

The Effectiveness of Intercultural Persuasive Communication in an Organisational Context: Influencing Factors

Elena Pruvli

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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERCULTURAL
PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION
IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT:
INFLUENCING FACTORS**

Thesis of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my beloved father, Karl Tokman, who has always been a great inspiration to me.

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This doctoral research project is based on the following original academic publications that are referred to throughout the text of the dissertation as indicated below in bold:

Study 1

Pruvli, E. and Alas, R. 2014. Perceived differences in interdepartmental communication regarding organisational formalisation: a case study of an international company. *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia. The Journal of University of Economics in Bratislava*, (7) 26, 265 - 278.

Study 2

Pruvli, E. and Alas, R. 2012. Status Related Social Categorization: High Context and Low Context Cultural Perspective. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research*, 46, 91 - 95.

Study 3

Pruvli, E. 2014. Business Communication of a Persuasive Nature: Style Adaptation and Effectiveness during Intercultural Interactions. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 35, (online)
<http://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr35/pruvli.htm> (Assessed 28 February 2015).

Study 4 A and Study 4 B

Pruvli, E. 2015. Effective persuasion: A model for the intercultural business context. In Covarrubias Venegas, B., Dalipi, M. and Darder F. L. (Eds.) Academic Publications of SIETAR Europa Congress 2015. *Refreshing the Cultural Paradigm: Sharing Stories, Theories and Next Practices*. Spain, Valencia: SIETAR Europa in association with Meridian World Press, 77 – 85.

LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES

“Multiply cultural mindsets of international company: Inter-departmental communication and organisational formalisation”, *28th EGOS Colloquium*, Aalto University and Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland (July 5-7, 2012)

“Persuasive intercultural communication: style adaptation and effectiveness”, *EIASM Colloquium on Organisational Change and Development*, Bern University of Applied Science, Bern, Switzerland (September 13-14, 2012)

“Social categorisation in high and low context cultures”, *The annual conference of the International Network of Business and Management Journals (INBAM)*, Universidade Tecnica de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal (June 17-19, 2013)

“Multi-faced cultural context of an international company: Interdepartmental communication”, *Global Reach: Local Touch - how streams of culture are shaping our future*, SIETAR (Society of Intercultural Education, Training and Research) Europa Congress 2013, Tallinn, Estonia (September 18-22, 2013)

“Intercultural Business Communication: Influencing Factors in an Organisational Context”, *Institutions in Context: The Free Market*, The Workshop hosted by the North American Studies Program, University of Tampere, Finland (June 9-15, 2014)

“Effective persuasion: A model for the intercultural business context”, *Refreshing the Cultural Paradigm: Sharing Stories, Theories and Next Practices*, SIETAR (Society of Intercultural Education, Training and Research) Europa Congress 2015, Valencia, Spain (May 21-23, 2015)

“Intercultural perspective on persuasive communication in an organisational context”, *Contemporary Approaches in Training and Education for Cross-Cultural Competence – potentials, challenges and its limits*, 7th CEMS/IACCM Doctoral Workshop at 14th IACCM (International Association of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management) Annual Conference, Vienna, Austria (October 1-3, 2015)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation clarifies and expounds the factors that influence the effectiveness of intercultural persuasive communication (IPC) in an organisational context. While persuasion was studied and conceptualised cross-culturally, this research analyses managers' interaction from within an intercultural communication perspective.

The central problem of this study is how to make IPC effective in an organisational environment and to reduce semantic asymmetries among communicators. In order to find solutions four research tasks were created and four qualitative empirical studies were conducted in Estonian organisations. The data for each study was collected in stages. Ethnographic techniques have been used for the exploratory case study in order to understand and explain communication between two departments of the international company; open-ended on-line interviews with further personal clarification of answers and focus-group discussions were implemented. A contrived experiment, controlled by the author, was chosen to study the effects of communication styles on the process of social categorisation. Italian and Estonian respondents made their decisions on individual and intra-national group levels. The results were analysed comparatively through the implementation of a dialogue method with introductory, reflective, interactive and clarifying phases to discuss these results with a conceptual sample of professionals from various fields of activity. An explanatory applied study was designed to investigate preferred persuasive styles, perceptions of alternative persuasive styles and adaptation strategies among Estonian local municipal managers. An e-mail questionnaire was used to select the specialised informants to be interviewed in person. Subsequently, they were engaged in a dialogue based on an outline designed by the author.

This dissertation analyses the findings and offers a descriptive model of effective IPC. The model explains to users the adaptation strategies of cultural persuasive styles, status issues and differences in process orientation versus results orientation. A rapid ethnography (RE) method was used to test this model with the focus on a "preferred persuasive style" factor in an international setting. The result of this preliminary test revealed that rather than relying on self-reporting for an indication of managers' "preferred persuasive style" it would be efficient to undertake the text and narrative analysis of their own persuasive messages when their structure is not given in advance.

This research project contributes to the development of the intercultural communication theory by handling the long-standing issues of persuasive intercultural communication in an organisational context.

Keywords: intercultural persuasive communication (IPC); effectiveness of business communication; preferred cultural persuasive styles; social categorisation; cultural orientations

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the topic

Persuasive business communication means “communicating for results” (Hamilton, 2010) when persuaders have in mind their desired outcomes. The effectiveness of persuasion is evaluated by the persuader in the subjects’ actions or in their changed intent (Kaul and Desai, 2014; Perloff, 2008).

With further international development, intercultural business communication of a persuasive nature becomes omnipresent within public and private sectors. Nowadays, IPC is part of managerial communication routine in international business.

While differences in persuasive styles from a cross-cultural perspective have been conceptualised (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989, 2008), scholars have paid little attention to strategies for adapting persuasive styles in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, the theories of persuasive communication have been evolved mainly in the US and from a political perspective (Hovland et al 1953; Cialdini, 2001; Perloff, 2008).

Joseph Cheng (2007, 26) asserts that in management studies there is a domination of easily quantified phenomena with large samples related to organisations “at the expense of those that are hard to measure such as societal culture and its influence on behaviour.” He argues that critical issues for future advancement in international management research will involve the exploration of phenomena that are difficult to quantify as well as the incorporation of “local country knowledge into the development of theories about management” (Cheng, 2007, 26–27).

Subsequent to Estonia’s accession to the EU, the intercultural contacts of managers in Estonian organisations dramatically increased and changed their nature. Nowadays, these contacts, which are often initiated by the Estonian side, are more direct, independent, and diverse in the contexts of their occurrence. Research into the dynamics of preferred persuasive styles and their connection with the effectiveness of communication in a global business context will reveal the factors that impact the effectiveness of IPC.

The aim and research tasks

The core issue of this doctoral research project is the process of intercultural persuasive communication (IPC) in an organisational environment, into which this paper will provide an insight. In the current study, IPC is handled as a special mode of business interaction, which is part of the work responsibilities of interacting professionals.

The central problem of the study is how to make IPC effective in an organisational environment and to reduce semantic asymmetries among communicators.

In order to solve this problem, this doctoral thesis aims to determine the major factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational context.

Due to the format of the doctoral thesis it was necessary to limit the investigation to the most reflective and representative environments. For the same reason, a traditional approach was adopted to the complex phenomena of cultural identity (Hall, 1992), which states that culture is grounded on a belonging to the group, that it operates as a normative scenario for behaviour and is expressed both implicitly and explicitly.

The first research task is to establish how the Estonian managers perceive the main differences in IPC between themselves and their business counterparts, and to clarify the nature of these differences (Study 1, Study 3).

The second research task is to determine the preferred persuasion style of the Estonian managers and to evaluate their perception of different preferred persuasion styles during IPC (Study 3).

The third research task is to identify the strategy of adaptation that Estonian managers use to raise the effectiveness of IPC within the representatives of different preferred persuasion styles (Study 3).

The fourth research task is connected to the influences of the hierarchical issues on IPC in an organisational context (Study 1). It seeks to compare the process and outcome of status related social categorisation in the cultures within the different communication styles (Study 2, Study 4 A).

The methods used in the research

The nature of this study gave rise to the research methodology. IPC in business is a goal driven process. To understand this process the author used Bernard's (2012, 127-128) approach that "cultural data" is obtained from the people who "have a particular competence in some cultural domains" and are "selected for their competence rather than for their representativeness" (Bernard, 2012, 171-173). Based on (Handwerker 2001; Wolcott 2008; Zaman 2008) sampling techniques, 10-20 knowledgeable informants served as a reliable source to understand the contents of the well-defined cultural domain.

It would not have been possible to study the dynamics of the process and the factors influencing its effectiveness just by answering a "yes/no" question (as in the case of hypothesis testing). Therefore, the following qualitative methods were implemented:

1. Ethnographic techniques were used for the exploratory case study in order to understand and explain the communication between two departments of an international company from the perspective of the Estonian managers (Study 1). The case company was selected because of its 20 years of experience in operating a production unit in Estonia and its close intra-company collaboration between the Estonian and German departments. Being one of the world leaders in medical engineering, this concern has a strong well-developed organisational culture which helps to understand the influences of the managers' national culture on their communicative practices.
2. An explanatory applied study was designed to investigate preferred persuasive styles, the perceptions of alternative persuasive styles and the adaptation strategies among Estonian local municipal managers (Study 3).
3. A comparative investigation was implemented to establish the impact of the communication style of Estonians and Italians (low and high context respectively) on how they categorise a third culture (English) in terms of status (Study 2). Italian culture was chosen for a comparison because of the exploration and evaluation of its communication style by scholars and its polarity with the Estonian communication style.
4. The empirical method of research among Estonian professionals was interpretive and based on dialogue. It was performed in the following phases: introductory, reflective, interactive and clarifying. The choice of respondents was based on their similarities (cultural background, interest in intercultural communication and affiliation with the Estonian Red Cross) and differences (demographics, areas of activity, experience and education) (Study 4 A).

The following studies were designed and carried out for this research project:

The data was collected in stages to comprehend the differences and problems in communication between Estonian and German managers from the perspective of the former. An open-ended interview with the managers was conducted by e-mail. This interview included the questions about respondents' demographics and the problems they experienced in intercultural contacts. Sixteen (16) managers, all of whom were included in the research sample, were regularly involved in communication between the departments in question (Study 1). A personal meeting was organised with the goal to clarify the problems they indicated in their e-mail interviews (Study 1). A focus-group discussion according to the frame presented in Appendix 1 was arranged to understand the imbalances in cultural orientations of the Estonian and German respondents (Study 1).

A contrived experiment under the author's supervision was chosen to study the effects of the communication style on the process of social categorisation. It was simultaneously implemented in three stages among 14 Estonian and 18 Italian students who attended a common study programme in Estonia. The Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas approach (2009, 711) was adopted and non-

task related information was used because it “affects perceptions of status distance and relationships at work” (Study 2). During the common discussion, respondents were checked on their knowledge of the relevant details of the British establishment. They were asked to make individual notes about the social status of the personalities presented on a video that was shown afterwards (Study 2). The students were requested to discuss these notes in both intra-national groups and to orally present a summarised statement about the group decision process. The results were collected from both groups for comparative analysis (Study 2).

To understand the process of social categorisation more deeply in an intercultural environment when the relevant information of status was not willingly disclosed, a dialogue with 46 Estonian professionals was conducted (Study 4 A), which allowed the author to be both a participant and an observer, thus facilitating interaction with different respondents on a more personal level before and after the event. The dialogue about the status issues in an intercultural environment was performed in the following phases. During the introductory phase the contrived experiment from Study 2 was introduced to participants. In the reflective phase, participants were in groups composed of focus-groups of 6 or 7 people; each group presented their comments and expressed their attitude towards and their understanding of status issues. In the interactive phase some participants shared their personal experiences relating to social differences and status issues with the rest of the audience. During the clarifying phase, the author and participants engaged in the exchange of questions and answers to reach the “inner qualities” of status related social categorisation processes in different environments. The results were noted for subsequent interpretation and analysis (Study 4 A).

An e-mail questionnaire was conducted about demographics and the main responsibilities related to intercultural communication among managers of Estonian local municipal governments (Study 3). The questionnaire was carried out to select the specialised informants involved in intercultural projects with various partners on a regular basis; as a result, 18 from 25 respondents were chosen. A personal interview was carried out to explore the nature and content of the respondents’ recent intercultural business interactions of a persuasive nature, and to obtain their feedback on the effectiveness of these interactions. After the replies were analysed and the reported experiences were grouped, using Scollon’s politeness system factors (Scollon and Scollon, 2003), a dialogue was conducted with specialised informants according to the outline presented in Appendix 2.

The originality of the research and its practical merit

The interest in the persuasive issue is historic as the ancient Greeks and Romans explored the essence of rhetoric and the art of political debate. The Romans, Quintilian and Cicero, as well as the Greeks, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, (in view of his famous work on rhetoric) paid attention to the techniques and strategies of

speech-making (Hall 2007). The ideologists of the Roman Empire were concerned as to how to use persuasive messages to indoctrinate conquered nations, such as Persia. The practice of convincing message delivery remained a focus of religious traditions through the ages. For example, it was used by the Jesuits in medieval Europe.

Between World Wars I and II, psychologists made a number of scientific studies on persuasion (e.g. Lippmann 1922, 1925; Lund 1925; Schanck and Goodman 1939). However, since Aristotle's writing on persuasive communication, Hovland et al. (1953) are recognised to be the founders of the field that offered a scientific systematic approach to study "the conditions under which the effectiveness of one or another type of persuasive communication is increased or decreased" (Hovland et al. 1953, 5). Hovland's analysis, which is considered the seminal work for later studies on the effectiveness of persuasion (Insko 1967, 1; O'Keefe 2015), provides the grounds for numerous models and concepts. The aforementioned theories were developed primarily within the American environment (Benoit and Benoit 2008; Dillard and Shen 2012; Gass and Seiter 2013). The dominating areas of study were rhetoric and political communication at the level of mass communication (Lee 2004; Perloff 2013) in addition to health communication and social marketing.

Persuasion in intercultural business environments has been empirically investigated in international marketing but not aimed at handling the problems of communication styles. Instead these studies were primarily focused on cultural differences in orientations, e.g. collectivism and individualism (Cialdini et al. 1999); negotiation tactics, goals and values (Aaker and Maheswaran 1997; Simintiras and Thomas 1998; Chang and Chou 2008). The topic of persuasive communication in an international setting has been addressed by Glenn et al. (1977) and Johnstone (1989), who proved that a certain preferred communication style is losing its effectiveness in intercultural interactions; understandably, electronic communication was excluded as it was not the norm. However, these investigations were made from a cross-cultural rather than intercultural perspective: the scholars analysed comparatively and conceptualised persuasive communication patterns of different cultures. Any further study of this problem in academic literature is not known to the author.

The originality of this paper can be summarised as follows:

1. Persuasive communication was explored in an organisational context, and a model of effective persuasion for the intercultural business environment was created as a result. A number of empirical studies and theoretical concepts of persuasion existed in marketing related fields, but they used a value-based or strategic approach. The bulk of this research focused on the contacts when the source and the receiver(s) were not united by work functions. So far, a major part of persuasion theory was developed in political communication, where similar to marketing, the source and the receivers have an asymmetric

relationship. Traditionally, the models stressed the importance of a pleasant situation where the message is received and where the persuader is an expert. Business communication in private or public sectors is more formal and is meant to occur between the specialised professionals about the subjects that are related to areas of their professional credibility. The source and the receiver are united by the function and nature of work responsibilities.

2. This paper handles the long-standing issues of persuasive intercultural communication in an organisational context and introduces the key factors of effective persuasion for intercultural contacts. The author studied the topic in an international setting where a number of cultures with different communication patterns were involved in interaction with the Estonian managers. In addition, this paper applies to the intercultural context theoretical provisions primarily used for general communication. The majority of theories and concepts related to persuasive communication were developed from the American perspective for the mono-cultural environment.
3. While persuasion was studied and conceptualised mainly cross-culturally, this dissertation analyses managers' interaction from within an intercultural communication perspective (that means when the parts intercommunicate, and the analysis reflects the perception of the dynamics of this process by the source). Not only were the differences in persuasion styles explored, but also the strategies of adaptation of the persuasion styles during the interactions.
4. This paper confirms the contiguity of the quasi-logical preferred persuasion style with low- context communication. However, it also proves that inside the quasi-logical continuum, there are other factors such as cultural orientations (egalitarian or hierarchical and process or result) that influence the effectiveness of persuasion.

This study sees its practical contribution as stated below:

First, it has a multidisciplinary relevance as it borders with international business discourse, managerial intercultural communication and helps a conceptually and empirically progressive understanding of persuasive intercultural communication in an organisational context.

Second, it adds to the body of knowledge in the field of persuasive intercultural communication in business. Since Estonians started making extensive public appearances in international business roughly two decades ago, this research can later serve as a benchmark to enable other scholars to make more profound comparisons over much longer periods of time.

Third, a model of effective persuasion for intercultural organisational context provides the tools for successful networking in an international setting. The practitioners can predict and plan IPC in order to raise its effectiveness. For

managers from egalitarian, low-context cultures the study highlights and exposes the significance of status issues. It is helpful during negotiations and during the development of the relational capabilities in a global context to consider the differences in results and process orientation.

Fourth, a deeper understanding of IPC will support the internationalisation process of the enterprises. Entrepreneurs, start-up entrepreneurs and managers can achieve better results by implementing suitable persuasive styles in convincing their potential investors.

Fifth, the key factors of effective IPC will help the management of international companies in the motivation of their diverse employees without an additional reward.

Sixth, the explanation of the differences in IPC cultural styles and cultural orientations provides the guidelines for the international teamwork routine in international organisations. The identification of their preferred persuasive styles and those of their partners will contribute to successful co-operation within the team.

Seventh, the findings gained from the study of interdepartmental communication of the international company offer helpful information for managers about the priorities of training in an international company. It proves that it will be useful for managers involved in regular international operations to develop their intercultural communication skills even prior to professional training.

Finally, the findings support more straightforward recommendations for managers from cultures with a quasi-logical preferred persuasive style. In order to raise the effectiveness of communication with partners that use alternative preferred persuasive styles, they should pay more attention to the message treatment and code as well as to the social and cultural systems of their counterparts. As the study demonstrates, the managers should be aware of status issues and their perception in intercultural environment.

PART 1. THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ANALYSING INTERCULTURAL PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

If we seek to understand a people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can, in that particular historical and cultural background. ... If we wish to convince them, we have to use their language as far as we can, not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind. That is one necessity. Something, that goes even much further than that, is not the appeal to logic and reason, but some kind of emotional awareness of other people.

(Nehru, 1950)

The central problem of this study is how to make IPC effective in an organisational context and to reduce semantic asymmetries among communicators. Therefore this doctoral thesis aims to ascertain the major factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in organisations. It should be mentioned that the author seeks to contribute to the existing theoretical literature on persuasion with the issues that are particularly relevant and specific to an intercultural business context.

One of the founding scientific concepts of persuasive communication, the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al 1953), stressed the status of the source as one of the important attributes to be credible for persuasion. The concept of source credibility varies in different cultures, and more importantly, it is communicated in different ways. Diversity scholars (Jiang et al. 2012; Kawamura and Jackson 2014) claim that status hierarchies as underlying dimensions of diversity are often missed in current studies.

Persuasive communication in a business environment has been investigated empirically and theoretically but mainly outside the intercultural context, except for the studies in marketing that have a strategic or a value-behaviour approach (e. g. Hornikx and O'Keefe 2011). Some fundamental concepts of persuasive communication that were developed for political communication at the mass communication level were proven to be applicable in the intra-cultural organisational environment. IPC is a research domain that has been relatively overlooked by scholars.

IPC in an organisational context emerges from the theories of intercultural communication in business and persuasion. It is a process related to cognition when managers rely on their existing mental schemas and create further comprehension of a diverse environment which links IPC to the studies on cognition of diversity. Less explored areas between those interlinked basic concepts are shown in figure 1. These areas are the focus of this dissertation project.

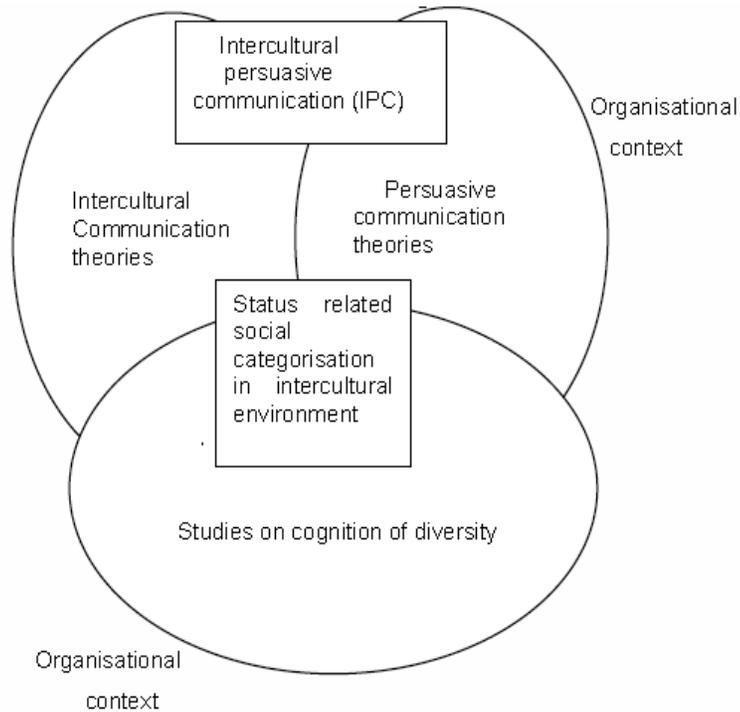


Figure 1. Interconnections and gaps between the constructing units of the theoretical framework (drafted by the author)

1.1. Intercultural communication and its effectiveness in an organisational context

Scollon and Scollon’ approach was used for this dissertation. They (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 182) described organisations as goal-directed discourse systems, where professional communication is performed within clearly shaped units, which include corporate culture, professional group, generational discourse and gender discourse. Organisations in this case are not necessarily defined by a formal structure, and communication plays a role in organising a structure.

This view is supported by the CCO (communication as constitutive of organisations) model (Schoeneborn and Blaschke 2014) that handles an organisation as four communication flows where each flow involves its own system of communication (Cooren et al., 2011). Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) used the broader concept of discourse and defined it as a system of communication within the group.

Study 1 provides a more comprehensive introduction into intra-organisational intercultural communication and its connection with the national cultures of the

participants based on the Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) model of seven cultural orientations. When these orientations are communicated within an international organisation the important factor to consider is the differences in its members' communication styles. These differences were first conceptualised by Edward T. Hall (1959; 1981; Hall and Hall, 1990), whose concepts serve as a fundamental platform for the analysis of intercultural communication (Kittler et al. 2011). Trompenaars's dimensions of universalism and particularism (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1997) are based on dualistic high and low context cultural factors respectively; high-context (or universalistic) cultures operate relying on previously shared experiences and relational structures but low-context (or particularistic) cultures use the messages as directly and linearly as possible. It should be stressed (Hall 1981) that no culture is purely a high or low context type, but communication is viewed as predominantly containing contextual clues or plain information. It is argued (Kittler et al. 2011) that the interpretation of intercultural communication in any culture is context and situation dependent. A more thorough description of Hall's model and its application in different contexts is given in Study 1 and Study 2.

A discourse system, e.g. professional affiliation, has an influence on communication style (O'Hara-Devereaux and Johansen 1994) as is shown in figure 2.

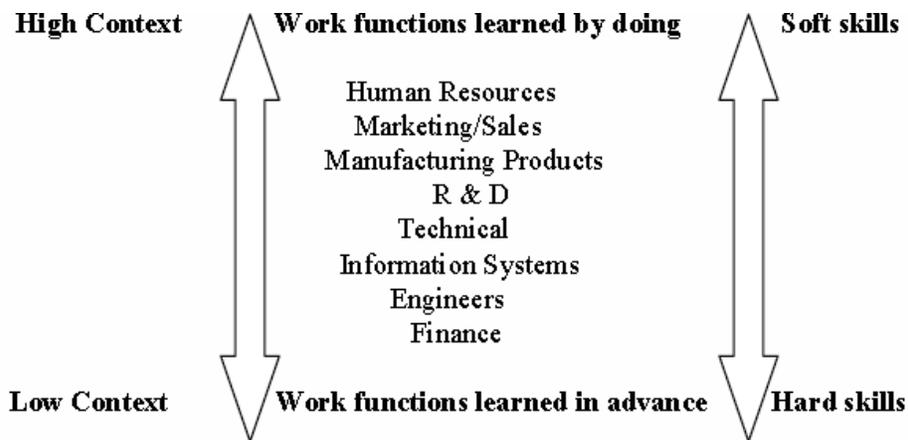


Figure 2. The connection of professional discourse with the context level of communication (drafted by the author based on O'Hara-Devereaux and Johansen 1994)

Since the emergence of the field, the effectiveness of intercultural communication has been at the centre of attention in the pragmatic tradition of scholarship (Ruben 1977; Hammer 1987; Koester and Olebe 1988; Cui and Den Berg 1991). The

theoretical basis of intercultural communication effectiveness was conceptualised by William Gudykunst. His anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory of effective communication (Gudykunst 2005) is focused on predictions and explanations regarding strangers' behaviour and on minimising misunderstandings. A detailed review of the theory can be found in Study 3.

Erving Goffman (1967) introduced the practices of social interactions in intra-cultural communication and the influence of the social context on someone's image as perceived by oneself and others. Following his ideas, Imahori and Cupach (2005) developed the identity management theory (IMT), which handles the complexity of social identity in intercultural interaction and argues (Cupach and Imahori 1993, 118) that for the effectiveness of communication, communicators should "successfully negotiate mutually acceptable identities in interaction." Swann et al. (2009) argue that minorities try to manage manifestations of their social identity in a diverse organisation in order to reduce anxiety caused by their low status and to raise the effectiveness of communication. The author will provide more explanation about the related constructs of status and social identity towards the end of this part.

According to Gudykunst and Lee (2002) the effectiveness of intercultural communication requires that messages be transmitted using an intercultural rather than a cross-cultural approach. They stated (Gudykunst and Lee 2002) that intercultural communication involves the process of interaction between people from different cultures, while cross-cultural communication involves a comparison of communication within one culture to that within another. It should be noted that a long-lasting confusion prevails between the terms *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* in the literature that was assessed by Stan Harms in 1973. He (Harms 1973, 41) associated intercultural communication with a joint venture when the partners have a common goal rather than individual goals and one-way messages as in cross-cultural communication. The author of this dissertation used an intercultural approach in Studies 1 and 3 and explored communication from within the intercultural perspective. The author of "When Cultures Collide: Leading across Cultures", Richard Lewis, used the intercultural approach to study communication between different cultural types. As the title of his classic bestseller proposes (Lewis 2006) he used interactions to draw his conclusions. The findings of Geert Hofstede (2001) are an outcome of cross-cultural studies where values, behaviours, institutions, and organisations across nations were first investigated within their own respective cultures to be comparatively analysed afterwards. This approach was used in Study 2 of this dissertation.

The distinction between these two fields of research can be summarised as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Intercultural and cross-cultural approaches to communication studies

Intercultural approach	Cross-cultural approach
Interaction	Comparison
Richard Lewis (2006) “When Cultures Collide: Leading across Cultures”	Geert Hofstede (2001) “Culture’s Consequences: comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organizations across nations”
Co-operative environment	Ethnocentric environment
Adaptation	Contrast
Studies 1 and 3	Study 2

Source: drafted by the author

However, these two fields of research are related, and cross-cultural models can be evolved in an intercultural setting for some new perspectives. For further development of the cross-cultural concept of persuasive communication both theoretically and practically, it was accessed in the intercultural context in Study 3.

1.2. Theories of persuasive communication and their applicability for an organisational context

The vast majority of persuasive theories originated from the USA; these theories are widely used in different fields: on an intrapersonal level in health communication and child development and on interpersonal and intergroup levels in psychology with the main focus on the psychological attributes of the receivers. In management studies they are used on an organisational level to handle the process of change. In marketing they are used on different levels for sales negotiations and on mass communication level, for sales’ support.

While the spectrum of persuasion theories is very wide, initially the main persuasive concepts were prepared for propaganda and political communication, mainly on mass communication level. However, they still serve a seminal role for business related disciplines. For instance, Shrum at al. (2012) tested the application of persuasive theories in consumer behaviour.

The persuasion theories that provide an insight into the communication process have been selected for discussion in this dissertation. From a very extensive bulk of literature the focus was on the theories that have a significant influence on the field, and as shown below, were proven to be applicable to the organisational context. It is agreed among scholars (O’Keefe 2015) that Hovland (Hovland at al.1953; Sherif and Hovland 1961; Hovland at al. 1967) was the founder of the scientific

approach to persuasive communication. It has been traditionally defined as the message that was made with the goal “to shape, reinforce or change” someone’s behaviour (Miller, 1980). Its effectiveness was evaluated by the persuader based on the achievement of the desired outcome.

Hovland et al. (1953) developed the factor, functional model, and constructivist models that constitute the Source Credibility theory. The factor model presents the inner characteristics of the source and of the audience; it connects the effectiveness of persuasion with the credibility and the expertise of the persuader as well as with the argumentation of the message and the atmosphere in which it is delivered.

The Source Credibility theory was applied by communication scholars Berlo et al. (1969) and McCroskey (1968) for devising evaluation systems of acceptability of message sources and ethos respectively. Doney and Cannon (1997) used Hovland’s findings “to determine five cognitive processes through which industrial buyers can develop trust in a supplier firm and its salesforce” (Doney and Cannon 1997, 35). Ko et al. (2005) identified behavioural communication-related factors that influence knowledge transfer from consultants to clients in enterprise.

The Reinforcement theory (Hovland et al. 1967) focuses on the message. It claims that in order to gain approval from the receiver(s), information should be presented in a certain way. It has found its applications in management and organisational studies. Hersey and Blanchard’s (1977) situational leadership theory argues that the leadership style should be adjusted to the followers. A few concepts of employees’ motivation in the work place (Ivancevich et al. 2004) used the initial ideas of the Reinforcement theory.

Table 2 shows the main concepts of Hovland and his associates and the examples of their influences on mainstream theories in business related fields.

These concepts have found application in the organisational context and further development in mainly American-based theories. According to Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1997), theoretical provisions developed in the US environment often do not consider cultural diversity. The effectiveness of persuasive communication in the cross-cultural context was first accessed by Glenn et al. (1977) who themselves considered their work preliminary with serious limitations (Glenn et al. 1977, 65-66). Johnstone (1989) asserted that a certain preferred persuasive style exists at any one cultural level and developed the concept of the *Quasi-logical, Presentational and Analogical* generic styles of persuasion. The concept of cross-cultural differences in persuasion can be found in Study 3.

Table 2. Theoretical impact of persuasion theories

Seminal Concept	Theoretical Impact	Application in Organisational Context
Source Credibility theory (Hovland at al.1953): factor, functional and constructivist models of persuasion	Berlo’s at al. (1969) dimensions for evaluating acceptability of message sources	Internal marketing Relationship management
	McCroskey’s J.C. (1968) scales for measurement of ethos	Internal marketing Relationship management
	Doney and Cannon’s (1997), five cognitive processes for trust development	Business to business marketing Outsourcing
	Ko at al. (2005) behavioural factors that influence knowledge transfer	Knowledge transfer Relationship management
The Reinforcement theory (Hovland at al.1967): information should be presented in a certain way for particular receivers	Hersey and Blanchard’s (1977) situational leadership theory	Management Leadership
	Ivancevich at al. (2004) employees’ motivation in the work place	Human Resource management

Source: drafted by the author

1.3. Cognition of social status in culturally diverse organisational context

According to Hovland (Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Hovland at al. 1953) expertness and status are important factors of source credibility; and these factors were proven to be applicable to the business environment as shown above. However, if expertness is related to functional expertise in a particular sector and is context specific, such complex phenomena as status and social identity, as related constructs, are context and culture dependent.

Diversity which is “a variation based on any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different” (Mannix and Neale 2005, 33) is based on categorisation. Status related social categorisation is the cognitive process of organising the flow of information into categories that are related to social class. Bodenhausen et al. (2011, 326) have introduced an important direction in studies

on the cognition of diversity which demonstrates an interconnection between social and personal identities as ways of perception of oneself and others. Bodenhausen et al. (2011, 323) noted that social categorisation “initiates the activation of a variety of stereotypes associated with the category in question”. Based on these findings, the author handles social status as a combination of features that are individuated (e.g. personal characteristics) and categorical (organised social impressions including stereotypes).

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1997) distinguish achieved status and ascribed status influences in the organisational context. Achieved status is gained thanks to successful actions and is lost because of failure. It depends on individual performance; it is here today and gone tomorrow. Ascribed status is, to a large extent, a matter of judgement (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1997), especially in diverse organisations and intercultural settings.

An ascribed status is related to hierarchical environments where individuals sustain inequality unlike in egalitarian societies where people have equal social status. Hofstede’s index of power distance shows the extent to which employees expect to obey their superiors. According to Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010) the index of power distance of the Estonian social environment is 40; it is comparatively the lowest of indexes of social environments where counterparts of Estonians in Studies 2 and 3 are originally from. The dimensions of the degree of individualism and uncertainty avoidance are also related to the status differences. The index of individualism, which shows the degree of interdependence between the members of society, scores 60 for Estonia. The index of uncertainty avoidance, which is relevant to the extent to which people fear unknown and unpredictable situations, is 60 for Estonia and is equal to its individualism index (Hofstede et al., 2010). It means that the main principles of status in Estonian society are rather achieved than ascribed, but the people would prefer the predictability of the foreign environment where the status issues might be in question (Study 4 A).

According to the prominent diversity scholar, Susan Jackson, various types of diversity influence organisationally relevant communication at work; however, social status hierarchies are “some of the most important drivers of interactions” (Kawamura and Jackson 2014, 267). They have influences on exclusion, rejection, or the ignoring of an individual (or group) (Hitlan et al. 2006, 217); and the cognition of social identity in an ethnically diverse organisation is more complex. Diversity researchers distinguish readily detected (or surface level) and underlying (or deep-level) categories of diversity at work. These categories are explained in Study 2.

Dr. Jackson claims that most of the empirical studies on cognition that explore the influence of diversity on communication are carried out on surface level types of diversity (Kawamura and Jackson 2014, 266-267). For example, some works highlighted the gender effects in an organisation (Hitlan et al. 2006) when men

have higher social status compared to women. Swann et al. (2009) pointed out that minorities in a diverse organisation often rely on implicit instead of explicit modes when they communicate the social class or social category to which they belong. These members of the organisation, where a majority belong to the low-context American culture, (Swann et al. 2009, 99) are “banking on the assumption that perceivers will know and understand the implicit rules”. The usage of context clues in the presentation of underlying categories of social status accompanies high context communication style. According to O’Harra-Devereaux and Johansen (1994, 54) “extensive background knowledge is automatically brought to bear in giving meaning to events and communications. Nothing can be described as an isolated event; everything is connected to a meaningful context.” Language is indecipherable because words are not very significant and are used in large amounts (LeBaron 2003; Samovar and Porter 2004). O’Harra-Devereaux and Johansen (1994, 54-55) have argued, that members of low-context cultures do not allow much “extraneous” information in their communication; “in order to give detailed meaning to an event, they require detailed information.” Low-context cultures use language succinctly (LeBaron 2003; Samovar and Porter, 2004). That is also true for Estonian communication style (Study 1 and Study 2).

It can be concluded that the usage of context clues in the presentation of the underlying categories of social status will affect the whole process of communication and its effectiveness in the intercultural environment.

PART 2. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY IN ESTONIAN ORGANISATIONS

This part of the dissertation demonstrates the relation of research tasks to the gaps between the basic interconnected concepts that constitute the theoretical framework of the current investigation. The methods implemented in the research are introduced here. Based on academic sources, four propositions were developed, which are explained below. Their bond with the gaps between the main theoretical concepts and research tasks, as shown in Figure 3, determined the methodology for the four studies conducted in Estonian organisations during the period 2009-2011.

2.1. Composition of the research

Dillard et al. (2007) demonstrated in their review of literature that it is a tradition in persuasion scholarship to treat perceived effectiveness (PE) of persuasion as actual effectiveness (AE); in their study they confirmed PE–AE correspondence. The approach taken in this thesis is based on the agreement among scholars that the effectiveness of the persuasive message is evaluated by its source.

The construction of the theoretical frame for the research began in 2002 by collecting literature on intercultural communication and its effectiveness, organisational communication, persuasive theories and the cognition of diversity. The author proceeded with the collection until the final phases of the exploration. The empirical studies were designed based on the analysis of existing literature and the gaps between the interrelated concepts that this analysis revealed.

As a consequence of a lack of research on IPC in an organisational context both internationally and in Estonia, four directing criteria were followed when creating research tasks. *The first is the theoretical interconnections and gaps* between the concepts that are related to the study: intercultural communication, persuasive communication and studies on cognition of diversity. *The second is the methodology suited to* shape the empirical research design and mode of analysis. *The third is generalisation* that enables one to apply the results of the study to some cultural business environments with similar characteristics. *The fourth criterion relates the theoretical and managerial implications* of the findings.

2.2. Research strategy and the methods used for empirical analysis

The first research task was to establish how the Estonian managers perceive the main differences in IPC between themselves and their business counterparts, and to clarify the nature of these differences. In spring of 2010 e-mail and personal interviews were designed and conducted with 16 managers of the international company who were constantly communicating with their German colleagues because of their shared work functions. These interviews, and the focus-group discussion that followed,

concentrated on communication differences during episodes of a persuasive nature. The selected informants were those whose intercultural interactions occurred within clearly shaped types of the discourse system: the corporate culture (they all worked for the same engineering company), the professional group (they shared a technical educational background), the generational discourse system (Estonian and German managers had similar age characteristics) and the gender discourse system (they were all male). The purposive sampling approach by Patton (2002) was applied as it is suggested that it is suitable for information-rich cases and homogeneous groups. The results were analysed in Study 1 with the focus on differences in communication styles and cultural orientations: results versus process, egalitarianism versus hierarchy. In autumn 2011, an e-mail questionnaire was designed and sent to 25 managers of Estonian municipal governments, and 18 knowledgeable informants were chosen as a result. The target sample was managers who have regular intercultural interactions in the fields of social services, education, pedagogy, health care and service management; stratified purposeful sampling (Patton 2002) was used for this investigation. In the sample, 17% of the managers are men, 83% are women, representing 10 local municipalities from 10 different counties out of a total of 15 in Estonia. Only interactions with the same gender representatives were chosen for analysis in Study 3 to complement the findings of Study 1. Personal interviews were carried out with 18 knowledgeable informants with the focus on perceived differences in communication styles, which is analysed in Study 3.

To determine the preferred persuasion style of the Estonian managers and to evaluate their perception of different preferred persuasion styles during IPC (*the second research task*) a dialogue was conducted with 18 knowledgeable informants, the results of which are analysed in Study 3. The outline of this dialogue is presented in Appendix 2.

To study a process of communication in dynamic and to approach it from within an intercultural perspective it is necessary to identify the strategy of adaptation that Estonian managers use to raise the effectiveness of IPC within the representatives of different preferred persuasion styles. That was settled as *the third research task* and analysed in Study 3 as a result of the dialogue. During this dialogue the informants presented some cases, which were briefly described in their earlier replies to the interview questions and which were selected for discussion.

The fourth research task is connected to the influences of the hierarchical issues on IPC in an organisational context. The differences in orientations towards egalitarianism versus hierarchy influence the effectiveness of IPC, as is shown in Study 1. However, the outcome of persuasion is influenced by the issues of the official hierarchy that is expressed explicitly and by the informal hierarchy that is related to social status and is expressed implicitly. It was necessary to compare the process and outcome of status related social categorisation in the cultures within the different communication styles. That was achieved in Study 2, which was conducted in 2009 with the contrasting cases sampling techniques among 14 Estonian and 18 Italian students who attended a common study programme in Estonia, simultaneously. This

kind of purposive sample is related to the aim of the comparative study (Patton 2002) and was composed of respondents with different communication styles. Differences in communication styles between the cultures in question are explained in Study 2. In 2011, a study of social categorisation was conducted among 46 Estonian professionals and a conceptual sampling based on their similarities and differences (Patton 2002) was used. The sampling that is done in this way provides a variation of attributes within the same cultural pool. The respondents had various fields of activity and demographics, but were all volunteers of the Estonian Red Cross; the majority lived most of their lives in Estonia, spoke Estonian as their native language and experienced intercultural interactions of some kind. The “inner qualities” of the process of status related social categorisation are shown in Study 4 A.

2.3. The propositions for empirical analysis

To address the core semantic asymmetries among the source and receivers in IPC and to access the factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational context four propositions have been created. The argumentation for the first proposition can be found in Study 3. The first proposition is related to the adaptation strategies of the cultural persuasive style of the source and the preferred persuasive style of the receiver. The second proposition deals with the influences of their cultural orientations, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, on the effectiveness of IPC even if they have similar cultural persuasive styles. Prerequisites for the second proposition can be seen in Study 1 and Study 3.

According to Diefenbach (2013, 42) organisations and societies consist of many heterogeneous clusters of social groups. In his theorem 5, he defines hierarchy (Diefenbach 2013, 41) as a formal order of unequal positions within an explicitly defined organisational structure. According to their cultural orientation towards hierarchy or egalitarianism, the managers can be more or less sensitive to this inequality respectively, but they have an explicit indication of the official rule systems. An informal hierarchy that is connected with attitudes, behaviours, communication and discourse was defined by Diefenbach (2013, 41) in his theorem 6. It is an informal order of unequal social relationships that becomes sustained through communication. Magee and Galinsky, (2008, 371) stated that status “exists entirely in the eyes of others” being an implicit social rank order of individuals or groups. They composed a review of academic sources which prove that judgments about one’s competence and status are made “within minutes of interaction” (Magee and Galinsky, 2008, 357) and are often based on subtle factors, e. g. non-verbal behaviour. The third proposition connects the status related social categorisation of the receiver with the effectiveness of IPC.

According to Hofstede et al. (1990) the process-oriented managers concentrate on the means of a task that should be fulfilled while the results-oriented managers associate with what has to be done to achieve a particular goal. The fourth proposition links the cultural orientation, results vs. process, of communicators

with the effectiveness of IPC; the theoretical premise for this can be read in Study 1 and Study 3.

Following is how the propositions (P1, P2, P3 and P4) are formulated:

P1. The effectiveness of IPC is impacted if the adaptation strategy of the cultural persuasive style of the source does not match the preferred persuasive style of the receiver (Study 3).

P2. The cultural orientation, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, of the source influences the effectiveness of IPC with the hierarchically sensitive receiver even if they have similar cultural persuasive styles (Study 1, Study 3).

P3. The practice of status related social categorisation differs between cultures with different communication styles (Study 2, Study 4 A).

P4. The cultural orientation, results vs. process, of the source and the receiver impacts the effectiveness of IPC (Study 1, Study 3).

Figure 3 bounds the propositions, research tasks and Studies with the gaps within the theoretical framework.

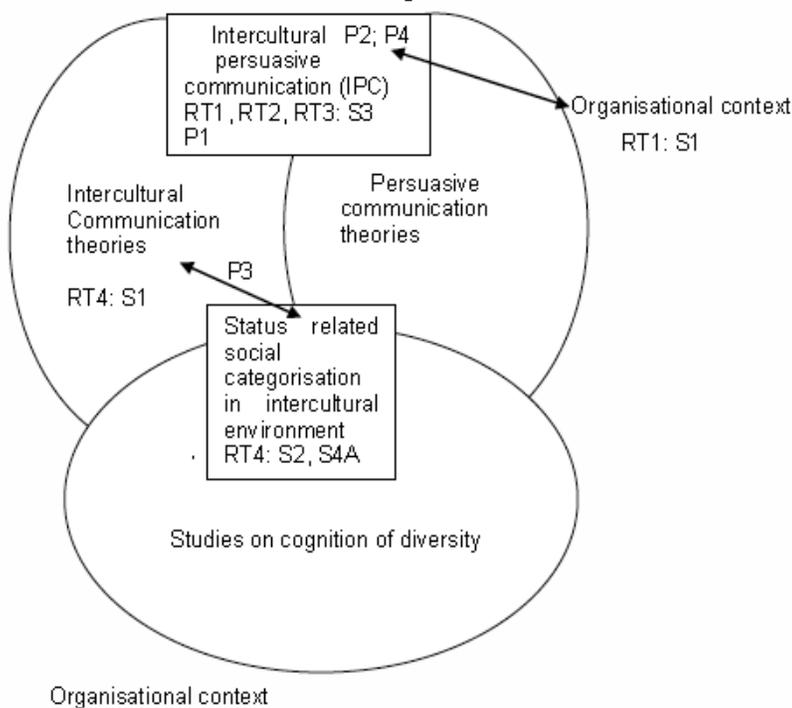


Figure 3. Propositions (P), Research Tasks (RT) and Studies (S) in connection with the gaps within the theoretical framework (drafted by the author)

PART 3. PUBLICATIONS

**1. PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES IN
INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION
REGARDING ORGANISATIONAL FORMALISATION:
A CASE STUDY OF AN INTERNATIONAL COMPANY**

Elena Pruvli and Ruth Alas

Pruvli, E. and Alas, R. 2014. Perceived differences in interdepartmental communication regarding organisational formalisation: a case study of an international company. *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia. The Journal of University of Economics in Bratislava*, 7 (26), 265 - 278.

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to study differences in communication between two cultures that are believed to belong to a low-context pole and represent “old“ and “new“ European. It is achieved in the context of the German-based MNE by investigation of the perceived differences between Estonian and Bavarian-based production units. An exploratory qualitative case study with ethnographic techniques proved that the reason for dysfunctional outcomes originated in how knowledge of norms was transferred and in differences in cultural orientations. It concludes that prior to organisational learning and development activities MNE managers should get training in intercultural communication.

Key words

intercultural communication, formalisation, low-context communication, Schwartz’s cultural directions model

JEL Classification: F23, M53

Introduction

Cultural differences in the communication process have received significant attention by scholars. Most of the studies followed the tradition of Hall (Hall, 1981; Hall, 1990) and involved examination of polar communication styles such as those of the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans versus those of the Germans, Americans and Northern Europeans (Würtz, 2006); Indians versus Germans (Fleischmann, 2013) and Estonians versus Italians (Pruvli & Alas, 2012). There were more investigations of Japanese-American interaction than between any other cultures (Rogers, Hart & Miike, 2002; Zakaria & Cogburn, 2010).

However, there has been little research into the communication between same context pole cultures that originate from “old“ and “new“ Europe. It is a trend to study the problems of “old“ and “new“ European business partnerships from a perspective of an “old“ partner, who relates the problems to East-European “behaviour and thinking associated with the communist era” (Pauleen, Rooney & Holden, 2010, p. 391). To get a reflection from “new” European representatives this study is conducted from a perspective of Estonian managers working in medical engineering MNE with headquarters in Germany. It investigates the perceived differences in communication with regard to organisational formalisation between

Estonian and Bavarian-based production units. According to Hammerich & Lewis (2013; p. 46) cultural agility is a sustainable competitive advantage for an international company. Clarity about organisational formalisation that means about rules and regulations inside the company is important for maintaining sustainability. This paper attempts to demonstrate how “deep and often invisible natural programming” (Hammerich & Lewis; 2013) affects communication between departments.

Production in the case company is based on bespoke orders from its international clients, and human resources are highly qualified. This choice of perspective and case company helps to reduce the other existing bias. Collinson and Rugman (2010) proved, that case studies of MNEs in management are biased towards US-based mass production manufacturers that are widely known for “phony“ brands. Clarifying the nature of communication problems in a chosen case company will help consultants and trainers to understand the interdepartmental communication of the “average“ MNE.

1 Theoretical framework

This part of the paper consists of two sections that link the researched phenomena with existing body of literature. First, it shows the connection of organisational formalisation with organisational culture and introduces four dimensions that influence organisational formalisation. Next section describes culturally affected communication styles and related studies. Current research is focused on communication related to organisational formalisation and it is important to discover the process of how knowledge about managerial roles, rules and regulations is transmitted within international organisation.

1.1 Organisational formalisation as a part of organisational culture

Within the organisation the organisational culture is to a large extent created. The culture as a concept with important functions is to clarify and reinforce the norms of behaviour (Greenberg, 2003); and to facilitate communication in its different forms (Islam & Zyphur, 2009). Organisational formalisation is a mix of shared and learned rules and regulations; it is communicated in a formal environment and is related to business knowledge (Fink & Holden, 2010). Rapert and Brent (1998) define the formalisation as establishing the distinguished positions and roles for the members of an organisation. It is a created and developed part of organisational culture.

Business culture of the managers is influenced by the main-stream national culture in which they were raised. National cultural values are organically absorbed whereas organisational cultural values are formally taught and expressed

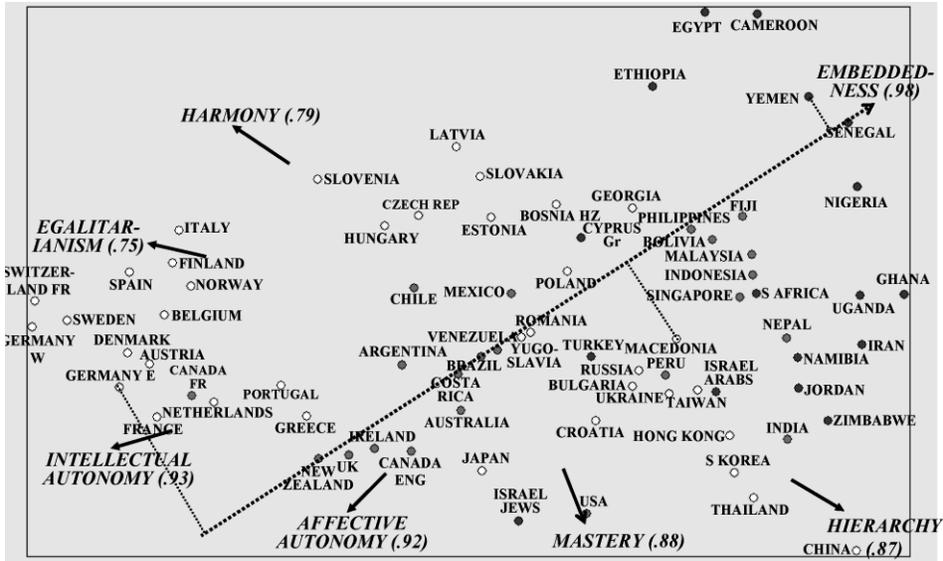
(Hampden-Turner & Tromenaars, 1993), and according to Hammerich & Lewis (2013) organisational national culture is embedded in the organisation through the founders and leaders. The system of values and working communicative practices is transferred through every day work practices by the management and is learned through working experience (Smircich, 1983; Barsoux & Lawrence, 1997). Communicative practices involve interpersonal relations and are influenced by national culture of the managers. It is proved by Hammerich & Lewis (2013, p. 1) that “national culture, through its influence on corporate culture, has a powerful but often-invisible impact on the success of global companies”.

Organisational formalisation helps to organise the functions in an organisation where work activities are defined formally by administrative rules, policies and procedures (Baligh, Richard & Borge, 1996). Schwartz introduced such dimensions of the national cultures as hierarchy, egalitarianism, intellectual and affective autonomy, they are related to work discipline of the researched national groups and have influence on organisational formalisation in the local companies.

Schwartz (1999) argues that the hierarchy dimension refers to unequal distribution of power and roles in organisations that are likely to stress chains of authority and to assign well-defined roles in a hierarchical structure. Egalitarianism (Schwartz, 1994) dimension refers to equality and social justice. Organisations in highly egalitarian cultures are likely to appreciate the importance of cooperative negotiation among members who influence organisational goals (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007). Intellectual autonomy dimension is related to the pursuance of an independent intellectual development of a person. Affective autonomy is equivalent to the pursuance of hedonistic, enjoyable experiences (Schwartz, 1994).

According to Child and Yan (2001) “German companies tend to be flatter, with more integration between technical and managerial roles, and having formalized systems for participation (Maurice, Sorge & Warner, 1980; Child, Fores & Glover, 1983)”. It is argued by Hammerich & Lewis (2013) that *Ordnung* (order) is a core of a German firm. The most knowledgeable manager is at the top of the administrative ladder and hierarchy is complemented by many rules and procedures. Schwartz claims that Estonia is higher in intellectual autonomy and egalitarianism and lower in hierarchy than the rest of Eastern Europe (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007, p. 181). However, Germany (shown as Western and Eastern) is relatively high for its own cluster in hierarchy, but shows higher positions compared to Estonia in intellectual and affective autonomy as shown on figure 1.

Figure 1 Map of 76 national groups on seven cultural orientations



Source: Re-printed with permission from Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007, p. 181.

1.2 Studies of communication styles

Communication researchers Hall and Hall (1990) supported the view that culture is a mix of shared and learned behaviours. According to Halls' classical model (1981) culture is operating on formal, informal and technical levels. Hall (1981) introduced his concept of the "main divide" on the example of Western-Eastern (American-Japanese) communication. The members of what he defined "high-context cultures" rely on their shared meanings, previous relationship history and common experience. The rules of communication are quite complex and the main sense is very much around the verbal message, rather than in the meaning of used words. The polar dimension introduced by Hall (1981) is low-context communication, when the people make the messages as direct, explicit, plainly coded and linear as possible. The members of low-context cultures are trying to reduce all the omissions to a minimum and to present all the information in the most verbal way, so that it can be understood without any additional contextual clues. Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) also focused on Western-Eastern interactions and indicated differences in patterns of discourse as the main reason of miscommunication. They used the broader concept of discourse and defined it as a system of communication within the particular group. According to Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) the corporate discourse system of the multinational corporation is a background to corporate culture. Scollon and Scollon (2003, p.182) described organisations as the goal-directed discourse systems, where professional communication is performed within the clearly shaped discourse systems. The

major types of such systems are the corporate culture, the professional group, the generational discourse system and the gender discourse system.

Zakaria and Cogburn (2010) confirmed, that “main divide“ exists in online intercultural communication (Cunha & Cunha, 2001), and defined high context as “content independent“ and low context as “context independent”. When managers belong to the same pole of the “main divide” tracking the differences is more complex. Gudykunst et al. (1996) made an attempt to measure differences in communication styles and developed a survey with 32 questions. However this approach has serious limitations. It is based on self-reporting and not related to organisational setting, when managers belong to the same business organisation and are united by economic goals. An inductive interpretative approach that is bound to a clearly defined environment (Cassell & Symon, 1994) is more traditional in communication studies. Ethnographic qualitative research offers the possibility to address the questions of perception when the aim of the study is to have a deeper insight into the process of communication. A researcher becomes a tool (Eisner, 1998) that develops a structure and selects what is important for understanding the process. The research structure in our case study is shaped by Schwartz’s cultural directions (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007, p. 181) related to organisational formalisation. The communication episodes as perceived by the Estonian managers are analysed.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research approach and setting

Ethnographic techniques as recognised methods of organisational studies are used in exploratory research (Hammersley, 1990). Atkinson and Hammersley (1994, p. 248) claim that ethnographic methods make it possible to explore “just one case, in detail” and to perform “analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations”. In order to understand and explain communication between two departments in question from the perspective of Estonian managers we have used an exploratory qualitative case study. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1994, p. 248) ethnographic research has “a tendency to work with data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.” This study was focused on communication related to organisational formalisation. Ethnographic techniques have been implemented to access content-based data.

The case company has its headquarters in Germany and operates in the field of medical engineering in 38 countries worldwide. It was one of the “earliest birds” to open a production unit in Estonia. The Estonian production unit has the closest contacts with its USA-based production unit, with the department in

Switzerland (near the German border) and with the Bavarian production unit in southern Germany. In the context of this study we use “Bavarian” and “German” as synonyms.

2.2 Sample and data collection

There were 16 managers who were involved in communication between the departments in question. All of them were included in the research sample. 100% are men, 92% are Estonian by origin, 8% are Russian speaking, but very fluent in Estonian and are integrated into Estonian culture. The age of the managers was 27-58 with a mean age of 36. All the managers have higher education in engineering, 32% had attended advanced studies in management that includes the director of operations, project managers and quality control managers. Professional communication between 16 Estonian managers and the Bavarian managers is performed within clearly shaped types of discourse system. These types according to Scollon and Scollon (2003, p. 182) are: the corporate culture (they all worked for the same company), the professional group (they shared an educational background), the generational discourse system (Estonians and Bavarians had similar age characteristics) and the gender discourse system (they are all male).

The research was conducted to comprehend the main differences and the nature of problems in communication between Estonian and German managers from the perspective of the former. Data was collected in stages.

The goal of the first stage was to get a general overview of the most frequent and recent intercultural experiences of the managers with their foreign colleagues. Managers have been involved in frequent communication with the Bavarian-based unit because of their working responsibilities but they could share information about other recent contacts, for example with the colleagues from American and German-Swiss production units. An open-ended interview was constructed in the Estonian language and sent by an e-mail to the managers. We asked the respondents to describe in detail their intercultural experiences: length in time, segments involved, hierarchical levels and nature of the contacts. A translation of the interview into English is presented in Appendix 1. We had a 100% response, all by e-mail.

The aim of the second stage was to learn the situational details of intercultural interactions of the managers and to clarify the problems they indicated in their e-mail interviews. A personal meeting with the managers was conducted for this purpose. During this meeting they explained in person where, when and how the particular misunderstanding had occurred, and additional notes were made on the printouts of the e-mail interviews. Based on Schwartz’s cultural directions related to organisational formalisation we calculated out the frame for focus-group discussions. The main topics for focus-group discussions are presented in Appendix

2. The aim of the focus-group discussions was to clarify the main differences in communication of Estonian managers with Bavarian colleagues and to understand the nature of these differences. For this purpose the data collected at two previous stages were categorised according to the situational setting and the nature of the problem. The study assesses communication and interprets this process by using a theory of communication styles and discourse patterns. All of the participating managers had attended intercultural communication training. They had received detailed explanations and had agreed on the terms: hierarchy, egalitarianism, low-context, high-context and organisational formalisation. In conclusion, the Estonian managers ranked communication styles of themselves and their foreign colleagues on a scale of 1(low-context) - 7 (high-context).

3 Results and discussion

In presenting the results we demonstrate how the respondents have perceived communication of the issues related to organisational formalisation.

3.1 Perception correlated to the framework of Schwartz's cultural directions model.

The group supported the following statement: it can be irritating, and is often considered being arrogant, when the Germans have stressed that they would trust only the expert opinion of the hierarchically higher positioned Estonian managers. Estonian specialists decoded it (Hall, 1981) as an attitude to the Eastern-European department and underestimating their professional capabilities rather than pursuing the hierarchical values. Status differences during these interactions were still important (Schwartz, 1999). Estonian managers expressed the opinion that some differences in the degree of formalisation do exist, but are not accusing their partners of serious misunderstandings. Confirmation of the findings is reflected in Schwartz's cultural directions model (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007, p. 181). The sample quotes of the respondents, which are correlated to the Schwartz's cultural dimensions, are presented in the table 1.

The discrepancies are connected with communication episodes of a persuasive nature, when the Estonian managers failed to urge their counterparts to come to an agreement about the ideas or actions. Estonians agreed, that among all the production units of the organisation the rules, roles and regulations (Rapert & Brent, 1998) are the most valued by Germans. Respondents attached them to formality symbols and to "orderliness of social manners and working habits" (Hammerich & Lewis, 2013, p. 95). The sales and service manager explained: "When the man in a jacket and tie is coming in, I know he's German, if he's in a jacket without the tie, he's Swiss, if he's wearing no jacket and no tie he's American." The problems (P) recorded below reflect miscommunication from a perspective of the Estonian

Table 1 Communication of Estonian and Bavarian managers in the framework of Schwartz’s cultural directions model

Cultural directions related to organisational formalisation	The Estonian managers’ perception	
	Communication pattern of Bavarian managers	Communication discrepancies
Hierarchy	having strong concern about the approval of the boss	they use it as an excuse to delay with actions
Egalitarianism	ready for the discussions and negotiations when it was responding to the common organisational goals	they are very firm and rigid in their position
Intellectual autonomy	willing to investigate deeper all the details of foreign colleagues’ proposals	they use these details to build a better argument for their own point of view
Affective autonomy	seemed to enjoy the process	we were trying to find the shortest and the most efficient way to the result

Source: Own elaboration based on Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007.

managers. The following sample quotes were formulated during the focus-group discussions and expressed the opinion of the group (OG).

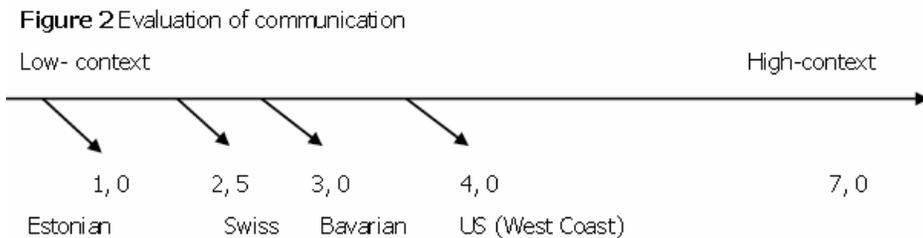
- (P): Ignoring the questions in personal, on-line or phone contacts. (OG): In all the discussed cases the question was initially directed not to “the right” Bavarian manager. Some questions required a deeper investigation and the answer has taken more time. Estonians claimed, that they had to find out the reasons of the ignorance or delay themselves, while a clear, explicit and direct communication would save a lot of time, energy and money (for example, when international phone calls were involved).
- (P): Getting rid of a problem by delegating the decision to someone else. (OG): If the problem was not in the area of a German managers’ responsibility (but Estonian colleague thought that this German manager could easily fix it), the decision or approval was normally delegated to the “right one”. Estonians complained of the frequent re-delegation, because they had to repeat the same information all over again.

- (P): Insisting on their own point of view without considering the opinion of Estonian colleagues. (OG): In some situations Estonian management concluded that he is not “the right person” for the particular area of competence, and therefore his opinion is ignored. Whilst 25% of respondents have explained it by arrogance, one higher-positioned manager revealed, that he has discussed this problem with the Bavarian colleagues in private. They said that there are fixed rules and defined roles in every game. One of the rules is that they want to investigate all the details of the foreign colleague’s proposal in depth. They normally do that in order to build a better argument for their own point of view, because changing their own point of view is negative for the reputation of industry experts.
- (P): Estonians considered that the most difficult thing to cope with was not keeping agreements, and not even bothering when they are broken. (OG): Further discussion revealed that these promises were made in a careful conditional form, and “not bothering” was expressed in the absence of any further explanations.

3.2 Communication style differences

The sample quotes reveal, that miscommunication is related to less verbal, explicit and direct (Hall, 1981) communication style of the Bavarian managers and they have a stronger formalised approach versus the Estonians’ personalised approach.

A study showed that communication by Estonian managers in a business setting is low-context, ranked by managers themselves as having 1 point (on a scale of 1–7). The evaluation of US and Swiss communication styles was made for comparison, and is presented in figure 2.



Source: Own elaboration.

The research has focused on the perceived differences in communication between Estonian and German-based production units regarding organisational formalisation and highlighted hierarchical, egalitarian, intellectual and effective autonomy cultural directions as explained earlier in the theoretical framework (Schwartz, 1994,1999).

Estonian managers were consciously aware that hierarchy was more important to Bavarian colleagues and accepted it as a part of their organisational culture (Warner & Campbell, 1997; Greenberg, 2003). However they have evaluated the chain of authority in particular situations as confusing and would have appreciated if the distribution of roles and power (Schwartz, 1999) would have been more clearly explained. Scollon and Scollon (2003, pp. 27-28) proved that perfectly explicit message is not possible for the reason, that for each step of increased explicitness one would add new components and it's an endless process. The meaning of communication situation depends on knowledge of context.

Estonians were higher in egalitarianism (Schwartz, 1994). They were united by the nature of organisational tasks with the Bavarian department and preferred cooperative negotiation (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007). Bavarians were higher in intellectual autonomy that involved fewer co-operations in decision making and a reluctance to change their initial point of view. Estonian management perceived it as lack of trust towards an East European partner (Pauleen, Rooney & Holden, 2010). Effective autonomy dimension (pursuing one's own pleasurable experience) (Schwartz, 1994) was more important for Bavarian managers. They were more process oriented (Hall & Hall, 1990; Cunha & Cunha, 2001) versus Estonian orientation on a quicker result. It correlates with Hammerich and Lewis (2013, p. 270) analysis that Germans devotion to process enables optimal procedures and structure, but they are slow or reluctant to switch.

As perceived by Estonian managers the study revealed that a researched company had integration between engineering and managerial functions and rigid organisational formalisation that confirmed earlier findings by Child and Yan (2001). The Estonian production unit had a less rigid formalisation structure compared to the Bavarian department. Estonian managers would appreciate more flexible roles and multifunctional responsibilities but they were ready to accept defined rules, norms and regulations in interdepartmental co-operation. (According to their expression it was necessary for the sake of "order in the house"). This knowledge related to organisational formalisation was transferred by Bavarians to Estonians through working communication practices (Smircich, 1983; Barsoux & Lawrence, 1997). Our study demonstrated that part of this knowledge has lost utility in the transfer process (Pauleen, Rooney & Holden, 2010, p. 384).

A number of comparative communication studies that omitted an Estonian sample (Graham, 1988; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1993) evaluated German communication style as verbal, explicit and having the lowest context among the sample (Hall, 1981; Hall & Hall, 1990). These findings had a generalised nature and did not consider regional differences in Germany but a generalisation that "a German relies more on the verbal message" (Morrison, 1994, p. 128) was supported by cross-cultural training practitioners (Storti, 1999). The study by Pruvli (2014) proved that in persuasive business communication the Estonian managers present ideas in a structured way and express them verbally and clearly. They are message-centred, rather than other party centred.

The reason for dysfunctional outcomes at the case company was originated mainly in differences in discourse patterns (results -versus process orientation), in communication styles (less versus more context) and in cultural orientations (egalitarianism - versus hierarchy).

Conclusion

The paper highlights the impact of differences in communication styles and cultural orientations on how organisational formalisation is communicated between departments of the same international company. We have suggested that this impact is often missed when cultures in question belong to the same low-context dualistic pole and when the partner from “old” Europe expects to hold a higher position in the hierarchy. The current study analyses communication episodes of a persuasive nature and reveals that differences in hierarchy and egalitarianism influence the results of such interactions.

Through an awareness of these differences the managers can manage anxiety/uncertainty and increase mindfulness (Gudykunst, 2005, pp. 305-307) in intercultural communication on both personal and organisational levels. MNEs operating in “new” Europe should be aware of the impact of differences in communication styles and hierarchy-egalitarianism cultural orientations. Prior to other educational programs the employees should be trained in this field to be able to examine, explain and predict how knowledge of norms within an international company is transferred. According to Rennstam (2012, p. 1085) the knowledge of norms is expected to lead managers indirectly to engage in knowing processes that are useful for organisation. It is important not only for the technological process, but also for the company identity (Islam & Zyphur, 2009).

The investigation considers the environment of a MNE and highlights the formative role that communication styles play in organizational self-structuring (McPhee & Zaig, 2009). The department of an international company can be handled as a single corporate discourse system within another larger system. The paper can contribute to the theoretical and empirical foundation of CCO (communication as constitutive of organizations) model (Nicotera & Putnam, 2009; Cooren et al., 2011; Cooren, 2012) by analysing one of the four main organisational communicative flows (McPhee & Zaig, 2009) in the intercultural context. It can provide the findings that are particularly interesting for the OaC (Organisation as Communication) network of scholars. This network was created recently with the support of the German Research Foundation and unites the researchers from German Universities.

As the single inductive interpretative investigation this case study can be generalised only to similar selected contexts (Cassell & Symon, 1994). For example, the contexts involving the managers from “old” and “new” Europe and the same dualistic communication pole (Hall, 1981). The findings might be relevant to intercultural

communication in MNEs operating in some other industries. Additionally they could be further validated by investigating a perceived communication from the perspective of a Bavarian-based production unit. Furthermore, the current research was focused on organisational formalisation limited to the four interdependent dimensions: - hierarchical, egalitarianism, intellectual and effective autonomy (Schwartz, 1994, 1999). Future research could broaden the scope and elaborate more on organisational communication between two departments.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 E-mail interview questions

1. Name:
2. Position:
3. Field of responsibility and the nature of communication involved:
4. In the company since:
5. Gender
() male () female
6. Age
() 18-25 () 26-35 () 36-45 () 46-55 () 56 – 65
7. What is your experience in another cultural environment? Please, provide the details including the length, location and the sub-cultural characteristics of the cultural segments involved.
8. Where and how you obtained the information about intercultural communication?
9. What is important for you in intercultural communication? What kind of problems you have experienced? Please, include the problems that you may not even relate to communication.

Appendix 2 Focus-group discussion outline

Main topics of discussion	Planned time for topic
INTRODUCTION of manager (additional details about the nature of communication and working experience)	MAX 5 min
Issues related to hierarchy and egalitarianism	MAX 10 min
Other issues related to organisational formalisation	MAX 10 min
Perceived gaps in communication: details, nature, context and feedback	MAX 40 min
Summary of discussion: Evaluation of communication on scale of 1(low-context)-7(high-context)	10-15 min

2. STATUS RELATED SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION: HIGH CONTEXT AND LOW CONTEXT CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Elena Pruvli and Ruth Alas

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Abstract. That social categorisation affects culturally diverse environments is well investigated, but most of examinations were done from a low-context communication perspective. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of Estonian and Italian actors' communication patterns (low and high context respectively) on status-related categorisation towards a third culture English. To find out the relationship between the context level of communication and social categorisation peculiarities a correlation investigation was chosen as a method. It was conducted in three stages in a contrived experimental setting with the focus on non-task- related information. The results revealed that the Italian actors were mainly concentrated on the lifestyle- related details of the video-example environment, referring them to high status. On the contrary the Estonian group paid more attention to the verbal message of the English video-personalities, and referred them to lower social class. Main results suggest that when status-relevant "underlying attributes" are not willingly revealed, the members of high-context culture are basing their social categorisation on environmental context even if this context is culturally different from their own, so less considering willingly shared personal information. Other important finding is that in the same situation for social categorisation low-context culture representatives are following mainly the issues that are verbally deliberately disclosed.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, High Context, Low Context, Social Categorisation

Introduction

In a business environment status indicates if the person expects more honourable approach and is giving individual more credibility in interactions. The counterparts with equal status level experience fewer obstacles in communication (Clair, Beatty, and MacLean 2005). Its influences on actors' business potential, on creation and maintaining the stable connections with co-workers and partners in culturally heterogeneous environments are the central point of diversity research. Diversity is based on social categorisation (Mannix and Neale 2005, p. 33). The social structure of Estonian and Italian societies is very different, thus understanding the status differences is very important in the development of one's potential and relational capabilities in business. The class society of Italy by the Italian Institute of Statistics definition (Sassoon 1997) since mid-80s was considered to comprise 6 categories. The upper class of bourgeoisie makes up 10% of working Italians. It consists of business owners, independent professionals

and top managers. Apart of imbalances in wealth distribution the social status differences in Italy are expressed in alcohol consumption traits (Cooper 1993) and table manners (French 1994). According to Karjahärm (2009) Estonian society stems from native peasantry. The social structure of the local population was quite homogeneous. The last two decades of re-independence created the social stratification mainly determined by personal income and relationship to the means of production. The majority of entrepreneurs and intellectuals of Estonian origin have roots in the rural cultural environment. This paper is an attempt to assess the influence of Estonian and Italian communicative patterns on social categorisation process related to the third culture. The correlation comparative research is focused on social categorisation process, its reasoning and outcomes in high context and low context cultures. It is experimentally examining Italian and Estonian groups of students, who are close by age, educational and professional experiences.

1. Theoretical background

1.1 Social Categorisation and Status

A number of diversity and related social categorising studies were performed in the US in multicultural (Watson, Kumar and Michaelsen 1993), multiethnic (Watson, Johnson and Zgourides 2002), or multi-racial teams (Bacharach, Bamberger and Vashdi 2005), when visible differences were at the focus of attention.

Mannix and Neale (2005, pp. 35-36) define “less visible differences, also known as underlying attributes”, which include apart of education, skills, abilities and functional background, differences in social and network ties such as work-related, friendship and community ties as well as in-group membership. Theorizing by Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas (2009) demonstrates the peculiarities of the choice to willingly divulge or withhold status-relevant personal information in heterogeneous environments. They (Phillips, Rothbard and Dumas 2009, p. 722) “have highlighted how the disclosure of personal information can be problematized in situations where there are status asymmetries between individuals.”

A significance of social categorisation in European diverse environments was proved by Dutch-initiated research. It is established a strong connection between the process of socioeconomic information arranging and qualities of the relationships in multi-cultural settings. Van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan (2004) explored the interdependence of social categorisation process and information elaboration in diverse groups. More recently Spisak et al. (2012) unpacked the intergroup relations using masculine and feminine factors, De Kwaadsteniet et al. (2012) highlighted a connection of social information about the actors with coordination in actions. Greer et al. (2012) demonstrated a correlation between the leader categorisation tendencies and the financial outcomes of the multi-ethnic teams.

Categorising individuals by socioeconomic background in studies introduced above was explored from the low-context cultural perspective, when the actors had the choice “to disclose or not to disclose” (Phillips, Rothbard and Dumas 2009) most of the status-relevant underlying attributes.

1.2 Communication Patterns

The classical Hall’s dyadic dimensions (1959, 1969) of high and low context cultures conceptualized the main difference in communication patterns which varies among the cultures. High-context cultures operate relying on previous shared experiences, relational structures and other components of the context, which are usually more important in a message than words. Low-context communication occurs in a linear and verbally explicit, direct manner, when the main sense of the message is clearly spelled by words. The concept provided a theoretical basis for communication research by Copeland and Griggs (1985, p. 107), who ranked 15 cultures by context from the highest to the lowest, which are German–Swiss and German cultures. Italian culture is at the 7th position, English at 10th. These results were confirmed by Graham (1988) in his study of 12 cultures, and Onkvisit and Shaw (1993). According to Pruvli and Alas (2012) Estonian business culture is having lower context of communication than German. Comparatively to Estonians Italian communication is high-context, and so is to lesser degree English communication.

Shown the critical role of considering status issues in creating the sustainable business relationship and given the view on Estonian-Italian differences in communication patterns and social system backgrounds, the authors have explored two research questions:

Q.1: whether the context level (low and high) of Estonian and Italian cultures is having an influence on social categorisation process of Estonian and Italian actors?

Q.2: how this influence is expressed by Estonian and Italian actors in a setting when social categorisation is performed toward the culture other than their own?

To answer these questions the relationship between the context level of culture and patterns of social categorisation was investigated by conducting experimental correlation study.

2. Research Design and Results

Research was conducted in 2009 among 14 Estonian and 18 Italian students; their mean age was 28 and 26 respectively. All had a command of English at least at the 6, 5 points of IELTS level. In Estonian group 68% are female and 32% male, all had Estonian as the mother tongue, 50% had longer living/studying experiences overseas (in Germany, Latvia, Finland, Poland and Ecuador). In Italian group 57 % are female and 43% male, all had Italian as the mother tongue, 62% were raised in South of Italy, 48% in Central and Northern Italy. 33% declared to have longer stayed in a foreign environment (Greece, France, Finland and USA).

A correlation investigation for Estonian and Italian students was implemented simultaneously. A contrived experiment was chosen for a setting, and the effects of context level on social categorisation were studied with a high degree of control from the authors. Following the approach of status-relevant personal information disclosure exploration by Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas, (2009, p. 711) the current experimental study has a “focus primary on non-task-related information that might affect perceptions of status distance and relationships at work.”

An experimental intervention was occurred in three stages. The purpose of the first stage was to check if the audience had any information about the British heroes of the video shown at the second stage. The personality of Charles Saatchi, founder of “Saatchi and Saatchi” agency was discussed to figure out if participants were aware about the private life of Saatchi: who is his spouse and what she’s doing; any kinship with the UK politicians etc. The aim of the second stage was to get an overview of the each participant status-related categorisation process. English culture has a diverse social structure, has higher context communication than Estonians but lower than Italians and participants revealed little experience with it. The students were asked to watch the video and make some written comments individually about the social status of the video presenter and the members of her family. The notes should include the signals about the heroes’ social position “related to higher status”, “related to lower status” and “confusing”, and should be summarised by the social category resolution. The video from British cooking series Nigella Express 101, part 1, titled “Everyday Easy” shows presenter Nigella Lawson outside the supermarket. She is describing the everyday life: work, children coming hungry from school and waiting for their mom at home. As her father was coming over for dinner the meal should please everyone, be feeding but simple and the ingredients should be available. She enters the food department, and explains that she’s going to roast a chicken with potatoes. Nigella Lawson stresses that for this dish you can use a cheap vegetable oil. Video shows her coming home and preparing the supper. Then her father is coming, and telling her that he was frying himself eggs for breakfast. They altogether set the table, put wine and glasses for adults and start eating.

The goal of the third stage is to examine the individual reasoning behind the participants' decision about Lawson family social status, and to specify it on a group level. The students were asked to discuss their responses in their groups, and to orally present a summarised statement about the group decision process. Comparative mode is used in intercultural communication research (Carbaugh 2007), the results were collected from both groups to be comparatively analysed. The researchers made sure, that the audience was not aware of Nigella Lawson's' background. Born to the former Chancellor of the Exchequer and the heiress of J. Lyons Empire Nigella Lawson is worth £15 million, half of it coming from culinary book sales. Students were not connecting Saatchi, who earned his millions through his advertising agency "Saatchi and Saatchi" with the content of the video, which showed his spouse, father-in-law and step-children. At the time of the experiment Nigella Lawson and her husband lived in a £25 million residence in Eaton Square in London's exclusive Belgravia district. The family dinner on the video was shot in a specially created kitchen-like studio, but the relations and habits of the family were real. During the experiment the participants and researchers agreed that the video scene will be examined as the real-life situation.

Table 1 is introducing the status-related signals' classification made by Italian and Estonian respondents after watching the video.

The Italian group concluded that details of environment are convincing them, that Ms. Lawson belongs to the upper class. Despite her talk about long working days, the way how she and her father behaved and the wine-drinking habits showed that these people are of particular lifestyle. Her father was casually elegant, had firm posture and looked as the high status person. Estonian group resumed, that Nigella is a "hard-working" single mother, whose older retired father needs care and can't be of much help. 25% of the group presumed, that the presenter is on alimony and has to carefully count her food expenses. 100% named her and Mr. Lawson's' talk as one of the main sources of information. That the elderly gentleman is making himself a simple breakfast gave the Estonian students the reason to sum up, that these people belong to lower social category.

3. Discussion

The overall goal of the examination was to study the relationship between the context level of culture and patterns of social categorisation of Estonian and Italian actors. The difference in social categorisation results of the researched groups is rooted in social structures' differences between Italian and Estonian societies. The class system traditions in Italy are influencing social relationships (Argyle et al. 1986) and business connections development (Capasso A., Dagnino G. B. and Lanza A., 2005), making the status issues important in the development of relational capabilities.

The research showed that the context level of Estonian and Italian cultures is having an impact on social categorisation process on individual and group levels. During the experimental intervention the status- relevant information was not willingly disclosed. However the high-context participants relied more on details of the environment, relationships between the people, behavioural particularities, looks of individuals and consumption patterns to derive the message about the heroes' social position. The information was obtained from the context, rather than from verbal communication. In contrary the members of the low- context culture were attentive to the words of the experimental plot actors and gained main information from willingly given facts. The study found the evidence, that when social "underlying attributes" are not deliberately disclosed in intercultural environment, the representatives of high-context culture are arranging the social categorisation process relying on elements of the context dispute they are strange and foreign to them. In the similar setting the low-context culture representatives are mainly relying on verbally disclosed- on-purpose issues. The findings contribute to the intercultural communications and diversity studies by highlighting that sharing or omitting the status-relevant information by choice depends on the communication patterns of the actors involved into diverse environment. They can help managers in considering these issues while developing the relational capabilities and sustainable business connections.

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Table 1. Experiment participants' status-related categorisation process on a group level.

	Signals related to higher status	Signals related to lower status	Confusing signals
Italian students	Not changing the clothes/putting apron while cooking Setting of the table: rules, use of cutlery, tableware and accessories	Buying food at supermarket instead of delicatessen or market	Cooking a very simple dish with basic ingredients Picking up the cheap oil, but being aware and stressing the differences in oil types
Estonian students	The way how wine is served and consumed Fathers' behaviour and looks	Presenter is a working mother with two kids, who's working long days She has lack of money, looking for cheaper, affordable products even for the family gathering Simple casual outfit	Beautiful home and spacious kitchen, but probably provided just for the cooking show

**3. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION OF A
PERSUASIVE NATURE:
STYLE ADAPTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS DURING
INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS**

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Abstract

Researchers have demonstrated that there are preferred cultural persuasive styles but little empirical research has examined the strategies for adapting persuasive styles in intercultural business interactions. This qualitative study investigates preferred persuasive styles, perceptions of alternative persuasive styles and adaptation strategies among Estonian local municipal managers. This article creates a new path for an explanatory study using a stratified sample by integrating differences in persuasive styles and effective communication theories. The findings introduce how alternative persuasive styles are perceived and how managers adapt to them. The paper offers solutions for adaptation strategies leading to more effective intercultural communication.

Keywords: business discourse, intercultural business communication, persuasive communication of managers, intercultural communication of Estonian managers, intercultural communication with high context cultures, effectiveness of communication, persuasive style, anxiety/ uncertainty management.

Introduction

Communication that aims to convince the other party to support an idea, to agree with certain conditions or to perform certain actions (Simons 1976) is an essential part of business, which nowadays is often conducted in an intercultural environment. While differences in persuasive styles from a cross-cultural perspective have been conceptualised (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989, 2008), little attention has been paid by scholars to strategies for adapting persuasive styles in intercultural interactions. As making adaptations and correcting errors are among the primary means to increase the effectiveness of communication (Gudykunst 2005), the current study examines preferred persuasive styles among managers, their perception of alternative styles and their adaptation strategies.

There are altogether 194 local municipalities and 33 towns and cities in Estonia (13 towns are included as local municipalities, and 20 have local governing bodies.) After Estonia joined the EU in 2004, direct intercultural contacts between local municipal representatives and foreign partners within and outside the EU have increased dramatically, and managers are well positioned to describe their intercultural interactions. The majority of this contact is part of a relatively new experience for both parties involved. This paper advances our understanding of

the preferred persuasive style concept and its connection with the effectiveness of communication in a global context. This qualitative in-depth study answers the call by Joseph Cheng (2007:26–27) “to investigate the phenomena that are difficult to quantify” and “to incorporate local country knowledge into the development of theories about management”. He stated (Cheng 2007:26), that “increased reliance on quantitative data analysis using large samples, as is characteristic of much of the management research published in the academic journals, has the negative effect of leading scholars to investigate phenomena that can readily be investigated with quantitative indicators (e.g., firm or industry characteristics), at the expense of those that are hard to measure such as societal culture and its influence on behaviour.” As increases in the accuracy of predictions and explanations regarding the behaviour of foreign partners help to increase the effectiveness of communication (Gudykunst 2005), the aim of the study is to propose solutions for the reduction of anxiety and uncertainty in persuasive intercultural business communication as part of the development of Gudykunst’s effective communication doctrine.

The process and effectiveness of persuasive communication

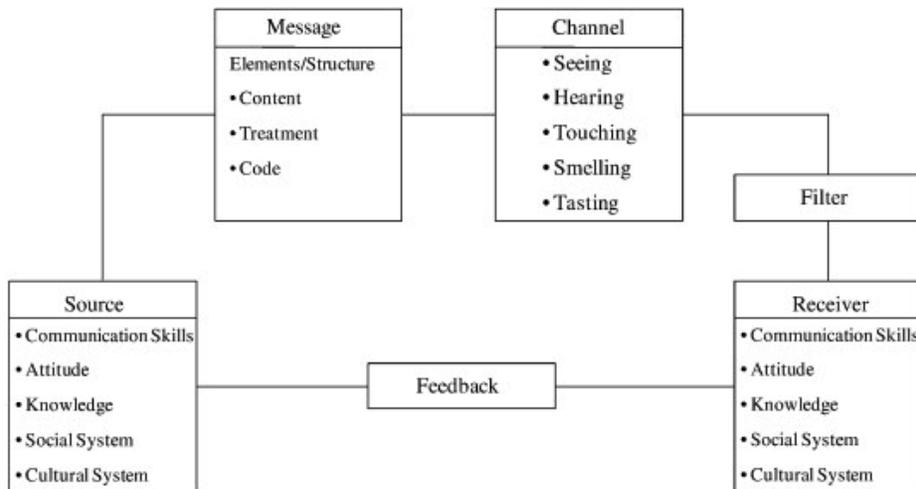
This section of the paper is set out in three related parts that are central to understanding intercultural persuasive communication. First, it discusses the process and key elements of communication, traditionally described using graphic images or “communication models,” where a derivative transactional model is applicable to persuasive communication. Generic styles and cross-cultural differences in persuasion are introduced in the second part. These differences are rooted in the inner characteristics of the source and receiver, and are expressed mainly in message structure, content and code. The third part presents Gudykunst’s theory of effective communication, which has proved that misunderstandings can be reduced via accurate interpretations. Applied to persuasive communication, this means that managers should develop mindfulness in respect to alternative persuasive styles.

1 Process and components of communication

Communication is traditionally described by scholars as a dynamic interpretive process (Berlo 1960; Craig 1999; Miller 2005), where key elements are involved in shaping experiences which can obtain various meanings at different stages of the process. Since Aristotle, who defined the main purpose of communication as “persuasion, an attempt to sway other men to the speaker’s point of view” (quoted in Berlo 1960:8), graphic images have been used to describe the process of communication and the interdependence of its components. The main purpose of those images, commonly referred to as “models”, has been to improve the communication process in order to raise its effectiveness.

According to Mortensen (1972; 2008), communication models can be oversimplified, confusing the patterns of the real communication they represent and making them overly abstract for the sake of the final model. They “stop or freeze an essentially dynamic interactive or trans-active process into a static picture” (Mortensen 1972:42). Communication models provide simplistic images of physical reality, and the components they are constructed from are subjectively selected by their authors. However, the classical message-centred “model of communication ingredients” by Berlo (1960:23–24), instead of stressing the interdependence of the elements of the process, focuses on the internal characteristics of recognised key components of communication. It offers guidelines for deeper research into the inner factors of the source, message, channel and receiver, including cultural factors, and their influences on the whole process of communication from an intercultural perspective. It also provides the starting point for model development; for example, Barnlund’s (2008) transactional model of communication, where participants in interpersonal communication are involved in the simultaneous sending and receiving of messages. A derivative model developed by Lee et al. (2012), with the receiver as the target of the whole process of communication is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Berlo’s “model of communication ingredients” added with the source and receiver providing a feedback to each other.



Source: Lee et al (2012).

A derivative transactional model is applicable to intercultural persuasive communication where the main message flow is directed toward the receiver, whose feedback is crucial to the success of the communication. Inter-individual feedback includes linguistic mechanisms Allwood et al. (1993:3-4) which enable the participants of a conversation to exchange information about contact,

perception, understanding and attitudinal reactions. According to Allwood et al. (1993:26) feedback mechanisms are highly context dependent.

Findings by Gudykunst (2003a) prove that the importance of the feedback is different for low-context communication (verbally explicit, direct, with the main meaning in the message attached to the words) and high-context communication (where previous knowledge, experiences, environmental, hierarchical, relational settings and other components of the context are used to construct the message).

In low-context communication, the participants can be satisfied with one-way communication; they consider the feedback less important for ascertaining shared meaning, as the words and sentences they use contain only one meaning. In their mind the receiver is responsible for the success of the communication (Gudykunst 2003a:55–56).

In high-context communication, feedback is most important for creating and determining shared meaning as participants must coordinate their meaning from the context. Verbal messages can contain multiple meanings, both sender and receiver may intend or receive multiple meanings, and “communication success is negotiated between communicators” (Gudykunst 2003a:56–57).

2 Cross-cultural differences in persuasion

Pursuing the traditional Aristotelian understanding of the main goal of communication (Garver 1995), persuasion research during the last 60 years has developed as follows. Initiated by the seminal analysis of Hovland et al. (1953) it at first focused on the intra-cultural American mainstream environment analysed by communication scholars mainly from the political perspective (Appelbaum and Anatol 1974; Berlo et al. 1969; Simons 1976). With the further development of international co-operation, later research showed that “in case of some other national cultures persuasion based on the presentation of facts, loses its efficiency in favour of different strategies” (Glenn et al. 1977:52). Each cultural environment implements persuasion as a combination of three basic styles: the factual-inductive (grounded on facts and figures), the axiomatic-deductive (grounded on ideas, principles and beliefs), and the effective-intuitive (grounded on feelings and emotions). The weight of these three basic styles alters in different cultural environments, but the empirical study conducted by Glenn et al. (1977) has shown that the factual-inductive is dominant in the US, the axiomatic-deductive in what was then the Soviet Union and the effective-intuitive in Arab countries.

The study examined American, Soviet and Arab styles of persuasion in the course of debates in the Security Council of The United Nations. The findings were widely used by scholars over the next three decades (e.g. Adler and Gundersen 2008:224–226), except by the authors of the research themselves (Glenn et al. 1977:65-66) having considered their work preliminary and including serious limitations – having been conducted during the Cold War on the basis of a single dispute it was potentially

biased. However, they developed an alternative methodology to study persuasion styles, which will be explained below, and which is used for the current examination.

With the further evolution of intercultural communication as an interdisciplinary field, studies of cultural differences in persuasive effects became an integrative part of management and marketing research, partly in connection with negotiation tactics (Aaker and Maheswaran 1997; Chang and Chou, 2008; Simintiras and Thomas 1998). The studies revealed that cultural background affects how goals, plans and objectives are communicated and perceived by the parties involved.

From Johnstone’s investigation (1989), it was asserted that a certain preferred persuasive style exists at any one cultural level. There are individual, group or regional variations intra-culturally (Johnstone 2010), but she proved that there is a distinct trend or persuasive pattern which most members of a given culture prefer in the majority of occasions. This pattern originates in the inner characteristics (Barnlund 2008; Berlo 1960) of the source and receiver. The main differences are expressed in terms of message structure, content and code.

Table 1 introduces the generic styles of persuasion that can be defined as preferred in different cultures.

Table 1. Characteristics of Cultural Persuasive Styles

	Quasi-logical	Presentational	Analogical
Creation of Evidence	Facts (based on testimony), figures, Statistics	Convinced way to present ideas, believes, emotional aspects	Metaphors, analogies
Warrant as connection	Formal logic (bits of right information should lead to conclusion).	Creation of emotional involvement, respond, participation.	Collective experience (of groups or cultures) should convince.
Presentation of ideas	Formal, rigid structure is very important.	Choice of words to win audience is important.	Choice of right examples to illustrate position is important.
Conclusion as persuasive claim	From general to specific, explicit, outspoken, “one right way”.	Intense words brighten persuasive idea. Right or wrong isn’t fixed. One unquestionable truth doesn’t exist.	As lesson from offered examples (implicit or explicit). Truth is based on previous experiences.

	Quasi-logical	Presentational	Analogical
Main accent and substantial ability from source respectively	Stress on information: to collect, select and organise information in structural form.	Stress on speakers' personality: charisma, attractiveness, and presentation skills.	Stress on context: knowledge of audience background, ability to connect it with message topic.

Source: drafted by the author as a generalisation of Johnstone's (1989, 2008) theory.

2.3 *Effective communication and Gudykunst's AUM theory*

Since Hall (1959) introduced the term “intercultural communication,” the field has expanded dramatically with the globalisation of business and public sector activities. While one of the key concepts, intercultural communication competence (ICC), still causes debate among scholars (Arasaratnam 2007; Messner and Schäfer 2012; Spitzberg 2007; Wiseman 2003), it is agreed that effectiveness of communication is a crucial feature of ICC. The theoretical basis of intercultural communication effectiveness on the interpersonal and intergroup level, which previously was mainly the area of disconnected practitioners, was developed by William Gudykunst (1993; 1995), who examined effective communication in terms of minimizing misunderstandings (Gudykunst 2003a:26). His anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory of effective communication (Gudykunst 2005) is normally referred to as AUM theory. Its first 34 axioms are grouped into sections around the issues of self-esteem, motivation, attitudes toward strangers, in-group and out-group categorizing, situational settings, connections between people, dignity and respect in interactions with strangers (Gudykunst 2005:294–304). These issues are related to anxiety and uncertainty management.

Axioms 35-39 (Gudykunst 2005:305–307) concentrate on mindfulness as the skill involved in creating learning abilities concerned with out-group members and being open to new experiences and perspectives. According to Gudykunst (2005:305) it is a key factor of effective communication and the culmination of the theory. He stresses that in-group members should be mindful of the communication process rather than of the communication outcome. Applied to persuasive communication, this means that managers should be mindful of their own and alternative persuasive styles. They should pay attention to the structure, content and code of the messages rather than to the feedback. A summary of this section is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Essential factors of effective communication according to Gudykunst

Essential source abilities to be increased	Influence on communication process	Boundary conditions for source
Ability to describe strangers' behaviour	Increase in ability to predict their behaviour accurately	1. Mindful of process of communication
Mindfulness of communication process with strangers	Increase in ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty	2. Not overly vigilant
Mindfully recognising and correcting pragmatic errors in conversations with strangers	Facilitates negotiating with strangers which will produce increase in effectiveness of communication	3. Anxiety and uncertainty are between minimum and maximum thresholds. When at minimum, people lose interest in communication process and become indifferent about its outcome. When at maximum, people get too frustrated emotionally, can leave the scene or engage in open conflict
Ability to manage anxiety about interacting with strangers and increase in accuracy of predictions and explanations regarding their behaviour	Increase in effectiveness of our communication	

Source: adapted by the author from Gudykunst (2005:306–307).

Effectiveness for Gudykunst (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001; 2005) is based on the accuracy of the interpretation of the message by the receiver – the closer it is to the meaning that was intended by the source, the more effective the communication between those two. Yoshitake (2002:183) commented that “to view effective communication as attribution of the closest meaning to the intended meaning reduces communication to a linear and mechanical activity where messages are transferred from sender to receiver”. He also (Yoshitake 2002:185) found “ethnocentric judgments of different cultures in the content of the axioms, when individualism and low uncertainty avoidance cultures are viewed positively, and collectivism and high uncertainty avoidance cultures are viewed negatively” (quoted in Gudykunst 2003 b:34). In response to this critique, the last 7 axioms (Gudykunst 2005: 308-311) out of a total 47 state the cross-cultural variability in AUM processes and bring up the major differences between the attitudes of collectivist and individualistic cultures.

Generation of propositions

A research proposition serves as a connection between concepts; it has to be proved or disproved using previous studies, justified argument and existing data (Whetten 1989). Cooper and Schindler (2008:64) state that propositions are statements about concepts or observable phenomena that may be judged as true or false. Hypotheses state the relationship between variables and are generated for empirical testing that can be repeated (Bernard 2012: 579). “The primary difference between propositions and hypotheses is that propositions involve concepts whereas hypotheses require measures”(Whetten 1989:491). Applying the previous discussion to the Estonian business environment I have formulated three propositions, based on the following.

The research conducted in 33 nations (Gelfand et al. 2011) shows that Estonians have relatively strong prevention self-guides, high regulatory strength and a need for structure as micro-level psychological affordability. So, when an Estonian manager is acting as a source, much attention in the communication process is given to the message structure and treatment. As the recent study proved (Pruvli and Alas, 2012), communication by Estonian managers in a business setting is low-context, ranked by managers themselves as having 1 point (on a scale of 1–7) less context than Swiss and German, and 3 points less than US business communication. This confirms earlier findings (McCrae et al. 2007: 955), that among 49 national cultures, the Estonian national stereotype, which has links to personality traits, values and beliefs, is closest to the German and Swiss national stereotypes. The classical investigation of basic persuasive styles by Glenn et al. (1977) showed that in the US the main style is factual-inductive (grounded on facts and figures that are presented in a structured way). Later findings by Johnstone (1989), who used the term “quasi-logical cultural persuasive style”, introduced the peculiar characteristics of the American persuasive style, which are affined and strongly affiliated with low-context communication (Johnstone 1989, 2008). This provides the basis for the first proposition:

P1. Performing as a source in persuasive business communication, the Estonian manager mainly uses a quasi-logical style with some elements of presentational and analogical styles.

When participants are involved into transactional persuasive communication (Barnlund, 2008), they send and receive messages simultaneously. A participant who initiated the process as a source, when getting messages will perform as a receiver. According to Gudykunst (2005), the ability to describe the behaviour of strangers increases the ability to predict their behaviour accurately, which is important for effective communication. Anxiety and uncertainty should be between minimum and maximum thresholds (Gudykunst 2005:306). A study by Gelfand et al. (2011) revealed that among 33 researched nations, Estonians have a high level of tolerance of deviant behaviour. Recent studies of the Big Five personality traits included an Estonian sample. It was agreed, that in 29 researched cultures, people see themselves as more open to experience, seeking more positive

emotions but much less assertive compared to how they are seen by strangers (Allik et al. 2010:870-881). Examination in 22 samples from 20 countries (Möttus et al. 2012:1424-1425) revealed clear cross-sample differences in response styles. According to the Lewis triangle model (2005) of cultural communicative types, Estonian culture is nearly in the middle between the reactive and linear-active types, so having the greatest differences in the multi-active cultural types. The last contain a number of characteristics (Lewis 2005:29-32), which are conterminous or contiguous with the features of presentational and analogical persuasion styles (Johnstone 1989). Therefore the following proposition is made:

P2. The Estonian manager in a receiver position evaluates presentational and analogical persuasion styles as containing inappropriate emotions and irrelevant information.

Lewis (2005) showed that there is a trend towards insisting on one's traditional cultural approaches when under stress, which accompanies discrepancies in business communication. During some intercultural persuasive interactions, a style based on statistical evidence and facts presented in a structured way "loses its efficiency in favour of different strategies" (Glenn et al. 1977). Gudykunst (2005) demonstrates in his AUM theory that an increase in ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty, mindfully adjusting communicative slips in intercultural communication, will increase the effectiveness of the communication. Therefore, the following proposition is put forward:

P.3. To raise the effectiveness of business communication, Estonians will increase the quasi-logical orientation of the persuasion style, reducing the presentational and analogical elements to a minimum.

Empirical study

This study uses the applied qualitative research with a focus on the intercultural communication process aiming to find out how to make it more effective. To achieve this aim, the following research questions should be answered:

- What is the preferred persuasion style of Estonian public sector managers?
- How do these managers evaluate alternative persuasion styles during their intercultural business interactions?
- Do Estonian public sector managers adapt their persuasive style in order to increase the effectiveness of intercultural communication, and if they do, what are the main adaptation strategies?

To understand the process, cultural data are used in social science (Bernard 2012:127-128), and obtained from the people "who can offer expert explanations of the cultural norm". A relevant sampling technique is described below.

1 Sample

The target sample for this investigation was Estonian managers who work in various local organisations, but have regular intercultural interactions in the fields of social services, education, pedagogy, health care and service management. According to The Statistical Yearbook of Estonia (2012:158–165), the highest percentage of women employees can be found in healthcare and social services (87 %), while in education and the service sector (mainly in hospitality and catering business) over 80% are women. Gender segregation by fields of study is very clear in vocational education. More girls than boys study business and administration, arts, social services, personal services and health-related subjects.

The research sample was constructed in strata and included 18 managers from local municipal governments, representing 10 local municipalities from 10 different counties out of a total of 15 in Estonia. The two largest counties (Harju containing the capital Tallinn, and Tartu), where the majority of the target sample is concentrated, were represented by 22% and 17% of the managers respectively. According to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009:190) “for sampling done this way it can be statistically proven, that one can achieve better representation with the same sample size as for other techniques.” Moreover, these people hold their current professional position because they represent the local culture and were chosen for the study as “specialised informants”. It has been noted (Bernard 2012:171–173), that “specialised informants have a particular competence in some cultural domains” and are “selected for their competence rather than for their representativeness”. Glenn et al. (1977:52–66) analysed the persuasion style of representatives in the UN Security Council from the US, USSR and Arab countries to make conclusions about those numerous and diverse cultures. According to Bernard (2012:175–176), there is growing evidence that 10–20 knowledgeable informants are needed to understand the contents of any well-defined cultural domain, and this sampling technique is widely used in ethnographic investigations (Handwerker 2001; Wolcott 2008; Zaman 2008).

In the sample here, 17% of the managers are men, 83% are women, and by nature of their work responsibilities, 100% have intercultural interactions in connection with educational, pedagogical, social, service sector development and health care projects. The age of the participants was 28–47, with an age average of 35. All the participants have higher education primarily in the humanities and social sciences, were born and lived most of their lives in Estonia and speak Estonian as their native language. Prior to the experiences reported during the research, 33% had attended courses related to the theory of intercultural communication.

2 Research design and data collection

According to Craig and Muller (2007), the source possesses control over the process of communication, so the scope of the communication study can be

outlined in accordance with the roles of the participants. Therefore, the study shall rely on the source self-reporting in respect to the control (strategies implemented by the source) and content (message) of the communication, as well as on feedback given to the source. According to Glenn et al. (1977), the customary approach to examining persuasive strategies is to evaluate the change in the receiver's attitude. Due to implementation difficulties, an alternative methodology was proposed by Glenn et al. (1977:53). Their method examines the communication process from the perspective of the source. It is based on the following assumption: the participants who hold a special representative position in their own society choose the persuasion style that conforms to their own previous experiences within their own culture and possesses matching communication patterns including their perception of communication feedback. It particularly takes place during argument (Craig 2011) and persuasion. To address the empirical questions posed, the author used this method to obtain emic explanations about the communication process, when "specialised informants" were acting as cultural representatives. An explanatory qualitative study was conducted using the multi-contact strategy, which involved the following stages.

The purpose of the first stage was to become acquainted with the respondents' background and professional responsibilities related to intercultural contacts, and to select those people who are involved in intercultural projects with various partners on a regular basis. A questionnaire in Estonian was sent by e-mail to 25 managers of local municipal governments requesting the following information: 1) name, position, area of main responsibilities related to intercultural communication. 2) Cultural and social background. 3) Main experiences connected with intercultural interactions (nature of contacts, length, particular outcome if any). 4) Educational background and courses, programmes or training related to intercultural communication. After obtaining the replies by e-mail, the information was examined. 18 respondents whose experiences and background matched the survey's goals were selected as specialised informants for further contact.

The goal of the second contact was to more deeply explore the nature and content of the respondents' relatively recent intercultural business interactions of a persuasive nature, and to obtain their feedback on the effectiveness of these interactions. (The meaning of "persuasion" and "effectiveness" in the communicative context was explained to the respondents).

The second contact was made in person, when I distributed printouts of the interview questions to the respondents, who were given a chance to clarify their answers to questions formulated in Estonian. English translations of the interview questions are presented in Appendix 1.

The replies were analysed and the reported experiences were grouped using Scollon's politeness system factors (Scollon et al. 2012:52–53). The relationship between the parts to be discussed at the next stage of the research can be described as:

Distance: Plus-D (as having equal power within their systems but rare contact with each other).

Power: Minus-P (as neither one is considered to hold a hierarchically higher position). No gender differences are involved.

Only interactions with the same gender representatives have been chosen for analysis.

According to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009:136), the methodological aims of the dialogue are to clarify differences in which participants can reflect on their original points of view, and go beyond their original opinions. The use of dialogue has an advantage over interviews in getting “at meaning and significances in the co-actors’ language and culture” as it is not just collecting data, which are facts (Arbnor and Bjerke 2009:196). Considering these aspects, the dialogue was conducted in order to obtain a deeper insight into Estonian intercultural persuasive communication, to identify the “other side’s” persuasive style from an Estonian perspective, and to learn about communicative discrepancies and adaptation strategies. Notes were made during the discussion, which was held in accordance with the outline provided in Appendix 2. The participants presented some cases, which were briefly described in their earlier replies to the interview questions and which I selected for analysis. The narrative inquiry approach (Holstein and Gubrium 2012) was then used to analyse the managers’ experience. This qualitative technique focuses on interaction between the source and receiver, and on the ways in which informants interpret their interactions with foreigners. It allows the researcher to uncover rules and regimented practices (Reissman 2008) from the source’s perspective and to track the structural regularities of how persuasive phenomena are organised.

The persuasive communication was about future co-operation in connection with:

- organising mutual visits or exchanges in the field of education;
- developing the service sector and relevant training;
- delivering and spreading information further to other members of the community;
- attracting the business sector to social projects.

The basic ideas and assumptions in the dialogue outline were derived from the replies to the interview questions.

Results

The results are described below and discussed in accordance with three main theoretical concepts. The managers’ perception of the “other side’s” persuasive styles is introduced, and the main communicative discrepancies are traced. Finally, the peculiarities of the adaptation strategies are explained.

The managers, from their position as source, revealed that the message “what to say” was at the centre of their attention. Therefore, elements (particular pieces of information) and structure (“getting things in a right order”) (Berlo 1960:23) were important for leading the “other party” to the desirable conclusion. All of the managers recognised the importance of “small talk” (2–3 sentences about weather, travel, cultural heritage), and 100% agreed with the statement that there is a particular order for how the “topic should be served” so as to make it be more “convincing” (Johnstone 1989, 2008). All described the preferred order they use to present an idea: small talk, background information, main idea based on facts and figures leading to a conclusion. They strongly prefer questions, remarks, suggestions or any other reactions from the receiver after the presentation. The treatment of the message (Berlo 1960; Johnstone 1989, 2008) can be expressed in the words of one respondent: “I’ve tried to talk about real things, straight to the subject, using as exact expressions as I can, so that everything should be clear even to a hedgehog”. The main idea of the message code (Berlo 1960; Johnstone 1989, 2008) was “to keep it short, plain and simple”, so that facts “will speak for themselves” as to why both sides will benefit from the co-operation.

When describing the “other side” involved in transactional persuasive communication, and by turns performing the source and receiver roles (Barnlund 2008), managers often used the generalised descriptive term “southerners”. These results are summarised and related to three main theoretical concepts in Table 3.

In the case of the intercultural contacts described above, Estonian local municipal representatives were not sure they could decode the feedback (one exception was an Irish colleague, who expressed his attitude to the proposal verbally). Almost 80% mentioned the other party’s body language as the confusing factor, and could not tell for sure if the content of their message was understood in the way it was intended as there were no clear actions following the contact. The main problem from an Estonian perspective was how to achieve the right self-positioning and to maintain interest in the co-operation after the initial contact. The majority (83%) agreed that to cope with these problems, they would stress their professional capabilities by re-presenting the essence of their project in a very clear, short, logical way, so that nothing “irrelevant” would confuse the receiver.

To conclude, the following adjustments took place: to the message structure (more precise with the units about particular information and exact requests or proposals); to the message content (more compact, skipping all irrelevancies); to the message treatment (more accomplished statements, more measurable, numerical information) and to the code (finding the most “exact” definitions). The channel in 66% of the cases was adjusted by providing a written message about the content of the presentation afterwards (by sending an e-mail with a summary of the proposal).

Table 3. Estonian managers' perception

"Other side" of communication process, number of cases	Derivative of Berlo's "model of ingredients of communication: message structure, content, code	Johnstone Preferred Persuasive Styles: evidence, connection, presentation of ideas, main accent	Gudykunst AUM theory: predictions and explanations regarding strangers' behaviour	Language of communication, language skills (own and partners')
Bulgarians, 2	Too much talking with facial expressions, which do not match verbal message	Jumping from subject to subject with no clear connection between issues	Predictions based on previous travel and leisure experiences	Russian , Good or very fluent
Georgians, 2	Too much talking, loudly, with a lot of gestures	Too intense, pushy Talking with many exaggerations, expressively	Predictive messages about timing: longer presentations and breaks than planned	
Serbian, 2	Too much talking with facial expressions, which do not match verbal message	Jumping from subject to subject with no clear connection between issues	Expected difference in communication patterns: more aggressive, pushy, emotional, talkative approach	
Croatians, 2	Too much talking, loudly, with a lot of gestures	Talking with many exaggerations, expressively	Predictive messages about timing: being late	English, Satisfactory, was not serious obstacle
Italians, 4	Containing too many personal remarks, compliments, wordy explanations Too much talking, loudly, with a lot of gestures	Jumping from subject to subject with no clear connection between issues Getting to core of proposal is tiresome Talking with many exaggerations, expressively		
Arabs, 5	Not serious enough, containing too many personal remarks, compliments, wordy explanations Too much talking with many exaggerations, loudly, expressively with a lot of gestures, facial expressions which do not match verbal message	Too intense, pushy Jumping from subject to subject with no clear connection between issues Getting to core of proposal is tiresome		
Irish, 1	Not serious enough, contain too many anecdotes, jokes	Getting to core of proposal is tiresome		

Source: drafted by the author

Discussion and Conclusion

The study was guided by three propositions, which will be discussed and evaluated according to Whetten's (1989) interpretation and Cooper and Schindler's (2008:64) definition that propositions may be judged as true or false. This qualitative study aims to understand the communication process and the experiences of managers within particular intercultural contexts, and 18 knowledgeable specialised informants were used as a sample.

Preferred persuasion style (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989) and effective communication (Gudykunst 2003a) are well-defined cultural domains. According to Bernard (2012:175–176), 18 specialised informants is sufficient to understand the content of phenomena. Whether propositions are supported or rejected emerge from the data analysed primarily using the interpretive and constructivist paradigm.

The first proposition was supported:

P1. Performing as a source in persuasive business communication, the Estonian manager mainly uses a quasi-logical style with some elements of presentational and analogical styles.

The investigation confirmed that there are individual differences in using the presentational and analogical elements, but the preferred persuasive style of Estonian managers is mainly quasi-logical. The creation of evidence is based on facts and figures; ideas are presented in a structured way and are united by formal logic, which leads to the persuasive claim and normally is expressed verbally and clearly. Presentational and analogical elements were mainly used for small talk, introductions and conclusions (e.g. to bring historical parallels in the development of the countries).

The second proposition was supported:

P2. The Estonian manager in a receiver position evaluates the presentational and analogical persuasion styles as containing inappropriate emotions and irrelevant information.

The review of the literature on persuasion showed that from all of the cultures involved in the current investigation, only the preferred persuasive style of Arabs has a clear classification in academic journals (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989). The evidence was consistent with the proposition, that Estonian managers mainly use a quasi-logical persuasive style, and research suggests that they have found differences in communication patterns with representatives of Bulgarian, Italian, Georgian, Serbian, Croatian and Irish cultures. The nature of the reported differences refers to the presentational and analogical preferred persuasive styles

discovered and researched by Johnstone (1989). Differences were characterised as behavioural tactics not suitable for business discussions and the topics discussed, and primarily referred to stronger than what would be “appropriate” emotional reactions. According to Trenholm and Jensen (2008:108) “all human behaviour has the potential to create meaning” and interpersonal communication occurs in a specific situation. If nonverbal behaviour is given priority over verbal message it might be the source of miscommunication (Schachner et al. 2005). Illustrative “stories” and “talking too much” were identified as disturbing factors, so issues connected with a larger information flow than the situation “required.”

As the dominating amount of presentational and analogical elements is a burden, and disturbs communication, reducing its effectiveness for Estonian managers in their receiver positions, it is logical to react by reducing those elements to a minimum in response to being in the source position.

The study supported the third proposition:

P3. To raise the effectiveness of business communication, Estonians will increase the quasi-logical orientation of the persuasion style, reducing the presentational and analogical elements to a minimum.

Estonian representatives of local municipalities connected the issues of communication effectiveness with self-positioning and maintaining the connection for possible future co-operation. The main concern was how to be taken seriously enough by a partner from a larger country, which represents a larger area with a much greater scale of activities. Therefore, adjusting the message to sound more business-like and often using a less personal channel (e-mailing the essence of the proposal after a lack of a feedback from the partner) is one way to raise the effectiveness of the communication from the Estonian perspective.

Implications

The theoretical contribution of the study is that it introduces one of the first efforts to unite the preferred persuasive style concept with Gudykunst’s AUM theory of effective communication (2005) in the intercultural environment. It has provided an insight into the persuasive communication process from a quasi-logical perspective. By investigating the perception of alternative styles, the paper confirms the findings of Gudykunst (2005) that the effectiveness of communication with strangers depends on the accuracy of predictions and explanations regarding their behaviour. In addition, this research suggests the importance of clearly defining, accurately predicting and explaining our own communication patterns. This will provide an insight into all components of the communication process, revealing the main differences and that it would help to “mindfully recognise and correct the errors” in communication (Gudykunst 2005:306). In terms of the development of business communication theory, the paper indicates the contiguity of the quasi-logical preferred persuasion style with low-context communication patterns (Hall 1959; 1976).

The research offers several practical solutions for managers. First, it provides guidelines for managing anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural interactions, leading to more effective communication. Managers can accurately predict and explain an intercultural communication process by identifying their own preferred persuasive style and recognise the features of alternative styles in the behaviour of foreign partners. The findings support more straightforward recommendations for practitioners from cultures with a quasi-logical preferred persuasive style, and as the study indicated it can equally be advised for low-context business cultures. In order to raise the effectiveness of communication with partners that use alternative preferred persuasive styles, sources should adopt more presentational and analogical elements. Attention during the communication process should focus on the message treatment and code, rather than the structure and content. The stress in a communication preparation process should be on studying the sub-elements of the other party (communication skills, attitude, knowledge and social and cultural systems).

The study complements previous findings (van Zolingen et al., 2012) that divided intercultural communication training into five areas: adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with host country nationals, adjustment to the general non-work environment, adjustment to local culture, and adjustment to the local context. The development of flexibility in regard to persuasive styles can be implemented as an integrative part of adjustment to the work. To make communication more effective and minimize errors, the manager will mindfully (Gudykunst 2003 a: 26) increase the presentational and analogical persuasive elements in the situation when decoding the feedback is problematic.

Limitations and future research

The study does have some limitations, which could provide inspiration for future research. The pertinence of the methodology used in the paper was proved by earlier investigations and prominent scholars, stressing that the source possesses control over the communication process. In this study, this means relying entirely on self-reporting, which increases the chance of a bias on the one hand, but on the other hand, it provides emic explanations. It would be interesting to complement these findings with research from the receiver's perspective (from "the other side"). Future research could examine this topic theoretically and empirically from alternative cultural perspectives, which prefer presentational and analogical persuasion styles. Further, the current results were obtained in a specific socio-cultural context of Estonian local municipalities, and the researched representatives, mainly women aged 28–47, were involved in particular fields of activity. This constrains any generalisations from the findings due to gender, age and specialisation limitations, but calls for further investigation using samples with different demographics. The current study took into account the P and D factors of the communicative parties; it would be interesting to analyse the inter-gender communication influences in addition.

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Appendix 1. The interview questions

Previous to our dialogue session, please, provide the directions for our discussion by answering the following questions:

- 1) Name, position and nature of intercultural contacts (if you want to clarify previously recorded information):
- 2) What kind of persuasive intercultural communication you've experienced in connection with your job? What was the hierarchical position of the participants? Were you communicating regularly or with the rare contact with each other?
- 3) Please, provide other details you consider to be relevant (personal or group communication, type of the project, your role in it, nature of the arguments).
- 4) Please, mention what were the most confusing issues in that practice? Identify at least three.
- 5) How in your mind those issues can be explained (give any hints you think might be relevant)? What was your reaction (solution) to improve the situation, to make the communication more effective?

Appendix 2. The dialogue outline

Topics discussed	Ideas and basic assumptions	Researcher task
Estonian intercultural persuasive communication	Most attention was paid to message and particularly to its structure (to make things short, exact, correct and clear is the normal intention).	To figure out: How evidence is constituted, what warrants are used, how ideas are formulated, how the conclusion is presented.
“Other side” persuasive style from Estonian viewpoint	Often decoded as “aggressive”, “flood of words”, message content unclear or lack of content (not seeing any “structure” behind words).	To clarify: cultures involved, ability to predict and explain behaviour of the “other side”.
Main communicative discrepancies		To learn: accuracy in predictions’ of strangers’ behaviour, ideas about feedback.
Main adaptation strategies	Getting straight to point, repeating main idea in brief, simple methods, putting it plainly, so it’s “easier” to understand.	To investigate: what sub-element in message construction and how it is adapted, logic behind this adaptation.

**4. EFFECTIVE PERSUASION:
A MODEL FOR THE INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS
CONTEXT**

Elena Pruvli

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Abstract

This paper expounds the factors that influence the effectiveness of intercultural persuasive communication (IPC) in a business context. It demonstrates the findings of four qualitative empirical studies in Estonian organisations and clarifies some practical implications of a model of effective IPC. The model explains to users the adaptation strategies of cultural persuasive style, status issues and differences in process versus results orientation. It is tested in an international setting by addressing the issues of self-perception with regard to a persuasive style. The paper explores the problem of social categorization by expanding a previously researched sample. While persuasion was studied and conceptualised cross-culturally, this paper provides an inside into doctoral research that analyses managers' interaction from within an intercultural communication perspective. It contributes to the development of intercultural communication theory by handling the long-standing issues of persuasive intercultural communication in business.

1. Introduction

Persuasive business communication is “communicating for results” (Hamilton, 2010) when persuaders have in mind their desired outcomes. The effectiveness of persuasion is evaluated in the subjects' actions or in their changed intend (Kaul and Desai, 2014; Perloff, 2008). With further international development, intercultural business communication of a persuasive nature becomes omnipresent within public and private sectors. Nowadays IPC is part of managerial communication routine in international business. While differences in persuasive styles from a cross-cultural perspective have been conceptualised (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989, 2008), little attention has been paid by scholars to strategies for adapting persuasive styles in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, the theories of persuasive communication have been evolved mainly in the US and from a political perspective (Hovland et al 1953; Cialdini, 2001; Perloff, 2008). According to Newman and Perloff (2004, p. 19) there is a difference of philosophy between business and political communication: “Communication in business is designed to support the goal of making a profit, while in politics it's directed to the successful operation of democracy. Winning in politics might be based on just few percentage points, while winning in business is based on huge variations.”

Joseph Cheng (2007, p. 26) declares that in management studies it is a domination of easily quantified phenomena with large samples related to organisations “at

the expense of those that are hard to measure such as societal culture and its influence on behaviour.” He argues that critical issues for future advancement in international management research are exploration of the phenomena that are difficult to quantify as well as incorporating “local country knowledge into the development of theories about management” (Cheng, 2007, pp 26–27). After Estonia joined the EU intercultural contacts of managers in Estonian organisations dramatically increased and changed their nature. Nowadays these contacts are often initiated by the Estonian side, are more direct, independent, and occur in very diverse contexts. Research into the dynamics of preferred persuasive styles and their connection with the effectiveness of communication in a global business context revealed the factors that affect effectiveness of IPC. These factors were organised into a descriptive model of effective IPC that is discussed in this paper with regard to its practical implications. The author tested it for observations on the focus group of 14 persuasion practitioners using a rapid ethnography method. The test reveals that while managers often claim that they prefer a quasi-logical persuasive style in business in reality they pay more attention to the messages that are closer to their own persuasive style. This paper broadens the earlier study on social categorization by exploring more diverse sample.

2. The aim of investigation and research tasks

The core issue of my doctoral research project is the process of intercultural persuasive communication (IPC) in a business environment. This paper will provide an insight into it. In a current study IPC is handled as a special mode of business interaction that is a part of working responsibilities of interacting professionals. The central problem of my doctoral study is how to make IPC effective in a business environment and to reduce semantic asymmetries among communicators. In order to solve this problem, my doctoral thesis aims to discover the major factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in business. Due to the format of the doctoral thesis the author had to limit her investigation to the most reflective and representative environments. For the same reason she adopted a traditional approach to the complex phenomena of cultural identity (Hall, 1992), that culture is grounded on a belonging to the group, it operates as a normative scenario for behaviour and is expressed implicitly and explicitly. As a consequence of a lack of research on IPC in business internationally and in Estonia, in creating research tasks the author followed four directing criteria.

The first is the theoretical interconnections and gaps between the concepts that are related to the study: intercultural communication, persuasive communication and social cognition. The second is the methodology suited to shape empirical research design and mode of analysis. The third is generalization that enables to apply the results of the study to some cultural business environments with the similar characteristics. The fourth criteria relates theoretical and managerial implications of the findings.

The first research task is to establish how the Estonian managers perceive the main differences in IPC between themselves and their business counterparts; and to clarify the nature of these differences (Pruvli and Alas, 2014; Pruvli, 2014). *The second research task* is to determine the preferred persuasion style of the Estonian managers and to evaluate their perception of different preferred persuasive styles during IPC in the business environment (Pruvli, 2014). *The third research task* is to identify what is the strategy of adaptation that Estonian managers use to raise the effectiveness of IPC within the representatives of different preferred persuasive styles (Pruvli, 2014). *The fourth research task* is connected to the influences of the hierarchical issues on IPC in business (Pruvli and Alas, 2014). It seeks to compare the process and outcome of status related social categorisation in the cultures within the different communication styles (Pruvli and Alas, 2012).

3. The methods used in doctoral research

The nature of this study accounted for the research methodology. IPC in business is a goal driven process. To understand this process the author used Bernard's (2012, pp. 127-128) approach that "cultural data" is obtained from the people who "have a particular competence in some cultural domains" and are "selected for their competence rather than for their representativeness" (Bernard, 2012 pp. 171–173). Based on (Handwerker 2001; Wolcott 2008; Zaman 2008) sampling techniques, the author relied on 10–20 knowledgeable informants to understand the contents of the well-defined cultural domain.

According to Arbnor Uncertainty Principle (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009 p. 132), "more precisely you determine isolated characteristics of a human being and her activities, quantitatively and statistically, the less you understand of her as a whole." It would not be possible to study the dynamics of the process and the factors influencing its effectiveness just by answering a "yes/no" question (as in the case of hypothesis testing). Therefore the following qualitative methods have been implemented:

1. Ethnographic techniques have been used for the exploratory case study in order to understand and explain communication between two departments of an international company from the perspective of Estonian managers (Pruvli and Alas, 2014).

The reasons for selecting the case company were 20 years' experience in operating a production unit in Estonia and close intra-company collaboration between Estonian and German departments. Being one of the world leaders in medical engineering this concern has a strong well-developed organisational culture which helps to understand the influences of the managers' national culture on their communicative practices.

2. An explanatory applied study has been designed to investigate preferred persuasive styles, perceptions of alternative persuasive styles and adaptation strategies among Estonian local municipal managers (Pruvli, 2014).
3. A comparative investigation has been implemented to establish the impact of communication style of Estonians and Italians (low and high context respectively) on how they categorize, in terms of status, a third culture; English (Pruvli and Alas, 2012).

Italian culture was chosen for a comparison because its communication style has been explored and evaluated by scholars and it has a polarity with the Estonian communication style.

4. The empirical method of this research among Estonian professionals has been interpretive, based on dialogue. It was performed in phases that are introductory, reflective, interactive and clarifying. The choice of respondents was based on their similarities (cultural background, interest in intercultural communication and affiliation with the Estonian Red Cross) and differences (demographics, areas of activity, experience and education). This investigation is presented at the end of the next section of this paper.

4. Studies carried out for this research project

The author designed and carried out for this research project the following studies: The data was collected in stages to comprehend the differences and problems in communication between Estonian and German managers from the perspective of the former. An open-ended interview with the managers was conducted by e-mail. This interview included the questions about respondents' demographics and the problems they experienced in intercultural contacts. There were 16 managers who were regularly involved in communication between the departments in question. All of them were included in the research sample. A personal meeting was organised with the goal to clarify the problems they indicated in their e-mail interviews. A focus-group discussion was arranged to understand the imbalances in cultural orientations of the Estonian and German respondents (Pruvli and Alas, 2014).

The author conducted an e-mail questionnaire about demographics and the main responsibilities related to intercultural communication among managers of Estonian local municipal governments (Pruvli, 2014). The questionnaire was done to select the specialised informants who are involved in intercultural projects with various partners on a regular basis and 18 from 25 respondents were chosen as a result.

A personal interview was carried out to explore the nature and content of the respondents' recent intercultural business interactions of a persuasive nature,

and to obtain their feedback on the effectiveness of these interactions. After the replies were analysed and the reported experiences were grouped, using Scollon's politeness system factors (Scollon and Scollon, 2003), the author conducted a dialog with specialised informants.

A contrived experiment, with control from the author, was chosen to study the effects of communication style on the process of social categorization. It was implemented in three stages among 14 Estonian and 18 Italian students simultaneously. The author adopted Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas approach (2009, p. 711) and used non-task related information because it "affect perceptions of status distance and relationships at work" During the common discussion respondents were checked on knowledge about the relevant details of British establishment. The author instructed them to make individual notes about the social status of the personalities presented on a video that was shown afterwards. The students were asked to discuss these notes in both intra-national groups and to orally present a summarised statement about the group decision process. The results were collected from both groups to be comparatively analysed (Pruvli and Alas, 2012).

This initial exploration was made in 2009 within a relatively restricted sample. Later the author conducted a study of social categorization among Estonian professionals; it is described below (as *study A*) with all the percentages rounded.

Study A: a conceptual sampling based on similarities and differences was used for investigation in the autumn of 2011. The sample involved 46 Estonian professionals from the West of the country who attended the author's intercultural communication training sessions and have got basic knowledge of the importance of hierarchical issues in different cultures. The two largest cities (Tallinn, and Pärnu) were represented by 37% and 20% of the professionals respectively. These people had various fields of activity such as construction, logistics, health care, transport, management of SMEs, education, catering, export management, IT and service sectors, but were interested in the subject as the volunteers of the Estonian Red Cross and declared that they had experienced intercultural interactions of some kind. In the sample here, 41% of the participants are men, 59% are women. A majority lived most of their lives in Estonia, speak Estonian as their native language and have at least a secondary or professional education. At that time 9 % were students and 24% have higher education. The age of the participants was 21–63, with an age average of 41.

The goal of this empirical study was to understand deeper the process of social categorisation in intercultural environment when the status relevant information was not willingly disclosed. The author had chosen dialogue as a method for her qualitative-interpretive research because it allowed her to be one of its participants and also to be an observer, "to be inside and outside the dialogue at the same time" (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009 p. 196). The dialogue process allows participants to express original opinions that are crucial for the construction of

meaning. According to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009 p. 196) all meaning is socially and continuously created and therefore a dialogue is not strictly limited in time; that was another reason for the author to choose this method. Therefore she could interact with different respondents more personally before and after the event. She made notes for her later interpretation and analysis. The dialogue about the status issues in intercultural environment was performed in following phases.

Introductory: The author introduced to participants the contrived experiment. The study revealed very different logic and reasoning between the researched groups, but more importantly it proved that Estonians based their conclusions mainly on *what* the members of this family have said. In contrary Italians relied more on *how* they behaved and on details of the environment.

Reflective: The participants composed groups of 6 or 7 people and discussed the setting and the outcomes of a correlation investigation. Each group presented their comments and expressed an attitude and understanding of status issues.

Interactive: Some participants shared their personal experiences relating to social differences and status issues with the rest of the audience.

Clarifying: The author and participants engaged into the exchange of questions and answers to reach the “inner qualities” of status related social categorization process in different environments.

This study confirms the earlier findings by Pruvli and Alas (2012) on how status issues are perceived and categorized in a low context culture such as Estonian. It also sheds more light on some “inner qualities” of this process. The majority of participants revealed high levels of uncertainty entering the status conscious foreign environment and they would strongly prefer very clear verbal characteristics of the member roles. However, the respondents over 40 years of age were more status conscious than younger people while engaging into culturally unknown reality. Some commented that in the setting of a contrived experiment, with a lack of verbal or tangible information, they would rather make no conclusions about the social status of the family. The study shows that respondents didn't view social status considerations always to be relevant in business situations. While they agreed on practical benefit of noticing social status issues they were not attaching much significance to it. A shared meaning in the research sample was attributed to social status that was connected mainly with elite consumption and could be expressed in tangible status symbols. They associated the meaning of status rather with hierarchical structure of organisation than with social structure of society.

5. Model of effective IPC and its testing in the international setting

The model presented in a table 1 was developed as result of research.

Table 1. The model of factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in a business context (drafted by the author)

Factors related to the Source	Factors related to the Receiver
<p>Managers should be mindful of their own and alternative persuasive styles. They should pay attention and make adjustments according to the cultural persuasive style of the receiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to the structure - to the content - to the treatment - and to the code <p>of the messages rather than to the communication outcome.</p> <p><i>Adaptation strategies of the cultural persuasive style</i></p>	<p>The main differences in preferred persuasive styles are expressed in the creation of evidence, connection, presentation of ideas, and the main thrust of the persuasive claim.</p> <p>Cultural Persuasive Styles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quasi-logical • Presentational • Analogical <p><i>Preferred persuasive style</i></p>
<p>The quasi-logical preferred persuasion style is linked with low-context communication. Differences in hierarchy and egalitarianism influence the results of intercultural interactions between the managers even if they have similar cultural persuasive styles.</p> <p>Managers with egalitarian cultural orientation failed to urge their counterparts with hierarchical cultural orientation to come to an agreement about the ideas or actions. They have evaluated the chain of authority in particular situations as confusing. However, status differences during these interactions were important for their counterparts with hierarchical cultural orientation.</p> <p><i>Cultural orientation: egalitarianism vs. hierarchy</i></p>	<p>The process of social categorization differs between low-context and high-context cultures. “Underlying attributes” include education, skills, abilities and functional backgrounds, differences in social and network ties. These ties embrace work-related, friendship and community ties as well as intra-group membership.</p> <p>When status-relevant “underlying attributes” are not willingly revealed, the members of the high-context culture base their social categorization on environmental context even if this context is culturally different from their own. Willingly shared information is valued less. Conversely, representatives of low-context culture mainly consider issues that are verbally disclosed.</p> <p><i>Social categorization practice</i></p>
<p>Managers are reluctant to change their procedures and structure because of their dedication to the process. Further pursuing a favourable experience can be more important than quick results. Difference in these cultural orientations can slow down the persuasive interaction and influences its outcome.</p> <p><i>Cultural orientation: results vs. process</i></p>	

It is an incentive for the author to comprehend how practitioners perceive their own preferred persuasive style. To obtain first hand reflections from the users and to get the main directions for further research she aimed to test this model using a quick or rapid ethnography (RE) method (it is presented below as *Study B*). This technique of intensively questioning a focus group about particular phenomena during a relatively short period of time was adapted to social research from health studies.

Handwerker (2001) defined RE as the constructivist method that, rather than looking for new solutions, emphasizes testing for specifications of issues that are arising from prior exploration. It is based on findings and suggests an intimate knowledge of the field by researchers and it involves data obtained during group session. According to Handwerker (2001, p. 13), a core of RE is understanding of what informants tried to teach us and enhancing of our understanding a step further. Informants perform as cultural experts who can speak on cultural phenomenon which is studied. To compare to traditional ethnographic approaches RE is shorter in time but more intense, is more focused on particular activities of the informants in certain situations rather than on their behaviour in general and is typically used to investigate the patterns of interaction and communication practices (Baines and Cunningham, 2013).

Study B: in my current investigation this method was implemented in an international setting. The author arranged a meeting with the users and discussed with them the factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in a business context. A brief description of the testing is given below and due to space limitations it is focused on a “preferred persuasive style” factor. Another limitation, in the author’s opinion, is that it requires more than just one case to draw some reliable conclusions with regard to the factors of cultural orientation and social categorization practice. Therefore a more thorough investigation into all factors that constitute the model should be done in future with more representative diverse international sample.

The author explained the model to the focus group of 14 persuasion practitioners, who worked as project managers and consultants for various international organisations. Their communications skills were shaped in the following cultural clusters: - Mexico, Chile and Costa Rica (3 males and 1 female), Russia and Armenia (2 females), Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates (6 males) and lastly China and Malaysia (1 male and 1 female). The age range of these people was 28-65, with an average of 43. Their relevant experience ranged from 3 to 27 years. During the general discussion about the differences in preferred persuasive styles everyone had expressed their opinion. A majority claimed that in persuasive business messages they find facts, figures and structure to be the most convincing and a quasi-logical style to be the most effective.

LaPiere established as early as 1934 (LaPiere, 1934) that declared attitudes in cultural domains does not necessarily determine the real behaviour of the

respondents. To check if this eminent discovery is relevant to the attitudes toward preferred persuasive styles the author worked out a research strategy and conducted an empirical examination as following.

First the informants watched a video showing how a US documentary filmmaker Mike Ramsdell delivers to an international audience a persuasive message. It is about the violent extraction in the Congo of valuable minerals (including diamonds and Coltan) that cause a lot of suffering to the natives. Coltan is used in cell phones produced by international corporations and the presenter calls to boycott unethical businesses. According to the author's analysis Mr. Ramsdell used almost equally throughout his presentation, quasi-logical (the structure and content), presentational (the treatment and code) as well as analogical (the content and code) elements. His message was an amalgamation of ideas from his speech and documentary.

The audience was then divided, by cultural clusters, into four uneven groups.

Group 1 consisted of four people from Mexico, Chile and Costa Rica.

Group 2 was composed of two people from Armenia (with one member who has studied and lived in Russia).

Group 3 was made up of six people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates.

Group 4 consisted of two people from China and Malaysia (with one member who was a Malaysian Chinese).

The informants were asked to analyse the persuasive communication of Mike Ramsdell and to discuss in their groups the following questions:

- 1) *What is the goal of his message? What made it easy or difficult to follow what he wants to change?*
- 2) *How easy or difficult is it to follow his ideas? What made it easy or difficult?*
- 3) *How does he make a connection between the pieces of information? How do these pieces fit together?*
- 4) *How does he create the evidence that the situation should be changed? Please evaluate the effectiveness and importance of this evidence. What makes the most impression?*
- 5) *Please, summarize the key point. What conclusion do you draw from his message? How does it fit with your experience? Have you been persuaded? What helped or hindered the progress of persuasion?*

While all of the groups claimed that the goal of the presentation was clear and it was easy to follow what his ideas were, they all agreed that the presenter should adapt the message to the relevant cultural contexts to be more effective with particular audiences. Group 1 was quite critical of how the evidence was created. They wanted to discuss a number of presentational elements which they found impressive (e.g. showing busy streets of megacity where people were happily using their cell phones ignorant of the violence caused in their manufacture). Group 2

paid attention mainly to analogical (e.g. comparing the atrocities in mining areas of the Congo with the holocaust) and presentational elements. Group 3 considered the whole message ineffective and was not happy with some presentational elements (e.g. the evidence given by a local woman about the violence towards her family). Group 4 paid attention to the analogical elements and found very little connection to their own cultural background. Interestingly almost no remarks commented upon the quasi-logical elements of the presentation despite Mr. Ramsdell introducing a number of facts and figures in a very structured way.

In a conducted study the common observations are more significant than the preciseness of results; hence the analysis is less exhaustive and scientific. However, the analysis revealed that all four groups based their impressions on different yet presentational and analogical elements of the persuasive message. The results of this test support the ideas of LaPiere (LaPiere, 1934), the managers declared that they prefer a quasi-logical persuasion style in business, but the study revealed that they pay more attention (be it approval or criticism) to the alternative elements of persuasion. An earlier study (Pruvli, 2014) suggests that these elements are closer to their own persuasive style. In order to indicate what persuasive style managers prefer in reality it would be useful to undertake the text and narrative analysis of their own persuasive messages when their structure is not given in advance (e.g. motivational letters).

6. The originality and implications of the study

Since Aristotel's writing on persuasive communication Hovland et al. (1953) are considered to be the first ones to provide a scientific approach that was focused on message perception by the receiver. Hovland's analysis which is considered the seminal work for later studies on effectiveness of persuasion provides the grounds for numerous models and concepts. The aforementioned theories were developed primarily within the American environment (Benoit and Benoit, 2008; Dillard and Shen, 2012; Gass and Seiter, 2013).

The dominating areas of study were rhetoric and political communication at a level of mass communication (Lee, 2004; Perloff, 2013) and also health communication and social marketing.

Persuasion in business environments has been empirically investigated in international marketing but a majority of studies were not aimed at handling the problems of communication styles. Instead they were primarily focused on cultural differences in orientations, e.g. collectivism and individualism (Cialdini et al. 1999); negotiation tactics, goals and values (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1997; Simintiras and Thomas, 1998; Chang and Chou, 2008). The topic of persuasive communication in an international setting has been addressed by Glenn et al. (1977) and Johnstone (1989) who proved that a certain preferred communication style is losing its effectiveness

in intercultural interactions; understandably electronic communication was excluded as it was not the norm. However, these investigations were made from a cross-cultural rather than intercultural perspective: the scholars analysed comparatively and conceptualised persuasive communication patterns of different cultures. Any later study of this problem in academic literature is not known to the author. The originality of authors' contribution can be summarised as follows:

1. Persuasive communication was explored in a business environment and the author created a model of effective persuasion for intercultural business context as a result. While there were some empirical studies in marketing and sales, they involved communication between the seller and the customers or were related to advertising messages. The source and the receiver(s) in these contacts were not united by working functions. So far a majority of persuasion theory was developed in political communication, where similar to marketing the source and the receivers have an asymmetric relationship. Traditionally the models stressed the importance of pleasant situation where the message is received and whether a persuader is an expert. Business communication in private or public sectors is more formal and is meant to occur between the specialised professionals about the subjects that are related to areas of their professional credibility. The source and the receiver are united by function and nature of working responsibilities.
2. This dissertation handles the long-standing issues of persuasive intercultural communication in a business context and introduces the key factors of effective persuasion for intercultural contacts. The author studied the topic in an international setting where a number of cultures with different communication patterns were involved in interaction with the Estonian managers. In addition this paper applies theoretical provisions to intercultural context primarily used for general communication. The majority of theories and concepts related to persuasive communication were developed from the American perspective for mono-cultural environment.
3. While persuasion was studied and conceptualised mainly cross-culturally, this work analyses managers' interaction from within an intercultural communication perspective (that means when the parts intercommunicate, and analysis reflects the perception of the dynamics of this process by the source). The author explored not only the differences in persuasion styles but also the strategies of adaptation of the persuasion styles during the interactions.
4. This doctoral project confirms the contiguity of the quasi-logical preferred persuasive style with low-context communication. However, it also proves that inside the quasi-logical continuum there are other factors such as cultural orientations (egalitarian or hierarchical and process or result) that influence the effectiveness of persuasion.

This study sees its practical contribution as stated below:

- It has a multidisciplinary relevance as it borders with international business discourse, managerial intercultural communication and it adds to the body of knowledge in the field of persuasive intercultural communication in business. Since the Estonians started making extensive public appearances in international business, roughly two decades ago, this research can later serve as a benchmark enabling other scholars' to make more profound comparisons over much longer periods of time.
- A model of effective persuasion for intercultural business context provides the tools for successful networking in international setting. The practitioners can predict and plan IPC in order to raise its effectiveness. For the managers from egalitarian, low-context cultures the study highlights and exposes the significance of status issues. It is helpful during negotiations and developing the relational capabilities in a global context to consider the differences in results and process orientation.
- Better understanding of IPC will support the internationalisation process of the enterprises. Entrepreneurs, start-up entrepreneurs and managers can achieve better results by implementing suitable persuasive styles in convincing their potential investors.
- The key factors of effective IPC will help the management of international companies in the motivation of their diverse employees without additional reward.
- Unpacking the differences in IPC styles and cultural orientations provides the guidelines for the international teamwork routine in international organisations. Identification of theirs and their partners' preferred persuasive styles will contribute to the successful co-operation within the team.
- The investigation findings gained from the study of interdepartmental communication of international company offer helpful information for managers about priorities of training in international company. It proves that it will be useful for the managers involved in regular international operations to develop their intercultural communication skills even prior to professional training.
- The findings support more straightforward recommendations for managers from cultures with a quasi-logical preferred persuasive style. In order to raise the effectiveness of communication with partners that use alternative preferred persuasive styles they should pay more attention to the message treatment and code as well as to the social and cultural systems of their counterparts. As the study demonstrates the managers should be aware of status issues and its perception in the intercultural environment.

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PART 4. CONCLUSIONS

The major findings are presented in this part, and the main conclusions are drawn, which are then organised into a descriptive model. The results of the survey in Estonian organisations offered an insight into the process of IPC and revealed the major factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational context. Furthermore, the findings highlighted some internal and external aspects that have an impact on the preferred persuasive style of managers, which can provide the basis for the prediction and analysis of one's preferred persuasive style in a business setting. The theoretical and practical contributions of the study are presented at the end of this part as well as the limitations and proposals for future research.

4.1. Discussion of the research propositions

P1. The effectiveness of IPC is affected if the adaptation strategy of cultural persuasive style of the source does not match the preferred persuasive style of the receiver (Study 3).

The first proposition was supported and the research disclosed two major factors of IPC effectiveness related to the source and to the receiver. Table 3 explains these factors confirmed by Study 3.

Table 3. Reduction of differences in preferred persuasive styles of communicators

Factor related to the Source	Factor related to the Receiver
<p style="text-align: center;">Adaptation strategies of the cultural persuasive style</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Preferred persuasive style</p>
<p>Managers should be mindful of their own and alternative persuasive styles. They should make adjustments according to the cultural persuasive style of the receiver <i>to the structure</i> <i>to the content</i> <i>to the treatment</i> <i>and to the code</i> of the messages rather than be centred on the communication outcome.</p>	<p>The main differences in preferred persuasive styles are expressed in <i>the creation of evidence, connection, presentation of ideas, and the main thrust of the persuasive claim.</i> Cultural Persuasive Styles: <i>Quasi-logical</i> <i>Presentational</i> <i>Analogical</i></p>

Source: drafted by the author

These factors match the conclusions of Kolodziej-Smith et al. (2013) drawn from another perspective; they also indicate that managers need to make decisions about cultural adaptations and target audience changes. These scholars (Kolodziej-Smith et al. 2013) addressed resistance to persuasion in a cross-cultural context and studied the impact of ethnic/cultural backgrounds on accepting or rejecting attitudinal persuasive messages in terms of self-construal and face negotiation theories.

The empirical study revealed the internal and external qualifiers of one's preferred persuasive style in a business setting. Triandis and Suh (2002, 136) conceptualised personality as a configuration of cognitions, emotions and habits activated in particular situations. The study supports their view that the situation is determinant in how personal characteristics are expressed and used for adjustment to circumstances.

Figure 4 illustrates the qualifiers that can serve as a prediction tool for the communication preparation process.

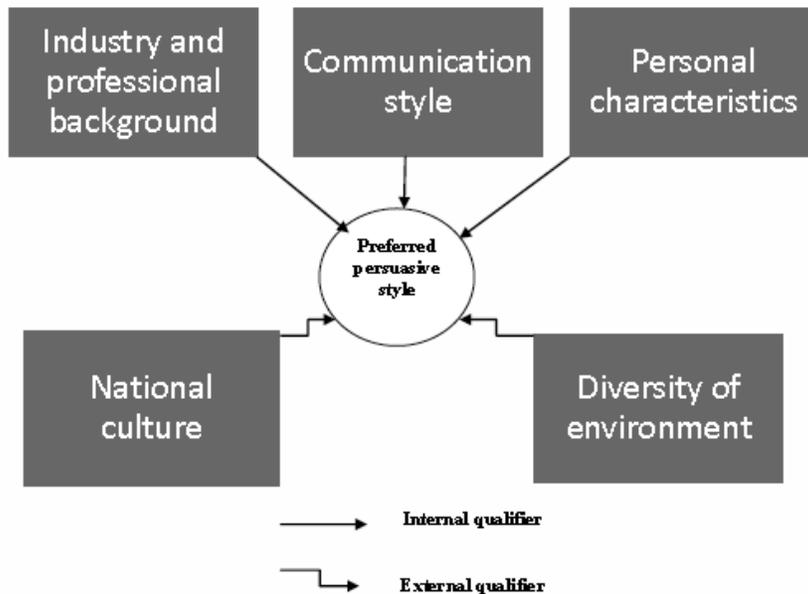


Figure 4. Internal and external influences on preferred persuasive styles (drafted by the author)

P2. The cultural orientation, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, of the source influences the effectiveness of IPC with the hierarchically sensitive receiver even if they have similar cultural persuasive styles.

This proposition finds support mainly through Study 1 and Study 3. Study 3 demonstrates that the quasi-logical preferred persuasive style is linked with low-context communication. As Lee and Choi (2006, 319) pointed out in a prevalent number of explorations, comparisons of communication styles were made at the national level using the polar view of cultural orientations while overlooking the potential within-culture variations. In this survey the preferred persuasive styles are analysed as a combination of communication elements, and their connection with cultural orientations is more complex. When handled this way, the preferred persuasive styles repulse the generic characteristics as well as the personal traits of the communicators.

Differences in hierarchy and egalitarianism influence the results of intercultural interactions between managers even if they have similar cultural persuasive styles. Similarity is expressed in the usage of identical communication elements. As Diefenbach (2013, 43) states, the hierarchical system works so “well” regardless of the actual situational and historical context because hierarchy is in people’s mind-set. According to Magee and Galinsky, (2008, 353), even when hierarchy is mindfully reduced by one side it inevitably emerges both between and within groups. Different elements of managers’ mindset (Diefenbach 2013, 46) represent the explicatory connection between their reasoning, actions, decisions and context.

Managers with an egalitarian cultural orientation failed to urge their counterparts with hierarchical cultural orientation to come to an agreement about their ideas or actions. They evaluated the chain of authority in particular situations as confusing. However, status differences during these interactions were important for their counterparts with a hierarchical cultural orientation.

P3. The practice of status related social categorisation differs between cultures with different communication styles.

This proposition is evaluated as partly supported.

In general, the findings of Study 2 and Study 4 A confirm the ideas of Yama and Zakaria (2012) that distinction between a low context culture and a high context culture provides an explanation for cultural differences in cognition. As Study 2 shows, the process of social categorisation differs between low-context and high-context cultures within the group of younger people with similar international experience. Findings from the BBC’s Great British Class Survey Experiment (Savage at al. 2013) proved the importance of extensive social networks that are associated with particular classes in British society, (and this environment was used by the author as an experimental setting). The analysis by Savage at al. (2013) reveals the class boundaries of a more complex nature than just educational and occupational.

When status-relevant “underlying attributes” are not willingly revealed, the members of the high-context culture base their social categorisation on the

environmental context even if this context is culturally different from their own. Willingly shared information is valued less. Conversely, representatives of the low-context culture mainly consider issues that are verbally disclosed.

However, Study 4 A proved that there are generational differences in this process in a low-context culture, such as Estonian. People over 40 years of age were aware of the significance of implicit attributes of status and attached more meaning to it in comparison with those of a younger age. These “underlying attributes” include education, skills, abilities and functional backgrounds, differences in social and network ties. These ties embrace work-related, friendship and community ties as well as intra-group membership. The survey showed that the respondents of this older group will be careful to categorise, without outspoken information about “underlying attributes”, in a strange environment. They claimed that they would strongly prefer an explicit message on “who is who”.

P4. The cultural orientation, results vs. process, of the source and the receiver impacts the effectiveness of IPC.

It was discovered that both results-orientation and process-orientation of communicators influence how the effectiveness of IPC is perceived by the source. It corresponds with a tradition in persuasion scholarship, which was explained at the beginning of Part 2, to treat perceived effectiveness (PE) of persuasion as actual effectiveness (AE). The results-oriented source feels the urge to accelerate the process, or even to abandon it, if the receiver is more interested in the means of achieving the goal, in the creation of better procedures, environment and structure.

4.2. Summary of findings and their applicability in the international environment

The study found and provided an insight into the major factors that influence IPC in an organisational context. In order to secure an effortless communication during an intercultural contact, practitioners should place emphasis on the communication preparation process. Based on the factors discovered in this study, a descriptive model was created in order to facilitate this process and reduce asymmetries between the Source who is initiating the IPC and the Receiver. This model is presented in Table 4.

The model was developed using the findings of four studies (Study 1, Study 2, Study 3 and Study 4 A) conducted in Estonian organisations. The findings are based on intercultural communication experience, but they reflect the perception of the Estonian communicators; as explained at the beginning of Part 2 (Dillard at al. 2007) the effectiveness of persuasive message is evaluated by its source. The author applied to IPC such well-developed domains of intercultural communication theories (Hall 1981; Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1997; Sagiv and Schwartz

Table 4. Model of factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational context

Factors related to the Source	Factors related to the Receiver
Adaptation strategies of cultural persuasive style	Preferred persuasive style
Cultural orientation: egalitarianism vs. hierarchy	Social categorisation practice
Cultural orientation: results vs. process	

Source: drafted by the author

2007; Hofstede et al., 2010) as cultural orientations, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy and results vs. process.

Ridgeway (2014) has argued that there are “cultural status beliefs” about individuals and groups regarding competence, esteem and suitability for authority. She claims that there are three types of cognitive processes that these cultural status beliefs shape implicitly (Ridgeway 2014, 12); the first indicates who is more competent and qualified for promotions and power; the second shows the associational preference of people when forming ties and favouring the exchange of information and opportunities; the third points out the resistance reaction to constrain lower status people who might prosper.

However, the “preferred persuasive style” and the dependent factor “adaptation strategies of cultural persuasive style” are domains that are relatively unexplored internationally. Therefore, to obtain some reflections on the receivers’ perception and to clarify the conditions of the model’s applicability in an international setting, the findings are tested with the focus on “preferred persuasive style” factor in this dissertation. A detailed description of the testing of the model can be found in Study 4 B. It was done using the rapid ethnography (RE) method. According to Handwerker (2001), RE is applied when testing for specifications of issues arising from prior exploration. The model was discussed with a focus group of 14 persuasion practitioners who were divided by cultural clusters into four uneven groups. During the general discussion about the differences in preferred persuasive styles, the majority claimed that they find a quasi-logical style to be the most effective.

All 14 informants worked as project managers and consultants for various international organisations. They are representatives of the cultures that, according to Hall (1981), belong rather to the high context pole. Study 3 proved the link between low context communication and quasi-logical preferred persuasive style;

therefore, it would be expected that these respondents will show preference for mainly Presentational and Analogical generic styles of persuasion. Based on conceptualisation of discrepancies (Mintzberg's 1994, 24) between the intended and realised strategies, a survey was designed to examine whether the intended strategy towards IPC of the focus group and its real behaviour were identical.

O'Keefe (2015) analysed the studies of persuasion and pointed out that the visual effects and computer mediated messages were not receiving attention by scholars. To address this gap the informants were offered an opportunity to watch a video showing how a US documentary filmmaker, Mike Ramsdell, delivers a persuasive message to an international audience. The message contains in almost equal amounts quasi-logical (the structure and content), presentational (the treatment and code) and analogical (the content and code) elements. His message was an amalgamation of ideas from his speech and documentary. This message was discussed in four groups, representing cultural clusters according to the questions presented in Appendix 3. The analysis revealed that all four groups based their impressions on different yet presentational and analogical elements of the persuasive message. Thus, it can be concluded that the model can be applied to an international setting but with an important clarification: rather than rely on self-reporting for an indication of managers' "preferred persuasive style" it would be efficient to undertake the text and narrative analysis of their own persuasive messages when their structure is not provided in advance.

4.3. Theoretical contribution and practical implications

Since the differences in persuasive styles from a cross-cultural perspective have been conceptualised (Glenn et al. 1977; Johnstone 1989) very little attention has been paid by scholars to strategies for adapting persuasive styles in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, the theories of persuasive communication have been evolved mainly in the US and from a political perspective. The Theory of Generic styles of Persuasion (Study 3) was used as the basis for designing the research. However, the focus of the analysis is on the interactions of managers from within an intercultural communication perspective and on the exploration of the strategies of adaptation of the persuasion styles during these interactions. This dissertation introduces the theoretical construct of Intercultural Persuasive Communication (IPC) that was relatively overlooked by scholars on interpersonal, intergroup or organisational level. **The main theoretical contribution is considered to be in developing the model of factors that influence the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational context (Table 4). This model conceptualises the factors from intercultural and cognitive perspectives.** By implementing this new approach this dissertation achieves a number of contributions for the fields of managerial intercultural communication, international business discourse and persuasion in an organisational context.

First, it introduces one of the pioneering efforts to unite the preferred persuasive style concept with the theory of effective communication in the intercultural environment. This research suggests, as shown in Figure 5, the importance of clearly defining, accurately predicting and explaining our own communication patterns regarding the preferred persuasive style in addition to the accuracy of predictions and explanations regarding behaviour of the other party (Study 3). These findings could be seen as supplementary to Gerhard Maletzke’s psychosocial model, which was developed in 1963 for communication in a mono-cultural environment (Danesi 2009, 183). Maletzke emphasised the impact of the social setting on communicators’ interaction and on their self-image.

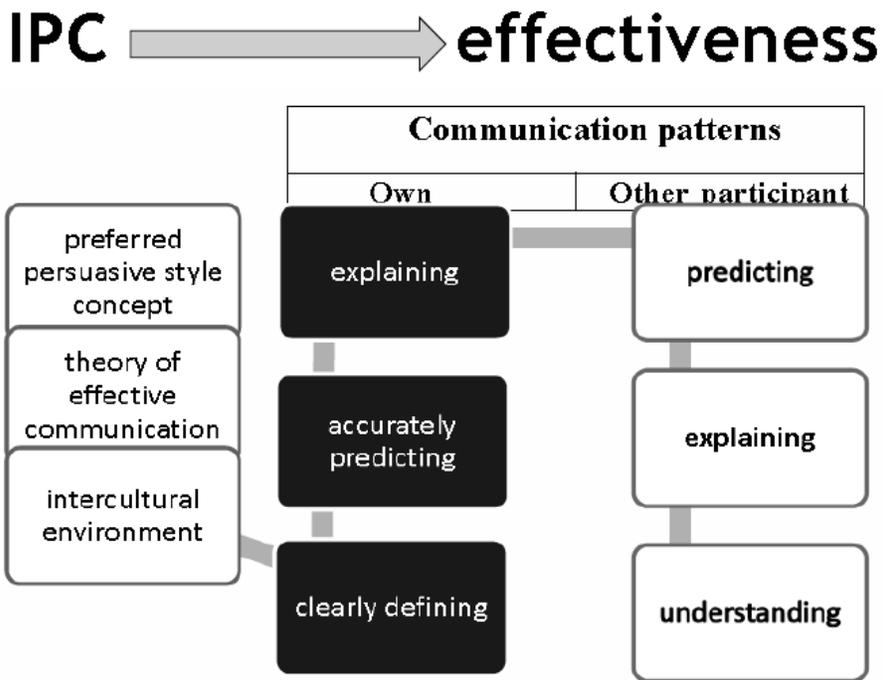


Figure 5. Connection between the effectiveness of IPC and the awareness of communication patterns, own and other participant (drafted by the author)

Second, the paper conceptualised the internal and external qualifiers of the preferred persuasive style in a business setting (Figure 4).

Third, this exploration accessed persuasive communication in an organisational context on interpersonal and intergroup level. A number of theoretical concepts of persuasion existed in marketing related fields on these levels, but they used value-based or strategic approaches and were not related to differences in the persuasive styles. So far, the majority of persuasion theory was developed in political communication at the level of mass communication.

Fourth, the majority of concepts related to persuasive communication were developed from the American perspective for the mono-cultural environment. The key factors of effective persuasion for intercultural contacts were conceptualised and the topic was explored in an international setting where a number of cultures with different communication patterns were involved in interaction with the Estonian managers (Study 1, Study 3).

Fifth, the investigation indicates the contiguity of the quasi-logical preferred persuasion style with low-context communication patterns, but highlights some other influences such as the cultural orientations that might affect the persuasion process (Figure 6).

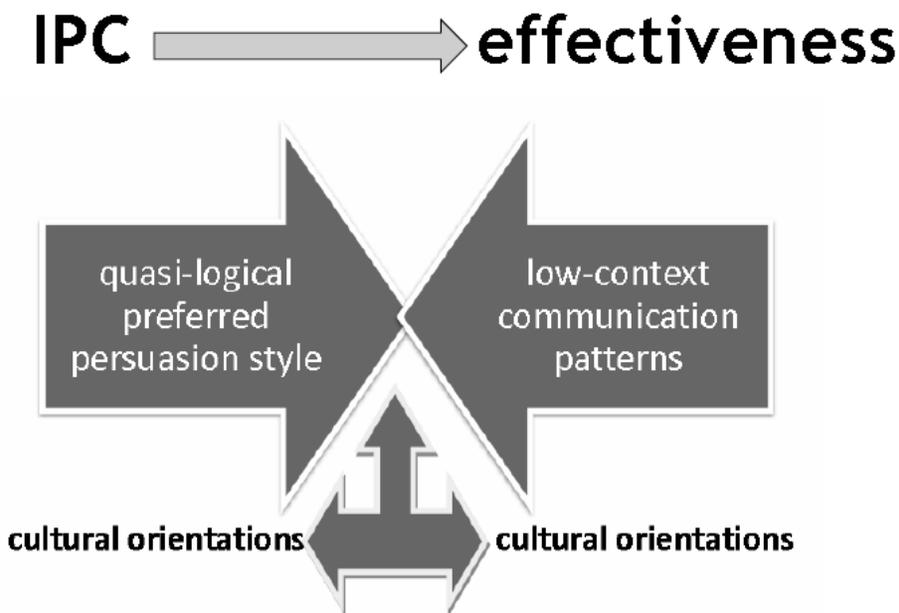


Figure 6. The connection between the effectiveness of IPC and the cultural orientations, which might affect the persuasion process even if communicators have similarities in communication patterns (drafted by the author)

Sixth, it adds to the body of knowledge of diversity studies by assessing the differences in the cognition process between cultures with different communication styles (Study 2, Study 4 A).

From a philosophical perspective this research continues the Socrates' and Plato's idealistic and rationalistic tradition (Garver 1995), which saw the reality as a combination of ideas and happenings. The concept of IPC unites the cultural phenomena with communication of a particular kind. Cultural patterns are ideas about actions that take place in reality; the ideas about these actions persist and

outlive the communication episodes that gave the ground to conceptualise the cultural phenomena. In terms of Aristotelian understanding of what he called (Garver 1995) unity of the shapeless “matter” and “essence”, instead of an “idea” in Plato’s conception, this investigation offers the frame for a process of communication. A number of persuasive episodes received their new meaning via this frame, which transforms them into concepts.

Findings suggest a number of implications for practitioners involved in business communication of a persuasive nature in an international setting.

1. The managers from a low context culture should be more centred on the communication process rather than the message. Through an awareness of differences in communication styles and cultural orientations, the managers can manage anxiety/uncertainty and increase mindfulness in intercultural communication on both personal and organisational levels. The study revealed that the impact of these differences is often missed when the cultures in question belong to the same low-context dualistic pole (Study 1).
2. Prior to receiving training on other educational programmes, employees should be trained in the field of intercultural communication to be able to examine, explain and predict how knowledge within an international company is transferred. It is important not only for the technological process, but also for the company identity (Study 1). The development of flexibility with regard to persuasive styles can be implemented as an integrative part of adjustment to the work (Study 3).
3. A communication planning base with emphasis on Cultural Persuasive Style of the receiver (Table 1 in Study 3) is recommended for the managers in the source position. The emphasis in the IPC preparation process should be on studying the sub-elements of the receiver (communication skills, attitude, knowledge and social and cultural systems) as illustrated in Figure 7.
4. If the study of the sub-elements of the receivers is complicated, it could be useful to undertake the text and narrative analysis of their own persuasive messages when their structure is not given in advance (Study 4 B).
5. If the source has a quasi-logical preferred persuasive style, IPC requires a preparation process with attention to the message treatment and code, rather than the structure and content. To raise the effectiveness of the message, the source should adopt more presentational and analogical elements instead of increasing the quasi-logical approach (Study 3).
6. The managers from egalitarian cultures should understand the importance of hierarchical issues (Study 1) and the influences of social status on IPC. While developing the relational capabilities and sustainable business connections

they should be aware of the “underlying attributes” that are not deliberately disclosed but are important for the source credibility in the eyes of the status conscious receiver (Study 2, Study 4 A).

7. The managers should consider that in an intercultural setting the difference in communication styles will determine the practice of social categorisation during the initial contact. Their partners from high context cultures will base their conclusions on context clues rather than on verbal messages (Study 2, Study 4 A).

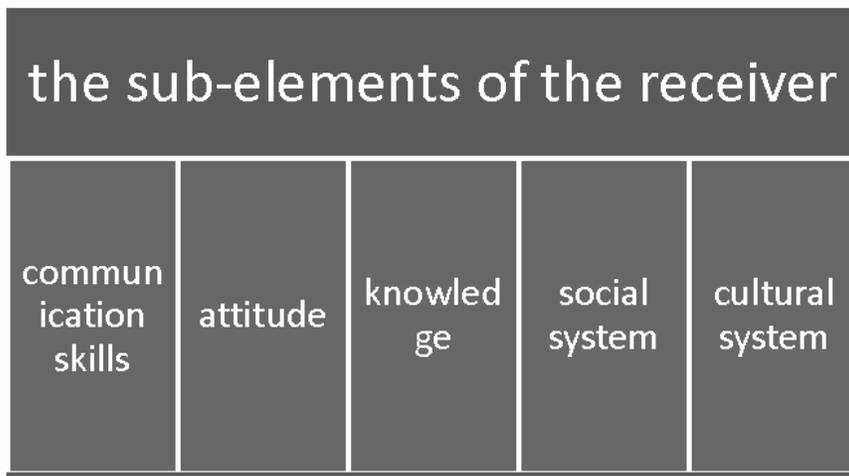


Figure 7. The sub-elements of the receiver for IPC preparation process (drafted by the author)

4.4. Limitations and proposals for future research

This work conceptualised the issues of the effectiveness of IPC in an organisational setting, but the scope of one doctorate project does not allow all the issues of this relatively unexplored topic to be treated. The phenomenon was studied from the low-context, quasi-logical cultural angle of the Estonian managers. Future research can examine this topic from alternative (presentational and analogical) cultural perspectives.

It was not easy to find the managers who are involved in IPC on a regular basis for a longer period of time in Estonia as part of their work responsibilities. While the respondents are considered qualified knowledgeable informants who present not only their personal but also a generic attitude, a further investigation could use larger samples with different demographics. It could be done with clusters of

cultures (e.g. Middle Eastern, South European and Latin American etc.) involved in the investigation. This study was conducted in both private and public sectors but concentrated on intra-gender intercultural episodes; therefore, the discovered factors of IPC effectiveness might have different significance across genders and sectors of the economy. The concentration was on persuasion theories that are proven to be applicable in an organisational environment for the theoretical framework. Thus some other important issues of persuasion (e.g. use of fear appeal) remain for future investigation.

It would be useful to test the model of effective IPC with regard to all the factors that constitute it. Using just one case for testing the factor of “preferred persuasive style” is a limitation of the current project. The investigation could be the starting point for developing a relatively new domain of research emerging from the traditional fields of persuasion, intercultural communication and cognition studies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Focus-group discussion outline

Main topics of discussion	Planned time for topic
Manager's INTRODUCTION (additional details about the nature of communication and working experience)	MAX 5 min
Issues related to hierarchy and egalitarianism	MAX 10 min
Other issues related to organisational formalisation MAX 10 min	
Perceived gaps in communication: details, nature, context and feedback	MAX 40 min
Summary of discussion: Evaluation of communication on a scale of 1-7 (1 being low-context and 7 being high-context)	MAX 15 min

Appendix 2. The dialogue outline

Topics discussed	Ideas and basic assumptions	Researcher task
Estonian intercultural persuasive communication	Most attention was paid to the message and particularly to its structure (to make things short, exact, correct and clear is the normal intention).	To establish: how evidence is constituted, what warrants are used, how ideas are formulated and how the conclusion is presented.
The “other side” persuasive style from an Estonian viewpoint	Often decoded as “aggressive”, verbose; message content is unclear or lacking (not seeing any “structure” behind words).	To clarify: cultures involved, ability to predict and to explain behaviour of the “other side”.
Main communicative discrepancies		To learn: accuracy in predictions of strangers’ behaviour and ideas about feedback.
Main adaptation strategies	Getting straight to the point, repeating the main idea in brief, simple methods, putting it plainly so it is “easily” understood.	To investigate: what sub-element is in the message construction and how it is adapted and the logic behind this adaptation.

Appendix 3. Questions for discussion within the four cultural clusters of the focus group

- 1) *What is the goal of his message? What made it easy or difficult to follow what he wants to change?*
- 2) *How easy or difficult is it to follow his ideas? What made it easy or difficult?*
- 3) *How does he make a connection between the pieces of information? How do these pieces fit together?*
- 4) *How does he create evidence that the situation should be changed? Please evaluate the effectiveness and importance of this evidence. What makes the most impression?*
- 5) *Please, summarise the key points. What conclusion do you draw from his message? How does it fit with your experience? Have you been persuaded? What helped or hindered the progress of persuasion?*

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN – KOKKUVÕTE

Mõjuva kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni tõhusus organisatsioonilises kontekstis: mõjutavad tegurid.

Doktoritöö eesmärk

Käesoleva doktoritöö uurimisobjektiks on mõjuva kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni protsess ehk IPC (inglise keeles *intercultural persuasive communication*) organisatsioonilises keskkonnas. Uuringu keskseks probleemiks on IPC tõhusamaks muutmine organisatsioonilises keskkonnas ja suhtlejate vahelise semantilise asümmeetria vähendamine. Doktoritöö eesmärgiks on eelnimetatud probleemi lahendamine selgitades välja põhifaktorid, mis IPC efektiivsust organisatsioonilises kontekstis mõjutavad.

Uurimistöö teoreetiline raamistik

Töö teoreetiline raamistik baseerub Hovlandi ja tema kolleegide mõjuva kommunikatsiooni kontseptsioonidel, eriti infoallika usaldusväarsuse teorial (Hovland et al 1953), mis rõhutab, et infoallika staatus on üks olulisemaid mõjuva kommunikatsiooni efektiivsuse atribuute. Infoallika usaldusväarsuse mõiste varieerub erinevates kultuurides ja mis veelgi olulisem, seda edastatakse erinevalt.

Mitmekesisuse uurijad (Jiang et al. 2012; Kawamura ja Jackson 2014) väidavad, et praeguses akadeemilises kirjanduses ei ole piisavalt käsitleti hierarhiast kui mitmekesisuse alusest. Siiani on mõjuvat kommunikatsiooni ärikeskkonnas uuritud empiirilisel ja teoreetilisel vaid peamiselt väljaspool kultuuridevahelist konteksti. Erandiks on turundus, kus uuriti väärtusi ja käitumist või kasutati strateegilist lähenemist (nt Hornikx ja O'Keefe 2011).

Doktoritöö tutvustab mõjuva kommunikatsiooni põhikontseptsioone, mis töötati poliitilise kommunikatsiooni massikommunikatsiooni jaoks. Hiljem kohandasid erinevad uurijad nagu Berlo, McCroskey, Hersey ja Blanchard jne neid intrakultuurilise organisatsioonilise keskkonna jaoks.

Seega võib öelda, et mõjuva kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni kontseptsioon on akadeemiliselt vähe läbi töötatud ja käesolev uurimistöö avab selle kontseptsiooni olemus. Oma olemuselt ühendab IPC organisatsioonilises kontekstis kultuuridevahelise ärikommunikatsiooni ja veenmise teooriaid. Tegemist on protsessiga, mis on seotud kognitsiooniga, mille käigus juhid tuginevad oma olemasolevatele vaimsetele skeemidele ja arendavad oma arusaamist keskkonna mitmekesisusest. See seob IPC mitmekesisuse kognitsiooni uuringute valdkonnaga.

Doktoritöös selgitatakse, kuidas IPC täidab lünga nende kolme uurimisvaldkonna vahel, mis on omavahel vastastikusel sõltuvuses.

Uurimisstrateegia ning metoodika

Doktoritöö baseerub neljal uuringul, mis on avaldatud rahvusvahelistes teadusajakirjades. Töös püstitatakse neli uurimisülesannet.

Esimeseks ülesandeks oli uurida tajutud IPC erinevusi Eesti juhtide ja nende Saksa kolleegide vahel ning täpsustada nende erinevuste iseloomu.

Teiseks ülesandeks oli määratleda, milline on Eesti juhtide eelistatud veenmisstiil ning selgitada välja, mis on nende arusaam teistest eelistatud veenmisstiilidest IPC käigus.

Kolmandaks ülesandeks oli tuvastada, millist kohandamisstrateegiat Eesti juhid rakendavad, et tõsta IPC efektiivsust suheldes teiste eelistatud veenmisstiilide esindajatega.

Neljandaks ülesandeks oli võrrelda staatusega seotud sotsiaalse liigituse protsessi ja tulemusi kultuuride vahel, mis kasutavad erinevaid kommunikatiivseid stiile.

Käesolev uurimus rakendab Bernard'i (2012, 127-128) lähenemist kasutades "kultuurilisi andmeid", mis on saadud vastajatelt, kes "on eriti pädevad mõndades kultuurivaldkondades" ja on "valitud nende pädevuse, mitte nende esinduslikkuse tõttu" (Bernard, 2012, 171-173). Lähtudes Handwerker'i (2001), Wolcott'i (2008) ja Zaman'i (2008) valikumeetoditest on määratletud domeeni sisu mõistmiseks vaja 10-20 teadlikku informaatorit.

Käesoleva uurimuse puhul on valitud ja kasutatud järgmiseid kvalitatiivseid uurimismeetodeid:

1. Ettevalmistava juhtumiuuringu puhul kasutati etnograafilisi meetodeid mõistmaks ja analüüsivaks IPC-d rahvusvahelise firma kahe osakonna vahel lähtudes Eesti juhtide vaatenurgast. Tootmisfirma valiti tema 20-aastase tegutsemiskogemuse ja Eesti-Saksa osakondade tiheda koostöö pärast (uuring 1).
2. Selgitava rakendusliku uuringu eesmärgiks oli uurida Eesti kohalike omavalitsuste juhtide eelistatud veenmisstiile, arusaamu alternatiivsetest veenmisstiilidest ja nende kohanemisstrateegiaid (uuring 3).
3. Võrdlev analüüs viidi läbi, et välja selgitada kommunikatsiooni stiili mõju eestlaste ja itaallaste staatusega seotud liigitusele. Madala ja kõrge konteksti kasutamise mõju on uuritud inglise kultuuri puhul (uuring 2).

4. Dialoogil põhinevat ja tõlgendatavat empiirilist meetodit rakendati, et uurida eestlastest spetsialiste ning viidi läbi järgmistes etappides: sissejuhatav, peegeldav, interaktiivne ja selgitamise faas. Vastanute valik oli tehtud arvestades nende sarnasusi, nagu kultuuritaust, huvi kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni vastu, sidemed Eesti Punase Ristiga ja erinevusi, mis on demograafia, tegevusalad, kogemused ja haridus (uuring 4 A).

Andmeid koguti etappide kaupa kõigi uurimisülesannete raames. Esimese, teise ja kolmanda uurimisülesande raames tehti küsitlusi ja intervjuusid, neljanda raames korraldati autori järelevalve all eksperiment.

Peamised tulemused ja järeldused

Käesoleva teadustöö uurimisprobleemi lahendusena läbiviidud uurimistöö põhjal autor on koostanud kirjeldava mudeli, mis põhineb IPC efektiivsuse põhifaktoritel organisatsioonilises kontekstis. See mudel on esitatud tabelis 1.

Tabel 1. Mudel põhifaktoritest, mis mõjutavad IPC efektiivsust organisatsioonilises kontekstis

Tegurid, mis on seotud infoallikaga	Tegurid, mis on seotud vastuvõtjaga
Kultuuriliste veenmisstiilide kohanemisstrateegiad	Eelistatud veenmisstiilid
Kultuuriline orientatsioon: egalitarism või hierarhia	Staatusega seotud sotsiaalse liigituse protsess
Kultuuriline orientatsioon: tulemustele või protsessile	

Allikas: autori koostatud

Uuringu (4B) tulemused näitasid, et mudelit saab rakendada ka rahvusvahelises keskkonnas vaatamata sellele, et mudel arendati Eesti juhtide uuringute põhjal.

Uurimistöö tõi välja, et lisaks prognoosile ja selgitustele teise poole käitumise kohta on oluline selgelt määratleda, täpselt prognoosida ja selgitada oma eelistatud veenmisstiil. Uuringu käigus kontseptualiseeriti veenmisstiilide sisemised ja välised mõjurid ärikeskkonnas. Selle käigus selgus kvaasi-loogilise eelistatud veenmisstiili seos madala kontekstiga kommunikatsiooni stiiliga. Uurimuse käigus jõuti järeldusele, et veenmisprotsessi mõjutavad ka teised tegurid. Käesolev töö toob esile kultuuriliste orientatsioonide mõju.

Saadud tulemustel on ka praktiline väärtus. Esiteks, madala konteksti kultuuri esindajatel tuleks rohkem keskenduda sõnumi asemel kommunikatsiooni protsessile.

Teiseks, enne teiste haridusprogrammide rakendamist rahvusvahelises ettevõttes peaksid töötajad saama koolituse kommunikatiivsetest stiilidest, sest nad peaksid olema teadlikud kuidas antud kultuurilises ruumis toimub teadmiste edasi andmine. See on oluline mitte ainult tehnoloogilise protsessi, vaid ka firma identiteedi jaoks.

Kolmandaks, kui ollakse infoallika positsioonis, siis on otstarbekas kasutada kommunikatsiooni planeerimise raamistikku, mis on välja töötatud autori poolt. Rõhuasetus peab olema vastuvõtja kultuurilisel veenmisstiilil.

Neljandaks, IPC ettevalmistamise protsessi käigus peab uurima vastuvõtja alaelemente: suhtlemisoskust, tausta, teadmisi, sotsiaalseid ja kultuurilisi süsteeme. Kui vastuvõtja alaelementide uurimine on raskendatud, siis on kasulik viia läbi tema veenmissõnumite teksti ja narratiivi analüüs, nii et nende struktuur ei ole etteantud.

Viiendaks, kui ollakse infoallika positsioonis ja eelistatakse kvaasi-loogilist veenmisstiili, siis IPC ettevalmistamisel tuleks tähelepanu pöörata struktuuri ja sisu asemel sõnumi töötlemisele ja väljendusviisile.

Kuuendaks, egalitaarsete kultuuride esindajad peaksid arvestama sotsiaalse staatuse mõju IPC ja infoallika usaldusväärsusele vastuvõtja silmis.

Käesoleva töö piirangud ja ettepanekut jätku-uuringuteks

IPC fenomeni uuriti madala kontekstiga kvaasi-loogilise kommunikatiivse kultuuri vaatevinklist. Edaspidi võivad uurijad seda teemat käsitleda alternatiivsete (presentatiivse ja analoogilise) kultuuride seisukohtadest.

Edaspidises uuringus võiks kasutada suuremaid valimeid erinevate demograafiliste omadustega. Oleks huvitav uurida kultuure klastrite kaupa (nt Lähis-Ida, Lõuna-Euroopa ja Ladina-Ameerika, jne). Tulevikus oleks kasulik testida IPC tõhususe mudeli kõiki tegureid.

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2000 - now Several courses in various European institutions on crisis management and communication, curriculum development, publishing and intellectual copyright, entrepreneurship, cross-cultural psychology and negotiation techniques, diversity management and intercultural training techniques

Professional Experience:

1992-2001 Business journalist, travel writer and researcher, FIJET
2000-now Lecturer and supervisor: EBS; EBS (part-time 2009-now); BFM-TU (part-time 2008-2012); Hogeschool Drenthe, NL (visiting 2003-2006)
2000-now Intercultural communication consultant and trainer, in a partnership with various organisations: Intercultural Communication Ltd; IPD, Switzerland; Hämeenlinna city government, Finland; IOM; Euroguidance; Eures; Euromed and some other international organisations

Intercultural communication training that involved Estonian participants:

- 2010 For academic faculty at Tallinn University of Technology
For support staff at Tallinn University of Technology
For local municipal governments (February 2010, 36 ac. hours in Tartu; March 2010, 36 ac. hours in Tallinn): organised by the Estonian Ministry of Culture
In the Estonian department of the international company “Karl Storz”
Of EAS Foreign Office representatives, at Investment and Trade division of EAS, Enterprise Estonia
For media representatives, Erasmus exchange students and the University faculty members at the Tallinn University workshop
For the officers of the Estonian Police and Border Services Agency organised by Estonian Police and Border Services Agency
- 2011 For the management and volunteers of the Central region of Estonian Red Cross, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and by EU funding
For the management and volunteers of the Southern region of Estonian Red Cross, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and by EU funding
For the career advisers of Finland and Estonia, organised and financed by the EC and Finnish Ministry of Employment and Economy
For the management and volunteers of the Western region of Estonian Red Cross, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and by EU funding
Of the Migration Monitoring Office staff of the Estonian Police and Border Protection department, organised and co-funded by the European Union through the Return Fund and the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- 2012 For Erasmus students (Orientation in Estonian communication patterns) at Tallinn University of Technology
For the governmental project “Participative integration in Finland” by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland
- 2013 Of the staff at the International Study Centre of the Tallinn University of Technology

2015 For members of International Club at the International Study Centre of the Tallinn University of Technology
For academic faculty at Tallinn University of Technology
For Erasmus students (Orientation in Estonian communication patterns) at Tallinn University of Technology

Other administrative work responsibilities:

Co-ordinator for the ERASMUS Intensive Programmes:

2003 - at EBS, Estonia

2004 - at Budapest Business School, College of IMB, Hungary

2005-2006 - at the department ECHO, Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven, Belgium

Member of the faculty and network for European Summer University of Dauphine University, Paris, France (with the support of the French Ministry of National Education)

2003-2008 - an annual workshop for entrepreneurship practitioners and academia

Co-author in International publishing projects in the field of positive psychology:

2010 - The World Book of Happiness, Bormans Leo (Eds.), Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo publishing

2013 - The Word book of Love, Bormans Leo (Eds.), Tielt, Belgium: Uitgeverij Lannoo

Awards and notifications:

2001 - Awarded by the TAA (Travel Association of America) for the follow up of the First Travel Media Showcase in 2000, Atlantic City, USA

2013 - Interactive intercultural communication session in the city of Hämeenlinna, Finland; recognised by the project support team as the most successful event of the year 2012. (The governmental project by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland “Participative integration in Finland”)

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