparative studies of human cultures all over the world. Unlike many other social or behavioural sciences, cultural anthropologists analyse cultural differences and similarities in a firsthand manner. In other words, they rely heavily on experiential learning through participant observation in social organisations of various types of societies and aim to collect culturally comparative information to be used in the production of descriptive studies of a wide variety of world cultures (Ferraro, 1994: 19-20).

Although anthropologists agree about the importance and centrality of culture in defining humanity, they do tend to disagree about definitions, and there seems to be just about as many definitions as there are anthropologists. One way of understanding the different approaches is
to make a categorisation based on the utterances and findings of various cultural anthropologists. In this way, culture may be defined and depicted as different progresses, processes or systems. For instance, Tylor claims that culture moves progressively along an evolutionary scale, advancing towards a ‘civilised’ condition. He thus sees culture as an 

*evolutionary progress*; something that evolves gradually over time, expressing itself through civilisation. The American anthropologist Franz Boaz (also called ‘the father of modern anthropology’) on the other hand, depicts culture as an historical notion claiming that every culture is unique and must be studied in its own historical context. To Boaz, the emphasis is therefore on the *historical process* in the sense that cultures are historical contacts in which cultural ideas are passed from one group to another.

Yet another way of looking at culture is to see it as a *cognitive system*. This theory, presented by Goodenough among others, depicts culture as a system of knowledge – the things people have to know and believe in order to behave in culturally acceptable patterns. In order to understand culture and form the framework for cultural analysis, it is therefore necessary to study how people within different cultures think. This way of looking at the notion of culture may be contrasted by the idea of functionalism according to which culture is seen as a *functionally related system* to be used in order to fulfil basic psychological and biological human needs.

Culture may also be seen as a *structural system* in which the minds of all people function according to the same basic structural principles, e.g. the principle of universal contrasts such as life/death, male/female, individual/group, danger/safety, etc. Structuralist anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss thus claim that language and culture itself could be looked upon as a code of meaning, and that the task in understanding culture is to identify the structural principles (largely unconscious) that underlie the cultural elaborations of a people.

Finally, it is also possible to define culture as a *symbolic system* in the sense that cultures are fundamental systems of shared symbols and meanings. According to the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz people express themselves through symbolic acts. In order to understand these acts, the social patterns of different cultures should be interpreted as texts,
i.e. the symbols and meanings should be analysed and dissected down to the last detail (Internet 2).

By looking at culture as different progresses, processes or systems, it is thus possible to categorise and defend an unlimited number of definitions, depending on people’s beliefs and value systems. The above definitions are only a few selected examples meant as an illustration of the variety and vastness of the ideas and opinions that people have about the term ‘culture’. However, just as culture changes over time, so do people’s beliefs and value systems and consequently their ideas and opinions of how to define culture. This is a two-way process, though, meaning that culture changes because of the way people think and act, but changes within the cultural environment undoubtedly also affect the behaviour patterns of people. Therefore, it is not possible to give a static account of culture, let alone a uniform and clear definition.

4.2. Understanding Culture

As stated by the British cultural historian Raymond Williams (1983) the term culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (in Barker and Galasinski, 2001: 3). Instead of asking what culture is, a good approach to understanding the term might therefore be to look at how we actually talk about culture and try to establish which aspects are covered under this definition.

4.2.1. Culture – an integrated whole or an ongoing process?

Part of the 1982 Mexico City World Conference Declaration on Cultural Policies states that "[…] culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (Internet 3).

This view holds that culture should be seen as an integrated whole, comprising all the various features that characterise a society or any other social group. It furthermore suggests that the
term does not simply refer to ‘highbrow culture’ (‘arts and letters’), but is used in a much broader sense to refer to the sets of symbols and meanings (cf. section 4.2.4.1.) that differentiate groups of people in their daily lives. This system of symbolic representation should be viewed as a whole framework of meanings and actions, i.e. a coherent whole, and not just isolated symbols and actions.

However, this might not be the most effective way of understanding the meaning of culture. As Geertz argues, the fundamental system of shared symbols and meanings of which any given culture is comprised should be seen as a system of texts – but these texts may not always form a coherent whole and may even be contradictory, indicating that culture is not an integrated whole (Internet 2).

In attempting to understand culture, it is therefore advisable to look at culture as a process rather than a distinctive whole and analyse the different elements of this process. In that way, culture becomes more of a tangible entity in that all the different elements may be seen as a set of independent tools to be used by people in their daily lives (Usunier, 2000: 5). This way of thinking is closely linked to the theory of the American linguistic anthropologists Scollon and Scollon, who claim that “culture is any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group” (in Thompson, 2003: 20). Or as proposed by the two American anthropologists Kendall and Wickham “culture refers to the way of life of a group (including, possibly, a society), including the meanings, the transmission, communication and alteration of those meanings, and the circuits of power by which the meanings are valorised or derogated” (ibid: 15). Again, culture is not just seen as an abstract notion, but as something that forms a basic part of our social experience, referring to the way of life of a group of people. Here, we also detect a kind of hierarchy in which certain meanings are given higher status and importance than others; a concept, which plays a crucial part not only in communication in general but also in social life more broadly. This hierarchy reflecting processes of domination and resistance is especially noticeable in subcultures since they reflect certain positions and segments of society vis-à-vis other segments or even society as a whole (Thompson, 2003: 15).
By looking at culture as a way of life of a group, the term may be equated with the fairly simple definition that “culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of their society” (Ferraro, 1994: 17). Even though this definition should only really be used as a starting point for developing an understanding of what culture is, the three verbs, have, think and do, help us identify the three major structural components of the concept of culture. First of all, in order for a person to have something, some material object must be present. Second, when people think, ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs are present, and finally, when people do, they behave in certain socially prescribed ways. Thus, culture may be said to consist of (1) material objects; (2) ideas, values, attitudes; and (3) normative or expected patterns of behaviour. The phrase “as members of their society” in the above definition again stresses that for something to be considered cultural, it must be shared by at least two people; if an individual thinks and behaves in a certain way, we do not talk about culture, but of idiosyncrasy (ibid: 17).

4.2.1.1. The dynamics of culture

“Learning continually disturbs the status quo”

The above quotation indicates that by looking at culture as a process in which people are constantly introduced to new ideas, values and behaviour patterns, it may be argued that culture is not a static entity but a concept continuously evolving over time. The three basic components of culture – material objects, ideas and behaviour patterns – may undergo deletions, additions or modifications; some components may die out, some may change appearance, and finally new components may be added. Such changes may be the result of internal forces through discoveries and inventions or external forces in the form of borrowings from other cultures. The latter is often referred to as diffusion, i.e. the spreading of cultural items from one culture to another. In most cases, cultural change is the result of diffusion; in fact anthropologists generally argue that as much as 90 per cent of new thoughts, norms or material items have their origins in other cultures (Ferraro, 1994: 27).
4.2.2. The role of culture

In his book ‘The Hidden Dimension’, the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall claims that “no matter how hard man tries it is impossible for him to divest his own culture, for it has penetrated to the roots of his nervous system and determines how he perceives the world” (Hall, 1983: 188).

With the above statement, Hall compares culture to an invisible control mechanism operating in our thoughts. In his opinion, culture is often subconscious, and people only become aware of this control mechanism when it is severely challenged, e.g. by exposure to a different culture. According to Hall, even small fragments of culture are difficult to change, not only because they are so personally experienced, but also because people cannot act or interact at all in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture. Hall argues that “most of culture lies hidden and is outside voluntary control, making up the warp and weft of human existence” (ibid: 188). Through such statements, Hall claims that culture is part of every human being and that no human being can survive without culture.

The French theorist Pierre Bourdieu introduced a rather interesting concept of ‘habitus’, which may be explained as the ways in which social subjects behave and act during their socialisation. Their ‘habitus’ is not a matter of conscious learning, or of ideological imposition, but is acquired through practice. Again, culture is something that is learned and stored in the minds of all humans without us actually being aware of it (Thompson, 2003: 21).

As the Swedish writer Selma Lagerlöf puts it, culture is “what remains when that which has been learned is entirely forgotten” (in Usunier, 2000: 23). At first glance, this definition may seem rather vague, but when studying it more closely, it does in fact touch upon two basic elements of cultural dynamics; (1) culture is learned and (2) culture is forgotten in the sense that we cease to be conscious of its existence as learned behaviour – it is just there! (ibid: 23).

Bourdée’s concept of habitus and Lagerlöf’s definition of culture may best be understood by imagining that the various aspects of culture are like wallpaper, i.e. “they fade into the background and, although we may be in contact with them on a daily basis, we forget that they are there, and they have little direct bearing on our conscious decisions or actions”
(Thompson, 2003: 21). This is exactly why a person often experiences what is known as ‘culture shock’ when moving into a different culture; what is normally taken for granted may now not apply to or even be understood within the new culture. Also, when returning to the original country, the culture – or the person – might have changed to such an extent that it may again lead to culture shock, only this time within the person’s own culture.

We may now conclude that culture is not only difficult to define but also difficult to pinpoint; it is something that operates in our thoughts without us necessarily being aware of it. Being an integral part of any society, culture thus plays an important role for people when communicating and interacting with one another.

4.2.3. Ethnocentrism

All this leads us to the notion of ethnocentrism, which refers to “the tendency for people to place themselves at the centre of the universe and not only evaluate others by the standards of their own culture but also believe that their own culture is superior to all others” (Mueller, 1996: 87-88). Ethnocentrism – literally defined ‘culture centered’ – is one of the greatest obstacles to understanding other cultures since people tend to take their own culture for granted, not even contemplating that there might be other ways of doing things. Often, people do not even become aware of their own culture until they encounter a foreign culture and thus stand at the boundaries of their own.

All societies display ethnocentrism to some degree, but if people learn to be open and become aware of their own ethnocentrism, they will be able to minimise the negative effects and maybe even turn it into something positive. Ironic as it may sound, without ethnographic differences, culture itself would not exist; difference allows the expression of social identity, and without social identity a culture would not be unique. An ethnographic study requires the understanding of at least two cultures, and a comparison of cultural differences is essential for cultural expression and understanding (Ferraro, 1994: 31-32).
4.2.4. Culture and language

We have now established that culture is a process involving shared values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour within a group or society, passed from one generation to the next. As stated by Thompson, “cultures exist only through the fact that they are communicated, i.e. the shared meanings which constitute a culture are manifested in day-to-day actions and interactions within that culture” (Thompson, 2003: 109). Culture is therefore not the physical characteristics of a group or a society, but the reasoning behind those characteristics. It is a body of implicit and explicit knowledge and shared meanings, which is the result of “signifying practices, most notably those of language” (Barker and Galasinski, 2001: 3-4). In other words, language helps make material objects and social practices meaningful and intelligible, and it structures which meanings can and cannot be deployed under specific circumstances by the participants of each culture. Therefore, there is a close relationship between language and culture, and many anthropologists even argue that language is the central means and medium by which we understand the world and construct culture. This relationship works both ways, meaning that it is impossible to fully understand a culture without taking into account its language and equally impossible to understand a language outside of its cultural context.

One of the most noticeable connections between language and culture may be seen in vocabulary. Vocabularies of all languages are basically worked out in accordance with what is considered important in each culture. For instance, the vocabularies of non-industrialised societies only contain a limited number of technical terms compared to the vocabularies of industrialised societies. In turn, non-industrialised societies may have several different words for objects that are of great importance to them. The classic example of the close connection between language and culture is the Eskimos’ complex classification of types of snow where most other cultures have only one word for snow. No matter which culture we look at, it may be concluded that the point of departure is the same: a language will contain a greater number of terms, more synonyms and more fine distinctions when referring to features of cultural emphasis than when referring to universal concepts or features (Ferraro, 1994: 47-50).
When discussing language and culture and trying to assess the relation between these two notions, it is worth mentioning the so-called ‘Sapir-Whorf hypothesis’ (1921) according to which “human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society” (Internet 4).

This hypothesis has been named after the American linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf and has often been labelled the most relevant explanation outlining the relationship between thought and language. Whorf believes that humans are able to think only about objects, processes and conditions that have language associated with them (linguistic determinism). He thus supports the idea that the language we learn in the society in which we are born and grow up is the basis of our worldview and our social behaviour in general. Not only does it influence the way we address issues; it helps us select those issues we consider relevant and finally guide us in acting (ibid).

4.2.4.1. Signs, symbols and meanings

Closely connected to language is the notion of signs, symbols and meanings. As established earlier, culture is a system of shared symbols and meanings through which the individuals of any given culture communicate and express their thoughts, beliefs and ideas. Geertz believes that the concept of culture is a semiotic one and that culture can be seen as a set of sign systems. Saussure further elaborates on this and claims that meaning is generated through the rules and conventions which organise language rather than the specific uses and utterances which individuals use in their everyday lives. He takes this a step further, arguing that meaning is “the social convention generated by signifying practices that organise the relations between signs” (in Barker and Galasinski, 2001: 4). To understand culture, it is therefore necessary to explore how meaning is produced symbolically through the signifying practices of language within any given society.

It may thus be concluded that it is through cultural signs and symbols that people are able to communicate with one another. Since certain words and/or gestures may have different meanings in different cultural contexts, it is important to be aware that communication should
always be understood in the context of the particular culture in which it occurs (this may also be referred to as ‘cultural relativism’ – see below). Only in that way is it possible for any given form of communication to be successful (Barker and Galasinski, 2001: 4).

4.2.4.2. Ideologies, values and attitudes

When studying the notion of culture and language, it is worth noticing the way that ideology affects the entire process of communication. Any discursive practice contains some form of ideology, which reflects the culture in which it occurs. In order to understand how communication is affected by culture, it is therefore advisable to study the social meanings of linguistic structures and try to identify the ideological aspects of discursive practices, i.e. to study how language is constructed and linked to the notion of ideology, which in turn is expressed through discourse.

Here, ideology should be understood as a form of power/knowledge used to justify the actions of persons or groups, holding the social institutions together, thus generating and enabling any form of social action. As such, ideology should be seen as a set of ideas that help maintain the status quo in terms of existing power relations. For instance, in some societies, the notion that “it’s a man’s world” is part of the ideology which characterises and influences not only society as a whole but also interactions between men and women. Ideology may therefore, to a certain extent, be said to be a reflection of culture and an important concept in identifying and characterising a specific culture (ibid: 24-25).

The notion of ideology is closely linked to that of values and attitudes in the sense that a certain ideology within a given society is typically based on the values and attitudes that are most prevalent in that particular society. Values should be seen as “the standards or principles, i.e. ideas about the worth or importance of certain qualities, especially those generally accepted by a particular group, e.g. moral values” (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 1992: 1452). Values are important in connection with defining which type of behaviour is considered right or wrong within a given society, i.e. values represent the standards by which behaviour is evaluated but not necessarily the actual behaviour. Values
are learned mental programming that results from living within a specific culture and may therefore be said to form the central tenets of a society’s culture (Ferraro, 1994: 86).

According to the above definition, value systems are culturally specific and will therefore also differ across borders. This means that it is important for people to try to understand and respect the values of other cultures when communicating with people from different parts of the world (cf. section 4.3.). In this respect, the notion of ‘cultural relativism’ plays an important role in that it refers to “the ability to view the beliefs and customs of other peoples within the context of their culture rather than one’s own” (Internet 5). However, values often seem to be so deeply rooted in the consciousness of people who consequently fail to acknowledge the existence of such values and do not even contemplate that their own values might not be shared by people from other cultures. More often than not, people therefore have a tendency to judge other people on the basis of their own culture and not even consider that this might not be the right approach. This is the cause of many misunderstandings and misjudgements between people from different cultures (Ferraro, 1994: 86).

Having said this, it is extremely difficult – if at all possible - to understand the values of other cultures without first acknowledging and understanding those of one’s own culture. This is also the case the other way round meaning that one cannot fully understand one’s selected way of life without understanding the cultural values of other societies. As mentioned above in connection with ethnocentrism, it is necessary to study at least two cultures and subsequently seek to require an understanding of each culture through a comparison of the two. The same applies to the study of values and attitudes.

4.2.5. Measuring cultural differences

In order to effectively measure cultural differences, it is advisable to find some sort of technique or framework for understanding the way of life within different societies. Just as there are countless definitions of culture, there are many ways of understanding and measuring how cultures differ from society to society. To mention all these different ways would be an impossible task well beyond the scope of this thesis, and the following therefore contains only a few selected examples in order to illustrate how this may be done.
4.2.5.1. Hofstede’s dimensions of culture

The Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede describes culture as the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from those of another. In order to communicate successfully across borders, it is important to understand these cultural differences. As a basis for a comparison of different cultures worldwide, Hofstede has therefore established four dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and uncertainty avoidance. His work is based on the study of work-related value orientations in more than 40 countries and provides a framework for understanding how a culture resolves the most basic problems of life in organisations (Hofstede, 1980: 13, 213).

In short, the four dimensions may be defined as follows:

- **power distance**: the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally, i.e. the degree of inequality among people which the population of a country considers normal (ibid: 65-66)
- **individualism versus collectivism**: the relation between an individual and his or her fellow individuals. In individualistic societies, people tend to look after themselves and their immediate family only as opposed to collectivist societies in which group interests supersede those of individuals (ibid: 148-149)
- **masculinity versus femininity**: in masculine societies, values such as performance, achievement, assertiveness success and competition predominate while feminine societies are more concerned with values such as quality of life, care for the weak, personal relationships and solidarity (ibid: 176-177)
- **uncertainty avoidance**: the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid such situations (ibid: 110-111)

Originally, the above-mentioned dimensions were used in connection with a survey of IBM employees with similar educational backgrounds and careers, but of different nationalities. The dimensions were measured on a scale from 0 to 100 (index), thus forming the basis for a comparison of the different nationalities. After conducting an additional national survey of 50
different countries, Hofstede added a fifth dimension, *long-term versus short-term orientation*, which covers the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-orientated perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term perspective (Hofstede, 2001: xvii).

As an example of how the different dimensions were measured using an index scale is illustrated in appendix 2, which shows how the countries selected by Hofstede scored on power distance and uncertainty avoidance. The combined scores for each country were meant to explain how people and organisations in selected countries differ and why some factors of motivation did not work in all countries the same way.

Although Hofstede’s five-dimensional model was initially developed for the analysis of differences in work-related values, the model has since been used by various researchers in connection with consumer-related values and motives or other forms of surveys.

While it is interesting to look at the different dimensions of national culture, it is, however, more interesting to look at the problems that people from different cultures experience when living and working together. For instance, if a person comes from a culture of high power distance, it can be extremely difficult for the same person to work in a low power distance culture. S/he will most likely feel that there is a lack of respect for authorities or that people are too informal. By the same token, a person from a feminine oriented culture visiting or working in a masculine oriented culture, e.g. a Dane staying in Britain, will most likely feel estranged and find that the masculine culture is socially uncaring or even aggressive. It all gets even more complicated when several effects of the different dimensions are combined, e.g. a feminist and weak uncertainty avoidance culture, such as Denmark, contrasted with a masculine and strong uncertainty avoidance culture, such as Japan; this is a situation that may pose many different problems that are often impossible to solve or deal with unless the parties involved understand one another’s culture (Internet 6).

It may therefore be concluded that even if the values of one culture are often completely different from the values found in other cultures, it is possible to avoid making too many
mistakes if one takes an active interest in the culture of the other party and tries to gain a wider understanding of the people living there.

All in all, researchers around the world have given Hofstede’s work a high status, claiming that his book ‘*Culture’s Consequences*’ (1980), which accounts for the first four above-mentioned dimensions, has provided the most influential framework for culture and management studies since its publication. However, many international scientists now question the validity of Hofstede’s famous model, arguing that he generalised cultures into homogenous units, not taking into account the potential effects of minority populations on the dominant culture. Furthermore, since 1980 the world has undergone significant changes, which have no doubt affected people’s value patterns both at work and within society as a whole. Therefore, many scientists feel that it is time to either rethink Hofstede’s ideas or work out an entirely new framework for measuring cultural differences (Holden, 2002: 20).

4.2.5.2. High-context versus low-context cultures

Another way of distinguishing between cultures and trying to understand different cultural orientations is to apply the concept of high-context cultures (HCCs) versus low-context cultures (LCCs) to the study of different cultures. This concept, developed by Hall, categorises cultures according to the degree of context in their communication systems. Thus, “in a high-context communication or message, most of the information is either part of the context or internalised in the person; very little is made explicit as part of the message. The information in a low-context message is carried in the explicit code of the message” (de Mooij, 1998: 65-66). LCCs therefore place high value on words, and people tend to communicate in a direct and unambiguous way in contrast to HCCs where communication tends to be more indirect and less dependent on the spoken word. Therefore, body language and any other form of nonverbal communication is of great importance in HCCs whereas LCCs rely heavily on direct verbal communication.

When communicating across cultures it is of great importance to be aware of the differences between communication styles in HCCs versus LCCs. This applies both to verbal and nonverbal communication (cf. section 4.3.5.). Furthermore, in HCCs the tone of the
communicator is more formal and characterised by ritualistic behaviour than is the case in LCCs. Here, there is much more emphasis on personal style, which makes the communication seem more informal.

Another feature characterising HCCs is that communication tends to be economical, fast and efficient and generally exhibit a more predictable nature than communication in LCCs. However, this is only the case if one is familiar with the particular culture; a person visiting an unknown HCC will most likely be mystified and confused by the way people communicate with one another. This is precisely why it is so important for people to try to gain an understanding of other cultures before visiting them. Such an understanding is important in connection with any form of communication in order to avoid – or at least seek to minimise – misunderstandings. For instance, in the world of business, and especially in connection with advertising, it is important to notice that communication in LCCs is typically characterised by argumentation and rhetoric contrasted with HCCs in which features such as symbolism or indirect verbal expression seem to predominate. If the message is not conveyed in a way that is consistent with the culture in which the communication takes place, the sender will most likely fail to get the message through to the intended receivers, and the communication process will thus be unsuccessful.

Most Asian countries are HCCs while most Western countries are LCCs. On a scale of selected countries showing which countries are generally said to be HCCs and LCCs respectively (cf. appendix 3), Japan and China are at the extreme end of the scale (HCCs) while Germany and Switzerland are at the opposite end (LCCs) (de Mooij, 1998: 66 and de Mooij, 1994: 131-132).

Having identified a number of differences between cultures, we will now take a look at certain aspects that may be applied across cultures.

4.2.6. Cultural universals

It is generally the case that cultural differences have a tendency to stand out more than similarities. However, it is equally important to note that – despite the many differences – all
cultures of the world share certain common features or modes of behaviour, also called ‘cultural universals’. All societies are confronted with fundamental universal needs that must be satisfied, and all human beings share certain basic biological similarities. One of the most obvious needs of a society is that all humans need food in order to survive, and each society must therefore develop systematic ways of producing, distributing and consuming these essential resources.

Beyond such basic biological drives, all humans are confronted with certain universal societal needs. For instance, it is important for every society to work out systematic procedures for the upbringing and education of children. Furthermore, it is imperative that some sort of mechanism is developed that will ensure that as many people as possible obey the laws and regulations – otherwise, the result will be chaos or anarchism.

Even though these universal needs are similar all over the world, the way in which the fundamental needs are met differs from culture to culture, resulting in different cultural patterns around the world. In other words, differences in details of cultural patterns exist because different societies have developed different ways of meeting these universal societal needs. However, due to the strong globalising forces at large all over the world today, people often tend to want the same thing, which is why so many international marketers argue that it is often advisable to standardise their product range across different markets and cultures (Ferraro, 1994: 23-24 and Mueller, 1996: 117). As stated by Theodore Levitt, a marketing guru of today’s business world, the “world is becoming a common market place in which people – no matter where they live – desire the same products and life styles. Global companies must forget idiosyncratic differences between countries and cultures and instead concentrate on satisfying universal drives” (in Mueller, 1996: 117). However, it is important for companies to consider whether they should adapt to local preferences in order to comply with differences in culture; or in other words ‘think global, but act local’.

4.2.6.1 Stereotyping

Having now established certain needs that different cultures have in common, it is important to note that cultural generalisations should not be interpreted too rigidly, i.e. the behaviour of
one individual should not automatically be equated with the behaviour of all individuals
within a certain cultural grouping – and vice versa. If we are not aware of this, we run the risk
of turning generalisations into cultural stereotypes. This may be dangerous as stereotypes are
often negative, unrealistic or exaggerated characteristics of a group – or subgroup – of people.
Furthermore, stereotypes are usually formed in accordance with a situation or an environment
that has since undergone drastic changes. Therefore, stereotyping often has the effect of
distorting the communication process, especially in relation to intercultural communication.

As Scollon and Scollon argue, “stereotypes limit our understanding of human behaviour and
of intercultural discourse because they limit our view of human activity to just one or two
salient dimensions and consider those to be the whole picture” (in Thompson, 2003: 31). According to Scollon and Scollon, stereotyping is therefore just another word for overgeneralisation. To overgeneralise in such a way is dangerous, and it is important to be
aware that even though people’s behaviour patterns are no doubt influenced by their culture,
there may be other factors involved as well. For instance, the social background, upbringing,
education or work environment of two people within the same cultural grouping may differ
widely, resulting in contrasting values and behaviour patterns. Therefore, instead of making
generalisations and assumptions that classify people by putting them into groupings that are
familiar to us, it is necessary to study the different cultures in detail and not just look at other
people as members of a particular cultural group but also as individuals with their own unique
set of personality traits and experiences.

In conclusion, generalisations can be helpful in the process of learning to understand other
cultures but dangerous if they result in negative stereotyping. Effective intercultural
communication is thus based on awareness of the dangers of stereotyping and a commitment
to ensuring that stereotypes are not allowed to influence our actions and interactions. In order
to avoid making hasty conclusions or forming unwarranted stereotypes, it is therefore always
a good idea to get varied viewpoints about the same culture (Ferraro, 1994: 136-137 and
Thompson, 2003: 30-33).
4.3. Cross-cultural communication

The above definitions and explanations of what culture is and how different cultures are to be understood and categorised may now form the basis for a study of how people communicate across cultures. As established in section 4.2.1., culture involves everything people have, think and do. Therefore, cultural differences will inevitably influence any cross-cultural communication process.

The concept ‘cross-cultural communication’ may be defined as the ability to successfully form, develop and improve relationships with members of a culture different from one’s own. In order to do this, it is necessary to be aware of and familiar with as many factors as possible, such as the other culture’s values, attitudes, social structure, behaviour patterns, etc. Furthermore, it is important to study how members of other cultures communicate – verbally as well as nonverbally (cf. section 4.3.5.) – otherwise the communication process will most likely be unsuccessful.

4.3.1. Cultural barriers

In the words of Thompson, “the area of intercultural communication is potentially a minefield of difficulties and complications” (Thompson, 2003: 29). When communicating within one’s own culture, it is possible to operate effectively at the intuitive or unconscious level. However, when entering an intercultural arena everything changes, and it is necessary to be conscious of the communication process at all times. As already established, people have a tendency to carry their own cultural map with them and respond to the foreign environment in ways that would be acceptable in their own culture but may or may not be acceptable in different surroundings. Since culture is such a complex and multifaceted entity, this means that there is always a risk that people from different cultures fail to understand one another or even end up disputing over something that would probably never have been a problem had the communication process taken place within the same culture (Ferraro, 1994: 130-131).

Even if different cultures have much in common, there is always a risk that people misunderstand one another and consequently fail to communicate successfully because of the
many different assumptions and unwritten rules that often exist as a result of minor cultural differences. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to be aware of any variation or dissimilarity when communicating across cultures – even if these may seem unimportant at first glance.

Before engaging in a cross-cultural communication process, it is therefore important to identify the cultural differences that may exist between one’s home country and the foreign country. Based on such findings, it should then be decided whether and to what extent the practices of the home country may be adapted to the foreign environment. Most of the time, there are certain obvious differences, but there will always be a number of less apparent or tangible differences. Consequently, the building of cross-cultural awareness is not an easy task, but once accomplished, it no doubt eases the communication process and helps business negotiators get the job done efficiently in a foreign environment.

Apart from the above obstacles, there are other barriers when doing business across cultures. For instance, the legal structures and the political environment between two cultures often differ significantly. Such factors should be studied carefully as they may affect the communication process significantly (ibid: 131).

It may now be concluded that effective cross-cultural communication requires a deep understanding of the foreign culture. However, intercultural communication is a two-way process, and it is equally the responsibility of both sides of a communication process to understand the cultural realm of the other party. Only in that way is it possible to communicate effectively and efficiently.

4.3.2. Cultural benefits

Although many people view culture as a problem area, it should not only be seen as an obstacle to communicating across cultures. In fact, it may even provide tangible benefits if used and understood correctly. Thus, some people see culture as a competitive advantage and emphasise the importance of releasing synergies from international and intercultural diversity. They claim that two different cultures working together may produce certain benefits and
options that would not have been there had the two cultures worked separately. For instance, cultures may learn from each other’s value systems and behaviour patterns, they may share knowledge, discoveries and inventions or simply work together in solving everyday problems. Culture is thus seen as a potential for harmonising collective efforts, releasing creativity and widening intellectual horizons, turning cultural diversity into something positive and productive rather than just a hindrance and a danger to cultural identities (Holden, 2002: 18-19).

4.3.3. Managing cultural diversities

No matter how one looks upon the notion of culture in connection with cross-cultural communication, it is something that needs to be managed and tackled effectively. As Holden puts it, “the essence of the task [of managing cultures] is not so much about operating across cultures as through them, by means of them” (ibid: 18-19). What Holden is really saying is that culture should be seen as something that can be used productively if managed the right way. In other words, it is not enough merely to acknowledge the existence of a different culture by trying to accept and understand how it works; it is necessary to go a step further and work through the foreign culture, thus using the qualities of the other culture in a productive way – and vice versa.

However, is it at all possible to manage cultural differences? This is not a simple question, and the answer depends upon one’s view of culture – for instance whether one is a researcher or a practitioner. Also, people tend to treat culture as if it were a ‘thing’ influencing and affecting society in a direct way. This may distort the process of managing the notion of culture, which should really be seen as an abstract entity affecting people indirectly through actions, thoughts and behaviour patterns (ibid: 29).

4.3.3.1. Schein’s model of organisational culture

One way of studying cultures and aiming to manage cultural differences is to employ Schein’s model of organisational culture. With this model, Schein – a social psychologist – distinguishes between three levels of culture: artifacts, values and assumptions (see figure 6).
Schein argues that the key to understanding a culture is to identify the basic *assumptions* that are taken for granted by members of a particular group, such as thoughts, feelings and beliefs about human nature and reality. These assumptions are unconscious and invisible and may therefore be difficult to see and understand. Also important are the many *values* that are shared by members of a society, such as ideas about family, religion, education, politics, the role of men and women, etc. According to Schein, these values are also invisible, but easier to understand than the basic underlying assumptions of culture. At the top level of culture lie *artifacts*, defined as that which is visible on the surface of culture, but difficult to decipher if one is not familiar with the particular culture (ibid: 24-25).

Even though Schein’s model was originally intended as a model of organisational culture, it has been used by a number of anthropologists as a means of understanding and managing culture in connection with the study of foreign cultures. Having said this, the model has been criticised of influencing researchers to think in terms of distinct levels of culture instead of trying to see the linkage between the levels. Critics claim that Schein has glorified the basic underlying assumptions as the true domain of culture and the foundation for values and artifacts without explaining their link to the more visible levels of culture. Instead of concentrating on the elements of culture, the focal point should thus be on the relationship between the elements. This will make it easier to reach an understanding of how to manage different cultures and how to communicate with people from other cultures (Internet 7).
4.3.3.2. Cross-cultural competences

Managing different cultures is not only a matter of understanding people’s values, beliefs, behaviour patterns, etc., but also a question of knowing how to communicate in a foreign language and communicating effectively with people from other countries. In cross-cultural communication, linguistic competence thus refers to a person’s ability to produce and understand sentences based on his/her knowledge of the rules of a foreign language. Communicative competence takes this a step further by referring to the speaker’s ability to use his knowledge of a language to interact in accordance with the social environment of the foreign culture and thus communicate effectively, verbally as well as nonverbally (Holden, 2002: 271-272).

However, it may take many years to acquire these competences. Possessing such qualities is therefore not a precondition for successful cross-cultural communication, but rather an aid in reaching ultimate understanding of a foreign culture and communicating in the most effective way.

Communication is often seen as a form of interaction between two parties. However, in the case of cross-cultural communication – and especially in the world of business – this is a general misconception. Here, communication is best seen as a participative act involving several people working together as individuals as well as groups. Communication may thus be defined as a multipolar and collective experience, which requires an open-minded approach to foreign cultures. Such an approach is dependent on participative competence, i.e. “an ability to interact on equal terms in multicultural environments in such a way that knowledge is shared and that the learning experience is professionally enhancing” (ibid: 272).

In order to illustrate the difference between communicative and participative competence, communicative competence may be defined as interaction with ‘the other’ whereas participative competence focuses on the ‘the others’. In a cross-cultural business setting, communication usually involves more than two parties, and the focus should therefore be on participative competence. Participate competence requires an understanding of the environment in which the communication takes place as well as a certain knowledge of how
the language is constructed and used. Such a competence is acquired and developed through continual learning, and it is up to the individual to build and use the competence resourcefully in new situations (ibid: 273).

Participate competence is thus a vital factor if one is to communicate as effectively as possible across cultures. However, it is important to note that the required participate competence will often differ significantly from one culture to another depending on various factors such as values, behaviour patterns, political and legal environment. In the world of business, participate competence also requires a certain knowledge of how people in different cultures prefer to do business and what kind of approach should be taken. This will be further elaborated on in the following.

4.3.4. Relationship-focus versus deal-focus

When studying international communication, it is possible to identify certain patterns that apply to different countries in general. One way of doing this is to study how people tend to act in a business negotiation process. This is an area that has been studied closely by many researchers, among others the American professor Richard Gesteland. In his book ‘Cross-Cultural Business Behavior’, Gesteland takes a closer look at patterns of cross-cultural business behaviour and sets up guidelines for categorising and understanding different cultures.

Gesteland distinguishes between relationship-focused (RF) countries and deal-focused (DF) countries, calling this the ‘Great Divide’ between business cultures all over the world. According to Gesteland, DF people are fundamentally task-oriented whereas RF people are more people-oriented in the sense that they concentrate more on the human aspects of creating business relations rather than just the task itself. The characteristics of DF cultures and RF cultures respectively may roughly be outlined as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship-focused cultures</th>
<th>Deal-focused cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reluctant to do business with strangers</td>
<td>Open to doing business with strangers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make initial contact indirectly</td>
<td>Make initial contact directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build trust before getting down to business</td>
<td>Get down to business straight away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer indirect, high-context communication</td>
<td>Prefer direct, low-context communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rely on close relationships rather than contracts to resolve disagreements</td>
<td>Rely on written agreements rather than personal relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Relationship-focus versus deal-focus (Gesteland, 2002: 16-17)

RF people thus prefer to deal with people they are familiar with and therefore feel they can trust. They are uncomfortable doing business with strangers and typically want to know their prospective business partners well before talking business with them. DF people are the complete opposite; they tend to get down to business straight away and prefer a direct and straightforward contact, even with people they have never met before. In business negotiations, it is therefore extremely important for DF people to be aware that RF people do not operate in the same way and vice versa. Initial contact with a prospective business partner in a RF country should be made indirectly, preferably through a third party well known to the RF business partner. Knowing the counter-partner personally is just as important to the RF partner as trusting that the company itself is committed to achieving successful results from the business relationship. Having – or finding – the right contacts is therefore helpful when approaching a prospective business partner in a RF country.

When a deal has been agreed upon, the question then is how to prevent misunderstandings and solve future problems. Here, DF people tend to rely heavily on written agreements whereas RF people prefer to continually strengthen the relationship and rely on mutual respect and trust in one another. This may cause problems or disputes, and it is therefore important for the parties to decide how to resolve disagreements before they arise.

Finally, RF negotiators tend to use indirect language in order to avoid conflicts. RF countries are typically high-context cultures, and it is therefore necessary to know the context surrounding the words in order to understand what is meant. Again, this is the complete opposite of DF countries that are generally low-context cultures in which a communication
process is typically characterised by direct language (cf. section 4.2.5.2). Consequently, one should be aware of such differences before commencing a business relationship in a foreign culture. In fact, even if both business partners come from a low-context (or a high-context) culture, there may still be differences that might affect the negotiation process, depending on the degree of context in each respective communication system.

According to Gesteland, the majority of the world’s markets is relationship-oriented and includes the Arab World, most of Africa, Latin America and Asia. Deal-oriented countries include most Nordic countries, Britain, North America and Australia (Gesteland, 2002: 20-21, 28-30).

4.3.5. Verbal versus nonverbal communication

As mentioned earlier, when communicating across cultures it is of great importance to be aware of how members of other cultures act – verbally as well as nonverbally. This applies to any form of communication – business, tourism, everyday situations, etc.

Broadly speaking, communication may be said to take place in two ways: (1) through language (using words and their related meanings) and (2) through nonverbal communication (‘body language’ or ‘silent language’). People often tend to think that the spoken language is the most important factor in the communication process. However, it has in fact been estimated that only about 20 per cent of communication between two individuals (within the same culture) is verbal – the rest is interpreted through body language. In a cross-cultural situation, where people are from different cultural settings, they will rely even more heavily on nonverbal cues. Therefore, it is vital for people first of all to think about whether their body language matches what they say, but also to study other people carefully when communicating with them (Mueller, 1996: 92).

4.3.5.1. Verbal communication

As already established, there is a close relationship between language and culture. Consequently, culture and communication are inextricably linked, and language plays a
central role in international marketing. However, since the English language is rapidly becoming the international language (lingua franca) of business, English-speaking people tend to think that it is not necessary to learn a foreign language in order to do business abroad. This might be true in most cases, but it is worth noticing that English is in fact the mother tongue of only five per cent of the world’s population (Ferraro, 1994: 42). Furthermore, it is difficult to grasp the features of a foreign language in terms of world view and communication style if one does not know anything about the language. As stated by Whorf and Sapir, language tends to shape our world views and "the only way to really understand the world view of another culture is through its language" (ibid: 43).

It is, however, not necessary to have absolute proficiency in foreign languages in order to conduct business across borders. However, it is advisable to have an awareness of what language differences imply and how language and culture shape the world view of people within different societies. Proficient non-native English speakers may look and sound the same as native English speakers, but this may be quite misleading since they may in reality have a completely different mindset and also a much greater proficiency for oral than for written English. If this is the case, it may be difficult for the business negotiators to finalise the written details and come to a mutual understanding (Usunier, 2000: 437-439).

As stated earlier, the globalising forces are spreading rapidly throughout the world, which means that the role of language is becoming more and more important. Therefore, the experience of learning another language is beneficial, not only in isolated cases, but also in the learning of third and fourth languages, etc. It is also the best way of gaining a fuller appreciation of one’s own language (Ferraro, 1994: 43).

4.3.5.2. Nonverbal communication

Even in a situation in which verbal communication plays a significant role, part of the message is always based on gestures, gesticulations, attitudes, etc. As mentioned above, such nonverbal cues usually make up a large majority of any form of communication and consequently pose a great challenge in connection with working successfully in an international business setting.
Nonverbal communication has several functions. It is an effective way of (1) sending messages about feelings and emotions, (2) elaborating on verbal messages and (3) governing the timing and turn taking between communicators. Even though some nonverbal cues may seem to work in similar ways across cultures, there may be considerable differences that may cause problems in a cross-cultural communication process. It is therefore worth studying and categorising such differences before engaging in a business negotiation (ibid: 63). In this connection, a number of classification systems of nonverbal language have been developed, some of which contain up to 24 different categories of behaviours. Most classification systems include the following:

- facial expressions
- eye contact and gaze
- body movement
- touching
- smell
- space usage (proximity)
- time symbolism
- appearance or dress
- colour symbolism (Mueller, 1996: 92)

Nonverbal communication is thus a crucial communication tool, which should not be overlooked or trivialised. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of differences: (1) the same nonverbal cue carries with it very different meanings in different cultures and (2) different nonverbal cues carry the same meaning in different cultures.

An example of how the same gesture may have different, or even opposite, meanings in two different cultures is the American “OK” gesture, communicated by making a circle with one’s thumb and index finger; in France, this gesture means zero or worthless, in Japan it indicates a willingness to give money, and finally in Greece and Brazil it carries quite vulgar connotations (ibid: 93).
In contrast, the same message may be communicated in various cultures through very different nonverbal cues. For instance, in the US and most western countries, nodding one’s head is a sign of affirmation, whereas in northern Japan the same message is communicated by bringing both hands to the chest and then gracefully waving them downward with both palms up (Ferraro, 1994: 64).

There are numerous forms of nonverbal cues, and the above examples are only meant as an illustration of how important it is to take this issue seriously.

Having said this, nonverbal communication should not only be seen as an obstacle but also an additional interpretative framework, which allows people to overcome the shortcomings of verbal communication and thus communicate in different ways. Furthermore, although it is necessary to be aware of how various nonverbal cues may be interpreted in different cultural environments, one should avoid thinking that the consequences of misunderstandings are always catastrophic. Even though in some cases the misreading of nonverbal cues may lead to serious breakdowns in communication, many other nonverbal cues do not have such serious consequences, but merely lead to minor irritations or even amusements.

4.3.6. Guidelines for effective cross-cultural communication

Having now established the importance of being aware of different verbal and nonverbal cues when negotiating across cultures, the next step is to examine the possibilities of adjusting to different cultures and overcoming the problems that might arise from cross-cultural communication.

The key to effective cross-cultural communication is knowledge. First of all, it is essential to try to gain an understanding of the potential problems of cross-cultural communication and subsequently make an effort to overcome these problems. Second, it is important to be aware that one’s efforts might not always be successful in which case one’s behaviour should be adjusted appropriately. In other words, it should always be assumed that there is a significant possibility that cultural differences may cause communication problems. Furthermore, it is necessary to be patient and forgiving, rather than hostile and aggressive, and to respond
slowly and carefully, not jumping to the conclusion of knowing what is being thought and said. At the same time, it is important to be careful not to overgeneralise or overemphasise and keep in mind that cultural ‘facts’ are generally based on a sample of human behaviour and therefore only point out tendencies at the negotiation table.

In some cases, it might be advisable to employ the help of linguistic intermediaries who are familiar with both cultures and can translate both the substance as well as the manner of what is being said. However, it is important to keep in mind that sometimes a mediator might make communication even more difficult. For instance, if the mediator shares the same cultural traits as one of the negotiators and none with the other, it might give the appearance of bias, even when none exists or is intended. It is only natural for the mediator to be supportive or more understanding of the person of the same culture simply because he or she understands that person better. This is very much related to the notion of ethnocentrism as described earlier and again stresses the importance of being aware of the cultural differences when communicating across cultures.

The aim of this section is not to attempt to list all of the do’s and don’t’s of international communication, but to give certain general guidelines that can be applied to most cross-cultural situations, e.g.:

- be flexible, tolerant and patient
- listen actively and be open to new ideas
- reflect on what is going on before acting
- learn the nonverbal communication style of other cultures
- avoid over-reliance on cultural generalisations
- prepare carefully

With the above guidelines kept in mind it should be possible to overcome or even avoid many potential problems when communicating across cultures. The important thing is to not take anything for granted and to continuously seek to develop and improve one’s understanding of the foreign culture (ibid: 133-143).
5. Basis for defining and reaching a target audience

We have now discussed communication, discourse and culture in detail and find it safe to conclude that all three notions are not only closely connected but in fact inseparably related to one another. For instance, all communication is influenced by the specific situation, i.e. context, in which it takes place. Also, culture may be considered a form of discourse, and since every person is a member of a particular culture and sub-culture(s), it is necessary to have an understanding of culture in order to communicate effectively. Consequently, it is not possible to discuss the notion of communication without including aspects of discourse and culture and vice versa.

The above discussion thus provides the basic framework for determining how a start-up communications agency may define and reach its target audience. However, in order to establish the actual process of selecting the right target audience and subsequently reaching the receivers, it is necessary to include certain marketing-oriented theories. For instance, it is not possible to decide on which market segment to target without first having studied the environmental factors that might influence the company, both internally and externally. Furthermore, in order to be able to define and subsequently reach the selected target group, it is necessary to know who the receivers are and have an understanding of the communicative strategies that may be employed in order to reach the intended target group.

However, before turning to the marketing theories that will help define and reach the target audience, we will introduce the fictional communications agency, innoVisions, by presenting a short company profile outlining the company’s characteristics and values. This introduction will be used in the production of the product sheet, which in turn will be used in order to give examples of how the theories presented may be used in practice. Since the presentation of innoVisions does not contribute significantly to the realisation of the actual purpose of the thesis, this section is not so much an integral part of this process as it is a step on the way to realising the overall purpose of the thesis.

Following the introduction of innoVisions, we will provide a discussion of selected aspects of The Marketing Planning Process, developed by the American Professor of Marketing
Malcolm McDonald since this model gives a clear overview of how a company may communicate with existing as well as potential customers and subsequently create a successful marketing strategy. These aspects will include the company’s mission statement, corporate objectives, SWOT analysis, marketing objectives and strategies as they are most relevant in connection with realising the purpose of the thesis.

After having studied the marketing environment of the company, we will present selected market segmentation bases that provide useful tools for a company when segmenting markets. Following this, we aim to provide guidelines as to how a company may reach its target audience, both with respect to the various buyer-readiness stages at which the receivers may be as well as the different communications objectives that a company may choose to focus on. Finally, we will introduce the verbal and nonverbal rhetorical strategies that may be employed as a means of achieving the desired communications objectives.

To sum up, the discussion of communication, discourse and culture in part one of the thesis should be seen as the basic framework for determining how a company may define and reach its target audience, whereas part two mainly builds on the theories presented in part one, however, also introducing other relevant theories, thus functioning as a supportive framework. Part one therefore contains a detailed discussion and evaluation of the subjects in question in contrast to part two, which is a general outline of the topics to be used in connection with the analysis of innoVisions and the product sheet.

5.1. Company profile

As mentioned in the introduction, innoVisions is a communications agency, which aims to provide its customers with unique business solutions that are tailored to meet the requirements of each individual customer. The target group of the company mainly consists of small to medium-sized businesses both within the Danish and the British markets, however with emphasis on the British market. This means that the customers are all found within the business-to-business market, which is something that should be taken into consideration when defining and reaching the target audience.
The services offered by innoVisions range from isolated assignments to repeated jobs or wide-ranging projects. An example of an assignment or a job may be a translation or a linguistic revision of a document either in Danish or English. A project will typically be related to PR or information activities and may, for instance, consist of the planning of a PR campaign or the production of leaflets, product sheets or other promotional material.

The key word and core business of the company is communication. This applies both to the process of reaching the target group as well as the act of solving the various jobs and assignments, once the target group has been reached. innoVisions therefore continuously seeks to develop and improve its communication skills, making sure that the employees are highly qualified and receive adequate training at regular intervals. In order to provide a service of equal quality in both Danish and English, the company strives to have a staff consisting of native Danish and English speakers at all times. In that way, it is possible to build a solid foundation for offering the customers optimum quality and value for their money.

Since innoVisions is a new company, which is still in the introduction stage of its lifecycle, it only has limited resources and therefore only few staff members. On a long-term scale, the aim is to increase the number of staff; however, the company intends to stay fairly small and keep the number of customers at a certain level in order to provide each and every customer with a personal and unique service.

Having outlined the basic characteristics of innoVisions, the following will account for some of the most important aspects that the company should to take into consideration when communicating with the public and deciding on a target audience, starting with a definition of the marketing plan.

5.2. The Marketing Planning Process

A well-defined marketing plan is essential for the success of any company, big or small. It is important to understand the objectives of the company and ensure that all marketing efforts fully support these objectives, especially when starting up a new company. This is where
marketing planning enters the scene, forming the basis for the success of the company. There are many ways of shaping and describing a marketing plan, but the following will be based on *The Marketing Planning Process* (cf. appendix 4). In collaboration with the American Professor Adrian Payne, Malcolm McDonald provides a clear overview of the different parts of the marketing planning process and divides this into nine different stages of which we will concentrate on the mission statement, corporate objectives, SWOT analysis, marketing objectives and strategies. The reason for choosing the mission statement and corporate objectives is that these two components state the values and purpose of business as well as communicate with the external environment. The SWOT analysis is included since it helps the company assess its strengths and weaknesses and consequently is an important tool in connection with the process of identifying and reaching the target group. Finally, marketing objectives have been included, because they form the basis of the overall marketing strategy, including the choice of target segments (McDonald and Payne, 1996: 31-34).

### 5.2.1. Mission statement and corporate objectives

Strategic planning starts with setting the overall mission of the company, i.e. the organisation’s basic function in society in terms of the products and/or services that it offers to its customers. The mission is then turned into a mission statement, which is a formal description of the mission stating the purpose of the business, i.e. what the company wants to achieve, and how it plans to get there. Typically, a mission statement includes an outline of the role of the company, a definition of the business, a statement of differentiation as well as an indication of future direction. Apart from guiding people within the company, a clear mission statement is also an important tool for the company when communicating with both existing and potential customers in that it states the company’s identity, values and purpose of business. In other words, the mission statement may be said to be part of the company’s communications strategy since it conveys a certain message of how the target audience will benefit from the products and/or services provided by the company (Croft, 1994: 52-53).

An effective way of making a mission statement even clearer is to divide it into different parts, e.g. a product or service mission, an economic mission and a social mission. In that way, the customers can easily identify the aspects that might affect and/or benefit them. For
instance, a social mission may communicate morals or ethical standpoints and subsequently
create a positive image of the company in the minds of the customers, while a product or
service mission may give certain information about the quality and origin of the product or
service in question. This is best illustrated by giving an example from an already established
company such as the mission statement found on the homepage of the ice cream manufacturer
Ben & Jerry’s (cf. appendix 5). This mission statement contains a clear definition of a
product, economic and social mission, followed by a statement that these three parts must
thrive equally in a manner that lives up to the social environment. In that way, the company’s
social position is communicated so that it creates a direct link to the company itself and is
easy for the customers to understand and relate to. Apart from being a means of
communication, the mission statement also provides a foundation and sets the overall
direction for the market segmentation process, i.e. it is used by the company as a means of
targeting the customers and positioning the company in the market (McDonald and Payne,
1996: 34).

Once a mission statement has been worked out, the next step is to turn this into overall
corporate objectives, the purpose of which is for the stakeholders to measure the success of
the business. Corporate objectives may for instance be:

- to obtain a certain position or image within the market
- to increase the company’s shareholder wealth by a certain percentage
- to maximise the level of productivity by a certain percentage
- to improve the company’s technological know-how

Corporate objectives may thus be found within different areas and may be qualitative or
quantitative or even a combination of both. In order to compete effectively in the market, it is
important for the company to focus on the area (or areas) that will benefit the company the
most and subsequently use this as a basis for setting clear objectives. For instance, it is no use
concentrating on improving the company’s technological know-how if the company will
benefit more from maximising the level of productivity. Even though corporate objectives
should always be attainable and realistic, it is advisable to work out objectives that require the
company to stretch itself; in that way, the company will gain maximum output from its investments.

To sum up, corporate objectives thus lay the foundation for the establishment of the actual business and provide a basis for the marketing strategy, which is basically a plan of action of how to achieve the corporate objectives. Corporate objectives are measurable goals in contrast to the mission statement, which outlines the philosophy and overall direction of the company. The process of setting corporate objectives alongside the mission statement is an effective way of assessing the appropriateness of both entities; the corporate objectives should support the mission and include an evaluation of whether the mission statement is being achieved, and each key element of the mission statement should thus be covered by a corporate objective. This means that there is a strong interrelation between the two, and any change in the mission statement will inevitably affect the corporate objectives (Payne, 1993: 186-188).

With a thoroughly worked out mission statement and well-founded corporate objectives, the company is now ready to assess and analyse the current market situation and use this analysis as a platform for selecting attractive markets that fit within the scope of the company’s performance skills. A commonly used analysis for this purpose is the SWOT analysis, which will be described below.

5.2.2. SWOT analysis

Looking at both internal and external environmental factors that might influence the company, the SWOT analysis is an important tool for auditing the overall strategic position of a business and its environment. The model is based on the marketing audit, which is a situational analysis of where the company is at a particular point of time. The purpose of the audit is to gather all the data necessary to determine how the company can succeed in each market segment in which it chooses to operate. The data collected are usually divided into external data concerning the marketing environment and internal data covering all aspects of the company itself. Once the marketing audit has been performed, the SWOT analysis is applied in order to identify the key components of marketing information generated by the
marketing audit. In short, a SWOT analysis may therefore be defined as a summary of the audit (Croft, 1994: 53).

The SWOT analysis consists of **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** that are classified as internal factors and **Opportunities** and **Threats** that are external factors. The overall objective of the analysis is to identify the environment affecting the business and subsequently evaluate the company’s internal position in relationship to its particular strengths and weaknesses, compared with the opportunities and threats presented by the external environment. An effective SWOT analysis will thus help determine in which areas the company is succeeding just as it will help identify which market segments should be targeted in the future. Finally, it will help pinpoint the needs of its target group and provide guidance for the management as to how the customers in each target segment are best satisfied (Payne, 1993: 196-197).

An effective way of identifying and evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is to consider specific key areas such as technological skills and advances, customer loyalty, satisfaction and tastes, etc. With the selected areas in mind, the company should then seek to answer questions such as the ones shown in figure 7. In that way, the SWOT analysis provides a framework within which the selected information can be compared. The trick is then to find the best way of matching the strengths to each identified opportunity and addressing those weaknesses for which there is a corresponding threat.

It is important to understand the distinction between the different SWOT elements in the sense that strengths and weaknesses are issues internal to the company and therefore under its control. Opportunities and threats, on the other hand, are outside the control of the company since these issues are related to aspects of the external marketing environment (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 49-50).
### Strengths
- What skills do we have and what are we especially good at?
- What can we do that nobody else can?
- What successes have we had recently, and why?
- What makes people buy from us?
- What makes people recommend us?

### Weaknesses
- What skills do we lack and what are we not good at?
- What do others do better than us?
- What failures have we had recently, and why?
- Why do people choose our competitors instead of us?
- Why do previously happy customers leave us?

### Opportunities
- What new products/services could we offer?
- What new skills and capabilities could we acquire?
- How could we become unique?
- What new types of customers/markets/needs could we serve?
- What changes in the market could we exploit?
- What new ideas, techniques and technology could we use?
- How may demographic changes benefit the company?

### Threats
- What new ideas, techniques and technology could undermine us?
- What are our competitors doing that could damage us?
- Are there any legal, economic or political threats to us?
- Are our customers' needs changing?
- What other changes in the market could damage us?
- Are there any other black clouds on the horizon?
- What threats may demographic changes pose to the company?

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5 The following will provide a brief introduction to the four different SWOT elements in order to account for what aspects the elements consist of and how they are interrelated.

5.2.2.1. Strengths and weaknesses

10 This part of the SWOT analysis is fundamental to the setting of marketing objectives and strategies and selecting target markets, because it analyses the internal environment, i.e. what the company is capable of doing and where it lacks efficiency and performance capability (McDonald and Payne, 1996: 89). A company’s strengths are the positive resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for enhancing performance and developing a competitive advantage. Examples of such resources might be a strong brand, customer loyalty, efficient production or high-quality products. Weaknesses are the negative factors that
the company should strive to overcome, e.g. lack of work experience, poor reputation among customers, weak technical knowledge or poor work discipline among the staff. In some cases, weaknesses result from the absence of certain strengths; for instance, a poor production level or long delivery schedules may very well lead to the loss of customers. In other cases, a weakness may even be the downside of a strength. For instance, many companies that have achieved a high level of customer satisfaction have worked so hard to obtain this status that they subsequently tend to forget the importance of continuously making sure that the customers are satisfied (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong, 1999: 407).

As a concluding remark to this part of the SWOT analysis, it is important to note that strengths or weaknesses may only be viewed as such if this is how the customers perceive them. Furthermore, these two elements must always be defined in the context of the competitive environment. For instance, a brand is only strong if it is popular amongst the customers, and product quality is only a strength if the performance is strong compared to the competing products (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 50).

5.2.2.2. Opportunities and threats

Opportunities and threats are external factors that affect the company. Opportunities are the positive effects such as unfulfilled customer needs, effective distributors, the arrival of new technologies or the reorganisation of competitors. Threats are the negative effects that will most likely be a disadvantage to the company or even damage the business. Such effects may range from changes in customer tastes or needs to increased trade barriers, superior competitor skills or recently introduced competitive products (Kotler et al., 1999: 407).

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is to assess the company’s strengths and evaluate these in order to assess whether they might open up any new opportunities. Furthermore, it is a good idea to analyse the weaknesses of the company and find out if the elimination of some or all of these might lead to new opportunities.

All in all, each element of the SWOT analysis must be given careful attention in order to obtain maximum benefits from undertaking the analysis. It is advisable that the SWOT
analysis is only done on individual market segments; in that way, only the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered. This will give a more useful output than an analysis containing several different market segments since such a procedure would lead to far too general assumptions or even cause certain specific opportunities to be overlooked (Croft, 1994: 54).

As with any other form of analysis, the SWOT analysis has both advantages as well as disadvantages. On the positive side, the analysis is fairly simple to understand and undertake. On the downside, however, the simplicity of the analysis may lead to hurried and relatively meaningless analyses, containing irrelevant or useless information. Additionally, users often tend to be very subjective and rely on outdated or unreliable information. Therefore, the SWOT analysis is best used as a guide and not a prescription. It does, however, provide a good background for guiding the company in the process of deciding what to communicate to the customers and how to do this (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 48-49).

Once key strategic issues have been identified through a SWOT analysis, it should now be possible to develop marketing objectives that are consistent with the overall corporate objectives and mission of the company (Adcock, Halborg and Ross, 1998: 408). We will therefore now turn to the last part of the marketing planning process that we have chosen to include in this thesis, namely marketing objectives.

### 5.2.3. Marketing objectives and strategies

Marketing objectives are part of the overall marketing strategy (cf. appendix 4). As opposed to corporate objectives, which concern the business as a whole, marketing objectives are specific objectives for marketing activities. We are therefore now dealing with objectives on the functional level at which stage the objectives should be seen as quantifiable results of the marketing planning activities, i.e. what the company aims to achieve within a specific planning period. Once the objectives have been set, a marketing strategy is developed, determining by which means the marketing objectives are to be achieved (Payne, 1993: 200).
Examples of marketing objectives may be:

- to achieve a 50 per cent awareness of a new product or service in the target market within two years
- to increase product awareness among the target group by 20 per cent before the end of the year
- to achieve a market share of 30 per cent within three years

Apart from specifying what needs to be achieved, a marketing objective must always be linked to a specific time frame. The objective must be stated in absolute terms in order to be able to make a comparison between actual performance and the objective set week by week or month by month. Last but not least, any objective must be realistic and achievable; otherwise it should be amended or rejected (Adcock et al., 1998: 409). An effective way of remembering these criteria is to set objectives that conform to the commonly used SMART criteria as summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Achievable</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Time-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 8: The SMART criteria (ibid: 409)

With the SMART criteria in mind when formulating each specific marketing objective, the accumulated result of all the objectives will help the company stay on track and form a solid framework by which it can measure its performance.

Once the marketing objectives have been thoroughly worked out, the next step is to decide on a marketing strategy that will enable the company to apply its skills and resources to the marketplace in such a way that maximum profits are gained. Typical marketing strategies contain elements such as procedures relating to the products or services offered, pricing,
advertising, distribution channels, customer service, etc. Finally, a well-structured marketing plan should give a detailed account of the market segments on which the company wishes to focus (McDonald and Payne, 1996: 132-134).

A marketing strategy thus contains many different elements of which we have chosen to focus on the area of market segmentation since this is particularly relevant in connection with starting up a new company. Furthermore, market segmentation is relevant in connection with the overall topic of this thesis, namely communication. The reason for this is that communication plays an important part in connection with defining and reaching the company’s target audience. It is necessary to have a deep understanding of the needs and wants of the various market segments in order to be able to decide on which segment(s) to target. Moreover, it is of great importance that the overall objectives of the company match the requirements of the market which the company intends to target; if the company’s values, goals and objectives do not match the needs and wants of the target group, the result will be failure and a communication breach.

Therefore, the following will be an account of how a target audience is best defined in terms of market segmentation and market targeting. This will then form the basis for the final part of the thesis, namely how to reach a selected target audience on the basis for communicative and rhetorical strategies.
6. Defining a target audience

In the previous chapter, we established that when starting up a new company, it is important to set both corporate objectives and marketing objectives. First, however, the company mission statement must be formulated thus defining the company’s identity, values and purpose of business. After that, we came to the conclusion that in order to define the target audience of a company, the company’s strengths and weaknesses should be analysed and the opportunities and threats in the market should be investigated. Subsequently, once the above-mentioned elements have been carefully considered and clearly stated, the next step is to identify and select market targets.

The overall aim of this chapter is to study the market segmentation process and in this connection examine some selected bases available for identifying market segments. Various approaches to defining market segments exist, but this chapter deals with demographic segmentation, psychological segmentation (or psychographics), geographic segmentation and finally behavioural segmentation. It must be borne in mind, however, that innoVisions operates in the business-to-business market, and therefore, although the selected segmentation bases are commonly used for segmenting consumer markets, we will seek to establish which of the selected variables are best suited for a start-up communications agency.

With respect to the description of the segmentation bases, it should be noted that although the methods for studying these fall under the first stage in the market segmentation process, the selected segmentation bases will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2. for the sake of clarity.

In the following, we will take a look at the concept of market segmentation and subsequently the market segmentation process. In the concluding section of this chapter we will look at market targeting and include a discussion of which segmentation bases are the most relevant to use for innoVisions.
6.1. Market segmentation

Market segmentation is a key element of marketing in industrialised countries, and since its introduction by Wendell Smith in 1956, market segmentation has become increasingly widespread, transcending markets, industries and national boundaries. Where markets only a few decades ago were said to be homogenous, it has now become evident that the majority of markets are made up of different individual customers, sub-markets or segments, and it is therefore no longer possible to produce and sell goods and services without taking into account customer needs and recognising the heterogeneity of those needs. Smith proposes:

“Market segmentation involves viewing a heterogeneous market as a number of smaller homogeneous markets, in response to differing preferences, attributable to the desires of consumers for more precise satisfaction of their varying wants” (in Wedel and Kamakura, 2000: 3). Consequently, what Smith’s definition of market segmentation seems to suggest is that segments originate directly from the heterogeneity of customer wants and needs. This view of segmentation reflects a market orientation rather than a product orientation, and it may therefore seem reasonable to propose that segments should be defined in terms of the customers themselves rather than the particular products they buy (ibid: 3).

The overall objective of market segmentation is to identify groups of customers with similar needs, wants and purchasing behaviour, and market segmentation is essentially the process of breaking down the total market into “several relatively homogeneous groups with similar product or service interests, based upon factors such as demographic or psychological characteristics, geographic locations or perceived product benefits” (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 1). Consequently, the understanding of how customers can be grouped together according to different types or classes is widely regarded critical to marketing strategy. However, marketers have not always held this view, and their thinking has traditionally passed through three different stages. The first stage is concerned with mass marketing and covers the areas of mass production, mass distribution and mass promotion of one product to all customers. The second stage regards product differentiated marketing, i.e. the marketer produces a number of products, which display distinct features, styles, qualities, sizes, etc.

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6 These stages will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2.5.2. under the headings of undifferentiated, differentiated and concentrated marketing.
The third and now increasingly dominant stage is target marketing where the marketer distinguishes between several market segments and selects one or more segments to be targeted with products or services specifically tailored to each segment (ibid: 1-2).

When segmenting markets it is important to be aware of the differences that exist between e.g. consumer markets and business-to-business markets. Although the aim of segmentation is essentially the same in both markets, business-to-business markets can be characterised in a number of ways which makes them very different from consumer markets. For instance, while private individuals have physical limitations as to the amount of products that a person can consume, business-to-business customers (i.e. companies) range widely in their consumption of products. Also, the selection of a supplier is more complicated in business-to-business markets than in consumer markets due to the fact that people are buying on behalf of their company rather than themselves, and this requires a higher degree of objectivity and rationality in the purchase situation (Internet 9). Finally, although the foundation of marketing in both consumer markets and business-to-business markets is based on knowing the customers, business-to-business markets are generally more focused on customer relationships than is normally the case with consumer markets. For instance, while the customer is remote in consumer markets, the customer in business-to-business markets is far closer as sales are made personally. Consequently, in business-to-business markets, knowledge of the customer is gained through personal contacts (Internet 10).

In conclusion, there are numerous benefits of adopting the concept of market segmentation. Segmentation is a particularly useful approach to marketing for the smaller companies since it allows target markets to be matched to company competencies and makes it easier for the smaller company to create a defensible niche in the market; segmentation is therefore an important marketing tool in connection with innoVisions. Furthermore, market segmentation contributes to an increased understanding of customer needs and wants, their decision criteria and approach and helps identify unserved or underserved segments, which may provide areas for new product development or extension of the existing product or service range (Hooley and Saunders, 1993: 152). Other benefits which can be derived from adopting a market segmentation approach are, for instance, that marketing efforts can be concentrated on the market segment or segments which offer the greatest potential for the company to achieve its
goals - whether speaking of goals to maximise profit potential or to secure the best long-term position for the product or service - as well as greater insight into the competitive situation and more effective resource allocation (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 7).

Therefore, although the benefits that market segmentation offers are potentially great and may help companies take advantage of marketing opportunities which might otherwise be missed, it may be argued that companies in this era of de-massification may very easily aim at segments which are too small to be viable or maybe even too expensive to reach (Adcock, Halborg and Ross, 2001: 121). In other words, adopting a market segmentation approach must be carefully considered, and in order to avoid the pitfalls of segmentation, it is therefore of crucial importance to understand the process of market segmentation fully before making any major decisions about how markets should be segmented. The market segmentation process will thus be described briefly in the following section.

6.1.1. The market segmentation process

According to Dibb and Simkin, any market segmentation programme involves three distinct stages, each consisting of a number of steps, which a company must go through in order for market segmentation to be effective. The three stages in the market segmentation process are segmentation, targeting and positioning, and the underlying principle of these three stages is that customers with similar wants and needs can be grouped together. In situations where such ‘similar’ customers can be aggregated into groups that are large enough, there is obvious potential for companies wishing to target such segments (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 11).

6.1.1.1. Segmentation

The first stage in the market segmentation process is concerned with how to carry out segmentation, and it involves two basic steps. The first step concerns the segmentation bases which are used to group together customers who display and reflect similar product/service requirements and buying behaviour. In order for a company to choose the appropriate segmentation bases, it is necessary to select the bases that clearly distinguish between e.g. different product requirements. To illustrate this point, Dibb and Simkin give the following
example: “Some customers of freezer ready-meals may be concerned about their weight and fitness. These customers may seek a different range of products than customers without such concerns” (ibid: 13). Furthermore, once the segments have been defined, it is critical that the company develops a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the customers in those segments. This understanding thus facilitates the design of a marketing programme which will appeal to the segment targeted.

Besides the two basic steps in the first stage of the market segmentation process, there is an additional step that deserves some attention, namely the identification of usable segments. When dealing with market segmentation, it is possible to describe at least four basic requirements that a segment should fulfil in order to provide a reasonable market target: a market segment must necessarily be definable, sizeable, reachable and relevant. First of all, in order for a market segment to be definable, it is imperative that it can be described, i.e. the key characteristics of the segment should show a degree of homogeneity. However, it is important to be aware that the segment must be viewed as a subset of a heterogeneous total market due to the fact that if the total market were homogeneous, there would be no need or basis for segmenting the market in the first place.

The second criterion that a segment must satisfy concerns the size of the segment, i.e. is the segment large enough to be able to produce the required turnover and profit for the company? In other words, useful segments must be assessed in terms of organisational resources and objectives. The third requirement is concerned with how to reach the segment both effectively and efficiently; besides including the distribution of the product or service, it also involves the different ways of communicating with customers. Finally, the fourth and most important criterion for any described segment deals with relevancy. This criterion cannot be considered in isolation from the above-mentioned requirements since there is no point in describing a relevant segment that is unreachable. Therefore, in order for a segment to be relevant, it must necessarily meet a number of criteria ranging from segment durability (or life cycle) to the extent of interdependency with other segments.

The criterion of segment durability is what Wedel and Kamakura label stability. They argue that “only segments that are stable in time can provide the underlying basis for the
development of a successful marketing strategy. If the segments to which a certain marketing effort is targeted change their composition or behavior during its implementation, the effort is very likely not to succeed” (Wedel and Kamakura, 2000: 5). In other words, it is crucial that segments show a certain degree of stability, at least for a period long enough for the identification of the segments. With respect to interdependency, this entails that selected segments are isolated from other segments in the market, thus making them suitable to be targeted with a distinctive market offering. Put differently, if segments do not show a certain degree of distinctiveness, they do not form a clear target for the company’s marketing efforts (Adcock et al., 2001: 120-121).

6.1.1.2. Targeting

The second stage in the market segmentation process deals with targeting. Once segments have been identified, the company must decide on which and how many segments should be targeted and subsequently decide on an appropriate targeting strategy. With respect to the decision on how many and which customer groups to target, the company may opt for one or a combination of the following market-coverage strategies: undifferentiated marketing, differentiated marketing or concentrated marketing.

The question of which target segment approach to adopt is highly dependent on a number of market, product and competitive factors, and each of these factors must therefore be carefully considered before making any decisions about the segment or segments to be targeted. The factors to be considered may include the following:

- company objectives
- company resources
- competition for the segment
- profitability
- segment size
- growth prospects
- substitute products
For instance, with respect to competition for the segment, the company must examine the level of competition in the market, how it changes over time and how the entering of the segment will affect the competitive status quo. Furthermore, as regards segment size and growth prospects, it is crucial that the company examines the size of the segment, how it is made up and how it is likely to develop in the future (cf. section 6.2.5.1.).

In conclusion, a careful examination of the above-mentioned factors will help the company make decisions about the viability of particular segments and furthermore help ensure that its resources are appropriately targeted (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 15-16).

6.1.1.3. Positioning

The third and final stage in the market segmentation process deals with positioning, which should be a primary consideration when marketing a product or service. Segmentation and positioning are two inseparable entities, and while segmentation identifies homogeneous groups of potential customers, positioning is concerned with how those customers perceive the products or services relative to the competition. Positioning thus provides a bridge between the target market strategy and the marketing programmes, and whereas “the positioning is determined so as to effectively appeal specifically to targeted customer needs, the marketing programmes have to facilitate this communication” (ibid: 17).

In order to achieve a particular product or service positioning, there are a number of steps that a company must go through. These steps include:

- the development of a product/service which caters specifically for customer needs and expectations
- an evaluation of the positioning and images (as perceived by the target customers) of competing products/services in the selected market segment(s)
- selecting an image which differentiates the product/service from competing brands.

This must be done on the basis of product/service characteristics, target customers’ needs and expectations and their perception of competing brands’ positioning
communicating with the targeted customers about the product/service, i.e. promotion of the product/service (ibid: 18)

In order for the positioning to be successful, it is necessary to ensure that the target customers find that the product or service satisfies their desires and expectations. It may be argued, however, that positioning is not about providing new information about the product or service to the target customers, but about reconnecting the existing information in the way a company wants its customers to perceive the product or service (Internet 11). Positioning of the product or service is therefore closely associated with the attributes that the target customers ascribe to it, for instance the value it delivers, the type of people using it, its strengths and weaknesses, etc.

6.2. Bases for segmenting markets

Some of the most important issues to be addressed in connection with studying and applying market segmentation concern the bases on which the segmentation should be conducted as well as the number of segments identifiable as targets in a particular market. In order to gain a clear picture of the nature of the market, the selection of the bases for segmentation is crucial. That is, not only may the use of different bases lead to very different results, but also the process of segmentation and the selection of different segmentation bases may prove useful for gaining new insights into old market structures, which in turn may offer new opportunities (Hooley, Saunders and Piercy, 1998: 208). It must be noted, however, that choosing segmentation bases is a fairly subjective process, and it is therefore seldom possible to assert categorically that there is one best way to segment a particular market (Dibb and Simkin, 1996: 13).

When describing segments it is possible to use two different approaches. The first approach is concerned with background customer characteristics, which are generally classified under three categories, i.e. demographic, psychographic (or lifestyle) and finally geographic variables. The second approach to segmentation concentrates on an equally powerful set of variables, which offers a focus on how customers behave and the benefits sought by those customers from a product or service (Adcock et al., 2001: 121). Consequently, the latter
approach to segmenting markets consists of two categories, namely benefit segmentation and
behavioural segmentation. Although these two segmentation bases may be dealt with
individually, we have chosen to consider benefit segmentation part of behavioural
segmentation. The reason for this is that benefit segmentation is closely related to the product
itself as are the rest of the variables used in behavioural segmentation.

6.2.1. Demographic segmentation

Demographic segmentation is the most widely used method of subdividing total markets.
Besides being the basis for the collection of many government statistics, demographic
segmentation is also the standard system used by the media industry (ibid: 121).

Demography may be defined as the statistical study of human populations and their vital
characteristics. This broad definition typically includes both demographic and socio-economic
variables where the latter are used to analyse a population in terms of economic and social
classes (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 8). Consequently, demographic factors are the basis for
the patterns of lifestyle within a society, and they constitute the circumstances in which
customers enact and display their social and commercial roles. Although demographic factors
change only slowly and are statistically predictable, they do, however, have great effects on
the nature and volume of demand for most products and services. A demographic factor
exerting obvious influences on companies and services in particular markets is, for instance,
birthrates. The demand for e.g. baby-clothes, nursery products, maternity services and later on
e.g. primary education and toys is directly linked to birthrate statistics. Similarly, with an
ageing population, which today has become a common phenomenon in industrialised
countries, there is an increased demand for age-related products and services such as sheltered
accommodation and pre-retirement counselling (Adcock et al., 2001: 36).

Demographic segmentation has traditionally been thought of as consisting of merely the
standard market research variables such as gender, age, marital status, socio-economic
classification and occupation. However, due to the fact that society has evolved over time and
old generalisations about the family, such as the idea that women take care of the house and
children while men are the breadwinners, have become less and less true, one might argue that
the traditional classifications should be supplemented with other and more current variables, which reflect contemporary society more accurately. Therefore, besides including the traditional demographic variables, demographic segmentation should now also include variables such as family type and size, income levels, ethnic origin, education levels and stage in the life cycle (ibid: 121-122).

Although demographic differences have been widely used as bases for segmenting consumer markets, there are equivalent demographic categories that can be used in the business-to-business market. In the business-to-business market, however, demographic variables are often referred to as organisational differences. Organisational differences such as industry type and company size are typically the easiest to identify since this type of information is readily available via e.g. government statistics and industry directories (Croft, 1994: 30). A variable such as company size may prove to be a useful segmentation tool for e.g. a start-up communications agency since it can help identify small companies, which do not have a marketing or communications department of their own and may therefore need another company to be responsible for the production of their PR and information material.

In conclusion, a demographic approach to market segmentation assumes that since people or companies can be grouped into certain types of categories (e.g. similar age and income brackets, industry types, etc.), they are likely to share similar values and display similar buying behaviour. However, while this may be true for some segments, one could argue that demographic segmentation becomes less and less reliable as markets become more and more sophisticated. Demographic bases alone therefore rarely provide a complete understanding of customer differences, and their exclusive use thus fails to explore the full potential of the market segmentation approach (ibid: 30).

6.2.2. Psychographic segmentation

The psychological classification of markets derives from two main customer variables, i.e. personality profiles and lifestyle profiles (psychographics). Psychological profiles are often used as a supplement to demographic and geographic segmentation, and while the traditional bases such as age, gender, occupation, location, etc. provide the marketer with accessibility to
customer segments, psychological profiles provide additional information about these variables, thus increasing the understanding of the behaviour of present and potential target markets (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 26).

As noted above, psychographics represents one aspect of psychological market segmentation, and it is primarily concerned with classifying customers in terms of their values and lifestyles. Values are important lifestyle determinants, and they may be defined as generalised beliefs or expectations about behaviour. While many values are relatively stable from generation to generation, other values undergo considerable change, and it is the latter type which is of greatest value to marketers since they form the basis for difference among lifestyle market segments. Lifestyles, then, may be defined as the patterns in which people live and spend their time and money, and they are “the result of the mix of economic, cultural and social forces that contribute to a person’s human qualities” (ibid: 28).

Lifestyle segmentation is concerned with three main elements, which are used for determining the overall patterns of living or the basic constructs affecting a person’s activities and perceptual process. The first main element comprises activities such as leisure-time activities, work activities, entertainment, holidays and charitable work. The second main element refers to interaction with others, e.g. self-perception, personality, role perceptions, social interaction, opinion leadership and communication with others. The third and final main element is concerned with opinions, e.g. on such topics as politics, social and moral issues, economic and business-industry issues as well as technological and environmental issues (Hooley et al., 1998: 216).

As with demographic segmentation, lifestyle segmentation is primarily used for segmenting consumer markets. However, it may be argued that lifestyle measures can be used in connection with segmenting business-to-business markets. For instance, it was noted above that lifestyle segmentation includes three main elements, and as regards the third element, i.e. opinions, it seems reasonable to propose that it would be possible to use this segmentation variable when considering issues relevant to the segmenting of companies, e.g. in connection with measuring levels of social responsibility.
In conclusion, although psychographics or lifestyle measures have become an increasingly popular means of identifying and describing customers and their differences along psychological dimensions, it seems unlikely that psychographics will supersede demographics as a major segmentation variable. It may therefore be concluded that their most valuable contribution to segmenting business-to-business markets is in providing a richer description of market segments identified from other segmentation bases, rather than the direct formation of homogeneous lifestyle segments (Hooley and Saunders, 1993: 146).
6.2.3. Geographic segmentation

The approach of geographic segmentation divides the market of customers into different geographic segments e.g. neighbourhoods, cities, counties, regions, states or nations, where the company pays attention to geographical differences in needs and wants. Geographic segmentation is especially useful when there are significant differences caused by the location in which a product is marketed. These differences are often influenced by cultural factors, tradition, politics, statutes, etc. Between some segments the differences may be small and more or less insignificant, while between other segments the differences are quite specific and remarkable. It is very important to be aware of such segments and differences since people are very much influenced by where they live and work, and their immediate surroundings may have quite an impact on their purchasing behaviour.

When segmenting a market according to geographical factors, it can either be done by using what is called market scope factors or geographic market measures (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 5). Whereas market scope factors distinguish between geographical dimensions like global, national, regional and local markets, geographic market measures deal with factors such as population density, climate, standardised market areas and census classifications. An example of differences between units segmented on the basis of geographic market measures can be seen where climatic differences lead to different lifestyles and eating habits. In countries with warm climates, for instance, most of people’s social life takes place outdoors, and, consequently, indoor-things like furniture are less important than it is in countries with colder climates. This is, however, only one of many examples; in general, all sorts of geographic factors may influence the customers’ buying behaviour substantially, but in today’s society with increasing mobility and globalisation, distinct geographically-based market segments are disappearing (ibid: 7). It is, however, still very important to be particularly aware of cultural differences between markets in e.g. different countries.

Possibly as a reaction to the increasing degree of globalisation in the world today, geographic segmentation has been undertaken at a rather localised level and linked to other differences in social, economic and demographic characteristics. The resulting basis for segmentation is often referred to as geodemographics; ‘geo’ meaning location and ‘demographics’ the study
of people. Consequently, ‘geodemographics’ is the study of people by where they live. Geodemographics thus bridges the gap between defining target markets and identifying where they live. The underlying thought of geodemographic analysis is that where a person lives is closely associated with a number of indicators of their socio-economic status and lifestyle, and in order to maximise the value of the physical dimensions of the marketing information, the geodemographic analysis is used.

For a start-up company conducting business across borders, it is vital to be very careful to develop the company’s geographic market segmentation correctly as most start-up companies have a very limited budget and can therefore not afford to make mistakes. And if the company is not careful, there is a risk that it might miss a profitable market segment. Also, when working across borders for the first time, it is particularly important to investigate the laws, tradition, politics and culture of the foreign country beforehand. First of all, this makes it easier to segment the market correctly according to these factors, but it will also minimise the risk of communication failures between the company and its potential customers. Finally, it is important to remember that when segmenting a market on the basis of geographic factors, or maybe even more so when dealing with geodemographic factors, some market segments might be cross-borders (e.g. young, dynamic businesses), while others will be restricted to one country. The reason why some market segments are cross-borders is, as mentioned earlier, due to the ever increasing mobility and globalisation in the world, which means that some companies have e.g. a corporate British identity in every office and subsidiary even if such a subsidiary is situated in e.g. Denmark. However, some degree of difference in the company culture should still be expected since we are all influenced by our surroundings.

6.2.4. Behavioural segmentation

Behavioural segmentation of markets, also known as direct segmentation, refers to why customers purchase a certain product or service and is often regarded perhaps the most sophisticated approach to segmentation developed to date. It first started to become popular in the early 1990s and may be seen as a fusion of marketing and behavioural science.
Behavioural segmentation can be broken down into six variables. First is the variable called *benefits sought* that deals with the benefit(s) a customer seeks from purchasing a product; i.e. how will the product enhance the customer’s overall lifestyle? When purchasing a computer, the benefit which the buyer seeks of it may vary from 'ease of use' to 'need for speed'.

*Occasion* is another variable, dealing with when a product should be purchased, e.g. the demand for turkeys increases during Christmas, flowers and chocolates on Mother’s Day and so on. Occasion segmentation aims to increase the 'reason to buy-factor', which in turn increases sales. A third variable is *user status*, which groups individuals according to whether they are non-users, ex-users, potential users, first-time users or regular users of a given product. Next is a variable called *usage rate*, which divides customers into light, medium and heavy users. Heavy users obviously contribute more to turnover than light or medium users, and the objective of a company should therefore be to attract heavy users, who will make a greater contribution to company sales. *Loyalty status* is yet another variable, and it groups individuals according to their level of loyalty to the brand; ‘hard core loyals’ always purchase the brand in question, ‘soft core loyals’ sometimes buy another brand, ‘shifting loyals’ only buy the brand for a certain period before shifting to another brand and ‘switchers’ will not specifically seek out a particular brand. Finally, behavioural segmentation deals with a variable called *buyer-readiness stage*. This variable groups market segments according to their readiness to purchase the brand/product in question and is particularly useful in formulating and monitoring the marketing communication strategies employed to move customers towards the purchase of a brand or product (Internet 12).

In the following, the above-mentioned six variables will be examined in more detail, except for the variable regarding buyer-readiness as we will be dealing with this when discussing the communications objectives in chapter 7.

### 6.2.4.1. Benefits sought

The variable of benefits sought is also known as benefit segmentation. Benefit segmentation identifies market segments by causal factors rather than descriptive factors, like e.g. demographics.
The first article on benefit segmentation was published in 1968 (Haley, 1985: 14), but in practice this approach has been used as early as in 1961 in a study conducted by R. I. Haley for Procter & Gamble. According to Haley, people are not receptive to messages unless they receive some benefit from being so. Together with Jack Richardson, Haley groups these benefits into three types: information, entertainment and emotional reinforcement. The Richardson-Haley model (see figure 9) represents the formalisation of the explicit underlying assumptions about how exposure to advertising copy relates to product purchase (ibid: 23).

1. **Information.** News, facts, or impressions that can be helpful, usually in purchase decisions. Sometimes, however, useful information is given on a topic of interest to the message recipient in the hope that he or she will favour the products or services of the advertiser in gratitude for the information.

2. **Entertainment.** Something that is pleasant or amusing to watch, listen to, or read. Again it is hoped that gratitude to the advertiser or affiliative feelings toward the brand advertised will favourably influence brand choice.

3. **Emotional Reinforcement.** A major function of advertising is to reassure purchasers that they have made a correct choice, to encourage favourable word of mouth about the product or services purchased, and to develop loyal repeat purchase behaviour. One of the most attentive audiences for the advertising of a product is those who have just bought that product. This is particularly true for products where risk is high. […]

Haley argues that a person who is exposed to an advertising message is by no means a ‘blank slate’ as every person has his/her own experiences, values, interests, personality, lifestyle, moods and habits, which s/he brings to the exposure situation, and each of these factors has an impact on how a person reacts to the advertising message. This entails that every reaction is more or less unique to the individual, and in order to understand the reactions, one must understand the receiver’s attitudes before s/he is exposed to the advertising. This is where benefit segmentation is useful for a company since knowledge of the benefits that are
important to the receivers might be very helpful in predicting responses to advertising which incorporates these benefits (ibid: 24-25).

Once the company has classified its customers into segments according to the benefits they are seeking, each of these segments should be contrasted with all the other segments in terms of its demography, volume of consumption, brand perceptions, media habits, personality and lifestyle, etc. This way, the company will be able to obtain a deep understanding of the people making up each segment, and it will thus be easier to present the product in as favourable a light as possible and consequently reach the target audience (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 22).

In short, benefit segmentation can be used to clarify the reasons why people should buy a specific product, to define the main attributes of the product and to clarify how the product contrasts with competing products of other companies. Moreover, companies can use benefit segmentation to search for new benefits and develop products which deliver such benefits (Kotler et al., 1999: 398).

6.2.4.2. Occasion

Occasion relates to seasonality in a market as well as everyday occasions, e.g. the sales of single-use underwater cameras for summer holidays or the sales of orange juice for breakfast. Occasion segmentation can help companies build up product usage, which is e.g. the case when it comes to florists at the time of Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day – some people even say that these occasions are promoted in order to increase the sale of flowers, cards, confectionery, etc. Another example of seasonality in a market is that of turkeys. In some countries, the turkey was for many years a product almost only bought for Christmas as, in most families, Christmas dinner was the only meal big enough to justify the purchase of such a big bird. In order to solve this problem and create sales all year round, an American turkey farmer, Bernard Matthews, repackaged the meat as turkey steaks, sausages, etc. and promoted these new products for year-round use (ibid: 397). Other examples of occasion segmentation could include looking at customer occasions related to escaping and relaxing or customer occasions related to just refuelling.
Segmentation on the basis of occasion is probably more useful in consumer markets than in business-to-business markets, especially when it comes to selling communication products as there is no fixed period of the year when a company needs to communicate e.g. its products or values. This is (or at least should be) as important to any company in, for instance, March as it is in November. Also, when e.g. one company is planning a campaign and consequently has a greater need for communication products, it does not necessarily mean that other companies in the market will have the same need at the same time. However, one communication product which is required at the same time every year is the company’s annual accounts, but it would probably not be very profitable to target customers with this need only.

6.2.4.3. User status

As mentioned above, individuals in a market can be divided into non-users, ex-users, potential users, first-time users and regular users of a given product or service. Whereas regular users of a product require one kind of marketing appeal, potential users may require a different kind of appeal, and it is thus important to divide these customers into separate segments and target them in different ways. Depending on the size and market position of a company, its focus may differ from that of another company; a company which is a leader in its market might be more inclined to focus on attracting potential users, while a small start-up company will focus on attracting existing users away from the market leader. This can be done e.g. by making its product or service seem more appealing to current users (ibid: 399). Aiming at non-users will require hard work as it will be necessary first of all to convince these customers that they need a product they have not used before. But if a company can succeed in turning non-users into potential users and then finally first-time users, there is a good chance that they might even become regular users of the product. The next challenge for the company will then be to turn these customers into ‘hard core loyal’. (cf. section 6.2.4.5.). If the company succeeds in doing this, it will be on its way to growth and success, but it requires carefully planned communication that fits the segments targeted.
6.2.4.4. Usage rate

Usage rate segmentation deals with dividing a market on the basis of the amount of products bought or used, and it segments markets into non-users, light, medium and heavy-user groups. In most markets, the heavy-user group constitutes only a small percentage of the entire market but accounts for a high percentage of the total buying (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 20). This is what is commonly known as the heavy half theory or the 80/20 principle, holding that 20 per cent of all customers generate 80 per cent of the demand in the market. Because of this, most companies would clearly prefer to attract one heavy user to its product than several light users, and the company’s marketing communications should therefore be specifically adapted to these customers. However, it is important to ignore neither the non-users nor the light- and medium-user groups as these may provide the best prospects for future expansions.

6.2.4.5. Loyalty status

In recent years, many companies have begun to segment their markets according to the customers’ loyalty towards a specific brand. It is assumed that some customers are always loyal, i.e. they always purchase the same brand. These customers are known as hard core loyals. Other customers are referred to as soft core loyals, meaning that they have divided their loyalty between two or more brands and purchase any of these on a random basis. The third group of customers consists of the shifting loyals, also sometimes called ‘brand switchers’. These customers usually buy one brand, which they stay with for a certain period of time after which they purchase another brand and stay with that for a certain period of time. They may eventually return to the original brand. The fourth and final group of customers in this segmentation variable comprises the switchers, who show no particular preference or loyalty towards a specific brand but rather buy the brand available or on sale at the time of need. This means that the purchase behaviour and pattern of this group is very difficult if not impossible to determine clearly.

In most cases, companies tend to focus on the profitable hard core loyals. However, these customers are few and very hard to find in most markets since the majority of customers are promiscuous and polygamous in their relationship with brands. Even the most hard core
loyals will try alternative brands from time to time, and most customers have a selection of favoured brands from which they choose, just like the polygamous brand users will change their repertoire of favourite brands from time to time. In order to hold on to their loyal customers and make new or existing customers even more loyal, some companies have introduced what is called *loyalty schemes*. This can be seen in e.g. the airline industry, where some companies offer free ‘air miles’ every time you fly, depending on the trip. There is, however, a danger that the customers’ loyalty may be displaced from the brand to the loyalty scheme if e.g. the air miles required become more important to the customer than the airline with which s/he flies (Kotler et al., 1999: 400). Therefore, it is very important to analyse and know the market well in order to be sure that the measures taken will work in the intended way.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, organisations that sell to both consumer and business-to-business markets must recognise that they cannot appeal to all buyers in those markets or at least not to all buyers in the same way. Buyers are too numerous, too widely scattered and too varied in their needs and buying behaviour. Companies vary widely in their abilities to serve different segments of the market, and rather than trying to compete in an entire market, sometimes against superior competitors, every company must carefully evaluate each market segment before determining which segment(s) to target. In the following, some important aspects of this process will be studied.

### 6.2.5. Market targeting

Having examined different ways to defining market segments, we will now move on to the task of evaluating each of the identified segments and selecting one or more for targeting.

#### 6.2.5.1. Evaluating market segments

When a company evaluates the various segments, it must examine several factors regarding sales value, growth rates, etc. To some companies, segments with e.g. large current sales and a high growth rate are very attractive, whereas other companies might find that they do not have the resources to target these segments and should therefore concentrate their efforts on
smaller and less attractive segments (in an absolute sense), since these segments would be potentially more attractive to them in terms of profits. In the following, the questions which a company should ask in deciding whether a segment is attractive or not are considered:

- **Size of segment**: what is considered an economic size of a segment varies between companies. A small company with lower costs may be able to justify serving much smaller segments that have distinctive needs, whereas a large mass production company might not be able to do so.

- **Substitute products**: a segment is less attractive if it already contains a substitute or potential substitute product as substitutes limit the potential price and profits from the segment.

- **Growth prospects**: markets are seldom static in nature and that which is an attractive segment today may not be so in the future. In this connection, it is important that the company examines the structural attractiveness of the segments, including current and potential competitors.

- **Profitability**: just because a market segment is large, it is not necessarily implied that that segment can be profitably served. Many markets are characterised by a large segment which seeks low prices and in which companies can only make good profits by strict control of their costs, while a smaller segment may be prepared to pay a higher price for a quality product.

- **Competition for the segment**: when a company is identifying potentially profitable segments to target, the chances are that its competitors are doing exactly the same. The result is that an attractive segment soon becomes unattractive when large numbers of new entrants, all following the same logic, create intense competitive pressure.

- **Fit with company objectives and resources**: many segments may appear large and profitable, but then rejected because they do not match the company’s long-term objectives and strategies or because the company does not have enough resources or skills to serve these segments (Internet 13).
6.2.5.2. Selection of target markets

After evaluating the various market segments, the company must choose one or more of these segments to make up its target market. A target market may thus be defined as a set of buyers with common needs or characteristics, which the company decides to serve. A fundamental issue for the company is how many segments to target and the manner in which it seeks to enter those segments. For this purpose, a number of market-coverage strategies have been developed, e.g. undifferentiated marketing, differentiated marketing and concentrated marketing. These three targeting strategies are often discussed, and companies frequently combine elements of all three approaches in order to be as effective as possible (ibid). The three strategies are as follows:

- **Undifferentiated marketing**: a company adopting an undifferentiated marketing strategy would ignore differences between market segments and approach the market as a whole with one market offer. This strategy focuses on common buyer needs rather than what is different and is designed to appeal to the largest number of buyers. Such a strategy provides cost economies, but difficulties can arise in the development of a product or brand that can satisfy all buyers.

- **Differentiated marketing**: a company using a differentiated marketing strategy targets several market segments, with separate marketing offers for each segment. Differentiated marketing has become increasingly popular among companies as it often creates higher sales levels than undifferentiated marketing. However, it also increases costs as the marketing offer has to be modified in conjunction with different segments' needs e.g. different products or different advertising strategies.

- **Concentrated marketing**: a company adopting a concentrated marketing strategy concentrates on a large share of one or more segments. This strategy may be useful for a company with limited resources. Through this strategy, smaller companies are able to gain a strong market position in the segments they serve, thus providing a way for them to gain a foothold against larger companies with greater resource bases.
When choosing a targeting strategy, a company has to consider several factors, such as company resources, product variability, product life cycle stage, market variability, and competitors' marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 1999: 417).

6.2.6. Discussion of market segments for innoVisions

On the basis of the various market segmentation variables discussed above, we will now examine which variable(s) would be best suited for innoVisions when starting up its business. Moreover, we will seek to determine which market-coverage strategy the company should choose in order to be as effective as possible.

For innoVisions and any other new company that selling a service, rather than a tangible product, it might be difficult to enter a new market since one of the most important types of PR and advertising activities would be word-of-mouth. This is due to the fact that it is not possible to tell the quality of a communication product simply by looking at it. Also, in order to develop successful communication products, it is crucial to know the values and intentions of the sender, and it might be hard for a third party (i.e. a new customer) to tell if these values are in fact communicated in a specific product. It is thus crucial to have customers who will testify about the quality of the product they have purchased. The bases for market segmentation should therefore be very carefully selected so that the right customers are targeted from the very beginning. Another reason for this is that being a start-up company, the resources will be very limited.

Since it has already been established that innoVisions will target customers in both Denmark and Britain, the first base for segmenting the market would have to be geographical segmentation. Obviously, in this situation it is important to be aware of the possible cultural differences, and in this case it is particularly important to be aware of the corporate cultures in the two countries since innoVisions, as mentioned earlier, will be operating in the business-to-business market.

Demographic segmentation will also be an important base for segmentation. It is important e.g. to decide whether the company should target either small, medium or large companies
since it will often not be possible to target all groups due to lack of resources. It might prove profitable to start by directing the company’s efforts at small companies since many of these do not have the resources to develop their own communication products. Later on, when resources have increased, the company might be able to widen its target markets.

Also, the variables within behavioural segmentation would be well worth considering in the case of innoVisions. In this connection, it would be particularly useful to segment on the basis of the benefits sought by the customers as it might then be possible to develop unique business solutions tailored to meet the specific benefits that each individual customer is seeking. These benefits might be e.g. quality, speed, personal communication or economic benefits. Finally, variables such as user status and usage rate would also be important to consider as it might be easier in the start-up period to sell to regular users with a high usage rate.

Finally, since the segments targeted in the start-up period would most likely be small and since innoVisions will have limited resources, it is advisable to use the market-coverage strategy of concentrated marketing. Through concentrated marketing it will be possible for the company to achieve a strong market position in the segments targeted because of its high degree of knowledge of the segments. Later on, when it becomes possible and profitable to target more and larger segments, innoVisions should consider changing its strategy to that of differentiated marketing as this strategy would be more useful for targeting several market segments.
7. Reaching a target audience

For the purpose of defining a target audience, we chose to focus on market segmentation as a method to divide the market into segments and thereby concentrate the efforts of the company on segments that fit the company resources. Next, we established that the segmentation bases best suited for innoVisions would be geographic, demographic and behavioural segmentation.

Having reached these conclusions on how to define a target audience, we will now try to examine how a company could reach its target audience.

7.1. Communicative strategies

In order to reach the target audience that the company has chosen for its products and services, it is important to develop and use the right communicative strategies. In the following, we will describe the different strategies and subsequently analyse the respective strategies put to use in the product sheet developed for innoVisions. We will start with the strategy of buyer-readiness stages, followed by that of communications objectives after which we will move on to rhetorical strategies, verbal as well as nonverbal.

Once the target audience has been defined, the company must decide on the objectives of the communication that is directed at the customers, i.e. the response that the company seeks from its customers must be decided upon with respect to each single communication product. In order to do so, the company should start by analysing its target audience in terms of buyer-readiness stages. The theory of these stages is, as mentioned in section 6.2.4., one of the variables of behavioural segmentation, but it is also closely linked to the communications objectives of the company, which is why we have chosen to include the theory in this chapter.

7.1.1. Buyer-readiness stages

Naturally, in most cases the final response that the company wants from its customers is purchase. However, before the customers reach the stage of purchase they will have to go through a long process of decision making. The company needs to know where the target
audience stands at any given point of time and to what extent it needs to be moved in another direction. In order for the company to do so, it has to be determined whether or not the individual customer is at all ready to buy. Therefore, it is important to start by looking at the six different buyer-readiness stages that the target audience may be in. These stages are awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase, and together they make up a hierarchy of customer response stages. The purpose of marketing communication is to move the customer along these stages to finally achieve purchase. In the following, each of the buyer-readiness stages will be explained in more detail.

7.1.1.1. Awareness

When a new product is launched, the target audience might not even be aware of either the product or the company behind it, or might just know the name or a few other things about it. The company must therefore start by establishing how aware the target audience is of its product and/or company. If the majority of the target audience is unaware, the company must try to raise awareness – perhaps starting with just name recognition. One way of doing this is to communicate by simple messages, repeating the company and/or product name. An example of an awareness campaign is that of the Benetton brand. The company had as one of its objectives to raise awareness of the brand, and, although a lot has been said about the company’s methods in their campaign, it succeeded in becoming one of the five most recognised brands in the world.

7.1.1.2. Knowledge

The target audience might be well aware of the existence of a certain product or company, but not know much more, or, even worse, have the wrong impression of both the product and company. If this is the case, the company will have to increase knowledge among its target audience. This can be done by informing the target audience about the benefits, strengths and qualities of both the product and the company, e.g. by developing promotional material which informs the target audience about the size, history and strengths of the company.
7.1.1.3. Liking

Once the target audience knows about the product/company, the next step is to find out how they feel about it. Knowing about something does not necessarily mean that it is liked; feelings about the product/company might be ambivalent, there might be no feelings at all or the target audience might even dislike the product/company. Therefore, once the target audience has a certain level of knowledge, the company must aim to develop favourable feelings about itself and/or its product among the target audience. If potential buyers have an unfavourable impression of the product/company, the company has to establish why and subsequently develop promotional material that will turn negative aspects into positive aspects, thus generating positive feelings.

7.1.1.4. Preference

The fact that the target audience likes a certain product/company does not necessarily mean that they prefer that product/company to others. In today’s markets, a high level of competition exists, and it is often the case that potential customers will like several competing products/companies on the market. When this is the case, the company will have to try to build customer preference by promoting the qualities, values and other beneficial features of the product/company, i.e. the company has to research the market to establish what the target audience perceives as the key benefits of the product/company and subsequently develop promotional material which underlines these beneficial features. In this way, the product/company is differentiated from its competitors.

7.1.1.5. Conviction

When a company has succeeded in creating preference for itself or its product/service among its target audience, the next step is to develop conviction about buying the product/service. It might not be enough for potential customers to prefer the product/service; they have to be convinced that the product/service is what they should actually buy. The company’s job is thus to build conviction that its product/service is the best choice for the potential buyer; promotional material must build confidence in the target audience that their preference is
justified. This can be achieved through a number of promotional tools such as positive press reviews, maybe including expert recommendations of the product. Also, informing the target audience about options, value for money and after-sales services might help to convince them that the product/service is right for them.

7.1.1.6. Purchase

The last of the buyer-readiness stages regards the actual purchase of the product/service in question. Some members of the target audience might have conviction, but do not quite get around to actually buying the product. They might feel that they need more information or they might be in a situation where they cannot afford making the purchase. Consequently, many customers might need further persuasion to purchase the product. The company thus has to lead these customers to take the final step, e.g. through actions that include offering a special promotional discount or through personal selling, i.e. salespeople might call or write to selected customers, inviting them to try the product. This way, preference and conviction can be converted into sales (ibid: 760-761).

In essence, the buyer-readiness stages form a hierarchy-of-effects model in that it is assumed that things have to happen in a certain order. It is implied thereby that the earlier effects of the model (e.g. awareness and knowledge) form the necessary conditions in order for the later effects (e.g. liking and preference) to occur. Just like other hierarchy-of-effects models, the above-mentioned buyer-readiness stages can be divided into cognitive stages (awareness, knowledge), affective stages (liking, preference, conviction) and conative stages (purchase). During the cognitive stages, the customers engage in mental processes, leading to awareness and knowledge of the product/company that is communicated. In the affective stages, emotional responses associated with the product/company occur, and consequently attitudes and preferences are formed. Finally, the conative stages refer to undertaking actions concerning the product/company, such as purchasing the product. A buyer does not necessarily go through these stages in the order of ‘learn-feel-do’; this sequence is appropriate in a ‘high involvement’ purchase situation, i.e. when a customer has a high involvement with a certain product category (e.g. cars, furniture) and consequently perceives the brands in that category to be highly differentiated. However, in a purchase situation concerning a high
involvement product, but in which the customer only perceives little differentiation between the brands, the customer will most likely follow a ‘do-feel-learn’ sequence. This could be the case with a central heating system. Finally, the customer could follow a ‘learn-do-feel’ sequence if s/he has low involvement with a product category and at the same time perceives little differentiation as would be the case when e.g. buying salt (ibid: 761). The aspect of these sequences has, however, been discussed among researchers within the field. One of these researchers, Richard Vaughn, proposed that the different sequence models be integrated, and as a result he presented his Foot-Cone-Belding (FCB) model (figure 10).

![Figure 10: The FCB grid (De Pelsmacker Geuens and Van den Bergh, 2001: 62)](image)

In this model, four different situations are recognised (triangles 1-4), based on two different dimensions, i.e. the high/low involvement and the think/feel dimension. **Involvement** is defined as the degree of importance customers attach to a product or buying decision, i.e. the extent to which the customer has to consider it as well as the risk associated with the decision. By the use of a continuum, the **think/feel** dimension reflects the degree to which the buying
decision is made on the basis of cognitive or affective aspects. As can be seen from the model, Vaughn distinguishes between different product groups, recognising that while cognitive elements are important for products such as furniture, food, banks, soap and paper towels, affective elements seem to have more impact on the buying decision process when it comes to products such as perfume, clothes, cakes and ice cream. In triangle 1, purchase decisions are characterised by rationality and high involvement, i.e. the customer wishes to learn about the product before purchasing it. Here, the classical hierarchy-of-effects sequence would hold (learn-feel-do). In triangle 2, the buying decision is still characterised by high involvement. However, the customer does not need much information about the product before purchase; s/he wants to be emotionally attracted to a product (e.g. through the brand image) before considering purchase. The third triangle concerns product decisions of low involvement for which a minimum of information is needed; first the customer buys the product, then s/he learns about its benefits and/or disadvantages, and finally the customer forms an attitude towards the product. The fourth triangle is concerned with products such as sweets, cakes and pizzas. Here, like in triangle 3, the customer begins by buying the product, then develops an emotional attitude towards it, and finally the customer might seek information about the product (ibid: 61-62).

The hierarchy-of-effects models have the advantage of incorporating the very important aspect of brand awareness, which in these models is considered a prerequisite for brand attitude formation. They recognise that affective responses cannot be formed, just like purchase cannot take place until the customer is aware of the brand/product. However, some critics of these models argue that there is no empirical support for the fact that customers will go through all three stages of the hierarchy-of-effects models. Also, these models do not take into consideration that often, interaction between the different stages will actually take place. For instance, purchase will lead to experience, which in turn might have an important influence on the formation of attitude. Therefore, while hierarchy-of-effects models might be useful in some situations, it is important to be aware that they have some flaws as well (ibid: 62-63).

Obviously, marketing communications cannot create positive feelings towards a product/company on its own. It is, however, very important for a company to know about and
understand the buyer-readiness stages of its target audience and the sequence in which the potential customers go through the stages. Such an understanding would make it possible for the company to plan its communications better in that it will be possible to plan the company’s communications objectives according to the actual buyer-readiness stage of its target audience. In the following, the company’s communications objectives will be outlined, followed by considerations about these as well as the buyer-readiness stages of the target audience for innoVisions.

7.1.2. Communications objectives

According to Russel H. Colley, the author of the DAGMAR model, an advertising objective can be defined as “a specific communication task, to be accomplished among a defined audience to a given degree in a given period of time” (in Michael L. Rothschild, 1987: 145). This definition is composed of four criteria: a specific communication task, a defined audience, a given degree and a given period of time. First, the communication task should be defined (e.g. moving the customers to the next level of the buyer-readiness stages), then the target audience has to be defined (e.g. one or more target markets, selected on the basis of segmentation), next, the given degree to which the communication task should be accomplished must be defined (e.g. raising awareness from 10 to 30 per cent) and finally, the period of time for which the communication should be accomplished has to be decided on (e.g. awareness must be at 30 per cent within one year). An example of an objective, which meets all four criteria, could thus be to increase awareness of company X as a creative, high-quality communications agency (task) from 0 to 25 per cent (degree) within six months (period of time) among small to medium-sized companies that do not have an information department of their own (target audience).

Communications objectives within marketing can be roughly divided into three categories: coverage goals, process goals and effectiveness goals. The coverage goals are to reach the target audience as effectively and efficiently as possible; this is done by careful segmentation of the market as well as a good definition of the audience. The process goals concern conditions that should be established before any communication can be effective, e.g. all

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7 It should be noted that advertising objectives may also be referred to as marketing objectives
communication should capture the attention of the target audience, then appeal and finally be remembered (or processed). The third type of communications goals is the effectiveness goals. These goals deal with the aspect of making the communication of the company as effective as possible (De Pelsmacker et al., 2001: 120). The aspect of coverage goals has already been dealt with in chapter 6 as well as in section 7.1.1., and the aspect of process goals will be dealt with in section 7.1.4., so in this section it will only be relevant for us to look at the effectiveness goals.

7.1.2.1. Effectiveness goals

The effectiveness goals are the most important of the three types of communications objectives as coverage goals only make sure that the communication is sufficiently exposed, and process goals just ensure that the communication is noticed by the target audience, appeal to them and is consequently remembered. Together, the coverage goals and process goals make up the basis for the effectiveness goals.

Setting sound communications objectives might be a very difficult task, which has to be done well. The objectives must be clear, concise statements of what the company wants to accomplish with its communications. Furthermore, the objectives must be known and agreed to by everybody involved in producing the communication material, and the results of the communications must be measured against these objectives in order to establish if the objectives have been met.

In order to deal with these difficult issues, Colley published his DAGMAR (Defining Advertising Goals for Measures Advertising Results) model in 1961. Since then, communications objectives have put emphasis on the current buyer-readiness stage of the target audience instead of just immediate sales effects. Before that time, it was not possible for companies to use measurable goals as they could not isolate the effect their communications had on sales due to the interaction effects with other marketing mix variables (ibid: 121). The communications objectives of the DAGMAR model are outlined in figure 11 below.
Just like the buyer-readiness stages, the DAGMAR model is a hierarchy-of-effects model, assuming that things have to happen in a certain order, e.g. brand awareness has to happen before brand attitude, which in turn has to be present before purchase can take place. The difference between the two models is, however, that the model of buyer-readiness stages focuses on the customers and how far away from or close to buying they are, whereas the DAGMAR model focuses on the company and the objectives with its communication. The two models are therefore closely connected, and one cannot be employed without the other since the company cannot determine its communications objectives without taking the buyer-readiness stages of its target audience into consideration. If e.g. a company wants to market a new product unknown to the target audience, the first communications objective regarding the product could not be brand loyalty – or at least then the communication would not be successful. The target audience must first be aware of the existence of the product, form an attitude towards it and actually purchase it before maybe developing brand loyalty. It is
therefore crucial that the company sets its communications objectives according to the buyer-readiness stages of the target audience. In addition, the company also has to consider the competition in the market as well as the opportunities and threats that were uncovered through the SWOT analysis.

The DAGMAR model is used as a framework for defining communications objectives. Every promotional campaign should be organised with at least one of these communications objectives in mind, and when a company defines its communicative strategies, it should therefore decide on the most appropriate communications effects or objectives from the DAGMAR model. According to the model, nine different communications objectives or effects can be established in the communication process: developing category need, creating brand awareness, developing brand knowledge, creating, improving or maintaining brand attitude, generating purchase intention, stressing purchase facilitation, generating purchase, creating satisfaction and finally enhancing brand loyalty. The communications objectives function as guidelines for anyone who is involved in the communication material of a company, just as they are the basis of any campaign strategy; all phases of the marketing communication plan should be built on the communications objectives (ibid: 122). Also, as communications objectives are the criteria against which the success (or failure) of a campaign is measured, it is crucial that they are well defined and quantified; otherwise it will not be possible to determine whether or not they have been met.

In the following, the nine stages of the DAGMAR model will be examined in more detail, leading to an evaluation of which objectives would be appropriate for innoVisions to set for their initial promotional material.

7.1.2.1.1. Developing category need

The first very basic condition to fulfil for a company is to create a need for its products or services among its target audience. If the potential buyers do not perceive the product as being able to fulfil their needs and wants, they will not feel motivated to purchase it. Category need can thus be defined as “the existence of one or more of these buying motives and the perception of the product category as a good means of meeting these motives” (ibid: 122).
It might be argued that in most product categories, customers already have developed a need for the products, and the objective of category need may consequently be ignored. However, in product categories that are not purchased or used on a regular basis, communicating category need might be useful in order to remind the customers of their needs. Also, if the product category is not really acknowledged by the members of the target audience as something they need, it would be necessary to focus on developing category need through the company’s promotional material. This might be the case with e.g. communication products. In some businesses, the importance of carefully planned communication might not yet have been acknowledged, and a communications agency could therefore create a whole new market with these businesses if it succeeds in creating category need among them. Generally, for promoting innovations as well as for addressing non-category users, creating category need is a must as customers need to first understand which needs are satisfied by the new product, and thus the difference between the new product category and existing categories has to be stressed. For instance, when the cellular phone was invented, the first thing for the companies behind it to communicate was the benefits of and the need for the cellular telephone as opposed to the land line. Category need can thus be omitted, refreshed or actively used in market communications, depending on the different market situations (ibid: 122,123).

7.1.2.1.2. Brand awareness

Brand awareness is achieved when the target audience associates some physical characteristics, e.g. brand name, logo, package, style, etc. with a category need. There are two different kinds of brand awareness: top-of-mind brand awareness/brand recall and brand recognition. Top-of-mind brand awareness is when people spontaneously think of a specific brand in connection with a specific product category; for instance, if people think of coffee, they might spontaneously think of Starbucks. If, in an unaided context, a person recalls several brands spontaneously, it is referred to as brand recall or unaided spontaneous awareness. However, people might also recognise a brand by its colour, package, logo, etc. This is referred to as brand recognition or aided awareness, and is, of course, less difficult to obtain than unaided spontaneous awareness since fewer efforts in the sense of less repetition and thus smaller investments are needed in order to establish brand recognition than brand recall. While it seems only natural that customers are better able to recognise brands than to
spontaneously recall brand names, it does not mean that one is better than the other in terms of marketing a product; when a brand name has achieved a top-of-mind awareness status among its target audience, the potential buyers might be more inclined to actually buy the product, however, brand recall is not a guarantee that they will recognise the brand in the shop when they get there.

When a company has to aspire to either one or the other awareness goal, it has to examine the situational circumstances in which its product or service is bought. If, for instance, the decision to buy the product or service is made at home or at any other location than the point of sales, or when the customer has to ask explicitly for the specific product or service (e.g. at a pharmacists), it is necessary that the customer is able to recall the name of the product or service, i.e. brand recall is needed. If, on the other hand, the purchase decision is made at the point of sales, and the customer is aided in the situation by e.g. displaying of logo, brand name, colours, etc., brand recognition will be more important than brand recall.

If a company wants to stimulate brand recognition, it is vital that the logo, name and colours of the company or brand are exactly the same in every advertising product and other communication material leaving the company. This implies that for brand recognition objectives, media such as radio would not be appropriate. However, if a company seeks to build brand recall, it is necessary to continuously repeat the association between product category and brand name. This could be done by using slogans that integrate the product category and the brand. In some situations, a company might want to create both brand recognition and brand recall; this would be the case when the customer is to recall the brand name at home and subsequently search for it at the point of sales. In order for the search process to be successful, brand recognition would be needed.

Every communication should include objectives of brand awareness since a brand can never have too much awareness. Even if brand attitude or other objectives are more important, it will still be necessary to support brand awareness. Also, brand awareness should always be built before brand attitude as it would not be possible to create an image, preference or attitude towards an unknown brand. It is important not to underestimate the impact that brand

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8 Here, it should be noted that a point of sales is not necessarily a supermarket or store. It might just as well be the Internet as many companies market and offer their products and services online.
awareness has on brand choice and purchase; if two brands are perceived equally attractive to a customer, the brand with the highest awareness level will often be purchased (ibid: 123-124).

7.1.2.1.3. Brand knowledge

The objective of brand knowledge (or comprehension) seeks to make the target audience aware of the most essential brand characteristics, features and benefits; the target audience should know the strengths of the brand as compared to those of competitive brands and therefore know why to choose one brand over another. This knowledge might, of course, be based on very objective information, but most likely brand image will also have affected the target audience in some way or another. Obviously, the knowledge that people have about a certain brand will be very subjective and often based on past experiences or beliefs and perceptions. The objective of brand knowledge is closely connected to the next level of the DAGMAR model, namely that of brand attitude; once a potential customer has achieved a certain level of knowledge about a brand, that knowledge will inevitably bring about some kind of attitude towards the brand (ibid: 124).

7.1.2.1.4. Brand attitude

Brand attitude is the value of a certain brand as perceived by the customers. When a product and/or service is highly differentiated from the competitive products and services, it will often grow stronger, and thus brand attitude is a very important communications objective. In a situation where the target audience is equally aware and has an equal amount of knowledge about several products and/or services, potential buyers will base their choice of product on an individual evaluation of the different products’ benefits. In the process of evaluating the products, the target audience will develop an attitude towards the different products.

When deciding on the communications objectives, a company should study the attitudes and perceptions which already exist among the target audience. If there is no brand attitude, it will most likely be because the target buyers are unaware of the benefits and qualities of the brand,
and consequently brand attitude should be stimulated in the company’s communications. If the target audience has developed a moderately favourable brand attitude, the company should seek to reinforce that attitude through adapting its communications to the specific target audience since this would make the target audience more inclined to buy the product or service more frequently. In the end, this could create even more loyal customers for the company. If, however, the company has succeeded in creating a favourable brand attitude among its target audience, this attitude should be maintained in order to keep all customers loyal and satisfied. It could be very risky for the company to assume that once a positive brand attitude has been developed, it will remain positive, because attitudes are liable to changes due to dynamic markets and the power of competition. Thus, the competition in the market demands that the company be continuously attentive and never put down its guards. Otherwise, the company might lose some of its potential buyers to its competitors (ibid: 124).

7.1.2.1.5. Purchase intention

The next communications objective in the DAGMAR model is to enhance the target audience’s intention to purchase the product or service or take other buying-related actions such as using the Internet to seek further information. In accordance with the theory concerning buyer-readiness stages (cf. section 7.1.1.), it should be noted that for low-involvement buying situations, the objective of purchase intention should not be stressed in the company’s communications. In these cases, brand knowledge and attitude will in often be enough to lead the target audience to buying the product or service whenever the need for it arises. In high-involvement situations, however, the target buyer will often perceive the risk of purchasing the product as high, and it will therefore be necessary for the company to generate purchase intention through e.g. advertising or sales promotion (ibid: 125).

7.1.2.1.6. Purchase facilitation

If the company decides to focus on the objective of purchase facilitation, it will have to assure its potential customers that there are no barriers such as price or distribution that hinder the purchase of the product or service. The availability or price of a product or service may
sometimes be a problem that prevents customers from buying that product or service, and in these situations, the company should seek to develop communications that will help minimise the perceived problems. Such communications could include information on how to contact the company, or the company could justify the prices of its products or services by giving the potential customers a sense of value for money (ibid: 125).

7.1.2.1.7. Purchase

In any marketing activity, the main objective would, of course, be purchase. However, it is often difficult to use purchase as a primary communications objective, but in some situations sales could turn out to be an appropriate objective for communications. This might be the case with sales promotions such as price cuts or direct-response advertising, but only in these exceptions will purchase be the main communications objective (ibid: 125).

7.1.2.1.8. Satisfaction

The second to last of the communications objectives in the DAGMAR model is that of satisfaction. Whenever a customer buys a product or service s/he will have built up certain expectations about it, and consequently, if the product or service does in fact live up to those expectations, the customer will be satisfied and possibly inclined to buy the same product or service again. If, on the other hand, the customer does not feel that the product or service lives up to his/her expectations, s/he will be dissatisfied and will most likely buy a different product next time. On top of it all, the customer will most likely also generate negative word-of-mouth as s/he will tell his/her family and friends about the bad experience.

Many companies are satisfied when the goal of sales has been reached and consequently stop communicating at that point. This is, however, a big mistake as the company might risk losing some of the existing customers if it does not emphasise the communications directed at these customers. Some customers might experience doubts about the choice of product they have made, and in such situations the company should aim to reassure the customers, and thus enhance brand loyalty. Also, communicating with existing customers might stimulate and
approve positive word-of-mouth communications, which will also lead to enhanced brand loyalty (ibid: 126).

7.1.2.1.9. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty may be defined as “the mental commitment or relation between a customer and a brand” (ibid: 126). In this connection, it is important to be aware that repeat purchase is often just the result of habit or routine buying where the customer does not have a commitment or relation to the product or service. This is especially the case with low-involvement buying situations, and repeat purchase does not as such equal brand loyalty. However, habit buying might after a while lead to brand loyalty in that repeated purchase and use of the same product or service will often initiate a positive attitude towards that product or service (ibid: 126-127).

Of course, not every communications objective should be present in every communication product produced by or for a company. It is important to always analyse and research the market and communication situation before deciding upon the purpose of the specific communication product. If the level of awareness is low, the communications objective in focus should be that of brand awareness, while satisfaction should be focused upon in a situation where the customers seem dissatisfied. However, the objectives of brand awareness and brand attitude should always be part of any promotional campaign since it is always important for a company to maintain these effects (ibid: 127).

7.1.2.2. Communications objectives for innoVisions

As innoVisions is a new company in the market, the most important communications objective to focus on would be brand awareness. However, it might also be quite useful for the company to focus on category need since some companies, as mentioned earlier, might not yet recognise the importance of well planned communications. These companies may be defined as non-users of communication products. This might be particularly true for small companies that do not have the resources for planning their own communications and therefore might have decided that their communication products are less important than other
activities. For innoVisions, such companies could constitute a new market that might be worth exploring. But first of all it would be necessary to convince them that they do have a need for the products or services offered, and, by doing that, the potential customers would automatically move from the buyer-readiness stage of awareness towards that of knowledge.

If, however, innoVisions decides to target existing users of communication products, i.e. companies that already acknowledge the importance of carefully planned communications, the company would be targeting customers who are already at the knowledge level of the buyer-readiness stages – at least regarding the product category. The communications objectives of innoVisions should therefore first and foremost focus on brand awareness and brand attitude; the potential customers already have category need, and it is therefore not important to focus on this. Together with brand awareness and attitude, it would be important for the company to focus on purchase intention and facilitation, e.g. by including the website information in the promotional material, thus making it possible for potential customers to seek further information or even contact innoVisions for special offers and prices in general.

In order to enhance satisfaction, innoVisions should focus on after-sales service, ensuring that each customer will be reassured about his/her choice of company and thus inclined to do business with innoVisions again. Moreover, satisfied customers are quite valuable when it comes to positive word-of-mouth communications. Finally, since it is a new company, it is much too soon to focus on brand loyalty, and the company should therefore wait until it holds a more secure position in the market.

7.1.2.2.1. Communications objectives in the product sheet

The most obvious communications objectives in the product sheet are those of brand awareness, knowledge and attitude. This can be seen in the sub-headings throughout the product sheet, e.g. “Who are we?”, “Communicate effectively”, “What can we offer you?” and “Team spirit”. The first section (“Who are we?”) gives the reader some information about innoVisions, specific facts as well as an indication of the company’s values, thus generating brand knowledge and awareness. The next section (“Communicate effectively”) informs the reader about the foundation of the company’s products and services as well as the company’s attitude towards this foundation, thus creating category need and brand awareness. The third
section ("What can we offer you?") concerns the specific products and services of innoVisions as well as the company’s attitude towards its customers through which brand awareness, knowledge and attitude are formed. The next section ("Team spirit") tells the reader about the spirit of the company, which helps create brand attitude by playing on emotions. Finally, the last section ("Let us manage your communications") is about the values of the company together with its attitude towards the customers and the services it has to offer in addition to its products. This section generates brand attitude and purchase intention by underlining the benefits connected with doing business with the company. The contact box at the end of the last section encourages the reader to seek further information about the company, and the focus of this feature is thus purchase intention.

To sum up, the product sheet mainly focuses on creating brand awareness, brand knowledge and brand attitude. However, certain elements in the product sheet also help to generate category need, while other elements focus on purchase intention. All of these communications objectives are relevant for a start-up communications agency.

In the following, we will consider different rhetorical strategies in connection with verbal as well as nonverbal communication. In order to do this, we will start by examining some of the factors of communication, i.e. code and context.
7.1.4. Rhetorical strategies

In chapter 3 we discussed the notion of language, and yet we gave only little consideration to the written mode. Consequently, this section on rhetorical strategies deals with selected features of language, which can be used for analysing not only spoken, but also written texts. By analysing texts into their component parts, it is possible to study in detail how they are made up and, among other things, discuss what the sender means with what s/he says.

Before we move on to discussing the verbal rhetorical strategies, let us first of all return to the concept of language. As noted in chapter 3, language can be seen as the basis of communication and social interaction. The numerous ways in which language plays a crucial role in the life of a community range from simple everyday activities such as greeting friends and making phone calls to activities guided by a distinct purpose, e.g. writing a letter or being interviewed for a job. In fact, there is no situation in which language does not play a part, and it is therefore not possible to present a comprehensive list of the range of uses for which we employ language. Language, then, is made use of and taken for granted in much the same way as it is taken for granted that eyes are for seeing and ears are for hearing. However, it must be borne in mind that although language is in many ways the basis of thought, feeling, action and interaction and consequently such an integral part of our everyday lives, it does not necessarily mean that we all master the skill of communicating well.

In order to be able to communicate successfully in any language, whether using the spoken or written medium, it is not enough to know the rules of its grammar and syntax or its system of sounds and spelling. It is also very important to know how to make the appropriate choices in any communication situation so that the text produced correlates with the situation in which it occurs (Albrecht, 1995: 9). For instance, the use of rhetorical strategies is essential in connection with analysing or producing a communication product. Rhetorical strategies may be defined according to how people process information and to their expectation towards the role, purpose and effect of communication. Furthermore, rhetorical strategies concern the use of certain verbal and/or nonverbal communicative strategies, which are applied in order to achieve the desired communications objectives. In other words, rhetorical strategies help convey the intended message. Examples of verbal rhetorical strategies could be the use of...
slang or words with certain connotations, specific syntactic constructions, e.g. an extensive use of passive constructions, intertextuality or a specific argumentative style. Nonverbal rhetorical strategies, on the other hand, could be the use of certain pictures, certain signs and/or colours, a specific use and position of texts, a certain typographical style and a certain relation between pictures and texts (Frandsen, Johansen and Nielsen, 1997: 114-116).

7.1.4.1. Verbal rhetorical strategies

Having defined the notion of rhetorical strategies, we will now examine the constitutive factors of communication and subsequently the different functions of communication, which constitute a significant part of the verbal rhetorical strategies. Nonverbal rhetorical strategies will be dealt with in section 7.1.4.2.

7.1.4.1.1. The constitutive factors of communication

As noted in chapter 2, which takes a detailed look at the area of communication, there are a number of factors at play whenever communication takes place. The present section is therefore mainly based on Jakobson’s model of communication as introduced in section 2.7.

With respect to the factors that must be present in order for communication to be possible, Jakobson proposes the following six elements: addresser, addressee, message, contact, code and context. First of all, in any communication situation there will be an addresser who wants to send a message to an addressee, and in order for the message to be operative it requires a code. The addresser will have to decide upon which code to use for encoding the text, and the code must be fully, or at least partially, common to both the addresser and addressee. Finally, there will be a contact, indicating the physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and addressee. However, before all this takes place, the addresser will have to consider the type of context that the message must fit into (Albrecht, 1995: 18). In the following, we will take a closer look at two of the factors in Jakobson’s model of communication, which are particularly important in connection with verbal rhetorical strategies, namely code and context.
7.1.4.1.1. Code

Code may be defined as “the principle of semiotic organization governing the choice of meanings by a speaker and their interpretation by a hearer” (Halliday, 1987: 111). As opposed to dialects and registers, which are varieties of language, codes are ‘above’ the linguistic system in that they are types of social semiotic or symbolic orders of meaning, which are generated by the social system. Codes are actualised in language through the register (see below) as they determine the semantic orientation of speakers in particular social contexts. That is, codes control the transmission of the underlying patterns of a culture or subculture, thus acting through such socialising institutions as family, peer group and school. For instance, a child comes to interpret meanings in the context of situation and in the context of culture when s/he takes over the code. Culture, then, is transmitted to the child through the code, and the child so transmits the code as part of the culture (ibid: 111).

In brief, code refers to a shared meaning system by which the message is structured, and the participants in a communication situation thus draw upon a system of signs and rules in order to convey a certain message. An example of a sign system could be Morse or a traffic light of which the latter may be characterised as a simple system consisting of red, yellow and green colours, each signalling a specific message (the nonverbal aspect of code will be dealt with in section 7.1.4.2.1.3.). Of course, also natural languages such as English and Danish provide systems of signs and rules by means of which texts can be produced; the addressee knows the signs and rules according to which s/he encodes his/her message, and in order for the addressee to decode the message as intended by the addressee, the addressee must necessarily know them too (Albrecht, 1995: 10).

7.1.4.1.2. Context

The notion of context (also referred to as social context or situation) is not as straightforward as its commonsense uses in everyday life might suggest. The term context seems to imply some kind of environment or circumstance for the various instances of language, i.e. context functions as background, setting, surroundings, conditions or consequences for a communicative event, and context is something we need to be aware of in order to properly
understand the communicative event. Put differently, context may be defined as the situation in which the text occurs, and “any social context or situation requires texts occurring within them to observe the conventions and rules pertaining to them” (ibid: 16). For instance, some situations require a fairly strict pattern of language usage with respect to structures and lexical choices, whereas others allow a more varied pattern of language usage. That is, different situations require different linguistic choices, and thus the addressee’s choice regarding the use of certain words and structures will depend upon the situation (ibid: 16).

7.1.4.1.2.1 Context of situation

As noted above, linguistic situations differ from one another. The ways in which the situations differ may be divided into three areas: first, what is actually taking place; secondly, who is taking part; and finally, what role the language is playing. Taken together, these variables “determine the range within which meanings are selected and the forms which are used for their expression” (Halliday, 1987: 31). These variables, then, determine the register, or more explicitly, register refers to the various dimensions of the situational context of a text. The notion of register is based on the assumption that any text – whether spoken or written – occurs in a social context and that a social context requires a text to observe a more or less specific set of language conventions. In other words, spoken or written language varies according to the type of situation in which it occurs, and the way in which language is used in different situations may be said to be predictable, at least to some extent. Consequently, what we need to know about a context of situation in order to be able to predict the linguistic features, which are expected to be associated with it, may be summarised under three headings: field of discourse, mode of discourse and tenor of discourse.9

Field is broadly speaking concerned with the subject matter of the text; mode refers to the channel or medium of communication, i.e. spoken or written language; and tenor to the relationship between the participants in a communication situation, i.e. their social roles and the personal relationship between them. Although these different levels of text realisation are sometimes separated for the purpose of analysis, it must be noted that such a division is

9 In the following, these three different levels of text realisation will simply be referred to as field, mode and tenor.
merely artificial. This means that field, mode and tenor cannot be separated due to the fact that they are mutually constraining and determining. A change in one dimension, for instance from a spoken mode to a written mode, will most likely result in a higher degree of formality and distance in the tenor as well as a different use of lexis and grammatical structures in the field (Collins and Hollo, 2000: section 10.2.2). In the following, the three dimensions of register will be discussed in more detail, beginning with the notion of field.

*Field* is used to refer to the institutional setting in which instances of language occur, e.g. politics, linguistics, computer technology and education. Field is typically defined according to the subject matter of the text, however, it should be stressed that it is not only through the subject matter of a text that field is identified. Also the entire discourse situation, i.e. the whole activity of the speaker or participant in a setting, contributes to the final shape of the language associated with it (ibid: section 10.3.1). Field is furthermore closely associated with lexis, entailing that some words are field-specific. Put differently, field-specific vocabulary may be exclusive to a certain occupation, for instance *lexis*, *hyponymy* and *nominalization* in linguistics and *byte*, *floppy disk* and *laptop* in computer technology. However, common core words may also take on specific meanings when they are used in different registers, for instance *mouse* in computer technology; *delivery* in medical discourse; *degree* in the field of education; and *action*, *clause* and *appeal* in legal discourse. Consequently, it is mainly through the recognition of field-specific words or jargon that we are capable of identifying the topic of a text. The use of jargon among members of the same occupation is very convenient as it provides a common ground for speakers who share similar interests or who are bound together by their profession.

As noted above, lexical differences are the most obvious features of language that identify the field of a text, but also grammatical differences may be associated with different registers. For instance, passive clauses are typically found in scientific texts, present tense verbs in headlines and imperative clauses in instructional registers. Field is thus characterised by certain patterns of lexis and grammar, which people who are familiar with a particular register come to expect and associate with it (ibid: section 10.3.1).
The second dimension of register is mode. Mode may be defined as “the dimension of register which accounts for the effects of our linguistic choices of the medium in which language is transmitted and received” (ibid: section 10.3.2). In other words, mode refers to the medium of communication used, and the distinction is mainly between spoken or written language. The linguistic features which distinguish speech and writing most strongly are reflected in the presence or absence of the addressee. That is, while speech is typically associated with the presence of an addressee, writing is normally characterised by the absence of an addressee. This factor thus has a number of logical consequences that affect different aspects of a text, for instance the interaction between the addressee and addressee and the level of formality.

The interaction between addressee and addressee is probably most clearly reflected in conversation. A conversation may be characterised as being the main use of speech, and it is by definition dialogic. Put differently, in a conversation, where the addressee is always present, the addressee and addressee have an immediate possibility of interaction. The participants take turns to speak, and when one participant poses a question or makes an offer, the other participant answers, accepts or rejects. Consequently, the spoken mode, at least in casual conversation, typically creates open-ended or dynamic texts in contrast to the static, closed and monologic character of the majority of written texts.

With respect to the level of formality, the spoken mode typically produces a higher degree of informality than the written mode. However, it may be argued that if speech is conducted in the presence of more than one or a few addressees, this tendency is reversed. Some linguistic indicators of informality in speech are contractions such as I’ll, I’ve, you’ll and you’d, the omission of ‘that’ as a subordinator, e.g. “I know you’ll like this” and the use of phrasal verbs, e.g. break down, put off and give up. In addition, speech typically makes use of more informal and attitudinal lexis compared to writing, i.e. degree adverbs such as really and absolutely and ‘hedges’ such as kind of and sort of are more frequently found in the spoken mode. Consequently, writing tends to be more formal and impersonal than speech, and this is partly due to the fact that the addressee(s) may be unknown to the addressee. The addressee thus has to predict the addressees’ needs by being more explicit and subsequently more formal (ibid: section 10.3.2).
The third and final dimension of register is that of tenor. Tenor refers to the interpersonal role relationship between the participants in a communication situation, and the most important feature of tenor is distance.\(^{10}\) For instance, it is not only the physical stances of the addressee and addresser that contribute to the overall ‘meaning’ of communication, but also the degree of physical contact between them. In most societies there are clear expectations about the amount of personal space appropriate in different social situations, and the invasion of the personal space with, for instance, gestures or volume of voice are indications of different power relationships between the participants. The participants’ verbal and nonverbal behaviour is clearly influenced by their identity, both with respect to their personal traits and as determined by their social and professional status (ibid: section 10.3.3).

In other words, the communication situation is highly dependent on the assumptions that the participants make about their status in relation to one another, e.g. a parent talking to a child, a specialist writing to a non-specialist or the communication between persons of the same status, e.g. students. However, the participants may in some cases disagree about their relative status so that one is speaking to the other as superior-to-inferior, or, more commonly perhaps, as inferior-to-superior for reasons of politeness. The degree to which language behaviour is determined by status differs from one language to another, yet it may be argued that there is probably no language for which status is completely irrelevant (Albrecht, 1995:13).

Distance in tenor is thus created by unequal power relationships and by differences in age and gender, and the linguistic features of tenor are characterised by levels of formality, which may be achieved primarily by differences in explicitness, in directness and in the use of particular terms of address.

*Linguistic markers of explicitness* are typically found in very formal texts. The reason for this is that at the most formal end of the formality scale we tend to make the assumption that the addressee does not share any knowledge or value system with the addresser. Phrase and sentence constructions therefore tend to be very complex, and the words are precise and emotionally neutral. In contrast, if a text is very informal, it is typically characterised by

\(^{10}\) It must be noted that distance is also a crucial motivating factor in mode where it has a straightforward physical manifestation, and in field where, for instance, the use of jargon is convenient if both participants share similar interests and professional knowledge.
linguistic markers such as reduction and contracted forms, and less care is taken in the selection of grammatical structures and lexis. In informal texts, words are consequently less precise and more emotional, and slang and swearwords, etc. may be used in order to make the sentences more expressive (Collins and Hollo, 2000: section 10.3.3).

Linguistic markers of directness are concerned with social distance, and distant formal relations require a higher degree of both positive and negative politeness. While positive politeness may be defined as the explicit use of politeness markers such as please and thank you, negative politeness involves the use of certain strategies designed to ‘save face’. For instance, in order for either party to be able to escape politely from an undesirable situation, pre-structure questions such as “Are you doing anything tonight?” or “Will you have some spare time this afternoon?” may be used. Such pre-structure questions are typically followed by an invitation or a request, and thus the addressee has a chance to respond politely so that neither party ‘loses face’. Furthermore, requests and orders are typically less aggressively expressed; declaratives and interrogatives are used in favour of the imperative mood. For instance, a request to open a window may be expressed as “Could you open the window?” or “I think we should open the window.” Also, distant formal relations will typically cause the use of less grammatical constructions as well as the avoidance of possibly offensive words such as slang (ibid: section 10.3.3).

Another aspect of directness is persuasion. Persuasion is a subtle way of being direct (Albrecht, 1995: 20), and it is frequently used in the advertising industry. Persuasive communication, which is carried out be means of reasoning, urging or inducing, is essentially about persuading the addressees into changing their attitude or behaviour and consequently encouraging action (de Mooij, 1998: 169). In order to persuade the addressees into reacting on a certain message, the text could make use of explicit persuasive expressions and/or expressive adjectives.

The systems of address terms that are found in the languages of the world are used to clarify the addressees’ social and professional status, their gender and their relationship with the addressee. Many languages express respectful, intimate or dominant relationships through their pronoun systems. For instance, most cultures use the singular second person to address
children, intimates and social inferiors, and they use the plural third person when addressing the elderly or persons with a higher social or professional status. In communities where such pronominal differences exist, the progress of one’s relationships can be measured quite explicitly as it would be considered impolite to begin using the singular form until explicitly invited to do so. In most cultures, however, it seems to be important to avoid the direct use of the singular second person in more formal and distant relationships (Collins and Hollo, 2000: section 10.3.3).

Finally, it may be argued that the extent to which personal pronouns are used in texts, whether spoken or written, depends on the level of formality. For instance, formal texts are typically impersonal, which may be reflected in the use of passive constructions such as “Guests are requested to….” Informal texts, on the other hand, are more likely to express personal opinion using personal pronouns as in “I would like you to…” The use of personal pronouns in informal texts thus creates a more dynamic and interpersonal relationship between the addresser and addressee.

7.1.4.1.2.2 Context of culture

When dealing with context, the notion of culture plays an important role. While context of situation refers to the immediate situation in which communication takes place, context of culture may be defined as the environment in which the context of situation is embedded (Frandsen et al., 1997: 64). In every country and language, there are numerous underlying cultural conventions that affect discourse, whether spoken or written. These conventions may sometimes cause problems in intercultural communication, especially if there are great differences in the conventions of register used in the communication situation. For instance, if a company wants to advertise or sell a product or service abroad, it is of crucial importance that it is aware of the different conventions of register that exist in the target culture in order to be able to convey the intended message in the best possible way. In other words, the company must be aware that culture specific differences manifest themselves at the level of rhetorical strategies (Bhatia, 1993: 38), and it is therefore vital that the company carefully examines the culture of the intended target audience so that the message is conveyed successfully.
Let us take a practical example: it was established in section 5.1. that the target group of innoVisions mainly consists of small to medium-sized businesses primarily within the British market. innoVisions must therefore be aware of the cultural differences that exist between Denmark and Britain in order to be able to employ the most appropriate rhetorical strategies in the product sheet and subsequently reach the target audience.

For instance, Britain may be characterised as a masculine society where values such as achievement and success are dominant. This means that status is important in order to show success, and there is a tendency to polarise, e.g. big and fast is beautiful. Furthermore, result-, winning- and success-orientations are characteristic of the British culture. In contrast, Denmark is an example of a feminine society where the dominant values are caring for others and quality of life. In other words, quality of life is considered more important than winning, and status is less important for showing success. In sum, masculine and feminine cultures differ with respect to values such as winning, success and status. These values are frequently used in advertising appeals, and the masculinity/femininity dimension is therefore important in connection with marketing and selling (de Mooij, 1998: 80-82).

Although Britain and Denmark differ with respect to the masculinity/femininity dimension, they do, however, display certain cultural similarities. For instance, both cultures may be characterised as individualistic and low-context cultures. Cultures reflecting individualistic traits are “I”-conscious, express personal opinions and emphasise self-actualisation. The distinction high-context versus low-context culture is very useful for understanding the differences between cultures with respect to, for instance, verbal and nonverbal communication and direct versus indirect advertising (ibid: 75). As noted in section 4.2.5.2., low-context cultures are characterised by explicit verbal messages, and effective verbal communication is therefore expected to be unambiguous and direct. Another characteristic of low-context cultures is that they place central importance and positive attitudes on words. This must be seen in contrast to high-context cultures where communication is generally more indirect and less reliant on words, and where the tone of the communicator is more formal and characterised by ritualistic behaviour.
7.1.4.1.2. The functions of communication

According to Jakobson, all verbal behaviour is goal-oriented. To emphasise this point, Jakobson proposes six different communicative functions, i.e. the emotive function, the conative function, the referential function, the poetic function, the metalingual function and finally the phatic function.

A communicative function may be defined as an aspect of the communicative event on which the language is focused. Any text is characterised by a number of communicative functions, and a text may therefore be said to be multifunctional. However, although a text has multiple functions, i.e. the text focuses on several constitutive factors, in most texts there will be a main or predominant focus (Albrecht, 1995: 19).

As noted previously, there are a number of factors, which must necessarily be present in any act of linguistic expression. Each of these constitutive factors thus determines a specific communicative function so that each of the functions occupies the same place in the model as the constitutive factor to which it refers (cf. sections 2.7.1. and 2.7.2.). Consequently, the communicative function corresponding to code is called the metalingual function; the emotive (or expressive) function corresponds to addresser; the conative (or directive) function to addressee; the phatic function corresponds to contact (or channel); the poetic function to message; and finally the referential (or informative) function corresponds to context. In the following, each communicative function will be considered in turn.

7.1.4.1.2.1. The emotive function

The emotive (or expressive) function is used when the focus of attention in a text is the addressee. The meaning that is being emphasised in the text is thus expressive of the addressee’s attitudes, emotions, class, social and professional status, i.e. all those elements, which make the message uniquely his. For instance, references to states of mind, feelings and health all have the emotive function as their predominant function, and the choice of words is therefore typically connotative rather than denotative, subjective rather than objective and
personal rather than public. The emotive function is primarily seen in lyric poetry, but it is also dominant in the more ordinary expressions of the addresser’s feelings, for instance in connection with interjections and swearing (Collins and Hollo, 2000: section 10.4.1).

7.1.4.1.2.2. The conative function

If the focus of attention in a text is on the addressee, the conative (or directive) function is used. The primary aim is to get the addressee to do what the addresser wants, and imperatives and vocatives, which are used with the explicit intention of attracting the attention of the addressee, are therefore clear examples of the conative function. However, the conative function is frequently carried by other and more subtle linguistic features such as persuasion. As mentioned previously, persuasion is a subtle way of being direct, and it is usually most successful when it is not recognised as such by the addressee (Albrecht, 1995: 19-20). The conative function is predominant in commands and propaganda, and it is frequently used in advertising.

7.1.4.1.2.3. The referential function

The referential (or informative) function is used when the focus of the message is on the subject matter, i.e. it focuses on the contents of a text. The referential function is predominant in non-fictional, objective texts (e.g. entries in encyclopaedias), i.e. texts containing information that is concerned to be ‘true’ or factually accurate (Fiske, 1982: 37). In brief, the referential function is used to convey information about the world surrounding us.

7.1.4.1.2.4. The phatic function

The communicative functions discussed so far have been oriented towards the content of the message as well as towards the addresser and addressee(s). In contrast, the phatic function is concerned with keeping the channels of communication open and maintaining the personal relationship between the addresser and addressee. In other words, the focus of the message is
on the channel and the psychological connections between the participants. The role of language of the phatic function is to signal that one is willing to communicate a certain degree of openness and friendliness, but not necessarily to discuss a particular subject (Albrecht, 1995: 20). In short, the phatic function focuses on social contact as in, for instance, small talk, exchanges about the weather and ritual everyday expressions such as “How are you?”

7.1.4.1.2.5. The poetic function

The poetic function is oriented towards the form of the message and towards the selection of elements from the code, which draw attention to themselves and subsequently to the text. Put differently, the poetic function focuses on the message ‘for its own sake’ (Collins and Hollo, 2000: section 10.4.1). The linguistic features characteristic of the poetic function are, for instance, unexpected collocations, marked thematic structures and patterns, parallelisms, fragments, alliterations and consonance. It should be noted, however, that ‘poetic’ uses of language not only occur in poetry, but also in everyday language usage (Albrecht, 1995: 22).

7.1.4.1.2.6. The metalingual function

The metalingual function focuses on the code, i.e. it explains language with language. Examples of the metalingual function are, for instance, dictionaries and grammars. All messages must necessarily have an explicit or implicit metalingual function due to the fact that they have to identify the code they are using. Consequently, all users of language, professionals as well as non-professionals, produce metalingual utterances (ibid: 22).

7.1.4.1.3. Verbal rhetorical strategies in the product sheet

Having discussed the different factors and functions of communication which account for the theory concerning the verbal rhetorical strategies, we will now take a look at selected examples of verbal rhetorical strategies employed in the product sheet.
First of all, rhetorical strategies are used in order to attract attention, and one of the verbal rhetorical strategies designed for this purpose is the slogan. The creation of a slogan is a way of branding a product or service, and thus the slogan “fresh thinking – creative ideas” is used to position innoVisions as a young and dynamic company in the minds of the receivers. Another element that attracts the attention of the receivers is the company name innoVisions. innoVisions is a combination of the two words ‘innovate’ and ‘visions’, and this particular composition thus creates certain connotations in the minds of the receivers; for instance that the company is innovative and that it is able to envisage the customers’ communication needs.

Furthermore, the first thing that draws attention to the field of the text is the heading on the front page, i.e. ‘innoVisions’. The heading indicates that the text deals with a specific company. Further indications of field are reflected in the sub-headings, e.g. “Who are we?” “Communicate effectively” and “Let us manage your communications” as well as in the fact boxes and the contact box. Together, these elements indicate that we are dealing with a product sheet.

Field-specific vocabulary is found throughout the product sheet, for instance “communications agency”, “communication needs”, “communication services” and “communication material”. Consequently, it is through these field-specific words that we are able to identify the subject matter of the product sheet. However, also grammatical differences may be associated with different registers. For instance, the product sheet makes use of very simple sentence constructions. By using simple sentence constructions it is easier for the receivers to understand the message without making too much of an effort, and the possibility that the receivers will actually act on the message is thus enhanced.

As regards the medium of communication used, the distinction is mainly between the spoken and the written medium. Since we are dealing with a product sheet, the medium of communication used is the written language. However, although the written mode is typically characterised by closed and static texts, the text in the product sheet is somewhat atypical in the sense that it is written in a way that resembles the spoken mode and thus encourages some kind of feedback and/or reaction from the receivers. For instance, the questions in two of the sub-headings on the front page, i.e. “Who are we?” and “What can we offer you?”, may be characterised as an indirect form of dialogue between innoVisions and the receivers. In
addition, the contact box on the reverse side of the product sheet invites the receivers to take contact to innoVisions and thus continue the dialogue that has already been started.

As noted above, the indirect dialogue between the sender and the receivers encourages the receivers to interact with the sender. The sender thus seeks to reduce the distance to the receivers and create an intimate and personal atmosphere. Examples of direct communication style are found throughout the product sheet, for instance “Whatever your communication needs...”, “We care about the message you want to project...”, “... we need to build a relationship with you”, “... we ensure that you are saying what you want to say” and “... whatever you need to communicate...”. In addition, the extensive use of personal pronouns such as ‘you’, ‘your’ and ‘we’ creates a more dynamic and interpersonal relationship between the sender and the receivers. The chance that the receivers will relate to the message and subsequently act on it is therefore increased.

Another way of creating a dynamic and interpersonal relationship with the receivers can be seen in the frequent use of explicit persuasive expressions such as “By letting us manage your communications, you are provided with the very best technical expertise...”, “We therefore aim to work with you, not for you; we listen to your requirements...” and “Whatever your communication needs, we will help you find the ideal approach”. However, also the use of expressive adjectives such as ‘creative’, ‘first-class’ and ‘unique’ is a way of persuading the receivers into acting on the message. The use of these expressive adjectives and persuasive expressions may thus persuade the receivers into choosing innoVisions as their business partner.

Moreover, it was established above that a text is characterised by a number of communicative functions, i.e. the text is multifunctional. However, it was also established that most texts have one predominant focus, and the main focus of this product sheet may be said to be the conative function. In other words, the primary aim of the product sheet is to make the receivers react to and hopefully act on the message, and this is reflected in the persuasive expressions found throughout the product sheet. However, the aim of the product sheet is also to attract attention and shape the message so that it will be easily remembered (i.e. the poetic
function). Finally, a text of this type also has the need to inform, and this is reflected in the referential function.

In conclusion, since Britain reflects the traits of an individualistic and low-context culture, which emphasises an explicit and direct mode of verbal communication, the product sheet has been produced in accordance with the values and attitudes characteristic of British culture. The chance that the target audience will relate to the message and subsequently act on it is therefore increased.
7.1.4.2. Nonverbal rhetorical strategies

Just as verbal rhetorical strategies are used in order to catch the attention of and interact with the receivers, nonverbal rhetorical strategies are employed as a means of reaching the target group, only in this case through visual signs, symbols and codes.

As mentioned earlier, examples of nonverbal rhetorical strategies could be the use of certain pictures, signs and/or colours, a specific use and position of texts, a certain typographical style and a certain relation between pictures and texts. One way of classifying such strategies is to divide these into visual, tactile and olfactory strategies. Visual strategies mainly relate to pictures and layout both with regards to colours and typographical style. Tactile strategies concern things that may be felt by the sense of touch, such as the texture of the paper used for brochures. The aim of such strategies is to give the receivers certain associations; for instance, rough and ribbed paper may be used as a means of representing craftsmanship or environmental awareness, whereas smooth and glittery paper is often used with the aim of signalling luxury and first-class quality. Finally, olfactory strategies deal with the sense of smell and may for instance be used in the form of scented paper in a magazine containing an advertisement for perfume (Frandsen et al.: 115-116).

These different strategies may be used either individually or in combination with one another, depending on the target group and the purpose of the communication. For instance, a company that wishes to project an image of social responsibility and/or ‘green business’ to a target audience concerned with environmental issues may choose to use recycled paper for its marketing material combined with an old-fashioned or well-established typographical style. In contrast to this, a company that manufactures and distributes luxurious yachts and sailing boats, aiming at the young and rich, will most likely choose glittery paper with colourful and shiny pictures in combination with a typographical style that differs from traditional and commonly used styles.

Together, verbal and nonverbal rhetorical strategies form part of the organisation’s quest in achieving the desired communications objectives. Some things may only be expressed using either verbal or visual strategies, while other things may be expressed through a combination
of both. However, even when something can be expressed both verbally and visually, the two forms of expression are entirely different; for instance, what is expressed in language and texts through different semantic structures, word classes, choice of words, etc. is, in visual rhetoric, expressed through the choice between colours, pictures, different compositional structures, etc. Both forms of communication thus realise certain meanings that point to different interpretations of experience and different forms of social interaction, again depending on the receivers of the message (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 2). For instance, a child will typically infer different meanings from a certain message than an adult, the same way as a well-educated person and a person with no education will most likely come to different conclusions when exposed to the same message.

In order to compete and interact effectively with the surrounding marketing environment, the organisation must therefore be able to handle its communications in terms of various signs, symbols and codes. One way of doing this is to look at marketing and communication from a semiotic point of view since semiotics, as established earlier, is a comprehensive study of signs, symbols and meaning.

7.1.4.2.1. ‘Marketing and semiotics’

Although semiotics is primarily a linguistic discipline, it has been applied increasingly to non-linguistic phenomena in recent decades. One area in which semiotics has found particular favour is that of communication in relation to the marketing of products and services. Here, the discipline has been a considerable aid in the study of consumer behaviour, the analysis of product meaning, advertising and PR material as well as other forms of marketing and communication issues (Dahl and Buhl, 1992: 2).

Semiotics as a discipline does not restrict itself to any specific area or areas in terms of what may or may not be studied semantically. However, in the field of ‘marketing and semiotics’, only signs, systems and behaviour patterns that are related to market activities (ranging from advertising studies, product meaning studies to consumer behaviour studies) should be included.
Even though ‘marketing and semiotics’ was not officially recognised as a discipline in its own right until 1986, when the first international conference on ‘Marketing and Semiotics’ was held in the USA, the phenomenon is not exactly new. One of the first scientific researchers to address the issue was Sidney Levy, who wrote an article in 1959 in which he discussed the need for improving the understanding of symbolic market behaviour and meaning. Levy claimed that “people buy products not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (in Dahl and Buhl: p.3), thereby indicating the importance of understanding consumer behaviour patterns and recognising the symbolism related to products and services in order to conduct business effectively. Following Levy’s example, semioticians such as Eco, Barthes and Durand started to relate their studies to various phenomena of popular culture such as different forms of consumerism (Eco 1969), various forms of product symbolism (Barthes 1972) and the analysis of advertising rhetoric (Durand 1970). Without really being aware of it, many other marketing researchers have since contributed to the study of symbolic behaviour. Only, they have not referred to their studies as semiotics and have somehow lacked a solid theoretical base upon which to build their research. Therefore, the combination of symbolic research and the theoretical strengths of semiotics has provided a solid platform for understanding symbolic market behaviour and improving the communicative strategies required in order for an organisation to reach the intended target group and interact effectively with the receivers (Dahl and Buhl: p.3).

When studying nonverbal communication, it is important to be aware that visual language is by no means static or universally understood; it is a culturally specific phenomenon that undergoes continual change both within and across cultures. As established earlier, culture may be seen as a set of sign systems where different signs and symbols have different meanings from one culture to another. In relation to nonverbal communication, the discipline of semiotics is therefore closely related to cultural anthropology since this is a discipline that studies humanity within different cultures.

Umberto Eco defines this process by which a culture produces signs and/or attributes meaning to signs as 'semiosis', a term borrowed from Peirce. Even though Eco believes that the production of meaning is a social activity, he does, however, claim that subjective factors are often involved in different acts of semiosis (Internet 14). Eco talks of *unlimited semiosis* by
which he refers to the sign as “anything which determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on ad infinitum” (Eco, 1979: 69). According to this theory, it is possible to create an inexhaustible number of new meanings to be used when communicating, both verbally and nonverbally. In fact, even people’s thoughts may be designated as signs, which means that all thoughts refer to other thoughts and that all knowledge, like signs, is mediated by prior knowledge, which will inevitably lead to further knowledge (Merell, 1985: 9).

In the following, we will take a closer look at the concept of meaning and signs in relation to nonverbal communication.

7.1.4.2.1.1. Signifier and signified

The key notion in any semiotics is the ‘sign’. If we take Saussure’s definition of semiotics (cf. section 2.8.1.) as a starting point, we need to identify which aspects of nonverbal communication may be identified as signifieds and which may be identified as signifiers. One way of discussing this is to look at different forms such as colour, perspective, line, typographical style, etc. and study the way in which these forms are used to realise meanings. Signifiers are thus the forms that different signs take, while the signifieds represent the meanings attributed to the signifiers. Since people interpret signs in different ways, depending on the culture in which they live, the signifieds may be said to be the result of cultural experience. Just as words may evoke certain meanings in the minds of the receivers, pictures and images may do the same; the signifiers become signs when we look at them, i.e. when we match them with signifieds or mental concepts. Often, visual images contain a number of different signifieds of which the receiver is able to choose some and ignore others. Therefore, it is not only important for the sign-makers to consider the many different interpretations of signs across cultures, but also to consider the various meanings that each individual sign may have, even to the same person (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 5-6).

Nonverbal communication may thus be seen as a process in which sign-makers have a meaning, i.e. the signified, which they want to express to selected receivers. In this process, sign-makers use the form that they consider maximally transparent to the receivers and most
suitable for the expression of their meaning. The medium through which the form is depicted should be the most relevant in each communication situation, and it should be easily accessible to the intended receivers in the communication process (ibid: 6-7, 11). For instance, if a company wishes to advertise a new product, this may be done via the Internet, a product sheet or a direct mailing campaign – or a combination of all three. The important thing is to find the most effective nonverbal rhetorical strategies for each individual communication process and to combine these strategies in a way that conveys the intended message in the best possible way.

We may now conclude that signs are constructed through a certain relation between signifiers (forms) and signifieds (meanings) – or, in other words, as motivated conjunctions of signifiers and signifieds. In semiotics, motivation is usually not related to the actual act of sign-making, but should be defined in terms of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. It is here that Peirce’s trichotomy of icons, indices and symbols enters the scene since this theory describes the relationship between signifier and signified (ibid: 7).

7.1.4.2.1.2. Icons, indices and symbols

According to Saussure, there is only one sign; the unity of signifier and signified. Peirce, on the other hand, considered nine aspects of the sign of which icons, indices and symbols have become the most important (Gottdiener, 1995: 12). As established earlier, the most obvious example of an icon is a picture since it is in fact a sign of what is depicted; iconic signs are thus based on their similarity to the object, and the signifier-signified relationship is one of objective likeliness. For instance, photography may be described as a so-called ‘iconic language’ as pictures may be used as a means of communicating stories, incidences, happenings, etc. In relation to indexical signs, the motivating factor lies in the causal relationship between the dynamical object and the sign, where the latter reacts to the former as a reagent. The indexical sign therefore has a less direct relation, namely that of association. Since this sign stands for its object associatively, the association may be described as one of metonomy, i.e. a certain sign is substituted for the name of something, as the crown may stand for the monarch or the hoof prints may stand for the horse. Finally, the third part of the trichotomy, symbolic signs, is in fact related to the production of signs; however, the
motivation should be found in the relation between the sign-maker and the context in which symbolic signs are produced. In other words, it is not their own characteristics that make them signs, as with iconic signs, and there is no natural association between sign and object, as with indexical signs. Instead, symbolic signs stand for specific objects by virtue of some agreed convention or ‘contract’, which implies that such signs are not really a product of the actual sign-making process but rather the outcome of certain agreed meanings. For instance, a red stoplight is a symbolic sign which indicates that one should come to a halt. As opposed to indexical or iconic signs, which are referred to as natural signs by virtue of their intrinsic properties and physical form, symbolic signs are arbitrary and conventional in the sense that it is only due to some convention or agreement that they are given a certain meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 7).

As discussed earlier, Peirce’s definition of a sign is based on the relation between sign, object and interpretant. As an attempt to explain what binds a sign and its object together and allows people to interpret signs as referring to particular objects, Peirce thus referred to his trichotomy of icons, indices and symbols. With respect to nonverbal communication, this theory thus holds that visual signs are never arbitrary but always refer to some form of relationship between the sign-maker and the context in which the signs are produced. The sign-maker may be more or less conscious of this relationship, but the core of the matter is that the choice of signs is always motivated by some form of relationship between the signifier and the signified.

In order to gain a better understanding of the role that signs and symbols have in connection with nonverbal communication, we will now discuss the relevance of ‘codes’ in this respect.

7.1.4.2.1.3. Code

Just as signs and symbols vary from culture to culture, the same may be said of codes. However, codes refer to much broader categories and may be used to define the systems into which signs and symbols are organised. These systems are governed by rules, which are adhered to by members of the community using the various codes. Hence, the study of codes
is concerned with the social dimension of both verbal and nonverbal communication (Fiske, 1982: 68).

A code may be defined as a rule-bound activity, which is used either consciously or subconsciously by people within different societies. Codes are not fixed entities but are modified over time, in keeping with social change. In semiotics, the concept of 'code' is one of the most fundamental aspects, and the production and interpretation of texts and images depend upon the existence of codes or conventions for communication. Codes may consequently be said to provide a framework for making sense of signs, and the meaning of a sign therefore depends on the code within which it is situated. In other words, it is not possible to give something the status of a sign if it does not function within a code. The notion of code in relation to verbal communication was dealt with 7.1.4.1.1.1.; in the following we will therefore concentrate on the nonverbal aspects of code.

With regards to nonverbal signs, the receiver translates the images in accordance with the codes that exist in the society in which s/he lives. Perception is thus dependent on the coding of images into iconic signs in such a way that they are represented within the mind of the receiver. Since signs are culturally specific, they may be perceived in many different ways, depending on the receiver and the surrounding environment (Johansen and Larsen, 2002: 7-8).

According to Fiske, codes may be divided into digital and analogue codes. In digital codes, the signifiers and signifieds are clearly separated, whereas analogue codes work on a continuous scale. For instance, a digital watch separates one minute from the next, breaking every hour into different units. An analogue watch, on the other hand, makes use of a continuous scale that may only be perceived digitally by adding marks to the dial. Another example of this division of codes may be found when looking at different colours; primary colours may be classified as digital colours in that they may not be divided into further units such as is the case with analogue colours, e.g. paint colours mixed on a palette.

Digital and analogue codes may be useful when seeking to understand the meaning of certain signs. However, digital codes are normally easier to understand than analogue codes since they consist of clearly separated units. A distinction may be made between digital and
analogue codes according to which written texts are referred to as digital codes and visual images as analogue codes since images may be defined as codes involving a continuous scale of graded relationships. Basically, what this means is that a text is often easier to perceive since the words are there to be seen, whereas images are much more ‘polysemic’ in the sense that they are more open to different interpretations (Fiske, 1982: 69-70).

Some codes are unique to specific types of media, while others may be shared by many different types of media. Also, certain codes are characteristic of a particular culture, whereas others are found within different cultures. If the latter is the case, and the codes are shared and commonly understood, it eases the task of communicating a message to the intended receivers. However, if the opposite is the case, and the receivers do not share the same codes as the sender, the sender must consider how to convey the message in such a way that it complies with the culture of the receiver. For instance, certain pictures, typographical styles or particular colours may be perceived in an entirely different way within the culture of the receiver than that of the sender. This brings us to the notion of denotation and connotation, where denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, and connotation refers to the figurative meaning of the same sign.

7.1.4.2.1.4. Denotation and connotation

On a broad scale, the definition of denotative versus connotative meanings of signs covers both linguistic signs as well as visual signs. Therefore, the following may be applied to signs found at both levels; however, in this chapter focus will be on visual signs, and all the examples given will therefore relate to nonverbal communication.

A sign may be said to consist of a denotative signified as well as a connotative signified in the sense that meaning includes both denotation and connotation. The denotative meaning of a sign thus refers to the literal, obvious or commonsense interpretation of the sign, whereas the connotative meaning refers to the subjective associations that the receivers get when reading the sign. The interpretation of signs is greatly affected by the socio-cultural surroundings of the receivers and involves both ideological as well as emotional feelings (Internet 15). For instance, a certain image or colour may have particular connotations in one culture and evoke
different responses in another. As an example of this, many Western cultures associate the colour black with death, which means that it carries negative connotations. In Chinese culture, on the other hand, white is the colour of death, and in Brazil, purple is the colour. When communicating by means of visual signs, it is therefore of great importance to study the way in which different signs may evoke different connotations across cultures.

According to most semioticians, any sign will always carry denotative as well as connotative meanings; no sign is ever purely denotative. Most of the time, denotative meanings of signs are broadly agreed upon by members of the same culture as opposed to connotative meanings, which are always influenced by the values and attitudes of each individual person. However, connotations are not purely subjective meanings; they are determined by the codes that are found within the culture of the receiver. Cultural codes thus provide a connotative framework since they are “organized around key oppositions and equations”, each term being “aligned with a cluster of symbolic attributes” (ibid). Certain connotations are therefore widely recognised and shared by the members of a given culture, such as the above example of the connotations assigned to different colours.

Generally, the connotative meaning of a sign is more polysemic, i.e. open to different interpretations, than the denotative meaning. Denotation is therefore often regarded as a digital code as opposed to connotation, which may be defined as an analogue code (ibid).

7.1.4.2.1.4.1. Orders of signification

According to Barthes, connotation and denotation may be classified in terms of orders of signification (levels of meanings), where the first order of signification is that of denotation and the second that of connotation. For instance, in a photograph of a car, the first order of signification is the car itself, and the second order of signification is the connotations produced by the denotative sign. The second order of signification is thus derived, not from the sign itself but from the way that society uses and values both the signifier and the signified (ibid). This corresponds with the words of Fiske that “denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how it is photographed” (Fiske, 1982: 91). For instance, the denotative level in a photograph of a street may signify an urban line with buildings whereas
the connotative level may evoke different associations depending on how the street is photographed, e.g. the time of the day, the focus and contrast and the type of film used (colour film or black and white). In this case, the denotative meaning would therefore always be the same; the difference would be found in the connotation of the photograph (ibid: 91).

Changing the form of the signifier while keeping the same signified may thus generate different connotations. Another way of perceiving the changing of form is to compare, for instance, the cropping of a photograph with Shannon and Weaver’s concept of noise. Sometimes a photograph may contain several different objects of which the sender wants the receiver to focus on one particular part of the photograph. This may be achieved either by cropping the photograph or by zooming in on the desired object when taking the picture. In that way, the ‘noise’ is cut away, and the receiver will only be able to draw connotations from the particular part of the photo that the sender had in mind (ibid: 110).

By dividing semiotic systems into smaller units and explaining how different verbal signs function as well as which denotative and connotative meanings may be related to such signs, we have tried to establish the importance of semiotics in relation to nonverbal communication. On the basis of the above, we will now turn to a brief discussion of what is required in order for visual communication to work.

7.1.4.2.2. Communicational requirements

Just like any other form of communication, visual communication must comply with certain communicational requirements in order to function as a communicative system. As a way of explaining this notion, Kress and van Leeuwen have borrowed Halliday’s notion of ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, which may be applied to linguistic as well as visual semiotic modes.\footnote{The verbal aspects of Halliday’s metafunctions have been dealt with under the headings of field, mode and tenor in section 7.1.4.1.2.1.}

According to this theory, the ideational metafunction concerns the ability of semiotic systems to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system or in the
semiotic system of culture. This may, for instance, be concerned with visual directionality, i.e. the direction in which certain objects are represented in respect to one another. An example of this might be the way that visual (and textual) representations are typically read from left to right in Britain as opposed to Japan where right to left is the standard procedure.

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The interpersonal metafunction deals with the way in which visual representations manifest the social relation between the sender, the viewer and the object presented. This is a notion, which is closely related to Hofstede’s dimensions of culture. For instance, a certain power distance between sender and viewer will manifest itself in the way that the object is presented, and visual representations will vary according to the level of masculinity versus femininity within different societies/cultures.

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Finally, the textual metafunction concerns the layout and relation between images and/or texts and images. Different compositional arrangements will allow for the realisation of different textual meanings. For instance, if an image is placed before a text in an advertisement, the meaning will most likely be different than if the text comes first – and vice versa (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 40-41).

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The metafunctions thus say something about how semiotic systems work and how the images used should be presented in relation to the sign-maker and the receivers of the signs. In the following, we will seek to establish who the participants in a communication process are and how they are related to one another.

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7.1.4.2.2.1. Participants

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Just as the role of participants plays an important part in verbal communication, the same may be said for nonverbal communication. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, nonverbal communication deals with two kinds of participants; represented participants (the places, objects and people depicted in images) and interactive participants (the actual people who communicate with each other through the images). In this connection, it is possible to speak of three types of relations: (1) relations between the represented participants, (2) relations
between the interactive and represented participants and finally (3) relations between the interactive participants.

Interactive participants are therefore, on the one hand, the people who produce images with the aim of conveying a certain message and, on the other, the people who receive and interpret the images. To a certain extent, the sender of a given image in a communication process may be able to regulate what the image is meant to signify. This is especially the case if sender and receiver are engaged in a face-to-face interaction, i.e. a direct and immediate interaction in which the two parties know each other or are at least familiar with one another. However, in many cases there is no immediate and direct involvement in the sense that the sender is absent to the receiver. In this case, it is difficult for the sender to control the situation; s/he has no way of knowing the receivers and must instead create a mental image of who they are and how they are likely to perceive the images presented. That is why it is important for a company to carefully define its target group when marketing a product or a service so that it may be possible to at least have a general idea of how the receivers of a certain message will react when exposed to this message.

Such social relations in which the sender is absent from the actual communicative transaction may be referred to as represented rather than enacted relations. Here, the sender is only able to address the receivers through a substitute ‘I’, and the receivers are put in the position of customers in an imaginary way. This means that whether or not the receivers will identify with the position in which they are placed will depend on many other factors such as their real relation to the sender. If they are already familiar with and have a positive attitude towards the sender, there is a good chance that the selected images will help the sender achieve successful communication – if not, it is up to the sender to create a situation which will seem trustworthy to the receivers.

The represented participants may be either real or imaginary, but that is not really important here; what really matters is how the interactive participants communicate and understand one another and whether or not the intended message is conveyed effectively to the receivers (ibid: 119-121).
On the basis of the above accounts of verbal and nonverbal communication, we may now conclude that both forms of communication are important in any communicative act. However, different semiotic modes each have potentials as well as limitations, which means that in some situations it may be more beneficial to rely on verbal rather than nonverbal signs – and vice versa. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, there seems to have been a dramatic shift from the verbal to the visual mode in recent years. The reason for this is not quite clear, but it may have something to do with “information being so vast, so complex, that it has to be handled visually, because the verbal is no longer adequate” (ibid: 32). In other words, visual communication may be understood on a wider spectrum across cultures than verbal communication – however, it is important not to forget that nonverbal communication is also culturally specific and therefore should be adjusted accordingly.

7.1.4.2.3. Nonverbal rhetorical strategies in the product sheet

The product sheet displays several visual signs in accordance with the theory concerning nonverbal rhetorical strategies of which the following will include selected examples in order to illustrate this.

First of all, the product sheet itself exists quite literally as a sign that is intended to attract potential customers and inform them of the purpose of innoVisions as well as the nature of the products and services offered by the company. As a ‘substance of expression’, the product sheet thus seeks to initiate some form of relationship between sender and receiver by means of various nonverbal signs.

Starting with the visual strategies, the product sheet contains both pictures and texts, placed in a way that enables them to interact with one another (see below). The typographical style used is fairly neutral since the target group consists of companies irrespective of industry type, values and history. Together with the rather blurred and cropped pictures, the colours, which are soft and toned down, symbolise that the company has a relaxed attitude and wishes to work with the customers on a personal and intimate level. Both pictures are cropped both at the top and at the bottom, and the faces of the people are either cut away or blurred illustrating that the negotiating parties may consist of anybody who is interested in communicating,
regardless of age and gender. In the picture on the front page, focus is drawn towards the hands of the people and the piece of paper that the person to the left is holding. The picture on the reverse side of the product sheet shows three people quite clearly concentrating on something which is central to them all – again the blue piece of paper is part of the picture.

Both pictures symbolise the actual communication process between the negotiating parties, and the piece of paper could, for instance, be a contract, an agenda or a finished product such as a translation or a revision of a document. Finally, the blue colour used for the piece of paper in the two pictures is repeated throughout the product sheet both in the slogan “fresh thinking – creative ideas”, the logo and the text boxes, which creates cohesion. The same applies to the grey and slightly toned down colour used for the headline “innoVisions”, the text in the text boxes, the different sub-headings throughout the product sheet and again the logo.

Turning to the tactile strategies, the paper used for the product sheet is smooth and slightly glittery in order to give a feel of first-class quality. The texture of the paper may also symbolise that a negotiation process with the company is a pleasant and smooth experience.

All this signifies that a specific meaning has been incorporated into the product sheet with the aim of creating connotations in the minds of the receivers. The overall signifier is thus the product sheet itself. Together with the colours, pictures (iconic signs) and typographical style used, the product sheet thus represents the form that innoVisions has chosen to use in order to realise the intended meanings, i.e. the signifieds. In that way, the signifiers become signs when the receivers match them with the mental concepts that they have. In Peircian terminology, the interpretant is therefore the image of the company and the object the product sheet.

The different forms, such as colours and pictures, used in the product sheet thus carry denotative meanings that evoke certain connotations in the minds of the receivers. If innoVisions manages to evoke these desired emotions amongst the receivers, it will help fulfil the communicative purpose of the product sheet, which is to attract potential customers and pass on certain information about the company and the products and services offered.
As mentioned above, the pictures and texts are placed in a way that enables them to interact with one another. This means that the **textual** metafunction manifests itself through the interaction between pictures and texts, giving the two an equal status in the sense that both pictures and texts are equally relevant in the process of visually conveying the intended meaning. The **interpersonal** metafunction is seen in the way that the pictures are meant to symbolise a relaxed attitude and a personal and intimate service; they seem to invite the receivers to come and see for themselves and indicate that *innoVisions* is here for the customers and communicate with the customers.

Finally, with regards to participants, the **interactive** participants consist of *innoVisions*, on the one hand, and the potential customers, on the other. The **represented** participants, i.e. the people depicted in the pictures, are in fact imaginary images of the interactive participants, which makes this quite a unique situation. The relation between the interactive participants is therefore a **represented** relation in which *innoVisions* is only able to communicate with the customers through a substitute ‘I’, and the customers are only customers in an imaginary way. The relation between the represented participants, on the other hand, is a represented relation symbolising an **enacted** relation between the two parties. This means that the interactive and represented participants are connected in the sense that the interactive participants are in fact depicted in the product sheet through the pictures symbolising the represented participants. Consequently, even though the relation between the interactive participants is a represented relation in the sense that *innoVisions* is absent from the customers during this communication process, it does in a way resemble an enacted relation because the target group has been studied so carefully before the production of the product sheet (it is almost as if *innoVisions* is *there* talking to the receivers).

To sum up, the product sheet is first and foremost an important tool for *innoVisions* in connection with meeting the communicative objectives, of which the most important are to create brand awareness, brand knowledge and brand attitude. To a certain extent, specific elements in the product sheet will also help generate category need and purchase intention. On the basis of a thorough analysis of the target audience, the communicative objectives are sought realised through certain verbal and nonverbal rhetorical strategies, which have been
worked out in accordance with the values and attitudes that are prevalent in Britain in order for the communication to be successful.
8. Conclusion

We have now discussed the areas of communication, discourse analysis and culture in order to realise the purpose of our thesis, i.e. to provide a framework for determining how a start-up communications agency may define and reach its target audience. In discussing these areas, we have come to the conclusion that they are not only closely linked to one another but in fact inextricably intertwined. For instance, any communicative event is formed by the specific situation, i.e. context, in which it takes place. Also, since every person is a member of a particular culture and sub-culture(s), it is necessary to have an understanding of culture in order to communicate effectively. Therefore, it is not possible to discuss culture without including aspects of communication and discourse and vice versa.

In the discussion of communication we have focused on the process school and the semiotic school. Within the process school we focused on Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication, providing an evaluation of the model with the aim of establishing whether or not it is widely applicable within the field of communication as claimed by Shannon and Weaver. In this process, we came to the conclusion that the model may in fact be used as a good basis for understanding communication; however, it lacks certain important aspects of communication such as meaning, context and function. Therefore, we included Jakobson’s model of communication since it takes into consideration the constitutive factors and functions of communication, thus covering the aspects lacking in Shannon and Weaver’s model. In this connection, it should be noted that although modelling is useful and, in our opinion, necessary, no model can be comprehensive, and it is thus important to remember the limitations of any model.

With regards to the semiotic school we chose to concentrate on the theories of Peirce and Saussure since they are regarded the founders of this discipline. By including these theorists we were able to account for the most important aspects of semiotics from an overall perspective. Saussure’s theory of signifier and signified together with Peirce’s trichotomy provide a detailed account of what constitutes a sign as well as how a sign can be analysed. Since semiotics deals with the role of sign systems in language, we may conclude that the discipline of semiotics is essential to the understanding of communication. Taken together,
the views of the process school and the semiotic school have provided us with a comprehensive knowledge of the field of communication. For instance, we have learned that communication is more than just a linear one-way process of transmitting messages; rather, it is an interactional process including important aspects such as meaning and context.

Communication is closely linked to discourse analysis, partly due to the fact that context is central to the concept of discourse, meaning that any discourse is formed by the context in which it occurs. By focusing on the three approaches of speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication we were provided with a deeper insight into the notion of context. Based on our discussion of speech act theory we may now conclude that an understanding of this approach is in fact a useful tool in connection with avoiding miscommunications. This is due to the fact that in speech act theory, the understanding of a specific utterance is dependent on the context in which it occurs, and together with the knowledge that we have of the conditions and rules underlying speech acts, we are able to decode the meaning of these. As opposed to speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication regard context as both social and cognitive, thus giving a more detailed description of the context in which language is used. Furthermore, since interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication regard language as socially and culturally relative, these three approaches together provide a basic understanding of the elements of discourse that are most relevant in connection with communicating effectively across cultures. In other words, the combination of the three approaches has provided us with an understanding of how important context is for identifying the communicative content of an utterance as well as which aspects of context are relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances.

Communication is not only closely related to discourse, but also an integral part of culture, which again is directly linked to discourse as established above. Culture is an essential part of people’s everyday lives in that it entails everything that people have, think and do as members of their society. Since culture is a system of shared signs, symbols and meanings and is passed on from generation to generation, we can conclude that culture is not a static and integrated whole, but rather a dynamic and ongoing process, continuously evolving over time. Culture is learned behaviour and something that exists subconsciously in people’s minds. It is therefore
important to be aware of the notion of ethnocentrism in the sense that this is one of the greatest obstacles to understanding other cultures since people tend to take their own cultures for granted without even being aware of it. In this connection, we can conclude that Hofstede’s dimensions of culture are useful in order to overcome the barrier of ethnocentrism since this theory provides a basis for understanding and measuring cultural differences, thus forming a framework for communicating effectively across cultures. All this leads us to the conclusion that the task of managing cultural diversities is not only a matter of understanding people’s values, beliefs and behaviour patterns, but also a question of knowing how to communicate in foreign language and communicate effectively with people from other cultures.

Following a short introduction of innoVisions, which we subsequently used in connection with the production of the product sheet and the analysis of the company, we discussed selected aspects of the marketing plan in order to establish what a company should take into consideration when communicating with the public as well as defining and reaching a target audience. The aspects that we chose to concentrate on in this connection, i.e. mission statement, corporate objectives, SWOT analysis, marketing objectives and strategies, proved to be relevant in the process of realising the purpose of the thesis, especially since they are useful tools for analysing the internal and external environment of a company. Furthermore, the selected elements turned out to be essential in connection with defining the values of a company and subsequently forming the basis of the overall marketing strategy, including the choice of target segments.

One way of defining a target audience is through market segmentation. In our approach to this area, we chose to account for four of the most commonly used bases for segmentation, i.e. demographic, psychographic, geographic and behavioural segmentation. On the basis of the description of these segmentation bases we can conclude that the bases best suited for innoVisions are demographic, geographic and behavioural segmentation. The reason for focusing on demographic segmentation is that innoVisions has to narrow down its target audience in terms of e.g. company size; geographic segmentation should be employed since innoVisions will be working across borders; and finally, the different variables of behavioural segmentation must be used in order to narrow down the target audience even further. In this
connection, innoVisions should focus on the variable of benefits sought as it might then be possible to develop unique business solutions that meet the specific benefits sought by each individual customer. Also, the variables of user status and usage rate should be considered as it might be easier for innoVisions in the start-up period to sell to regular users with a high usage rate.

After defining the different market segments, the company has to evaluate each of the identified segments and subsequently select one or more for targeting. In the task of evaluating the segments, it is important to look at factors such as profitability, competition within the segment and the company’s resources. Finally, the company must choose one or more segments to target and decide on the manner in which it seeks to enter those segments. In this connection, we described three different market-coverage strategies, i.e. undifferentiated marketing, differentiated marketing and concentrated marketing, and on the basis of this description we were able to conclude that innoVisions should choose the strategy of concentrated marketing. This is due to the fact that this strategy has a high degree of knowledge of the segments and therefore, when working with limited resources in small segments, concentrated marketing will be the right strategy for innoVisions.

Following the discussion of how to define a target audience, the process of how to reach the target audience was discussed. In this connection, we considered the communicative strategies that a company should focus on, including communications objectives and rhetorical strategies. Furthermore, we included the buyer-readiness stages in connection with the company’s communications objectives since these two areas of theory are closely connected. It proved useful to discuss them together in that one cannot be employed without the other; when setting communications objectives, the company should always take the buyer-readiness stages of the target audience into consideration, otherwise the communication material might not be successful. After going through the different stages of the DAGMAR model, we were able to conclude that it is of great importance for a company to focus on the communications objectives which are most relevant for its communication product and at the same time fit the buyer-readiness stages of the target audience. Through our analysis of innoVisions and the product sheet, we were able to conclude that the communications objectives most relevant for this company are those of category need, brand awareness, brand knowledge and brand
attitude. This is due to the fact that innoVisions is a new company in the market, and its customers would therefore either be at the buyer-readiness level of awareness or that of knowledge.

One way of achieving the desired communications objectives and subsequently reaching the intended target audience is through the use of various verbal and nonverbal rhetorical strategies. Concerning the verbal rhetorical strategies, we chose to base our discussion on selected aspects of Jakobson’s model of communication together with Halliday’s three variables of register, i.e. field, mode and tenor. Whereas Jakobson’s theory provided us with a clear overview of the different components that constitute a text, Halliday’s theory of register gave a good insight into the specific language conventions that are required in different contexts. When aiming at a foreign target audience it is important to be aware of the different conventions of register that exist in the target culture and subsequently know how to make the appropriate linguistic choices so that the text correlates with the situation in which it occurs.

Verbal communication in Britain is generally characterised by explicitness and directness, and through our analysis of the product sheet we can conclude that it has been produced in accordance with the values characteristic of British culture.

Turning to nonverbal rhetorical strategies, they are employed as a means of reaching the target group through visual signs, symbols and codes as well as tactile and olfactory strategies. Together, these different strategies provide an important tool for the company in the process of achieving the desired communications objectives, and it is therefore of great importance that the company is aware of how to handle such visual strategies in its communications. In connection with nonverbal rhetorical strategies, we included the theories of Saussure and Peirce since semiotics is such an integral part of visual communication and forms a good basis for studying nonverbal signs in marketing. In the introduction we therefore proposed that the discipline of ‘marketing and semiotics’ provides a useful tool for communicating effectively within different markets. After having studied this discipline, we may now conclude that it is in fact an effective way of understanding nonverbal rhetorical strategies in connection with marketing and subsequently finding the best way of communicating with the receivers. This is due to the fact that it is precisely through such an understanding that a company may achieve the best results from its visual language. However,
it is important to note that visual language is a culturally specific phenomenon, and we therefore found it necessary to not only combine marketing with the science of semiotics but also with the discipline of cultural anthropology. In our analysis of the product sheet we were able to conclude that it contains various nonverbal signs, all used with a specific purpose in mind.

Together, verbal and nonverbal rhetorical strategies are used in order to reach the communications objectives, and based on the analyses of the product sheet we may conclude that there is a good chance that the intended target receivers will in fact react to and act upon the message contained in the product sheet.

In conclusion, the discussion of communication, discourse and culture constitutes the basic framework for both defining and reaching a target audience since an understanding of these three notions is essential to any purpose of communication. Furthermore, the account of the marketing plan together with that of market segmentation make up the framework for defining a target audience whereas the discussion of the communicative strategies form the framework for reaching the target audience. Consequently, we may now conclude that we have succeeded in providing a framework for defining and reaching a target audience and thus realised the purpose of our thesis.
Summary

Referat

Formålet med specialet er at opstille en ramme for, hvordan et nyopstartet kommunikationsbureau kan definere og nå sin målgruppe. Som basis har vi valgt at gennemgå nogle af de vigtigste teorier inden for områderne kommunikation, diskursanalyse og kultur og derefter bygge videre på rammen med forskellige marketingsrelaterede teorier.

I afsnittet om kommunikation fokuserer vi på to forskellige skoler inden for kommunikationsteori, nemlig processskolen, hvor kommunikation ses som overførsel af beskeder, og den semiotiske skole, der opfatter kommunikation som produktion og udveksling af mening/betydning. Hvor processskolen bl.a. er repræsenteret af Shannon og Weaver, er Peirce og Saussure nogle af de mest kendte navne inden for semiotikken. I gennemgangen af teorierne inden for de to skoler er fokus derfor på disse teoretikere. Shannon og Weavers lineære kommunikationsmodel inddrages således i diskussionen af processskolen, idet modellen evalueres med henblik på at fastslå, hvorvidt den er universelt anvendelig inden for kommunikation generelt. For at kunne foretage en sådan evaluering er det imidlertid nødvendigt at studere fænomenet kommunikation i dybden, hvorfor forskellige centrale begreber inden for dette emne diskuteres. Efter at have evalueret modellen kan det konkluderes, at Shannon og Weaver har udarbejdet en god basismodel til forståelse af begrebet kommunikation, men at modellen imidlertid mangler visse vigtige aspekter såsom mening, kontekst og funktion, for at den kan anvendes universelt. Som et supplement til denne model inkluderer derfor Jakobsens dobbelte kommunikationsmodel, der indeholder de konstitutive faktorer og funktioner som kommunikation består af og således danner en slags bro mellem processskolen og den semiotiske skole.

fysiske tilstedeværelse og dets mentale koncept. Han beskæftiger sig i mindre grad med modtagerens fortolkning. Tilsammen giver Peirce og Saussures teorier et godt overblik over det meget brede område, som semiotikken spønder over.


Tre af de mest centrale tilgange til diskursanalyse er talehandlingsteori, interaktionel sociolingvistik samt kommunikationsetnografi. Talehandlingsteorien er oprindeligt udviklet af de to filosoffer Austin og Searle, og teorierens grundlæggende synspunkt er, at alle former for sproglig kommunikation involverer talehandlinger. Med andre ord handler vi altid over for hinanden, når vi taler, og af denne grund kan talehandlingen anses for at være den grundlæggende analytiske enhed i diskursanalyse.

Den anden tilgang til diskursanalyse, som vi har valgt at medtage, er interaktionel sociolingvistik. Gumperz og Goffman er ophavs mændene til denne tilgang, som udspringer i antropologien, sociologien og lingvistikken. Det primære formål med interaktionel sociolingvistik er at beskrive og gøre rede for de forskellige kontekster, som sproget optræder i og at relaterer en ytrings betydning og funktion til disse kontekster. Gumperz og Goffman har forskellige tilgange til interaktionel sociolingvistik; hvor Gumperz har fokus på kontekstens vigtighed for produktionen og fortolkningen af en ytring, fokuserer Goffman på strukturen og betydningen af konteksten.

Hva...
sociale og kulturelle kontekst samt at beskrive, hvordan sproglig interaktion bruges i forskellige kontekster. Men i modsætning til interaktionel sociolingvistik, fokuserer kommunikationsetnografi på kommunikation som kulturel adfærd. Tilsammen giver disse tre tilgange til diskursanalyse således en detaljeret redegørelse for den sociale og kulturelle kontekst, hvori sproget optræder, hvilket er medvirkende til at sikre effektiv kommunikation.

Ligesom kommunikation er tæt forbundet med semiotik, hænger kultur uløseligt sammen med det at kommunicere og i det hele taget begå sig med hinanden. Det er svært at give en entydig definition af kultur, idet det er så diffust et begreb, og der findes mange teoretiske retninger inden for kulturforskningen. For at indsnævre begrebet lidt har vi valgt at basere dette speciale på studier foretaget af kulturelle antropologer, idet disse ser på kultur ud fra et humanistisk synspunkt og foretager direkte sammenligninger af kulturelle forskelle over hele verden. Dette danner således basis for at kunne kommunikere effektivt, ikke blot inden for enkelte kulturer men også på tværkulturelt plan.

Ifølge kulturelle antropologer er kultur en grundlæggende del af vores hverdag; alt, hvad vi tænker og foretager os som medlem af et givert samfund, er influeret af den kultur, der omgiver os, ligesom de fysiske rammer er fastlagte i overensstemmelse med den omgivende kultur. I sin helhed kan kultur defineres som et system af nedarvede tegn, symboler og meninger, der er fælles for alle inden for hver enkelt kultur. I henhold til Hofstede er kultur således en kollektiv programmering af sindet, der adskiller medlemmer af en gruppe fra en anden. Med andre ord er kultur noget, alle mennesker lærer uden egentlig at være opmærksomme på dette; kultur er noget, der eksisterer hos os alle på et mere eller mindre ubevist plan. I den forbindelse er det naturligt at introducere fænomenet ’etnocentrisme’, dvs. den indstilling, at ens eget kulturmønster, normer og værdier er bedre end andres, og at andre kulturers begreber betragtes ud fra normer og tænkemåder, som gælder i ens egen kultur. Dette er især vigtigt at være opmærksom på i forbindelse med tværkulturel kommunikation, idet det ikke er muligt at opnå en forståelse af en anden kultur uden først at være i stand til at stille sig uden for sin egen kultur.

Udover at være et nedarvet fænomen anses kultur for at være en dynamisk og kontinuerlig proces. For at kunne opnå effektiv tværkulturel kommunikation er det derfor vigtigt til enhver tid at holde sig ajour med de kulturelle forskelle, der måtte være mellem ens egen og
modpartens kultur. Det er dog ikke nok blot at søge at opnå en forståelse af den anden kulturs værdibegreber og normer men også nødvendigt at vide, hvordan man på bedst mulig vis håndterer det fremmede sprog for dermed i sidste ende at kunne kommunikere på mest effektiv vis med den fremmede kultur.

Efter denne introduktion af begreberne kommunikation, diskursanalyse og kultur, giver vi en kort præsentation af innoVisions, som senere vil blive brugt i forbindelse med udarbejdelsen af et produktdokument samt analyse af samme. Herefter opstiller vi udvalgte markedsrelaterede teorier, som vi finder relevante for enhver virksomhed i forbindelse med at definere og nå sin målgruppe.

Det første skridt i denne forbindelse er en redegørelse for, hvordan man på mest effektiv vis opstiller og udfører en velstruktureret markedsføringsplan. I denne forbindelse finder vi det mest relevant at inkludere følgende: virksomhedens idégrundlag og mål, SWOT-analyse samt markedsføringsmål og markedsføringsstrategi. Begrundelsen for at inkludere virksomhedens idégrundlag og mål er, at begge disse elementer medvirker til at redegøre for virksomhedens værdier samt forretningsgrundlag. Hvad angår SWOT-analysen, er denne et effektivt redskab i forbindelse med at analysere virksomhedens svagheder og styrker, både internt såvel som eksternt, hvilket i sidste ende kan hjælpe virksomheden med at definere samt nå sin målgruppe. Sidst men ikke mindst danner gennemtænkte markedsføringsmål et solidt grundlag for den overordnede markedsføringsstrategi, inklusiv valg af markedssegmenter.

Samlet udgør de forskellige elementer af markedsføringsplanen således en solid basis for virksomheden i forbindelse med at undersøge markedet samt definere og nå den valgte målgruppe på basis af gennemtænkte kommunikationsstrategier.

For at en virksomhed kan definere en målgruppe, er det nødvendigt at segmentere markedet. Tanken bag markedsssegmentering bygger på, at totalmarkedet er sammensat af forskellige grupper af forbrugere, der har forskellige behov og ønsker. Markedssegmentering går således ud på at splitte totalmarkedet op i flere heterogene delmarkeder, som hver for sig har visse indbyrdes fællestænk. En af fordelene ved markedsssegmentering er, at det bidrager til en større forståelse af forbrugernes behov og ønsker, og desuden kan markedsssegmentering vise
sig særdeles værdifuld for mindre virksomheder, da det giver dem mulighed for at skabe sig en niche på markedet.

Til at segmentere markedet kan man gøre brug af forskellige segmenteringsvariabler, hvoraf de mest udbredte er demografiske, geografiske, psykologiske samt behavioristiske variabler. Hvad angår demografisk segmentering, er det den mest udbredte metode til opdeling af markedet i delmarkeder, og det grundlæggende synspunkt er, at man på baggrund af demografiske faktorer såsom alder, beskæftigelse, virksomhedsstørrelse og branche kan inddele personer og virksomheder i forskellige segmenter. Psykologisk segmentering grupperer personer på baggrund af deres værdier og livsstil, og sådanne psykologiske profiler fungerer således som et supplement til de typiske demografiske faktorer. Herved opnås en bredere forståelse af nuværende eller potentielle målgrupper.


Efter at have segmenteret markedet skal virksomheden udvælge et eller flere segmenter, der skal udgøre dets målgruppe, og for at kunne gøre dette skal man sikre sig, at det valgte segment er lønsomt, dvs. at det er stabilt, har en tilstrækkelig størrelse og tilstrækkeligt potentiale. Herefter skal virksomheden vælge en strategi for valg af målgruppe, f.eks. udførdifferentieret, differentieret eller koncentreret strategi.

Når målgruppen er defineret, er næste skridt at finde ud af, hvordan man kan nå den gennem sin kommunikation. Til dette formålet findes en række kommunikative strategier, bl.a. fastsættelse af kommunikationsmål og retoriske strategier. Desuden inddrages her også teori
om kundernes købsparathed, da det er nødvendigt at tage dette med i overvejelserne omkring kommunikationsmål.


For at være i stand til at kommunikere optimalt på et hvilket som helst sprog er det yderst vigtigt at være bevidst om og foretage de rette kommunikative valg, således at den skrevne eller talte tekst stemmer overens med konteksten, hvori den optræder. Verbale retoriske strategier kan karakteriseres som specifikke sprogkonventioner, der varierer fra kultur til kultur, og de kan defineres som verbale virkemidler, der bidrager til at overbringe budskabet. De verbale retoriske strategier, som f.eks. brugen af slang, ord med visse konnotationer samt specifikke syntaktiske konstruktioner, bliver gennemgået primært baggrund af Jakobsons kommunikationsmodel og Hallidays teorier vedrørende register og situationskontekst.

Sammen med de verbale retoriske strategier udgør de nonverbale retoriske strategier de vigtigste redskaber for virksomheden i forbindelse med at nå de ønskede kommunikative mål. Nonverbale retoriske strategier, der bl.a. er brugen af billeder, tegn, symboler samt farver og typografi, bruges således med det formål at udsende bestemte signaler og meninger, fx gennem særlige sammensætninger af billeder, tekst og farver. Idet visuel retorik er tæt forbundet med semiotik, har vi valgt at basere vor redegørelse af dette emne på udvalgte teorier fremsat af Peirce og Saussure. For at opnå effektiv kommunikation er det vigtigt at være opmærksom på, at visuel retorik er et kulturbestemt og dynamisk fænomen. Dette
betyder, at det er nødvendigt at have en forståelse af modpartens kultur for at nå frem til de mest egne retoriske strategier og dermed opnå effektiv tværkulturel kommunikation.

Efter at have behandlet de fremsatte teorier og på denne baggrund opstillet en ramme for, hvordan et nyopstartet kommunikationsbureau på bedst mulig vis definerer og når sin målgruppe, kan vi konkludere, at vi har opnået formålet med vores speciale.
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Communication is the core activity of everything we do and is of vital importance to any profession. In today's world of business, the need to communicate clearly and concisely both internally and externally therefore becomes increasingly important.

Who are we?

innoVisions is a communications agency based in Denmark, which consists of a number of native Danish and English speakers. We use our depth of experience and expertise in all areas of communication to provide effective and fully integrated communications solutions for small to medium-sized businesses in the Danish and the British markets.

We seek to provide our customers with unique business solutions that are tailored to meet the needs of each individual customer. Whatever your communication needs, we will help you find the ideal approach.

Our expertise is in offering consultancy across a wide range of communication and publicity services—from translation and revision of promotional material to the production of press releases and the planning of PR campaigns.

We aim to add value and expertise to every project—simple or complex, large or small. We care about the message you want to project, so understanding your business is essential. To understand your company's communication needs, we need to build a relationship with you.

When presented with your communication issues, we take a look at the bigger picture—exactly what is it you want to achieve, how should it be communicated, to whom and when? Only when we have that understanding, can we set tangible objectives and plan the solution.

In collaboration with you, we ensure that you are saying what you want to say.

Communicate effectively

Communication is an integral part of everyday life. Customers of today are more demanding and know what they can expect from different products—and will quickly leave brands from companies that fail to deliver meaningful and effective communication.

Communication is as much a matter of human relationships as it is about transmitting facts. To communicate successfully, you have to understand your customers and work hard to get them to understand you.

With such a mutual understanding as a basis for your communication, you will be able to meet the needs of your customers in a way that leaves them feeling good about themselves.

If you can achieve this through your communication material, you are well on your way towards a brighter future.

Our strategy is to create effective communication that reflects the values of your company.

We listen to your objectives prior to the development of any solution followed by ideas on how to meet these objectives, be it via carefully developed promotional material, press releases or revision of existing communications material.

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

- mutual understanding
- focus on values
- meeting objectives
- effective PR material
- commitment

In order to make your customers understand you, it is vital that every communication product leaving your company reflects who you are and the values you stand for.

This can only be done by someone who truly understands the soul of your company.

What can we offer you?

At innoVisions we understand the importance of effective communication. Therefore, when
taking on a new customer, we always take the time necessary to get to know the customer and understand their values. In this way, we will be able to create communication that works.

We offer a wide range of products and services; whatever you need to communicate in whichever way, we will be able to help you with our expertise.

**PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**
- press releases
- texts for your website
- texts for your intranet
- texts for leaflets, folders, brochures, etc.
- translations
- proof reading
- revision of communication material
- planning of PR campaigns
- etc.

**Team spirit**

The spirit of teamwork is at the centre of all we do at innoVisions. As a team, we all work together to evaluate and validate our problem solving ability. We challenge each other’s opinions, collate ideas and establish the way forward. Respect and encouragement brings the team closer together, and our ideas become even stronger.

We are driven by passion, committed to our beliefs and realise that to achieve our goals may require us to give our time, day or night as you can’t predict when an idea will strike. It is not something you switch on or off; it is instinctive. From concept to completion, we live and breathe the project.

At innoVisions we aim to maximise your communication with minimal fuss. If you choose to work with us you will see what we mean.

Let us manage your communications

It is critical to the bottom line that your communications inspire confidence and create the desired action amongst your customers. The key to success is therefore often measured by the level of confidence in the ability of your business to deliver what it promises, which is exactly why effective communication plays such a vital part in any business transaction.

**innoVisions** can assist you in defining your client expectations and consistently exceed them. From strategic marketing advice to conceptual design and practical application, we have the creative edge and discipline to deliver first-class results across the full communications spectrum.

We tackle every project with an open mind, establishing exactly where you are coming from and where you want to go.

Offering our customers global marketing capabilities with all the individualised attention of a small agency, we aim to create unique business solutions that are tailored to meet the requirements of each individual customer.

By letting us manage your communications, you are provided with the very best technical expertise to match your specific needs, whether it be a single translation, a revision of a document, the production of a complete PR campaign or other promotional material.

**Working with you**

In connection with any communications agreement, it is important to choose the right partner.

At innoVisions we offer to carry out a thorough analysis of your company before working out any agreement. In this way, we are able to understand and relay the business benefits of your specific products and services to your target markets through the right form of communication.

Such an analysis makes it possible for you to make the right choice and to enter into an agreement with a partner that is able to live up to your needs and expectations.

We therefore aim to work with you, not for you; we listen to your requirements, we ask questions, and we find answers.

Working as a team gives us strength to explore and exhaust every option, achieving a result to not only meet but also exceed initial expectations.

For further information on how we can help you communicate efficiently, give us a call or send us an e-mail:

**CONTACT**

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Power distance versus uncertainty avoidance

Hofstede, 2001: 153
High-context versus low-context cultures

High-Context
- Japanese
- Chinese
- Arab
- Greek
- Spanish
- Italian
- English
- French
- American
- Scandinavian
- German
- Swiss German

Low-Context
The marketing planning process

Phase One
Strategic context
1 Mission
2 Corporate objectives

Phase Two
Situation review
3 Marketing audit
4 SWOT analysis
5 Key assumptions

Phase Three
Marketing strategy formulation
6 Marketing objectives and strategies
7 Estimate expected results
8 Identify alternative mixes

Phase Four
Resource allocation, monitoring and detailed planning
9 Budget
10 1st year implementations programme

McDonald and Payne, 1996: 30
Our Mission Statement
Ben & Jerry's is founded on and dedicated to a sustainable corporate concept of linked prosperity. Our mission consists of 3 interrelated parts:

Product Mission
To make, distribute & sell the finest quality all natural ice cream & euphoric concoctions with a continued commitment to incorporating wholesome, natural ingredients and promoting business practices that respect the Earth and the Environment.

Economic Mission
To operate the Company on a sustainable financial basis of profitable growth, increasing value for our stakeholders & expanding opportunities for development and career growth for our employees.

Social Mission
To operate the company in a way that actively recognizes the central role that business plays in society by initiating innovative ways to improve the quality of life locally, nationally & internationally.

Central To The Mission Of Ben & Jerry's is the belief that all three parts must thrive equally in a manner that commands deep respect for individuals in and outside the company and supports the communities of which they are a part.

http://www.benjerry.com/our_company/our_mission/