

From Global to Local Markets: The Role of Communication Consultancies in Localizing the Launch Communication of MNCs

International Business Communication

Master's thesis

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**From Global to Local Markets:
The Role of Communication Consultancies in Localizing the Launch Communication
of MNCs**

Objectives of the Study

This study focused on identifying the role of communication consultancies in localising the launch communication of MNCs and investigating how this communication is localized in practise. The main research question of *what is the role of communication consultancies in the process of localizing MNCs' launch communication* was divided into three research sub-questions: 1) *What is the relationship between a communication consultancy and an MNC in a launch communication process like?* 2) *How do communication consultants localize MNCs' international launch communication?* 3) *How do communication consultants localize press releases to address the Finnish media?*

Methodology and the Theoretical Framework

The empirical part of this study consisted of five theme interviews with Finnish communication consultants and a supportive genre-analysis of six press releases. The theme interviews were divided into two sets according to the focus: a pilot study and focused interviews. To illustrate the localization of the communication materials in practice, original and localized press releases were compared by using some tools of genre analysis. The theoretical framework of the study illustrated the localization process of the launch communication. It consisted of three different levels: 1) the participants in the process, 2) the process of localization and 3) the concrete communication materials localized in the process.

Findings and Conclusions

Launch communication as well as localization seemed both client and case dependent. The role of communication consultancies in the launch process depended on the status of the consultancy in the international network of communication consultancies in each case. Typically, there were two kinds of positions in the network: a lead consultancy and a local consultancy. The localization process seemed as a natural and inherent part of the consulting work since in any given communication case, not just localization, consultants evaluated and adjusted the plan to ensure the best possible outcome for the client. When considering if and how to localize launch communication, communication consultancies typically considered seven aspects: 1) current Finnish market conditions and operational environment, 2) industry sector, 3) client organizations, 4) product or service that would be launched, 5) possible cultural differences between the markets internationally, 6) differences in the media, and 7) language. The localization of press releases depended, as all consultant work, on the client MNC's budget, time limit and policies. Typically, the communication consultants analyzed the original press releases carefully and revised them to make them effective in the Finnish market. It seemed that the original versions were used as master documents providing the key information which was then edited to fit the local needs.

Keywords: launch communication, localization, communication consultancies, integrated corporate communication, international business communication, press releases

Globaaleilta markkinoilta paikallisille markkinoille:**Viestintätoimistojen rooli kansainvälisten suuryritysten lanseerausviestinnän lokalisoinnissa****Tutkimuksen tavoitteet**

Tämä pro gradu-tutkielma keskittyi tarkastelemaan kansainvälisten suuryritysten lanseeraamisviestinnän sopeuttamista uusille markkinoille ja erityisesti viestintätoimistojen roolia osana lokalisointia. Päättökysymys oli: *Millainen rooli viestintätoimistoilla on kansainvälisten suuryritysten lanseerausviestinnän lokalisoinnissa?* Päättökysymys jaettiin kolmeen alatutkimuskysymykseen: 1) *Millainen on asiakasyritysten ja viestintätoimistojen suhde lanseerausviestintäprosessissa?* 2) *Miten viestintäkonsultit lokalisovat asiakasyritysten kansainvälistä lanseerausviestintää?* 3) *Miten viestintäkonsultit lokalisovat suomalaiselle medialle tarkoitettuja lehdistötiedotteita?*

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja teoreettinen viitekehys

Kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen tutkimusaineisto muodostui viiden suomalaisen viestintäkonsultin teemahaastatteluista sekä kuuden lehdistötiedotteen genreanalyysistä. Teemahaastatteluista saatiin kahdenlaista tutkimusaineistoa: yksi pilottihaastattelu ja neljä fokusoitua haastattelua. Haastatteluaineiston tueksi tutkittiin kolmea alkuperäistä ja kolmea niistä lokalisoitua lehdistötiedotetta genre-analyysin työkaluja käyttäen. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys pyrki kuvaamaan lanseerausviestinnän lokalisoinnissa kolmella tasolla: 1) prosessiin osallistuvista osatekijöistä, 2) prosessin vaiheista ja 3) lehdistötiedotteista, jotka prosessissa lokalisoidaan.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ja johtopäätökset

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että lanseerausviestintä ja sen lokalisointi ovat hyvin tapauskohtaisia ja sidoksissa asiakasyrityksen viestintästrategiaan sekä budjettiin. Lokalisointi nähtiin sisäänrakennettuna osana konsulttien työtä; jokaisessa konsultointiprojektissa konsultit arvioivat ja mahdollisesti muokkasivat asiakkaan viestinnällisiä tarpeita ja viestintästrategiaa parhaan mahdollisen lopputuloksen saavuttamiseksi. Viestintätoimistojen rooliin lokalisointiprosesseissa vaikuttaa olennaisesti niiden asema kansainvälisissä viestintätoimistojen verkostoissa. Tyypillisesti konsulttitoimisto voi toimia joko johtavan toimiston tai paikallistoimiston roolissa. Lanseeraustilanteessa konsulttien lokalisointipäätökseen näytti vaikuttavan seitsemän muuttujaa: 1) nykyiset markkinaolosuhteet ja operationaalinen ympäristö, 2) teollisuuden ala, 3) asiakasorganisaatio, 4) tuote tai palvelu, jota tuodaan markkinoille, 5) paikalliset kulttuuritekijät, 6) paikallinen mediamaisema ja 7) kieli. Lehdistötiedotteita lokalisoidessaan konsultit analysoivat tiedotteet tarkasti ja muokkasivat niistä mahdollisimman sopivia ja toimivia suomalaiselle medialle. Konsultit käyttivät lähtökohtina asiakasyrityksen kansainvälisiä tiedotteita, jotka muokattiin kontekstiin ja kohdemedialle sopiviksi.

Avainsanat: lanseerausviestintä, lokalisointi, viestintätoimistot, viestintäkonsultit, integroitu yritysviestintä, kansainvälinen yritysviestintä, maineen rakentaminen, lehdistötiedotteet

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1 INTRODUCTION

Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy. MNCs typically act globally but they also have to take into consideration the local characteristics of the various markets they are operating in. This means that MNCs have to adapt their corporate communication to reflect a consistent and coherent image while meeting the unique needs of each local market (Robertson, 1995). Since numerous new companies, new and remodelled products, and services are launched every single day, it is challenging for multinational organizations to be heard and to stand out from their rivals when entering new markets (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 25). Advertising alone is not enough to gain coverage of and raise the interest towards MNCs' launchings, but a joint venture of both marketing and communication efforts in external corporate communication are essential (Cornelissen, 2008).

According to Chen, Shen and Chiu (2007), a product launch is perhaps the riskiest, the most expensive and poorly managed phase of the product development process. In spite of the enormous commitments of time and resources, an average 40 percent of new consumer products fail. In challenging market conditions, a company that is proficient in communicating its new products and leveraging its affiliated brands may maximize its chances of achieving profitable product acceptance in the target markets (Chen et al. 2007; Guiltinan, 1999). Moreover, Lee and O'Connor (2003) argue that without an appropriate introduction strategy, product innovativeness may be perceived by customers as offering uncertainty and risk rather than superior benefits.

With accelerated global interactions, increasing attention has also been paid to the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization (Wu, 2008). Global communication strategies related to launching new products need adjustments to meet the heterogeneous and multilingual business environment. Despite globalisation, national languages and cultural differences still matter (Robertson, 1995).

For example, the content of communication must, above all else, be appropriate to the local context it is intended for, and thus it has to be personalized, translated to take account of the specific features of the language and culture of each country, put on the market without delay, and distributed through multiple channels (Trillaud, 2009). There are more foreign markets and larger volumes of more complex content to consider, and in some cases enterprises still lack localization understanding (Trillaud, 2009).

Global enterprises now face a growing need for market specific consultancy. Accordingly, during launching processes, MNCs tend to use local communication consultancies to provide the much needed market-specific know-how and local perspective. These consultancies have a significant role as a filter localizing the MNC's launching communication to meet the local media and other external stakeholder groups' local characteristics. In addition, they mould the content to address the local media and thereby, consumers and customers.

The issue of communication in global business is in the very heart of International Business Communication. Indeed, the localisation of MNCs' corporate communication in the global environment has been discussed in Master's theses of IBC at the Aalto University School of Economics to some degree although it has not been covered in its full extent. For example, Reitamo (2008) has concentrated on how MNCs can support their internal communication in the global environment by creating a consistent organizational culture and internal communication processes. However, different countries and cultures not only produce challenges to MNCs' internal communication produce challenges, but also to external communication, since MNCs do not have power over national cultures or infrastructures that affect local external communications. Thus, there is an apparent need for external corporate communication studies concerning MNCs in general, as suggested by Lappalainen (2008) and how MNCs' external communication is adapted to the local markets, in particular. Moreover, the role of communication consultancies and localisation work in the communication process requires attention.

The balance between “global” and “local” approaches to international communication strategy is discussed in the advertising and marketing communication discipline extensively (e.g. Wu, 2008; Robertson, 1995). Previous studies have concentrated on the question of MNCs need to adapt their global advertising to attract local consumers. In these studies, the defining of “local” elements and the optimum mix of localisation were in focus. In addition, to illustrate the mix between global and local, the academic literature addressing the issue of adapting to local markets has adopted the concept of “glocalization” (e.g. Wu, 2008; Robertson, 1995). Also Kanso (1992) has researched global advertising extensively and more specifically the role of advertising agencies in localising marketing campaigns. Additionally, Valenti (2007) has concentrated on global versus cultural approaches in public relationship management from the MNC perspective.

Despite previous research conducted in the field of marketing, the specific scope of localising launching communication seems not to be covered. In addition, the role of communication consultancies and the localisation work they conduct in practise has not been researched previously. Therefore, this study provides much needed information on both launching communication and the role of the communication consultancies in localization.

In this study, launching communication is defined as a communication program that evolves from the organization’s corporate communication strategy and is designed to communicate a launch. According to Louhiala-Salminen (2009) corporate communication is one of the four sub-disciplines of business communication and it is a business function that acts as the corporation’s voice and shapes its image by responding to the challenges of the constantly changing business environment. It includes both external and internal communication of the organization. In this study, launching communication is considered combining the different areas of corporate communication to introduce the organization or its products to new stakeholders supporting simultaneously the organization’s identity and crafting its image and reputation. Since the launching stage of a product or a service is an important platform for creating interest and positive associations among the various stakeholder groups in new markets, MNCs need to pay attention to how they

communicate launching to new markets and possibly seek external help to adjust the global launching communication to fit the local market characteristics.

This study aims to identify the role of communication consultancies in localising MNCs' launching communication and investigate how launching communication is localized in practise. In addition, this study approaches launching communication as a part of corporate communication.

Since this study aims to investigate the localization of the MNCs' launching communication and the role that communication consultancies play in that, I have established two main objectives for this study:

1. To investigate the role of communication consultancies in MNC'S launching communication.
2. To investigate communication consultancies' process of localizing messages in practise to address the media in the Finnish market.

1.1 Research Questions

In order to achieve the two main research objectives described above, I have formulated a research question as follows:

- What is the role of communication consultancies in the process of localizing MNCs' launching communication?

As this question is very broad, three sub-questions have to be raised:

- What is the relationship between a communication consultancy and an MNC in a launch communication process like?
- How do communication consultants localize MNCs' international launch communication?
- How do communication consultants localize press releases to address the Finnish media?

1.2 Overview of the study

This study is divided into five chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) Literature review, 3) Research methods and data, 4) Findings and discussion and 5) Conclusions. This first chapter introduces and justifies the topic. Additionally, the research questions of the thesis are presented here.

The second chapter reviews literature and presents the main theories and models relevant to the thesis topic. The literature review is built on four sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter identifies and describes the process of the launching communication in global markets. The second sub-chapter discusses localization of launching communication in particular and the third one discusses the relationship between MNCs and communication consultancies and the role of communication consultancies as a local expert or a filter. The fourth sub-chapter introduces the theoretical framework for the present study.

Chapter 3 describes the research methods and data of the study. In addition, the validity and reliability of the study are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and discussion of the study. Finally, the conclusions of the study are drawn in the fifth chapter. It also discusses the implications and the limitations of the study and provides suggestions for further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews previous literature and studies on corporate communication related to the introduction of products or services to new markets and to the localization of external corporate communication. The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical background and context that justifies the main objective of the study, which is to investigate the role of the communication consultancies in localizing MNCs' launching communication to meet new markets.

The literature review is divided into four sections (see Figure 1). Section 2.1 concentrates on communicating a launch in the international business environment. In this section the concept of corporate communication in terms of establishing new products and brands is presented and the strategic communication for launching is discussed. Section 2.2 focuses on the localization of MNCs' external communication. In this section international communication strategies, the role of languages and translation as a tool for localization are discussed. Section 2.3 discusses the role and meaning of communication consultancies in MNCs' external corporate communication. Here, press releases as communication tools are discussed. Section 2.4 presents the theoretical framework for the study.

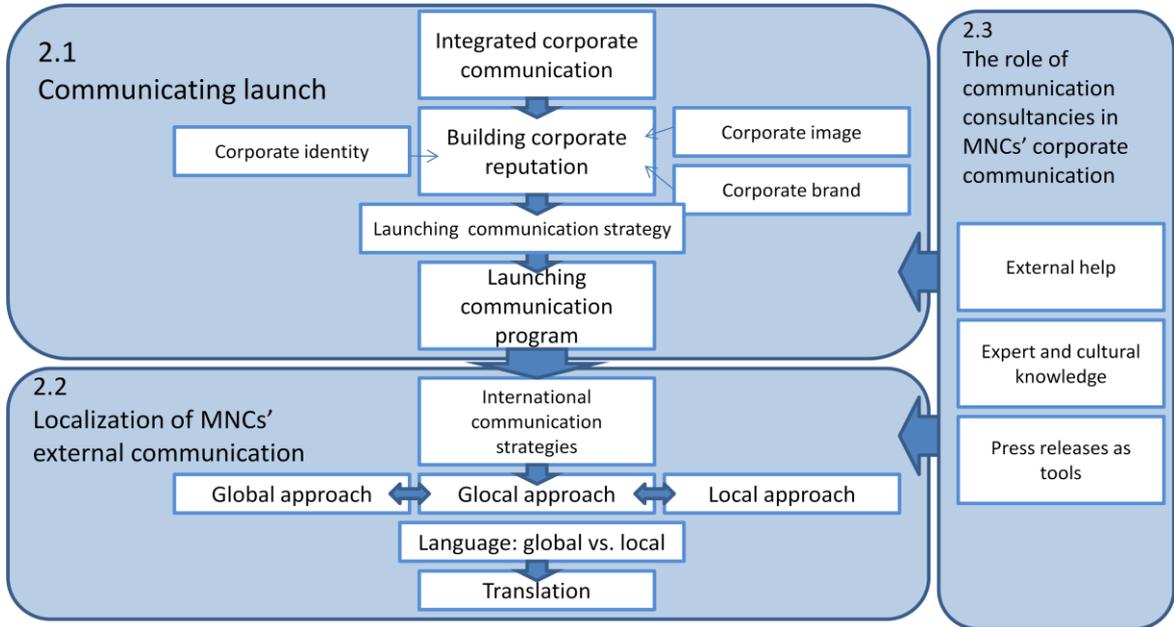


Figure 1: Construction of the literature review

2.1 Communicating launch

In order to gain attention from the target audiences in crowded markets with overflow of information, introducing the corporation itself or its products and services to new markets require extensive and strategic communication efforts at the MNC. Launching situation is an opportunity to introduce the brand and its products and raise interest in different stakeholder groups. Additionally, it provides a chance to communicate the organization's image and the identity in line with the corporate communication strategy and thus contribute to company's most valuable asset, a coherent reputation.

Launching requires a comprehensive approach of using different channels to reach desired audiences. Marketing, including the marketing basics of pricing, distribution and product development, solely is not enough to introduce the company or its products to a new market (Cornelissen, 2008). According to Shimp (2007), relying only on mass media advertising is not enough, either. To succeed, a wide coverage of communication is needed in order to be heard and noticed in the desired way in the midst of all the other information target stakeholders face daily. Furthermore, in addition to marketing, positive publicity, strategic media coverage and dialogical communication with the target audience are needed to stand out and establish the new launch successfully (Shimp, 2007). Thus, addressing all the stakeholders should be done via a strategic selection of various communication forms such as PR, mass media advertising or sponsorships.

To illustrate the communication in the global launching situation, the core concepts relating to the issue are discussed in the following sections. Additionally, the differences and similarities between marketing communication and corporate communication are described in order to enlighten these separate yet overlapping disciplines.

In this section, communication for launch is discussed. First, the concept of corporate communication is discussed and justified as a theoretical platform for this thesis. Secondly, the concepts of corporate identity, image, brand and reputation are presented. These are the essential building blocks that the communication activities aim to reflect and convey to organization's stakeholders when entering new markets.

Thirdly, a model for launching communication is built based on the already existing theories.

2.1.1 Corporate communication: An integrated approach

Since in this study launch communication is considered part of corporate communication, the concept of corporate communication is discussed next.

Traditionally, marketing and communication are considered as two individual disciplines in the academic world and two separate functions in the business world. Marketing has been seen as focusing on markets whereas corporate communication focuses on publics, excluding customers and consumers, of an organization (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 16). According to Cornelissen (2008, p. 16-17), the main argument for this separation was that communication towards the markets was one-way process aiming only to boost sales distinctive from the dialogical two-way process of communicating with publics.

Since the early 90s, both academic and business worlds have recognized the need for managing these two disciplines in a closer and more integrated manner. Integrated marketing communication provides a comprehensive view on the marketing communication planning in the global context that combines various communication efforts to produce cohesive and consistent communication to multiple audiences, not just consumers (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999). According to Cornelissen (2008, p. 21), organizations have adopted this integrated approach by coordinating both marketing and corporate communication disciplines, yet keeping the respective corporate departments separately. The nature of these disciplines is discussed in more detail in the following in order to provide a comprehensive view of current launch communication and its components in the MNC context.

Corporate Communication

Corporate communication is perceived as one of the four domains of business communication (Louhiala-Salminen, 2009, p. 308; Argenti, 1996; Kalla, 2005).

Despite the unique characteristics and emphasis of each domain, some difficulties in defining them exist and therefore, the definition of corporate communication is discussed here in more detail.

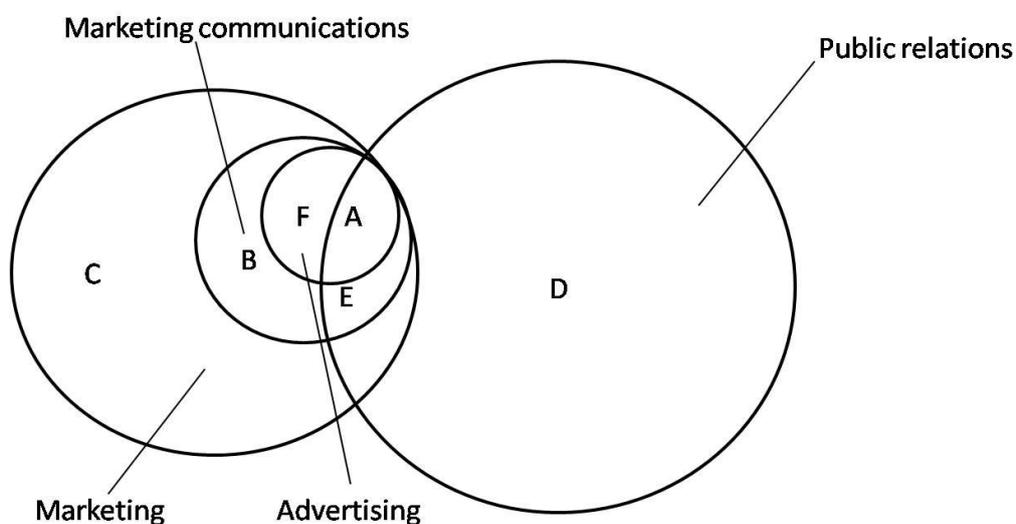
The roots of corporate communication are in what used to be called public relations (Louhiala-Salminen, 2009, p. 308; Argenti, 1996) which evolved to a business function responding to the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. Accordingly, corporate communication is defined as the corporate voice producing the images of itself to various audiences (Louhiala-Salminen 2009, p. 308; Argenti and Forman 2002, p. 4; Kalla, 2005). Currently corporate communication is increasingly seen as a holistic concept as well as a management function that coordinates both company-external and company-internal communication to maintain relationships with organizations' stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 5).

In the MNC context, corporate communication has an important role in forming and sending unified and coherent messages and images to all the stakeholders of the company. According to Argenti and Forman (2002, p. 4), corporate communications is also the process a company uses to communicate all its messages to key stakeholders: a combination of meetings, interviews, speeches, reports, image advertising and online communication. Thus, the core purpose of corporate communication is to manage an organization's communication as a coherent, unanimous entity.

Corporate communication may include various activities in the organizations depending on, for example, the organization's size and business areas. Similarly, in academic literature, the activities included under the concept vary according to the researcher. The difference between corporate communication and marketing communication can be showed by comparing the communication types included in each discipline. Argenti (1996, p. 77) includes in corporate communication the following areas of communication: the corporate image and identity, corporate advertising, media relations, financial communication, employee communication, community relations and crisis communication. Keller (2009), on the one hand, lists the following eight communication areas under marketing communication: advertising, sales promotions, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth-marketing and personal

selling. Taking a step further towards integrating corporate communication with marketing communication, Cornelissen (2008, p. 31) extends Argenti's definition by adding public affairs, issues management, direct marketing, sales promotions and sponsorships under the concept of corporate communication. The areas Cornelissen added under the corporate communication concept have traditionally been included under marketing communication.

Since launch communication requires extensive communication efforts combining areas from both corporate communication and marketing communication, I will use Cornelissen's (2008) definition of corporate communication areas as a starting point. His extensive definition of corporate communication feels a logical choice since it emphasizes the rather blurry definition of what kind of marketing is communication and what kind of communication is marketing. Figure 2 illustrates the relationships of marketing, corporate advertising, corporate PR, marketing PR, marketing communication, direct marketing and sales according to Cornelissen's view (2008, p. 19).



Key:

- A Corporate advertising
- B Direct marketing and sales promotions
- C Marketing (Distribution and logistics, pricing and product development)
- D "Corporate" public relations
- E "Marketing" public relations including product publicity and sponsorship.
- F Mass media advertising

Figure 2: Marketing and public relations activities and their overlap (Cornelissen 2008, p. 19)

As can be seen in Figure 2, there are six different circles overlapping, which represent the relationships between marketing and corporate communication and their blurry interface. In what follows the elements presented in the picture above are explained and described in more detail in relation to corporate communication. Since the emphasis of this study is on building an image and media relations in the new market, the areas A (Corporate advertising), D (Corporate public relations), and E (Marketing public relations) are discussed in more detail in what follows. After these, the rest of the elements in the Figure 2 are presented briefly.

Corporate advertising (A)

According to Argenti (2009, p. 88) corporate advertising is part of corporate communication. According to Shimp (2007, p. 287) corporate advertising focuses on the corporation's overall image instead of specific brands or products. Moreover, it can focus on economic or social issues relevant to the corporation's interests (Shimp 2007, p. 287). Argenti (2009, p. 88) points out that all of a company's advertising contributes to its image, and thus both product and corporate advertising should reflect a unified strategy. Corporate advertising involves the use of radio, TV, cinema, posters and internet advertising to create or manage a favorable image (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 19-20). However, Cornelissen (2008, p. 20) separates clearly corporate advertising from mass media advertising.

Public relations (D & E)

Public relations (PR) are commonly considered a predecessor of the contemporary concept of corporate communications (Argenti, 2009, p. 45; Cornelissen, 2008, p. 14). On that note, Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000, p. 6) define public relations as a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the publics whom its success or failure depends on. Shimp (2007, p. 578) describes PR as an organizational activity involved in fostering goodwill between the company and its various publics. According to him, PR does not involve marketing per se but rather focuses on general management concerns (Shimp 2007, p. 578). Cornelissen (2008, p. 17) stresses PR's role as a two-way dialogue channel for organization to engage its publics in.

Shimp (2007, p. 578) calls the approach to PR presented above as “general public relations” and Cornelissen (2008, p. 19) “corporate public relations” (part D in the Figure 2). Corporate public relations activities aim to enhance and maintain the organization’s reputation and communicate with the media and other relevant stakeholders that have an impact on the organization’s image.

PR activities can be used to marketing oriented purposes as well (part E in the Figure 2): publicizing news and events related to launching and promotions of products and services (Cornelissen 2008, p. 17). Cornelissen (2008, p. 17) defines “marketing public relations” (MPR) as using public relations techniques for marketing purposes which was found to be a cost-effective tool for generating awareness and brand favorability. Additionally, he found to imbue communication about an organization’s brands with more credibility than mass media advertising (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 17). MPR aims to give a product or a brand additional exposure, newsworthiness and especially credibility that traditional paid advertising cannot achieve. Shimp (2007, p. 579) emphasizes the role of MPR when introducing new products as valuable.

Shimp (2007, p. 581) extends MPR further to both proactive and reactive initiatives. Proactive MPR is opportunity seeking and offensively oriented in nature. It enables communicating successes of the brand and it is usually accompanied with advertisements and promotions to strengthen market penetration. Proactive MPR utilizes publicity by using product releases, executive-statement releases and feature articles.

Reactive MPR is, by comparison, more focused on responding to the outside influence that may have negative consequences to the organization. The core aim is to repair a company’s reputation, prevent market erosion and regain lost sales. Argenti (2009, p. 90) points out that the success of the campaign is not solely achieved by advertising, but it can also be attributed to public relations behind it. As marketing and public relations are becoming increasingly integrated into MNCs, PR becomes a key partner of corporate advertising strategies (Argenti 2009, p. 90).

Sales promotions and sponsorships

Keller (2009) defines sales promotions as a variety of short-term incentives to encourage the trial or purchase of a product or a service.

Marketing (distribution and logistics, pricing and product development)

According to Mullins, Walker, Boynd and Larréche (2005) marketing has an important role in the broader context of the global economy by helping to facilitate exchange relationships among people, organizations and nations.

Mass media advertising

According to Keller (2009), advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. Shimp (2007, p. 240) states, more concretely, that mass media advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identified source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future.

To sum up, Cornelissen's (2008) model illustrates different elements in marketing and communication and their partial overlap. In order to construct a strategy for launch communication, an overview of the various forms of MNC's external communication is essential. The approach Cornelissen (2008) introduces integrates both communication and marketing elements in building the corporate identity, the image, the brand and reputation and maximizing awareness and attractiveness among the company's stakeholders. Since launch communication aims to build up corporate image, the brand and the reputation via communication to raise interest and positive connotations of external stakeholders in much competed markets, a comprehensive approach to communication is needed.

In this study, launch communication is understood as a communication program that involves a large range of integrated communication efforts from proactive marketing PR to paid mass media advertising in accordance with the company's communication strategy. Therefore, Cornelissen's (2008) integrated view on corporate communication is applied in this study. Thus, launch communication is considered a part of MNC's corporate communication strategy.

2.1.2 Corporate identity, image, brand and reputation

In this study, launch communication is considered part of strategic image building among defined stakeholders when a company penetrates a new market area where its brand or its products are relatively unknown. The aim of the company is to attract attention among desired target audiences, create interest in its products and services, and to be seen in a positive light by its stakeholders in the new market. Launching provides a unique, yet challenging, opportunity to build a solid foundation for a good reputation and a positive image within the various stakeholder groups via strategic communication efforts.

In what follows, the concepts of corporate image, identity, brand and reputation are introduced and their differences and relationship with each other are discussed.

Corporate Identity

Identity is the answer to the corporation's question "who are we?" (Argenti & Druckemiller, 2004). It captures the essence of the organization and concretizes it to the organization's publics. As Argenti (2009, p. 68) puts it: "a company's identity is the actual manifestation of the company's reality as conveyed through the organization's name, logo, motto, products, services, buildings and all the other tangible pieces of evidence created by the organization and communicated to a variety of constituencies".

Corporate Image

Argenti and Druckemiller (2004) state that a company can define and communicate its identity and corporate brand, but its image and reputation result from stakeholders' impressions of the company's behavior and are thus less within the company's direct control. Argenti (2009, p. 68) argues that image is a reflection of an organization's identity seen from the viewpoint of its constituencies. The corporation can have many different images depending on which stakeholders are involved. Therefore, MNC's may also have to take to the possibility of different images in different markets into account.

According to Martinez and Pina (2005), when consumers buy goods and services that satisfy their needs, they also buy the image of a brand. Thus, being a relevant factor in the making of a buying decision, corporate image is one of the most highly appreciated assets by consumers (Martinez & Pina 2005). The image is closely related to the concepts of the corporate brand and the corporate reputation which will be introduced next.

Corporate Brand

According to Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004), corporate brand answers the question of who do the company say they are and want to be? The brand is defined as a name, a term, a sign, a design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). Thus, when a company markets itself as a brand, it engages in corporate branding. Furthermore, the goods and services the company produces are considered as a part of the company's brand (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004).

Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) emphasize that a strong corporate brand is an important asset to the company, especially when it is penetrating new markets, launching new products or broadening product lines. A strong brand with a good reputation provides cohesiveness, credibility and goodwill to new products or ventures. Consequently, when introducing an MNC to a new market, the already internationally existing corporate brand equity will serve as a foundation of the established corporate brand. According to him (Keller, 2009), as a result of the strength and equity of the brand, stakeholders are more willing to attend to additional communication for a brand, process these communications more favorably and have greater ability to later recall the communications and their cognitive and affective reactions.

Reputation

A corporation's reputation is a result of its actions and how its stakeholders view these actions. However, the responsible actions and good behavior alone are not enough, but the relevant stakeholders have to be aware of them. If an organization appears reliable and has a good reputation, the stakeholders will think that its

products, services and customer experience are of higher quality than those of other companies with a less positive reputation (Martinez & Pina, 2005). Furthermore, a company with a better reputation will be perceived as 'more qualified to offer new products' and the fit will be closer. Additionally, a good reputation provides a way of facilitating launching non-similar product line extensions (Martinez & Pina, 2005).

To summarize, a corporate brand is a brand that spans over the entire company. Since everything communicated in the corporation's voice will be associated with the brand, it has an influence on the perceived image (Martinez & Pina, 2005). To create a corporate image that result in a good reputation requires an appropriate corporate communication strategy. Launching situation provides a chance to introduce the organizations' identity in strategic manner.

In this study, good reputation is considered as an important factor in launch communication since a reputation is culturally-bound and it has a global-wide influence. Companies penetrating to new markets in foreign countries will benefit from a widely recognized brand with positive connotations (Hollis & Fitch, 2009). However, a well-established corporate brand with a good reputation in the local market is not enough when entering global markets. The cultural values of the new markets will affect brand perceptions (Hollis & Fitch, 2009). Thus, this study emphasizes the corporations' needs of reconsidering their image in relation to the unique characteristics of each market and the manner they communicate their identity.

2.1.3 Strategic communication for launching

This section presents the concept of launch communication. Since there is no exact theoretical model for composing effective launch communication, the model that will be presented here is a combination derived from a number of relevant previous theories. This section discusses the communication in the launching situation and presents the process stages that are included in the launch communication.

In general, surprisingly little, if any, attention has been paid to communication in the launching situation in the academic literature. In the rather scarce launching literature from the field of new product development and integrated marketing communication, the launch planning is defined as a combination of both strategic and tactical launch decisions (Hultink, Hart, Robben & Griffin, 1999; Chen, Shen & Chiu, 2007). Strategic decisions entail the decisions made before the physical product development including overall corporate strategy, its product strategy and market strategy whereas tactical decisions refer to the actual commercialization of the new product covering the basic elements of the marketing mix: price, distribution, product version and promotions (Hultink et al., 1999). The tactical decisions evolve from the strategic decisions made early in the development process to maximize the profitability over the product life cycle (Hultink et al., 1999). In launching, the promotional tactics, besides three other tactics of price, distribution and product version, seem to be taking an advantage of the various corporate communication elements described in section 2.1.1. Thus, in integrated launching, Cornelissens's (2008) communication areas such as mass media advertising, PR, media relations and corporate advertising are combined to a tactical set in line with general corporate communication strategy for reaching the target audience.

Managing corporate communication requires a communication strategy that describes the general image that an organization aims to project through messages to its defined stakeholders (Cornelissen 2008, p. 95). The strategy provides a set of defined guidelines for any communication campaign or program, such as product launches (Cornelissen 2008, p. 95). Thus, when an organization penetrates to new markets, launch communication needs to reflect the overall communication strategy for creating a cohesive corporate image.

Launching a new product is a single situation in a unique set of market circumstances. Therefore, an exclusive program plan is required to meet the characteristics of each launching situation. Cornelissen (2008, 109) defines a communication program as a formulated set of tactical activities towards targeted internal and external audiences, which may include outreach activities, community initiatives and other ways in which organizations and their employees communicate with stakeholder audiences. This definition expands the concept of the

communication program from a typical idea of being restricted only to the use of the mediated form of communication such as mass media advertising.

Keller's (2001) suggests six macro perspectives affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication program: coverage, contribution, commonality, complementarity, robustness and costs. The definition of macro perspectives is based on the assumption that the target audiences, their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors are thoroughly investigated. The first criterion, coverage, refers to the proportion of the audience that is reached by each communication option employed, as well as how much overlap exists among these options. By the second criterion, contribution, Keller (2001) means the main effect of the communication in terms of how it affects the audience's processing of communication and the resulting outcomes. Since communication can play many different roles, such as building awareness or enhancing the image, the contribution of any communication option will depend on how well it plays the role. The third criterion, commonality, refers to the extent to which common associations are reinforced across communication options, i.e. the extent to which information conveyed by different communication options share meaning. The fourth criterion, complementarity, relates to the extent to which different associations and linkages are emphasized across communication options. This criterion involves the content and organization of brand knowledge. The fifth criterion is robustness, which relates to the extent to which a communication option is robust and works for different groups of stakeholders. The final sixth criterion is the cost, which defines if these criteria are effective and efficient weighted against their costs.

In the absence of theory of launch communication, Cornelissen's (2008, p. 109-113) model for planning a communication program and campaign will serve as bases of a launch communication model. As the model includes such activities as launching new products, it is considered sufficient for this study with focus on localizing launch communication when introducing a company or the new products to new markets.

As Figure 3 shows, Cornelissen's (2008, p. 109-113) framework for a communication program process includes seven steps: 1) strategic intent, 2) defining communication objectives, 3) identifying and prioritizing target audiences, 4) identifying themed

messages,5) developing message styles, 6) developing media strategy and 7) preparing the budget.

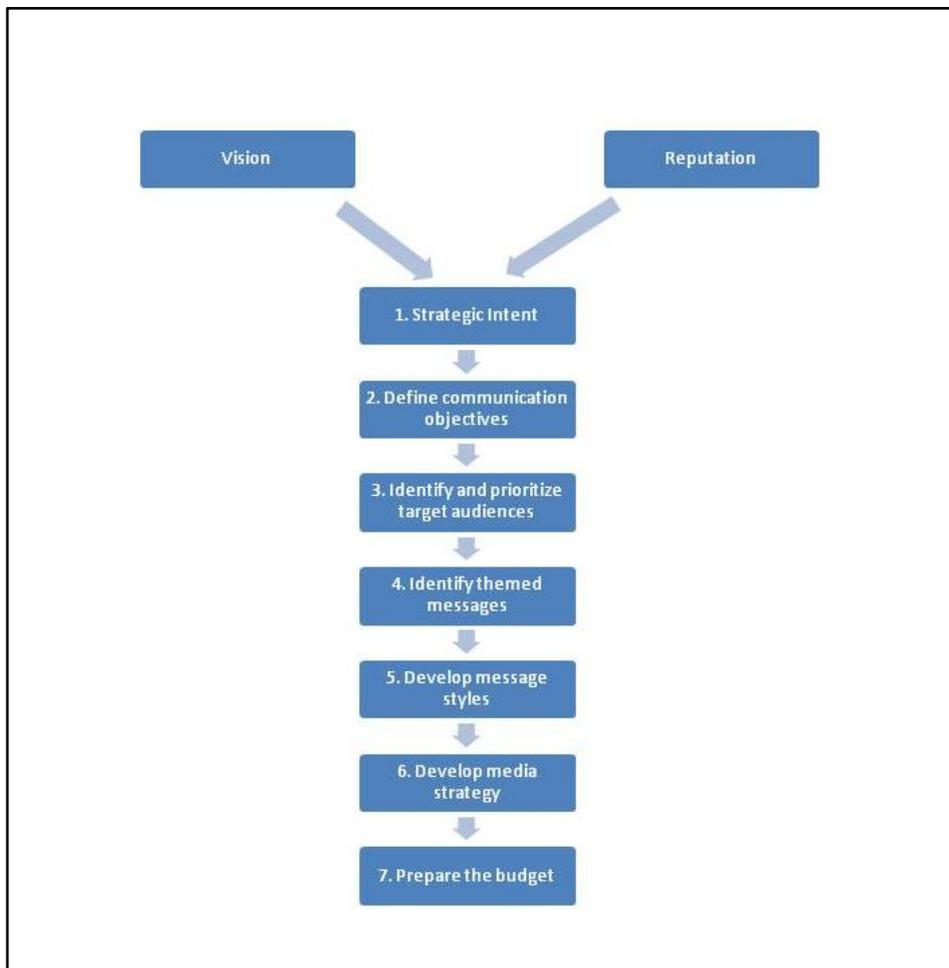


Figure 3: The process of planning communication programs (Cornelissen, 2008, 110)

The first step, the strategic intent, refers back to the organization’s overall communication strategy and its strategic intent. This step also aims to identify the current stage of the relationship between the company’s corporate identity and its image and reputation.

The second step focuses on defining the communication objectives of the program that are evolved from the strategic intent. During this step, it is defined if the campaign tries to address all or just some specific stakeholder groups. Here the objectives of the launching program are defined based on what it aims to achieve.

According to Cornelissen (2008), the definition of the launching objectives should follow the SMART-model; they should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely meaning being time-framed.

The third step is identifying and prioritizing target audiences. Once identified, the groups are usually divided into more specific groups that can be prioritized according to the strategic intent of the program. This prioritizing will also help in targeting the messages and actions towards each group.

The fourth step is identifying themed messages based upon the communication objectives and target audiences. Generally the core messages towards each stakeholder group evolve directly from the corporation's identity that is translated in to a specific campaign format. These messages can relate to the organization as a whole or to more specific areas such as products or services.

Fifth step focuses on developing message style and deciding on which communication areas should be utilized in the program. The messages developed in the previous step can be delivered in numerous ways. The style in which the messages are delivered depends on certain conditions and expectations of the selected stakeholders. Organizations may use multiple message styles simultaneously to communicate with different audiences. However, consistency with the selected style is recommended.

The sixth step is developing a media strategy and a suitable mix of media. This step involves identifying the media which can carry the program's messages, its creative execution and simultaneously reach the target stakeholders. The reach and coverage should be considered, as well as the match of the medium with the message, competitors' use of the media, and media's ability to enable dialogue and interaction with the audience. The decision of media use should be unique to each launching campaign and be based on the special features of each individual situation.

Lastly, the seventh step is preparing the budget for the launching program. The budget includes media buying, the production of the program, possibly hiring help outside the company (such as communication consultants or advertising professionals), and evaluation of the results. In practice the budget defines the actual

execution of the launching campaign and possibly redefines the earlier steps to fit the budget frames.

In this study, the plan for a launch communication program is perceived as a part of promotional tactics developed from the corporation's communication strategy. As a platform for Cornelissen's model, a definition of the launching communication as a combination of strategic and tactical decisions (Hultin et al., 1999; Chen et al., 2007) will be used in this study. These decisions were made based on a consideration of Keller's (2001) six macro perspectives affecting the launching situation. Keller (2001) defined these perspectives with an integrated marketing communication program in mind, and since Cornelissen's integration oriented definition of corporate communication is employed here, it seems justified to apply Keller's view on communication context.

To conclude Section 2.1 on corporate communication, it could be stated that the launch communication evolves from the corporate communication strategy that is based on the overall corporate strategy. Thus, in this study, launch communication is perceived as a selection of different communication tactics that evolve from the communication strategy of the corporation. Since this study focuses on launch communication in the international context, it is important to discuss the concept of corporate communication and its relation to communicating a launch.

Launch communication evolves from the interface between corporate communication and marketing communication disciplines combining features from both to address and reach the strategically targeted stakeholder groups. Since Cornelissen's (2008) wide definition of corporate communication extends to traditional marketing communication areas, his definition is applied in this study. Launching new products or a corporation itself is a unique opportunity to communicate the corporation's identity, craft its image in the eyes of the target stakeholder groups, enhance its corporate brand and thus build up its reputation. Since there was no suitable model for launch communication to apply directly, the model presented in the Figure 3 is combined from the findings of previous studies' by both Keller (2001) and Cornelissen (2008) on communication programs.

2.2 Localization of MNCs' external communication

This second sub-chapter of the literature review discusses the concept of localization in terms of MNCs' external corporate communication. The first section focuses on standardization and localization strategies and the relationship between these strategies is discussed. The second section concentrates on the role of language and translations. In the third and last section, the localization of launch communication is discussed.

Global, multinational and international organizations that once operated on a restricted geographic basis, i.e. on country-by-country management systems, have found their customers are driving them to a global view, and they are helpless to stem the tide (Kitchen & Schultz, 2004). Therefore, the means by which these organizations communicate with their globally dispersed clientele and how clients are engaged in a dialogue with the organization is an important factor in the current business environment. Since more MNCs are operating in the global markets and moreover, trying to reach and communicate with the same clientele, it is more difficult for them to separate themselves from their competitors and reach their stakeholders.

Operating in the global markets is in the core essence of MNCs. Kalla (2006, p. 10) describes MNCs' operating environment as geographically wide-spread and a combination of different types of national and functional cultures. As Lappalainen (2008), Reitamo (2008) and Kalla (2006) argue, global organizations are thus obligated to communicate cross-culturally increasing the complexity of their internal communication. In addition to considering issues in MNCs's internal communication, it becomes critical to understand how different cultures and languages affect MNCs' communication to external stakeholders in global markets. Cross-cultural communication is a complex issue. In addition to the uniqueness of each MNCs' corporate culture, the globally spread stakeholders also represent their own, nationally bound cultures. Pym (2004, p. 2), points out that communication is the bridge, which makes different cultures get in contact with each other.

The issue of globalization impacts brands, communications, agencies and client organizations (Kitchen & Li, 2005), not just MNCs' internal stakeholders. According to Kitchen and Schultz (1999), globalization is an ever continuing process and no

organization will “achieve globalization” in marketing and marketing communication. Instead, managers will face continuing the change of the operational environment, continuing response to customer needs, continuing challenges from competitors and technology, and continuing change and evolution in the relationships and ways of doing business (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999). The market conditions, infrastructures and the media available may radically differ from country to country and that has to be taken into consideration when MNCs are planning how to communicate launching in a global scale. This is especially important in the cultural domain where perceptions of the same advertisement or other promotional activity may be radically different (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999).

Rather than simplifying and synthesizing marketplace systems and communication approaches, Kitchen and Schultz (1999) suggest that the marketing and communication manager of the 21st century must recognize that there are multiple markets, marketplaces, customers, channels, and media available. Driving forces behind the emergence and growth of international communication are, among other things, media proliferation, audience fragmentation, the advance of information technology and the internet, the emergence of global consumers, consumer empowerment, increased advertising clutter, and shifts in channel power (Kitchen & Li, 2005).

2.2.1 International communication strategies: standardization vs. localization

This section presents the common strategies that MNCs use to communicate with their global external stakeholders. Corporate communication practitioners operating in the international context are faced with the decision of how to address stakeholders in each target country (Valentini, 2007).

In general, three core approaches are identified for MNCs to take in terms of how they reach their multinational stakeholder groups when communicating launching: global, local and glocal. The definitions of these terms vary among the scholars, yet the concepts remain similar. In what follows, these approaches are explained in more detail and the selected terminology is justified.

Global approach

Valentini (2007) uses the term “global” to describe the strategic treatment of international stakeholders as unanimous global stakeholders. More specifically, this approach is based on an idea that in a globalized world it is possible to talk about a global public, no matter the physical location, who can be addressed to establish a mutual strategic relationship. By adopting the global approach, MNCs aim to form a communication strategy which enables them to reach their target stakeholders around the world en mass. Calantone, Cavusgil, Schmidt and Shin (2004) use the term “standardized approach” referring to the same take on addressing the consumers on multiple markets in a standardized manner. Calantone et al.(2004) argue, that the globally spread technological innovations, mass mobility and consumer mobility enable consumers wants and need to converge and thus form the core idea of the standardized approach to address them. From the marketing communication discipline, Kanso and Nelson (2002) also use the term standardization arguing that according to this approach people all over the world share the same basic needs and motivations, and therefore, the campaigns can be constructed around these needs and motivations with a universal approach.

Kanso and Nelson (2002) point out that there are obvious success stories such as McDonalds, Pepsi and Coca-Cola that attribute to the fact that they are globally standardized, sold everywhere and welcomed everywhere. The main attraction of adopting the global approach is the obvious cost benefits (Kanso & Nelson, 2002; Valentini, 2007). The economies of scale and the standardized process can be utilized when a one formula is adopted.

The term “global” refers to the certain view on the current world and it involves an assumption of one, unified universal approach to operating in global markets. As in launch communication both strategic and tactical aspects need to be considered in the global scale, the term global approach is suitable for this study.

Local approach

The second approach is the local approach, the opposite view on the global approach to international communication. According to this view, there are insurmountable barriers among countries that the communication operators have to

consider (Kanso & Nelson, 2002). Such barriers include, on the one hand, differences in culture, taste, media infrastructure and economic development and, on the other hand, stakeholders' resentment of international corporations' attempts to homogenize their differing tastes and culture (Kanso & Nelson, 2002). Therefore, these stakeholders have to be addressed in a way appropriate for their cultural uniqueness. According to her (Valentini, 2002), culture guides the three variables of communication: verbal communication, nonverbal communication and perceptions that dominate how messages are structured and interpreted. Calantone, Cavusgil, Schmidt and Shin (2004) use the term "adaptation" to describe the adopting to the local market environment.

According to Ballance (2006), the benefits of localization are significant: cultural adaptation will help avoid a group of potential obstacles that can interfere with making a strong connection with the desired audience. Additionally, a proper focus on local cultural adaptation will help avoid time spent on reworking and, more importantly, will keep from wasting efforts and losing credibility with the audience. However, as Calantone et al. (2004) note, localization might bring extra costs, since adapting to international markets usually means modifying the products, product lines, hiring new experts to carry out the localization. It also provides the much needed information on the new markets. Moreover, Valentini (2007) discusses the possibility of the increased need to implement tailored strategies into each country and thus the multiplied work load for the company.

In terms of communication for launching, besides local culture, also the overall local market conditions, such as media available and local infrastructure, have to be taken in to consideration. Therefore, the term "cultural approach" seems one-dimensional to convey the comprehensiveness needed in this study. Thus, terms local and localization are used here to describe this heterogeneous approach.

Glocal approach

The third approach is a combination of the global and local approaches. Both Valentini (2007) and Kanso and Nelson (2002) call this mix of approaches as a "glocal" approach, in which global strategies are adopted to fit the unique characteristics of the local market environment. Glocal approach allows MNCs to

develop a single communication framework or a theme along with flexibility in campaign execution to adapt to various local markets (Kanso & Nelson, 2002). Thereby, MNC can build a framework to signal a single identity and reputation to each market, yet figure out how it can be achieved in practice within each of these markets.

According to previous research (e.g. Kanso, 1992; Valentini, 2007; Kanso & Nelson, 2002), despite the obvious attempt to lean on standardized global communication, some level of localization is still needed in order to successfully communicate and persuade stakeholders in different countries and cultures. Therefore, launch communication planning in the international context has to consider the width and depth of the localization the plan requires.

To summarize, among academic scholars and business executives there are supporters for both the global approach and the localized approach. Scholars' and executives' perspectives towards the issue seem to depend on their cultural orientation. Additionally, the question of the approach is very issue-oriented and difficult to generalize. The question is relevant in this study since it seems that some level of localization is needed, at least, in a sense of overcoming the language barriers of the globally spread external stakeholders, whom MNCs are aiming to persuade in the launching situation. As Kanso (1992) says: "what MNCs need for successful international external communication is a global commitment to local vision".

2.2.2 The role of language in the international business environment

This section discusses the role of language and translation in the localization of launch communication. Since verbal communication is one of the critical variables of any given culture (Valentini, 2007), a language provides an access to a culture. Therefore, this issue is covered in this thesis. In Valentini's (2007) words; "communication and culture are inseparable".

Peltokorpi and van den Born (2010) define language as the generally agreed-on symbolic system, which is used to represent the experiences within a geographic or cultural community. Moreover, language acts as a carrier of cultural values, and thus MNCs' stakeholders interact and make interpretations within the linguistic context (Peltokorpi & van den Born, 2010). These internationally spread stakeholders differ in terms of their native language and proficiency of the widely used business language, English. Since the headquarters of the MNCs usually are located in one country and the different external stakeholders in another, MNCs have to decide how and with what language to address these groups when entering new markets.

To solve these language-related problems and facilitate their external and internal communication, MNCs have to make strategic decisions between the global integration and local adaptation (Peltokorpi & van den Born, 2010). In terms of internal communication and an official corporate language, this question of balance is widely discussed in academic literature (see e.g. Kalla, 2006; Charles 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2007; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005; Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen & Piekkari, 2006). Simultaneously, while assuring effective communication within and between its international units, MNCs have to decide in what language to address their external stakeholders effectively and efficiently.

The role of language in communicating with international external stakeholders is researched in the field of marketing, more precisely, in the field of mass media advertising. Hornikx, van Meurs and de Boer (2010) discuss whether the choice of language, global English versus local language, affects the persuasiveness of the consumer ads. The findings suggested that when English was easy to understand, it was preferred over the local language. Therefore, it was concluded that comprehension affected the consumers' appreciation of an advertisement. Hornikx et al. (2010) thus argue, that the relationship between languages and advertising is rather complex and should be seen more comprehensively than just as a question of symbolic value. As advertising is in this study considered as part of corporate communication, the study provides a glimpse of how the issue of language is perceived by the MNC's external international stakeholders. However, there was not academic literature to be found focusing specifically on the role of language in relation to MNCs' corporate communication to external international audiences in

terms of launch communication. Therefore, this is a relevant issue to address further in this study.

2.2.3 Translation as a tool for localization of corporate communication

When MNCs are operating in multiple languages, translation is a central method in localization. However, mastering the vocabulary and the grammar of a second language is not enough to communicate skillfully. The effective communication across cultures means not just translating messages from English into local languages but paying attention to elements, such as the appropriate use of language and jargon, and varying cultural and social nuances (Ballance 2006, p. 54). According to Ballance (2006, p. 54) delivering the intended messages correctly, culturally applicable communication techniques should be applied and the texts adapted accordingly. Accordingly, localization is not just translating existing texts from one language to another, but also applying unique cultural features.

Le Seac'h and Klotz (1999) discuss the issue of translating and the different levels on a globalization-localization scale concerning corporate information such as press kits, press releases, annual reports and institutional leaflets to international audiences. The issue of international corporate communication is, if anything, an issue of maintaining and building a global image. In technical writing accuracy is the key, yet in corporate translation, an image must also be conveyed.

According to Le Seac'h and Klotz (1999) five levels are identified: 1) no translation at all, 2) basic translation, 3) adaptation, 4) rewriting and 5) new information. Choosing the first option, no translation at all, ensures there will be no deviation from the original corporate information. However, the most probable, this information will be understood and interpreted different ways in the different markets. The second option, basic translation, emphasizes the quality of the translation; the texts can be technically correct but incorrect culturally. The nuances of the wordings and phrases may alter the actual message and its perception. In the worst case, the simple cultural mismatch may tarnish the corporate image MNC wishes to convey. The third option, adaptation, is needed to express the corporate information and concepts in a

culturally adapted way despite possible changes in the word choices or the length of the texts. These changes are made to fit the subtleties of another culture. Fourth option, rewriting, stands for using the original corporate information as a basis of writing a something new, which would include some country-specific sections. This may be needed in the cases, where there is a time lag in the acceptance of concepts used in the corporate information. The fifth option, new information, may be needed in the cases where the local environment is particular, for example highly regulated or technically retarded. Jämtelid (2002, p.55) points out that these rewritten texts are not translations since multiple sources are used. In her study (2002, p.60-61) such text are called "*parallelskrivning*". In such cases, corporate information should address the issue with still obtaining their global view. Le Seac'h and Klotz (1999) emphasize the unique nature of each MNC and that they should consider the suitable choice as an individual case.

Furthermore, Le Seac'h and Klotz (1999) list the stakeholders that are involved in MNCs' global communications and a global image management process. The clear policy should be outlined in terms of the respective roles of the various stakeholders including the translation-localization issue. The stakeholders involved are the corporate communication staff, local operations, local communication consultancies and translators. The corporate communication staff at the headquarters, and perhaps their communication consultancy, is in charge of the strategy, but as a general rule, should not attend to the local details themselves. Therefore the delegation of the actual implementation is needed and centrally produced briefs are translated into foreign languages while the supervision remains centralized to headquarters or communication consultancy. It should not be assumed that the local operations are always capable of local implementation of a global strategy yet they should not be ignored either. The local communication consultancies are the best option to support the local operations, reporting either to the local subsidiary management or directly to the headquarters.

These local consultancies have to understand the requirements of the local management of the global image. More specifically, they have to be able to work under a global brief understanding when there is a need and room for local adaptation, act as a go-between mediating the headquarters and the local management perceptions, take advantage of the global synergies, brief and

supervise translators and their work. The international consultancy networks are the most likely to fit these requirements, since they have the necessary background to address global clientele and operate as experts in local markets. Lastly, the translators are mentioned as stakeholders. Le Seac'h and Klotz (1999) point out that MNCs should pay extra attention to the outcomes of translations since translated texts can never be exactly the same as originals.

The obvious reasons for MNCs to lean towards the standardized approach and using the global language are benefits of economies of scale (Hornikx et al. 2010). The localization and using multiple languages to deliver the same message bring costs due to the translation expenses. However, the decision should not be conducted solely based on the immediate costs since, according to Hornikx et al. (2010), the adaptation to tastes and values of the local culture is the precondition of a successful campaign. According to Pym (2004), as a general rule, a success condition for all communication acts is that the total benefits from the communication exceed the value invested in the transaction. With transaction costs Pym (2004, p. 4) refers to the efforts, such as production, translation and channel costs, that are invested into the communication act. The costs are highly relevant when considering ways of communication. If two alternative methods will produce the same result, the one carrying smaller transaction costs will be a better option.

Reitamo (2008, p. 11) suggests that transaction costs can be reduced by decreasing the complexity of communication, thus meaning limiting the number of possible interpretations. Costs can also be lowered by building trust or by learning the culture of the other communication partners. Success in reducing transaction costs does not automatically result in improved communication. Additionally, globalization is more likely to increase the overall costs of communication due to the increased need for communication across the cultures (Reitamo, 2008, p. 11). This increased communication involvement of various cultures is also acknowledged by Pym (2004). Pym (2004) also emphasizes the high riskiness of these communication efforts in terms of production, reception and mediation. The risk referred is a probability that a particular option will not lead to meeting of communication objectives. Therefore, the mediators should not spend an excessive amount of effort to the low-risk or background messages.

Corporate translation is very different from the technical translation and the tone and the style should be in accordance with content and context. Being true to the strategy and simultaneously accurately understandable may require some serendipity and thus basic translation comes short in terms of language choices of the international corporate information.

To conclude Section 2.2, there are different approaches for MNCs to take in terms of communicating with their external stakeholders globally. These decisions depend on MNCs' corporate communication strategy. In this study launch communication is considered following the corporate communication strategy, and therefore the approach affects launch communication decisions such as language as well. Language has an important role in communicating with international stakeholders whose native language is different from the language used in the headquarters of MNC. The choice of language for launch communication depends on the communication strategy of the organization: with the global strategy a global language, usually English, is used and with the localized strategy a local language is used. If the strategy is a combination of the global view and local implications, the question of language involves both local and global languages. In any given case of operating in multiple languages, the issue of the level of translation should be addressed. Technically accurate translation is not solely enough to build a corporate image in the international corporate communication. Therefore the issues of language use and translation are discussed in this study.

2.3 The role of communication consultancies in MNCs' corporate communication

This section discusses the role of the communication agencies in the international external communication. First, the role of the communication consultancies as MNCs' external strategic and operational help is presented. Secondly, communication consultancies as cultural mediators in the international business field are discussed. Thirdly, press releases as consultants' tools and as a professional business writing genre are focused.

Communication consultancies are utilized especially in organizations' external communication. Argenti (2009, p. 54) refers to a survey carried out by PR Week in 2007, where US CEOs were asked in which areas of PR they would use external counseling in addition to their own communication function. Of all the respondents, 70.8 per cent would use external counseling to manage corporate reputation and 62.5 per cent would use help for launching new products (Argenti, 2009, p. 54).

It seems that communication consultancies have stabilized their role in the current field of corporate communication. On the one hand, consultancies can be seen as external stakeholder group to their client MNCs. On the other, communication consultancies are part of MNCs communication function executing the corporate communication strategy. In this study, communication consultancies are considered as external help for MNC. They mediate MNCs' strategic and operational corporate communication efforts to various local business environments, stakeholder groups and cultures. Therefore, it is important to look in to their role in launch communication in international markets.

2.3.1 External help for MNCs

This section discusses the role of communication consultancies as external help for MNCs. Communication and marketing campaigns planning and decision making related to them are typically a joint enterprise of the client companies and communication and advertising consultancies (Shimp, 2007, p. 250). Therefore, the role that these consultancies have is important, especially in the complex global markets.

The relationships between MNCs and communication consultancies are unique in nature and these relationships are formed based on individual needs and wants of the client MNCs. According to Shimp (2007, p. 250), businesses routinely employ outside specialists such as lawyers, financial advisors, management consultants, and advertising agencies. By their very nature, these outsiders bring knowledge, expertise and efficiencies that MNCs do not possess within their own ranks. The relationships between consultancies and MNCs vary according to the mutual

satisfaction and the consultancy's ability to meet the client's expectations; they can be very short lived and volatile or they can last for decades.

Shimp (2007, p. 251) presents three ways for MNCs to perform communication function: 1) use in-house communication function, 2) purchase communication services on when needed -basis from the specialized consultancies or 3) use full-service communication consultancies. Typically, consultants are hired to complete MNC's own communication function when needed, to provide special know-how, connections and networks. Additionally, consultants can be used as the extra pair of hands in rush times.

Consultancies provide communication services from all the areas of corporate communication. The services may vary from strategic communication planning to urgent crisis communication assignments (Argenti, 2009, p.155). Shimp (2007, p. 252) points out that services are designed to fulfill MNCs' needs in long or short term scope. The relationship MNCs have with the consultancy defines the services they purchase. Consultancy in strategic issues requires a long relationship to be successful.

In addition to strategic consulting, communication consultancies provide operational services to implement MNCs' strategies as well. Mostly, the implementation involves writing different business texts to various purposes and stakeholders according to the strategic scope. Pope-Ruark (2008) mentions, for example, print and television advertisements, press releases, public relations newsletters, company and product briefs, and press and sales kits, among many others. Communication consultancies can usually offer extensive networks to address the specific stakeholder groups. This is an advantage in terms of media relations particularly.

Media plays a significant role when communicating the launch of new products or the company brand (Argenti, 2009, p.155). The media are both a stakeholder group and a conduit through which investors, employees and consumers receive the information about and form images of a company or its products (Argenti 2009, p. 155). Therefore, the media's role as disseminator of information to a firm's key constituencies, included the general public, has gained increasing importance over the years (Argenti 2009, p. 155). As Argenti (2009, p. 159) emphasizes,

communication consultancies provide specific know-how to help MNCs to target the right media with right stories to get coverage they want.

In this study, communication consultancies are considered as external help for MNCs providing knowledge, expertise and efficiencies that MNCs do not possess with their own ranks. The specialized knowhow of communication consultancies is especially important in the launch communication processes in the global business environment where market specialized knowhow is needed to create the wanted image.

2.3.2 Expert and cultural knowledge

This section discusses the essence of the expert knowledge the consultants possess and the role of the communication consultancies as cultural intermediaries in the international business field. First, the issue of expert knowledge that communication consultants provide to their client MNCs is in focus. Secondly, their role as cultural intermediaries is focused.

According to Fincham, Clark, Handley and Sturdy (2008), consultants are typically hired by their client MNCs to provide an access to expertise, specialized knowledge and outside perspective and thus improve their business according to the current needs and goals. The kinds of knowledge that management and the consulting industry employ are not easily defined and articulated. This knowledge is the essence of why the profession of a consultant exists in the current international business field and why they are hired by MNCs who employ various specialists itself. Despite the variation of definitions, a common way of defining a consultant is that of the outside expert (Fincham et al. 2008).

Consultants have frequently been seen as marginal who gain influence by a degree of otherness and sheer difference. According to Fincham et al. (2008), this expected special knowledge may involve the mastery of some technique or framework, familiarity with new equipment or hardware, or esoteric skills of divining clients' problems – but also these claims are frequently backed by experience of solutions bedded in a particular industry or sector grouping. They are assumed to bring improved judgement and comparison with other sector players. Thus, consultants are

also seen as sector specialists who accumulate knowledge of industrial sectors through repeated assignments in similar firms. (Fincham et al.,2008.)

Due to their cultural expert knowledge, consultants, particularly in the communication field, are considered, not just industry sector specialists, but cultural specialists as well. In her master's thesis, Reitamo (2008, p. 10) states that to localize the messages, or in a larger scale the communication strategy, in a proper way, a mediator is needed between the original communicator and the target audience. Moreover, as Pym (2004) argues, if a mediator is needed, there is unavoidable discontinuum in the communication.

Consultants operate in the interface between cultures of the clients and their markets. Therefore, they usually act as intermediaries between the client organizations and target markets in various ways. Cronin (2004) discusses consultants as cultural mediators from the advertising agency and Hodges (2006) from the PR agency perspective. Both emphasize that advertising and communication are inherently considered as part of the culture industry, wherein the agencies are actively both mediating and sculpturing culture. According to Hodges (2006), cultural intermediaries are by definition advertising practitioners, management consultants, public relations practitioners and other occupations involving information and knowledge intensive forms of work that have come to be seen as increasingly central to economic and cultural life. Consequently, legitimized by falling into the occupational category defined by Hodges (2006), communication consultants are thereby considered as cultural intermediaries in this study.

Accordingly, agencies are seen as specialists of symbolic production, both visual and textual discourses (Cronin, 2004). These highly culturally-bound artifacts such as written texts, images and signs both carry and shape the social meanings between the sender and receiver audiences via the intermediaries, the consultancies. Hodges (2006) justifies viewing public relations as a cultural activity by pointing out that within the process of communication, public relation proposes to the audience a way of contextualizing a part of the social world. In this sense, public relations is cultural because it reinforces existing beliefs or shapes new ones held about public communication, such as the value attached to gaining support through persuasion as opposed to coercion (Hodges, 2006).

Hodges (2006) argues that when operating in the international field of public relations, while the basic concept of public relations may remain constant, the activities will vary according to the historical and cultural context in which it is practiced. Therefore, cultural intermediaries are needed even within the PR occupation itself in the global context. According to Hodges (2006), PR practitioners should be regarded as cultural intermediaries, an occupational group which mediates between organizations and stakeholder groups within wider society, seeking to communicate meanings through influential communicative practice localized to meet the cultural realms of that particular context.

The view on consultancies as cultural intermediaries is not without critical voices. Cronin (2004) suggests that advertising agencies attempt to institute specific regimes of exchange between themselves, clients and potential consumers that are based on the currency of their purported skills and expert knowledge. Consequently, agencies are claimed to try to ameliorate their unstable position in a highly competitive market by establishing this currency of knowledge around branding, creativity, and local markets and its consumers (Cronin 2004).

To conclude Section 2.3, in international business context, outside communication consultancies have a special role, not just as the consultants of communication or communication issue, but as specialists of communication in certain business area, markets and their culture. Therefore, in this study, consultants, particularly in the communication, are regarded as not only industry sector specialists, but as cultural specialists as well. Communication is inherently considered as part of the culture industry, wherein the communication consultants are actively both mediating and sculpturing culture. Thus, in this study, communication consultants are considered as intermediaries between various cultures such as organizational cultures, business area cultures as well as national cultures when operating in the international business field. As the term “intermediary” suggests, the knowledge transfer that consultants produce is rather bipolar. On the one hand, consultants provide expert knowledge for their client MNCs from a local culture and on the other hand, consultants provide knowledge about the MNC and the product it launches to local stakeholders.

2.3.3 Press releases as consultants' tools

This section focuses on press releases as the essential tools of communication consultants' daily work. Here the role of press releases in the international launch communication context is illustrated.

First, press releases are discussed as the professional writing genre that the consultants employ in their work. Second, press releases are discussed as communication consultants' tools to illustrate how they are used in launch communication. Third, the structure of the press release is introduced.

Press releases as professional writing genre

In this study, the genre of press releases is discussed since it provides a commonly shared framework for the texts the consultants produce for various communication purposes, in this study, launching. Before discussing press releases as a business writing genre, the concept of a genre requires defining. Swales (1990, p.58) defines genre as comprising "the class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes or set of purposes are mutually understood by the participants in that event, the discourse community, and they occur within functional rather than social or personal setting."

According to Yates and Orlikowski (2002), a number of researchers in cultural, rhetorical, and system design studies have begun using a genre to refer to typified social action. Moreover, this notion of genres is used to examine organizational communications as socially recognized types of communicative actions used by organizational members for particular communicative and collaborative purposes. Zhu (2008, p. 181) adds that as genre is a situated and typified social action, it is imperative to have a culture-specific perspective.

Deeply grounded in the linguistics and literary studies, Yli-Jokipii (2008) argues that the concept of the genre can be applied in pursuit to identify reoccurring patterns in different types of texts as well, more particularly the texts of the modern corporate writing domain such as CEO letters, annual reports, and, as in the focus of this study,

press releases. According to Zhu (2008, p. 183) these patterns and communicative purposes are realized in different layers of texts such as rhetorical moves and steps, that are the basic unit of the analysis enabling the comparison within the genre. A move is a communicative event and a step is a unit under a move (Zhu 2008, p. 183).

As seen in Figure 4, Tench (2003) constructed a general model, where six moves were identified and defined to enable analyzing the language construction within a press release genre: 1) introducing the topic, 2) establishing credentials about the organization, product or service, 3) expanding the topic covering the details, timing and the indicating sector value of the topic, 4) enclosing documents, 5) solicit response and 6) offering information or contact details (Tench, 2003).

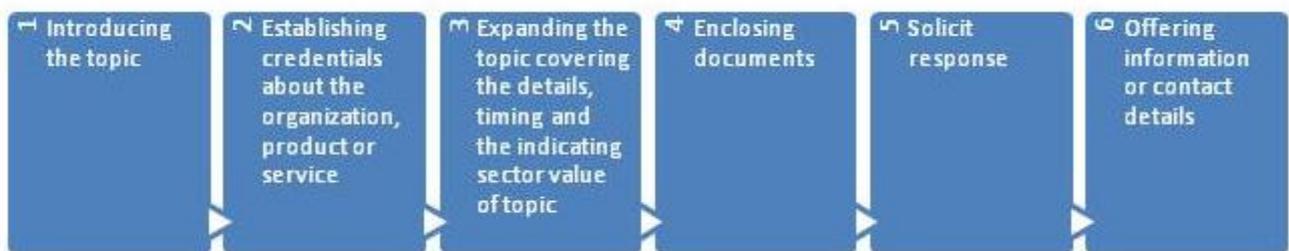


Figure 4: Rhetorical moves in press releases (According to Tench, 2003)

Press releases as communication consultants' tools

According to Tench (2003), public relations writing can be defined as a professional writing genre and thus, press releases as a sub-genre. In public relations writing the aim is to create cognitive dissonance; a cognitive consistency between the new information and a person's values and beliefs to lead their stakeholders to find new information, beliefs and facilitate desired behavior (Tench, 2003). Press releases are one of the corporate communication professionals' main textual tools for providing new information for their stakeholders and thus facilitate the desired behavior among them.

Tench (2003) suggests that corporate writing genres are separated from each other mainly by their communicative purposes or simply by the objective of the communication. The genre of press releases can have multiple purposes or

objectives such as launching a product or service, raise awareness of a brand or provide information about an organization (Tench, 2003).

The core stakeholder group for press releases is media. According to Maat (2007) the genre of press releases is characterized by a participant framework in which writers provide information for journalists in the hope that it will be passed on to the general public. Because journalists are not able to cover all newsworthy events in person, they need for their news reports ready-to-use information provided by press releases (Maat, 2007). News reports and press releases, both being individual professional writing genres, hence constitute a genre chain, where the first genre is a necessary antecedent of the second (Maat, 2007).

To maximize the chance of a press release being journalistically appropriated and to exert the utmost control on how they are used, press release writers try to meet the formal requirements of news reporting (Maat, 2007). According to Tench (2003), press releases are typically written to meet the journalistic news criteria of answering the questions of who, what, where, when, why and how. Additionally, Maat (2007) points out that making press release material easy for journalists to copy, writers objectify the content of the press release. Writers also smuggle in the positive characterizations of their activities with third-person references such as referencing “the biggest cash dispenser in Turkey” instead of the company name (Maat, 2007). Writers tend to increase the authority and credibility of the press release by avoiding the superlatives and excessive use of adjectives (Maat, 2007).

Press releases should always be written to a carefully selected target media in mind to assure attracting them to use the press release. According to Maat (2007), different journalists have different areas of interest and focus and thus the same press release does not necessarily attract them all. Journalists have to also consider their audience and what would be interesting to them on the subject of press release.

According to Henderson (2006, p. 164-165), there are four basic types of press releases for different purposes: announcements, spot or timely announcements, controlled-message announcements and reaction releases. The four basic types are overviewed in the Figure 5.



Figure 5: Four types of press releases (Henderson, 2006, p. 165)

As Figure 5 shows, first the announcements are used to announce events as new products or services, new employees, promotions, financial reports, mergers, layoffs and employment opportunities. Second, a spot or timely announcement is used to provide timely information updates for the media. Typically, it announces an upcoming event but also an occurrence over which company may have no control such as natural disasters. Third, companies use a controlled-message announcement when trying to suppress bad news or getting their message across in an adverse environment. Fourth, reaction releases are generally used in time-critical situation when it is important to comment on something that affects an organization, such as new legislation or a lawsuit.

In terms of launch communication, the press releases type commonly used is the announcements to let the target media to know about the new products or the service.

Structure of press releases

The typical structure of press release consists of somewhat standardized formula of characteristic of the professional writing genre. Henderson (2006) defines parts the formula consists of presented in Figure 6.



Figure 6: The structure of press the release (from Hendersson, 2006 and Feid, 2005)

As can be seen in Figure 6 the text “For Immediate Release” can be found on the top of the news release to signal the receiver the relevance and current nature of the information. Date is always included in the press release and it is written under the “For Immediate Release” in a form of the day of the week and the date of the release. The headline of the press release is important since it captures what the release is about, catches the attention and invites to read the rest of the release. The location is usually written after the headline at the beginning of the first paragraph.

The first paragraph is the so-called lead paragraph of the release and the most important part of any release. The lead paragraph should be short but able to carry writer’s message trough alone. It should grab the attention of the journalist.

According to Henderson (2006, p.169), the press release formula follows the pyramid style of writing. The body of the text contains two to three paragraphs providing essential background information and elaborating the first paragraph. The summary is provided to wrap up why the release was written, setting a call-to-action and repeating possible timeliness. At the end of the release, the contact information is provided. Additionally, Feid (2005) includes a “boiler plate” in the formula of the press release. Boiler plate is a paragraph usually at the end of the release containing standard “About the Company”-information as a signature.

According to Pope-Ruark (2008), press releases are usually produced by professional writers specifically with strive to create superior communication vehicles and effective message strategies for reaching target audiences. Essentially, the discursive work of professional writers is to use community expertise and genres to achieve other communities’ communication goals, either internally as MNC employees or externally as agency partners (Pope-Ruark, 2008).

The genre of press release requires consideration in terms of international communication. Zhu (2008, p.185) stresses that cultures serve as a basis of reasoning and persuasion and different cultures may resort to different types of rhetoric and persuasion. Therefore, what is considered newsworthy and interesting vary according to journalists but also to journalists in different locations.

To sum up, press releases are important in this study since they are essential external communication tools for professionals working in both MNCs and in consultancies. In the launch communication press releases are important tools for informing media and to gain media coverage. The genre of press release typically follows a standard formula but the content of the press releases are designed to fit the needs and focus areas of different media representatives. Therefore, press releases seem to be adjusted according to the receivers. In this study, the focus is on the localization of the press releases, the process of their localization process and communication consultancies involved in it.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

In this last section of the literature review, the theoretical framework is provided and explained to conclude earlier discussion. The theoretical framework aims to illustrate the construction of the theoretical literature review part and the empirical focus of the study.

As can be seen in Figure 7, the theoretical framework aims to illustrate the localization of the launch communication process. It consists of three different levels: 1) the participants in the process, 2) the concrete communication materials localized in the process and 3) the process of localization.

As Figure 7 shows, the top level focuses on the participants in that process and the bottom level focuses on the process flow of the localization. The medium level, in the middle of the framework, focuses on the concrete materials that are localized in the localization process. The framework works from the left to the right.

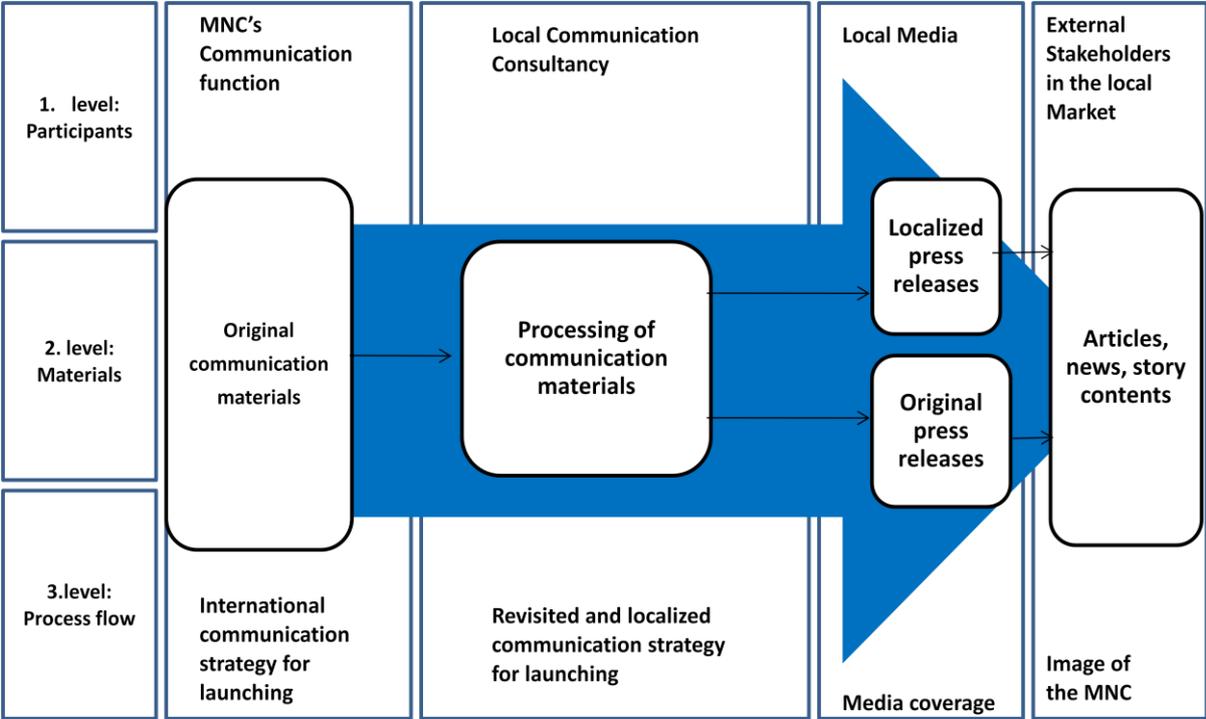


Figure 7: The theoretical framework: Localization of the launch communication process

In the top level, the process involves four participants relevant to the localization: MNC's communication function, the local communication consultancy, local media and external stakeholders in the local market.

The middle level, depicted as an arrow in the middle of the framework, focuses on the concrete materials, the press releases, which are localized in the process. The materials initially produced by MNC's communication function. These original materials they are then forwarded to the local communication consultancy. The materials are then reviewed by the consultancy and possibly localized to fit the localized strategy. Then the materials are sent to local media according to the MNC's strategy. Based on the materials, media generate articles, news, story contents, interviews and other media coverage.

In the bottom level, the process flow begins from the left in the framework. First, MNC's communication function formulates a communication strategy at the international level for the launching. Second, the local communication consultancy reviews the strategy and possibly localizes the strategy or parts of it to address the local media. Third, the local media produces media coverage about the MNC or its products. Finally, based on the media coverage, the external stakeholders in the local markets form an image of the MNC.

3 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA

This chapter introduces the chosen research methods and data of the present study. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces and justifies the selected research methods, the second one presents the data and its collection process and in the third section the validity and reliability of this thesis are discussed.

3.1 Research Methods

This study uses the qualitative approach to collect and analyze data. According to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2001, p. 152) qualitative research typically aims to reveal and describe realities and phenomena in a comprehensible manner, whereas quantitative research is based on the idea of verifying theories already existing. Since this study aims to describe and identify a rather new and complex phenomenon in the field of global business and, moreover, in corporate communication in the global context, the qualitative research approach seemed the most appropriate. In order to meet the two objectives of the study, the empirical research was built on using two separate methods: theme interviews and genre analysis.

Interviews were chosen as a research method of achieving the first objective of the study investigating the role of communication consultancies in MNC'S launch communication strategies. Interviewing carefully chosen, experienced professionals is an appropriate way to receive comprehensive and profound knowledge (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000, p. 47-48) on the role of the communication agencies as part of the MNC'S launch communication process.

A combination of both theme interviews and genre analysis was chosen to meet the second objective of the study investigating communication consultancies' process of localizing messages in practise to address the media in the Finnish market. Interviews provide a possibility for the consultants to explain thoroughly how they perceive the localization process and how they localize the launch communication to address the stakeholder groups of each market in practice. In addition, the actual outputs of consultants' localization work, that is, the localized press releases

intended to address the Finnish media, were studied to support the findings from the interviews. The analysis of the actual written texts was done to illustrate a tangible outcome of the localization process that the consultants described in the interviews in a more pragmatic way.

Figure 8 shows an overview of the research design including both methods and data. By using theme interviews, two kinds of data were collected and analyzed: data from the pilot interview and focused interviews. Genre analysis was used to analyze the press releases.

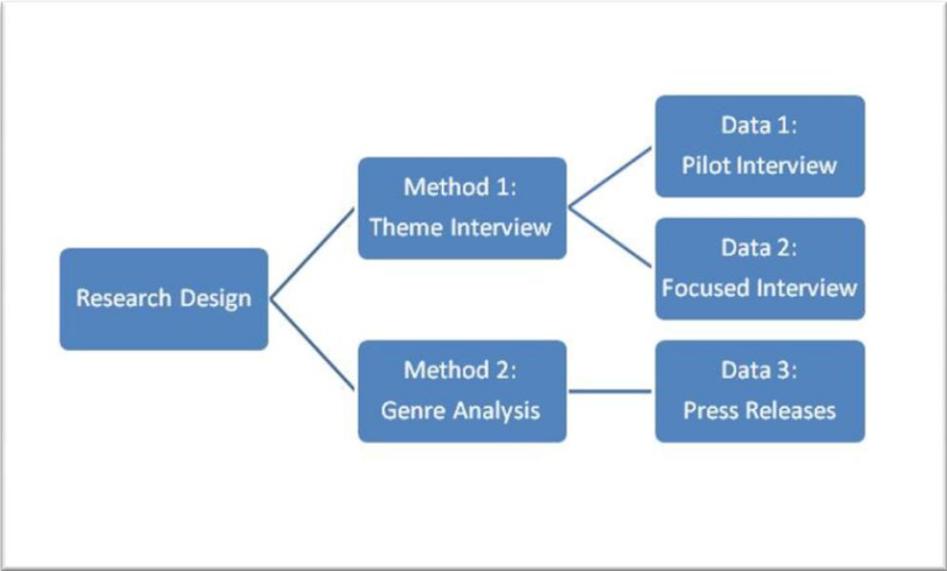


Figure 8: The Research design

As can be seen in Figure 8, the research design included two methods which are described below in more detail.

3.1.1 Theme interviews

In order to meet the research objectives, the interviews were conducted by focusing on the main themes relevant to the subject of localizing launch communication.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, p. 47-48) argue that by interviewing an expert about the issues relevant to the subject, more profound information can be exposed. Because the aim was to collect information, the interviewee needs to be able to explain the issue as freely as possible.

Therefore, the interviews were done as theme interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000) instead of a very strictly planned set of questions possibly restricting the information flow. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000), the theme interview is a semi-structured type of an interview, where some core details are fixed, yet in general the structure and content of the interview may vary significantly. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000) argue that in semi-structured focused interviews, the interview is evolved around certain core themes that will present a platform for the discussion providing a possibility for the interviewee to speak freely according to his or her expert knowledge and thus cover the issue in a more comprehensive manner. The method was chosen to bring out the voice of an expert and assure as free an information flow as possible (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000, p. 47-48).

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, p.109), the interviewer has to proceed during the interviews by using the so-called funnel-tactics. This means that within each theme, the interviewer is prepared to proceed from general umbrella terms to more in-depth and precise subthemes. Subthemes are necessary in order to dig deeper into the interviewee's expertise and knowledge and to maintain the discussion focused on the relevant aspects. Experts might have problems to verbalize and estimate what is relevant to tell when they are telling about their experiences, perceptions and professional knowledge. The interviewer's responsibility is to redirect the discussion with definitive questions. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000, p.109.)

All the interviews were loosely transcribed in order to get a comprehensive view on the data collected. Since the interviews were done in Finnish, the transcription was done in also Finnish. When analyzing the pilot interview, the data was reorganized to provide answers to the themes of the interview. In terms of the focused interviews, the data was reorganized to find mutually shared or differencing views on the themes. Data from both the pilot and focused interviews was translated just in

reporting in the study. Due to the confidentiality issues, the transcribed interviews were not included in the Appendices.

3.1.2 Genre analysis

Genre analysis was used to analyze press releases to meet the second research objective of investigating the communication consultancies' process of localizing messages in practise to address the media in the Finnish market. One of the interviewees gave the press releases, which were from a client MNC of the consultancy.

The aim of the analysis was to illustrate in practice how the communication consultants localize internationally prepared press releases to address the local stakeholders and to meet their preferences. Since this study focuses specifically on genres and their physical layout, medium, and language use in the situational cross-cultural context, North American New Rhetoric approach (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002) seems to appropriately serve the aim of the analysis on press releases.

From the North American New Rhetoric point of view, Yates and Orlikowski (2002) identify genres by two aspects. First, by their socially recognized purpose, which in this study refers to press releases aim to inform target media about a launch and to get them to write about it. Secondly, genres are identified by common characteristics of form referring to the observable aspects of communication, such as structural features, medium, and linguistic features. The present study focuses on the form of the press releases by comparing the three observable aspects of the form: structure, medium and language forms of the original and localized press releases. These three aspects of form are used in this study as the criteria that the original and localized press releases are analyzed and compared by.

Structure of the genre refers to physical layout of the genre (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002). In this study, the layout of original and localized press releases is analyzed and compared. The structure of press release as presented by Hendersson (2006) and Feid (2005) and described in Section 2.3.3. serves as a platform of this comparison of genre structure.

The medium refers to the channel of communication media such as paper and pen, face-to-face, fax, or email (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002). The new media available such as emails has impacted the evolution of genres and thus this aspect is taken into consideration in this study.

Language as an aspect of the genre refers to the level of formality and specialized vocabulary (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002). Since this study focuses on multinational business setting, the language of use, the code, is relevant. In addition to the code, the discourse features are analyzed in this study to illustrate possible differences in the structural elements of the text between the original and localized press releases. The discourse features are analyzed by comparing the moves used according to Tench's (2003) model presented in Section 2.3.3. Since the aim of the genre analysis in this thesis is to illustrate in practice the findings from interviews, no in-depth linguistic analysis is done. Differences in the focus of the contents and discursive features of the press release versions are analyzed based on the issues pointed out by the interviewees. The issues with confidentiality were limiting the analysis since the original and localized press releases could not be included in the Appendix. In addition, anything that would help readers to identify the client MNC, its products or the consultancy could not be revealed. This left the analysis somewhat vague yet it managed to illustrate the outcomes of localization work in practical manner. Even though this does not follow the principles of the qualitative research, the analysis was still decided to be included to the study due to its value in demonstrating the tangible differences between the original and localized press releases.

To sum up, due to the culture-bound and situational nature of written texts, the cross-cultural aspect to genres, particularly to press releases, is relevant to this study. However, in this study the cultural background of the client MNC and Finnish consultants was restricted from the study to maintain the focus of the analysis. Some tools of genre analysis, particularly the form, were used to illustrate the variation of characteristics within the genre of press releases produced by professional writers from both MNC organizational and consultancy domains. Genre analysis provides a method of comparing localized and original versions of press releases and to find out how much and in what way they differ. Since the findings of the genre analysis aim to provide empirical support for the findings from the interviews, the analysis should not be considered exhaustive but tentative only.

3.2 Research Data

In this section, the research data is presented. First the two sets of theme interviews are presented. Secondly, press releases as research data for genre analysis are discussed.

The data was designed to answer three research sub-questions separately. Thus, in total, three types of data were collected. The first, broader pilot interview aimed to provide answers to the first sub-question of how are the relationships between communication consultancies and MNCs in launch communication process.

The second set of more focused theme interviews aimed to provide data to answer the second sub-question of describing the localization process of MNCs' international launch communication by the communication consultants.

The third data type was press releases to answer the third sub-question of how the communication consultants localize the press releases to address the Finnish media.

3.2.1 Interviews

In this section the two kinds of interview data are presented and discussed: the pilot interview and the focused interviews.

Pilot Interview

The core aim of the theme interview was to answer the first research sub-question. The core motive to conduct the pilot study was to map out and explore the subject of launch communication about which very limited amount, if any, previous studies could be found. According to Yin (2003, p. 79), pilot study can be used as "laboratory" for the researcher since it allows observing the phenomena from different angles. The findings from the pilot interview served as a platform when planning and focusing the empirical study further. In addition, it served as a guiding tool when the literature review was built and the main focus of the research was decided.

The objective of this interview was two-fold. First it aimed to find reliable information related to the role of communication consultancies as actors in the MNCs' launch communication strategies. Second, it aimed to investigate how the consultancies localize messages to address the stakeholder groups of each market.

The interviewee was an account director in a well-established communication consultancy with an international clientele based in Finland. The interviewee had broad professional experience from working in both consulting agencies and the communication function of a few multinational companies.

The interview was built around three key themes to be in line with research objectives and furthermore to answer the research question one. The interview themes can be found in Appendix 1. The structure was selected to provide accurate information and additionally cover the subject as comprehensively as possible. Three main themes were selected based on the core areas of the theoretical framework. As can be seen in Appendix 1, the first theme concentrated on the launch communication within the international business environment. The second theme concerned the role of communication consultancies and MNCs as their clients. The third theme focused on the localization of the launching communication.

The interview was conducted face-to-face in the interviewee's own workplace in spring 2010. The interview was done in Finnish and it took 1 hour and 5 minutes. It was tape-recorded to ensure the reliability of the findings. The interview was transcribed within a few days.

Focused theme interviews

Four focused theme interviews aimed to answer the second research sub-question of how communication consultants localize MNC's international launch communication. The four interviews concentrated on the localization process itself and the localization work conducted in communication consultancies.

The objective of the interviews was to map out the process of localizing MNCs' launch communication to the Finnish market and describe how communication consultants see the localization in practice. In more detail, this set of interviews aimed to understand why and how localization is done. Additionally, it aimed to

understand and describe the localization process and all its parts in the communication consultancy and how communication consultants perceive the relevance of localization and the localization work itself.

The four communication professionals came from the same communication consultancy as the interviewee in the pilot study. As shown in Table 1, one of the interviewees was an account director. Three other interviewees were communication consultants working with MNC clients and were engaged in localization in their daily work. All the interviewees had extensive work experience as communication consultants with international clientele. The further details about the interviewees were decided to be excluded from the study due to the confidentiality reasons.

Table 1: Overview of the Interviewees

1. interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position: Account Director• Length of the interview: 48 minutes
2. interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position: Communication Consultant• Length of the interview: 49 minutes
3. interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position: Communication Consultant• Length of the interview: 58 minutes
4. Interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position: Communication Consultant• Length of the interview: 1 h 10 minutes

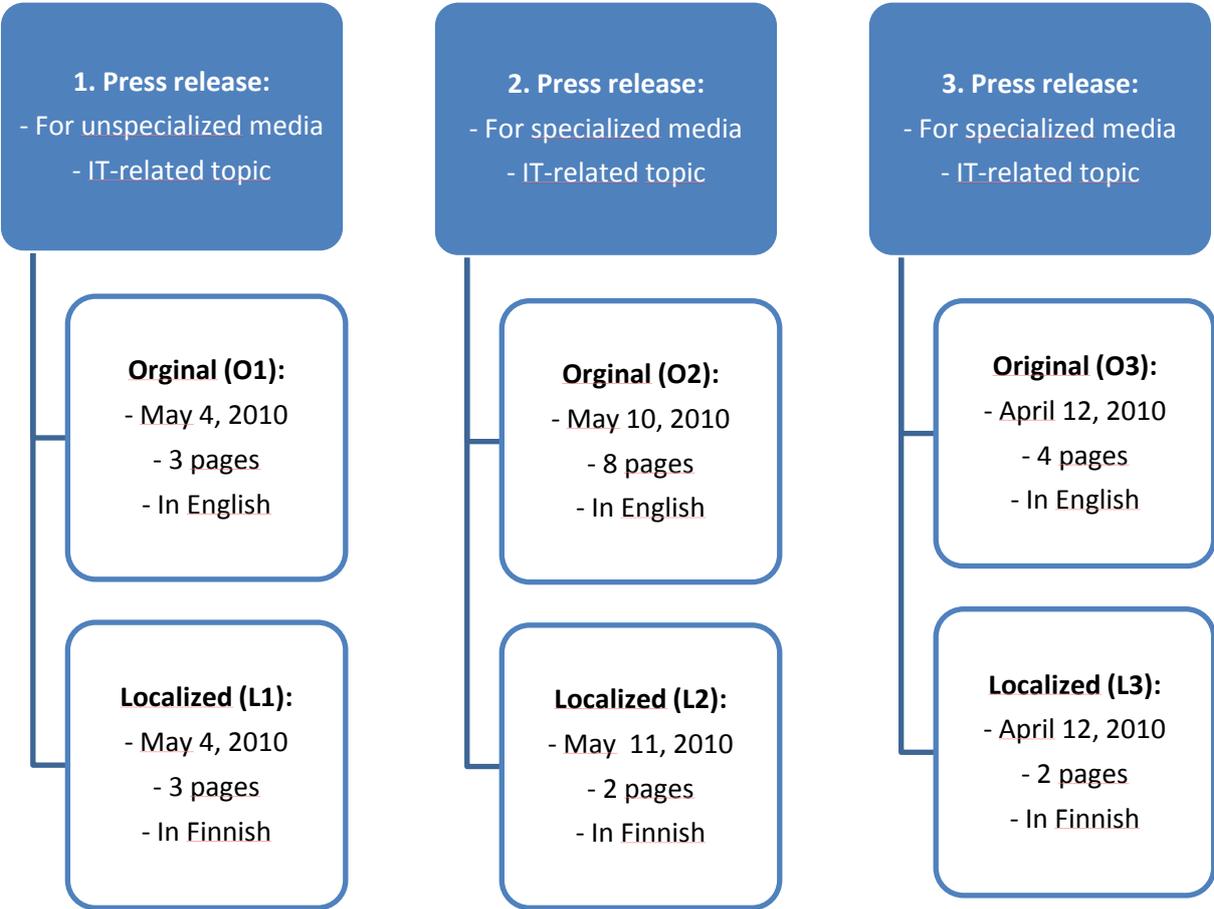
Three interview themes were constructed to cover the key issues of the concept. The first theme concerned the background, justification and localization of decision making. The next theme concentrated on how communication consultants perceive the localization process as a whole. The third theme focused on the localization process and the relevant parts it consists of. The interview themes can be found in Appendix 2.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the interviewees' workplace. Each interview was scheduled to take approximately an hour yet the actual time varied from 48 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes. The interviews were done in Finnish and they were tape-recorded. As well as the pilot study, these interviews followed a certain set of themes yet allowing further discussion and follow-up questions. The more elaborative questions were developed to follow the core aspects of the framework. The transcription was done within few weeks time.

3.2.2 International and Finnish press releases

In this section, press releases as research data are introduced and discussed. The core aim of analysis was to provide an answer to the third research sub-question.

Table 2: Overview of the data for the genre analysis



The aim of analyzing the data was not to conduct an in-depth genre analysis but rather to use some tools of genre analysis to illustrate the qualities of the differently targeted press releases. This was done by comparing MNCs' original and communication consultancies' localized versions of three press releases.

As can be seen from the overview Table 2, in total six press releases, three original (referred to as O1, O2 and O3) and three localized (referred to as L1, L2 and L3), were analyzed to illustrate differences within same genre of corporate writing with an emphasis on international context. The client MNC had produced three press releases related to their products and services in international markets. A Finnish communication consultancy produced their versions of these three press releases to address the Finnish media and other relevant stakeholders. All the press releases were produced and released during spring 2010.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

This section discusses the issues of validity and reliability of the data and research itself.

Generally, in any research, the validity of the research and reliability of the results are evaluated during the process to assure scientific trustworthiness (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2001, p. 213). In terms of qualitative research, reliability stands for the degree to which a study can be replicated and thus, its ability to produce consistent results. Validity refers to the ability of methods or measurements to measure what they aim to do (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara, 2001, p. 213).

Validity issues were carefully considered during this study. In order to produce a valid thesis study it was important to define the concepts related to the novel topic since no previous studies on the topic could be found. Therefore, the concepts of corporate communication and launch communication were carefully defined in the literature review to illustrate their integrated nature in the interface of marketing communication and traditional PR. The core concepts of this study were also explained to the interviewees to ensure that the interviewees shared a similar view on corporate

communication. Moreover, the concepts of “globalization” and “localization” were discussed with the interviewees to cover all the relevant areas of this study.

In addition to the concept definition, a pilot interview was conducted to collect background knowledge in order to understand and identify the issue in a comprehensive manner. The findings from this interview served as a guiding tool when the literature review was built.

This study was built to achieve a high degree of reliability. The study should thus be quite repeatable if the same communication consultants were interviewed within a relatively short period of time so that the situational elements such as markets would have not changed too much during the time. However, if consultants from other communication consultancies with another strategic orientation and clientele were interviewed, the results may slightly change. Since some of the issues discussed with the interviewees called for personal opinions, different people may naturally view them differently.

In terms of limitations, two issues require attention. First, all the interviewed communication consultants worked for the same company thus sharing a similar orientation towards corporate communication and consultants’ work. Second, the number of press releases was rather limited: only three press releases with two different versions of each. Hence no comprehensive or universal conclusions could be drawn. Additionally, they were analyzed with respect for the confidentiality. However, the role of this analysis was more supportive in this study and therefore this was not considered problematic in terms of reliability. Moreover, if repeated in a similar context, the results of the analysis would probably be rather similar to this study.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented and discussed. First, the pilot interview aimed to answer the first sub-question about the relationship between a communication consultancy and an MNC in the launch communication process. Here the findings from the pilot interview are presented. This data was collected in the early stages of the thesis process to map out the subject.

Second, focused theme interviews aimed to provide data to answer the second sub-question about the localization process of MNCs' launch communication performed by the communication consultants. Here the findings from focused interviews are presented.

Thirdly, the third data type collected to answer the third sub-question of how the communication consultants localize the press releases to address the Finnish media. Here findings from the genre analysis on press releases are presented.

4.1 The role of communication consultancies in MNCs' launch communication process on the Finnish market

In what follows, the launch communication process in the international business environment and the relationship between the client MNCs and communication consultancies are discussed. Additionally, the communication consultancies' role in the localization of launch communication is covered on a general level. Lastly, the discussion on the findings is presented. Findings are based on the pilot interview with an account director early on the study process.

4.1.1 Communicating launch in the international business environment

This section focuses on the interviewee's views on launch communication in a new market. Particularly, interviewee explains the crucial aspects to consider and steps in launch communication planning.

By localization the interviewee meant adapting the company's international launch communication to respond to the local market-related needs and requirements. According to the interviewee, in the field of marketing, localization is often referred to as adaptation, yet the possible nuance differences were not obvious to the interviewee.

According to the interviewee, launch communication is highly context bound and situational. Therefore, a typical strategy for launch communication is rather difficult to define. The most significant variable in the launching strategy equation is what is actually launched. The launching strategy is essentially different for consumer products and B-to-B products. The interviewee stressed the huge difference in launching a new organization compared with launching a new product by an already well-known organization. In the latter case, the consultancy can focus solely on launching the new product without the need for introducing the MNC as a company to its prospective target stakeholders. To quote the interviewee:

“When communicating a new product to the target stakeholders, whether using advertising or communication, media needs to know about the company behind the product. The product is just as believable as the company itself.”¹

According to the interviewee, typically in terms of launching, the communication strategy is already prepared by the client MNC or its international partner consultancy. In such cases, the prepared strategy and possible materials are usually done in a shared language, i.e. in English or Swedish. However, sometimes Finnish may be used as well.

In terms of strategy, the interviewee pointed out five relevant aspects that always require consultants' attention in localization. First, generally the identity and the brand of a company is the core in developing a launching strategy and should serve as a starting point of the localization process. Second, the market related perceptions of

¹ The interview was done in Finnish and therefore translations are made by the researcher. Any inaccuracies in the interviewee's quotations are the responsibility of the researcher.

the corporate identity may vary and this possibility should be taken into consideration. For example, if the company has faced challenges in other markets or the perceptions have been negative, such issues will likely be reflected in the launching to a new market via international media. Third, the main messages and sales arguments should be defined and the already existing messages reconsidered in order to fit the new market. The unique features of the product or the company should be considered as well as how to address potential new customers to get their attention and ultimately the messages across. The interviewee emphasized that the company or the product design itself may possess features that do not work for new markets. The interviewee took as an example a dish brush that could not hang above the sink. It would not be attractive and useful for Finns who use drying cabinets and tend to hang the dish brush over the sink.

The fourth issue to consider would be a possible façade, a spokesperson for the company in the new market. The spokesperson should be trained to face the new stakeholders and their expectations. The spokesperson should be relevant to the local media as well. The CEO in Sweden may not be as attractive for the Finnish media to interview as the Finnish country manager who focuses on issue concerning the Finnish markets. To quote the interviewee;

“Based on my experience I would stress the importance of a Finnish spokesperson with Finnish phone numbers and email addresses. A Swedish name on the contact information seems to kill spontaneous contacts and rule out hesitating journalists who wonder if the person speaks Swedish or English. A non-Finnish spokesperson also makes interviews and commenting trickier because journalists have to translate his or her comments.”

Fifth, the local competitors need to be considered when planning launching. Therefore, it is not just other MNCs but also the local operators who should be considered in terms of how they are positioned how to differentiate from them and how to communicate in that particular environment successfully.

The communication consultancy is considered the expert of the local media scene and therefore, the best alternative to find the key media players, social media

representatives and media channels to address. The client MNC defines the general target media. The local consultancy decides who in the local media would fit the general target. The interviewee also stressed that consultants are familiar with the local contacting preferences and the level of respectful tone required addressing these participants. Consequently, the media selection is almost always altered to fit the case.

According to the interviewee, all the components in the international launch communication plan can be localized, but the main messages and the texts are in the focus. The messages are culturally bound and therefore, usually need to be altered to fit the new market. What is appealing to consumers in Germany may not be appealing to Finns. The interviewee used a case of food as an example:

“In the food market and children oriented markets, domestic production, domestic materials and ingredients, and locality are important factors. In these particular markets, the argument ‘Number 1 toast in Germany’ is not attractive or persuasive to Finnish consumers even though it would be the main argument in German markets.”

In addition to the issue of messages, the language used to deliver the messages is highly important in localization. Besides the language itself, the rhetoric and argumentation are necessary to, not only translate but to adapt, to the local linguistic climate and heritage. To some extent, the linguistic genres vary from market to market, and therefore, the genres might need altering to meet the local genre description, and thus believable to the recipients. In these cases, the texts need not only translating but moderation to appeal to Finnish media representatives.

4.1.2 The relationship of communication consultancies and client MNCs

In this section interviewee’s insights on the relationships between communication consultancies and client MNCs in the international context are presented. Additionally, consultancies roles in the international consultancy networks are focused here.

The use of consultancies can be seen as economically efficient and socially sustainable way for MNCs to increase and decrease their level of staff and expertise according to the situation. Although MNCs typically have their own internal communication functions, they are using communication consultancies for various communication purposes. This is mainly due to the fact that specialized knowledge from certain areas such as crisis communication is occasionally needed. The communication consultancies provide the experts for the time needed and MNCs can avoid hiring the specialists and thus be economically efficient. They can concentrate on the general issues and leave the expert areas to the consultancies. Additionally, the workload may vary from time to time and MNCs prefer hiring consultancies which is easier than hiring and firing employees according to a current need.

According to the interviewee, the relationship between the consultancy and the client MNC, in line with the issue in general, is dependent on the MNC, its needs and the markets it is operating in. The consultancy's role in communication strategy may be anything from being extremely close to the MNC'S top management to being an occasionally hired help. However, no matter how the consultancy is addressed by the MNC, it is obligated to always perform at its best and maintain the objective and result –oriented consultant role. The interviewee pointed out the value of mutual trust and personal relationships. As an example, the interviewee explains:

“The relationships vary from one extreme to another. With some clients, we are extremely close, in some cases we are actually involved in the product development and are present in strategic meetings. On the other end, in some cases we are considered as a press release machine. In the worst cases, we are taken as a press release dispenser distributing ready-made press releases.”

The role of communication consultancies in the launching process depends on the status of the consultancy in the international network of communication consultancies in each case. The network refers to the hierarchy that consultancies have in relation to each other in the different markets. According to the interviewee, there are usually two kinds of positions in the network: a lead consultancy and a local consultancy.

The agencies' relationships with each other are mainly due to the fact that usually it is too difficult and inefficient if an MNC has to communicate to the various markets via different consultancies. To avoid heavy and resource consuming organizations, the client MNC may employ an international consultancy chain with offices in different locations. In terms of these networks, the interviewee described two typical approaches on how an MNC works with communication consultancies in various markets: a centralized model and decentralized model. Figure 9 and 10 show the models as described by the interviewee.

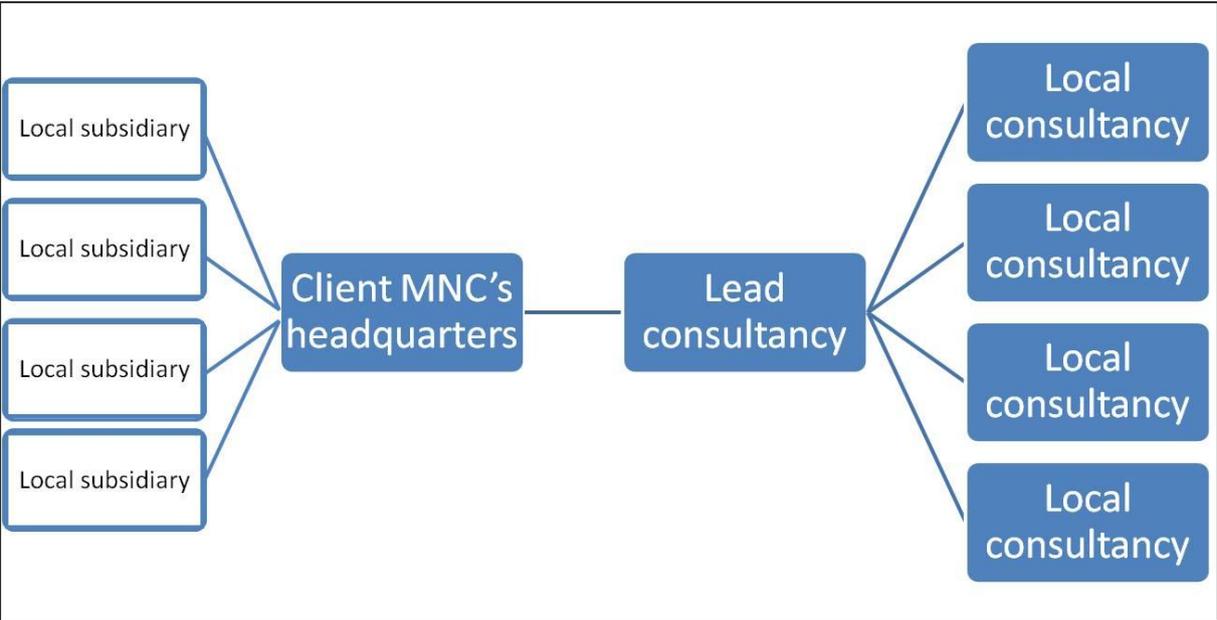


Figure 9: Centralized model in MNC-consultancy relationship (Based on pilot interview)

In the centralized model, shown in Figure 9, one consultancy or one consultancy in a chain of agencies takes a lead and acts as a lead agency. Usually, this is the consultancy with which the company has already an existing relationship. This consultancy develops the strategy and the roll-out plans in a centralized manner and then contacts consultancies in the locations and distributes information, instructions and guidelines. These local consultancies adjust the centrally produced plans to fit the market. They translate and localize the materials, find suitable channels, media and publics. The local consultancies contact the lead consultancies, not the local subsidiaries of the MNC. The headquarters is the main source of information and it is

distributed via the lead consultancy. In addition to strategic planning, the lead consultancy has a role as a coordinator for local consultancies.

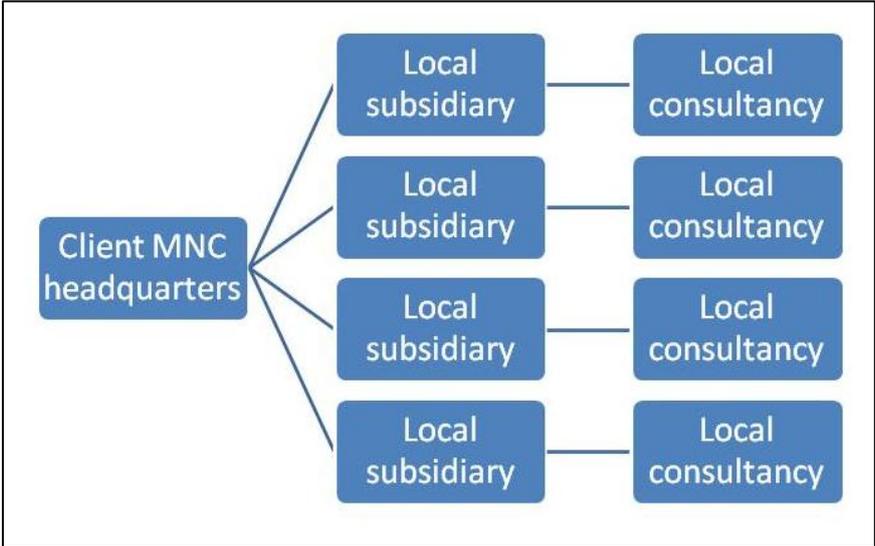


Figure 10: Decentralized model of MNC-consultancy relationship (Based on pilot interview)

In the decentralized model shown in Figure 10, the local subsidiaries of the MNC contact local consultancies and address them directly. In order to avoid dispersed messages and identities, the headquarters usually requires that the local consultancies are following the corporate communication strategy as a “master document”. The level of local expertise and market knowledge can be utilized to the fullest in these cases. Yet, the overall supervision and possibly not coherent corporate image is more difficult for the MNC to manage.

The consultancy may act in either one of these roles according to each individual case. Consequently, the role depends on the case; it can be comprehensive and focus on strategic planning or practical and focus on hands-on localization. Communication consultancies have a significant role as the experts of a certain market and its stakeholders. MNCs aim to utilize this while simultaneously having a targeting at a coherent image in all markets.

The interviewee also stressed the fact that localization should always be considered in terms of the individual case and it should aim at the best possible result to the client organization. Therefore, the consultancy should suggest localization if it considers it beneficial to the client than following the international communication plan.

4.1.3 Planning launch communication to the new markets

Here the interviewee’s views on planning launch communication to new market are in focus. The interviewee described how launch communication is approached and pointed out relevant steps for consultants to consider illustrated in Figure 11.

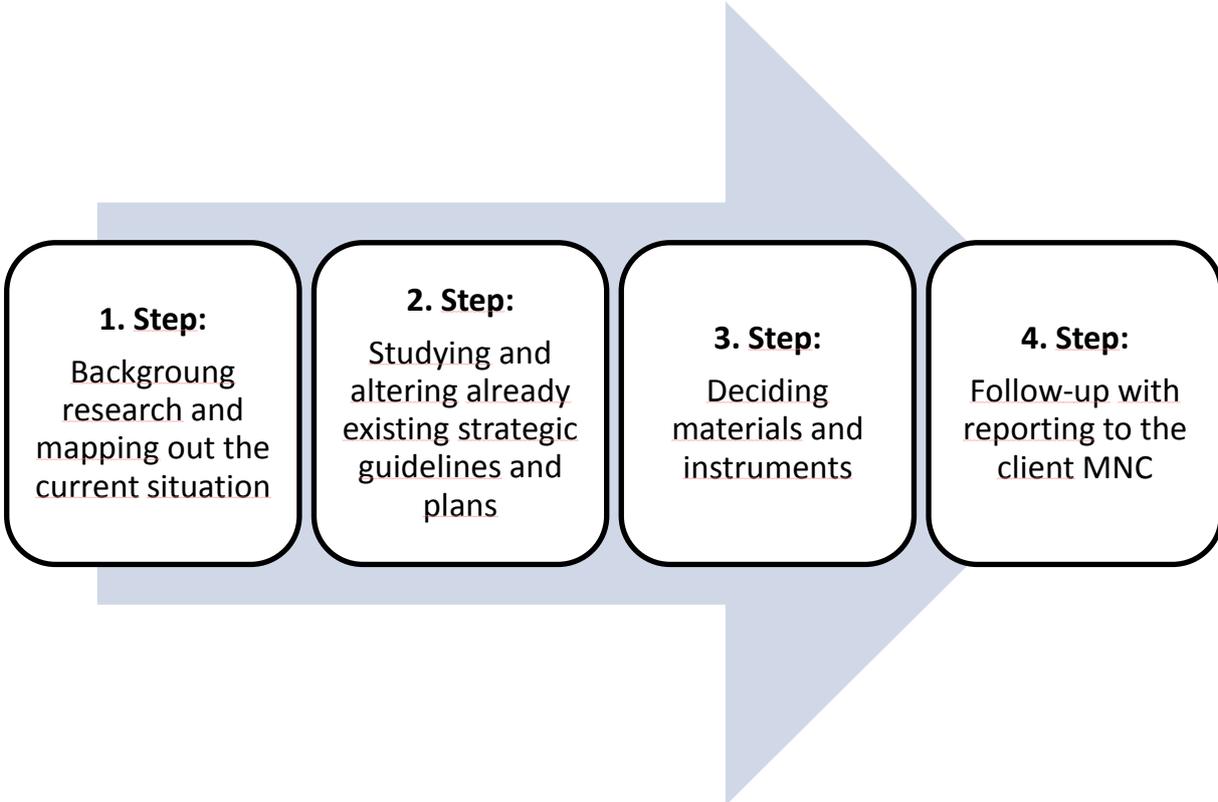


Figure 11: Launch communication process steps (Based on the pilot interview)

Despite the difficulties in making generalizations, according to the interviewee, there are steps that are typically taken when planning launch communication for an MNC to expand to a new market. The steps and what is involved vary extensively according to the relationship with the client MNC and their communication budget. Figure 11 illustrates the four steps interviewee defined in the launching communication process.

As can be seen in Figure 11, the first step is to do background research and map out the current situation. This requires extensive work to build a comprehensive picture of the client MNC's current reputation in other markets, the level of knowledge and reputation in the new market, the possible competition, the usable channels and the target audiences' preferences. The mapping conducted in step one provides a platform for the second step.

During the second step, already existing strategic guidelines and plans are studied and altered to fit the new markets. The interviewee pointed out that alterations are suggested to the client if they are considered beneficial. Additionally, a number of other issues need to be discussed such as the main messages, the target audiences, the critical level of exposure needed, the available communication channels and the local face of the company. The local channels available are crucial. The interviewee illustrated the issue of available channels by an example:

“ A while ago using Twitter was an important channel in Sweden, its importance in Finland was remarkably smaller due to the current low level of Twitter usage in Finland. “

During the third step of planning launch communication, the communication materials and instruments are decided. The work varies according to how much material has already been centrally prepared by the client and how much alteration or complete rework is needed. The materials can already be translated for the local communication consultancy and thus only cosmetic alteration is needed. At this point, according to the interviewee, the client's budget dominates what will be done. At the minimum, a translated news release is prepared and sent for the local target media accompanied with follow-up calls. However, this phase can include a

significant amount of work from preparing press releases and follow-up calls to the media, sending out prototypes to be tested, arranging press conferences with a quest list, speakers and PowerPoint-slides. Despite the possible ready-produced materials, they may need alteration to meet the expectations of local recipients. According to the interviewee, for example, Swedes use more “promotional tone” in their press releases, whereas Finns are more information-oriented in the specific genre. Therefore, the press releases require adjusting in order to be believable and effective for the Finnish media.

The fourth, and the last, step is the follow-up with reporting to the client MNC. The resulted media coverage and its tone will be reported along with the raised interest and discussions within the local target audiences in different forums. No matter how much the process may vary as to three steps, this step is always done. The consultancies make the report for their clients about what was done and how it worked no matter what was done and how tight the budget was.

The interviewee emphasized that it is difficult to illustrate the average launch communication process for new markets and define its standard elements. Yet, the four launching steps provide a picture of how the launch communication for MNC’S entering new markets was seen by an experienced communication consultant. In cases where an MNC wants the communication consultancy to be only a distributor of the already prepared material, the localization is obviously minimal if not nil. At the minimal level, for example, a small yet crucial procedure as proofreading can be skipped due to a too tight budget pressure. Therefore, the localization level is budget and client dependent to a very high extent.

4.1.4 Discussion

Based on the pilot interview, it seems that the role of the communication consultancies in the client MNC’s launch communication is highly dependent on the client company’s strategy, the budget and, to some extent, on the personal relationship between the team members. In general, launch communication, the role of the communication consultancies in the process, and the cooperation with the

client MNC are extremely context bound and case dependant. Similarly, the launch communication process also seems case bound and different based on what is sold in the new market: the company, the product or an improved version of the product or service. Therefore, any generalizations were difficult to draw in order to illustrate the typical launching communication process within the framework.

The interviewee was very aware that international communication strategy may not be applicable or successful as such in the new markets and thus market-related adjusting is usually needed. Differences in both the cultural and business environment require addressing, however, within the limits of client MNC's strategies and budgets. This seems to support the concept of "glocal" approach to global launching communication, in which global strategies are adopted to fit the unique characteristics of the local market environment (Valentini, 2007; Kanso & Nelson, 2002). A glocal approach allows MNCs to develop a single communication framework or a theme along with flexibility in campaign execution to adapt to various local markets (Kanso & Nelson, 2002). The interviewee emphasized the consultant's ethical responsibility to ensure that the client MNC's best interests will be served when suggesting whether to adjust launch communication and to what extent.

The interviewee brought up core situational issues that consultants generally should consider when planning a launching communication strategy to the new market. The issues of corporate identity, brand, and reputation were brought up by the interviewee supporting the ideas of Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) considering them as important assets when penetrating new markets. From the consultant's point of view, five perspectives seemed important in terms of launch communication: the already existing identity of the client MNC, the market-specific perceptions of it, the main messages and the sales arguments of the international communication strategy, the local competitors and market circumstances, and finally, the possible façade of the client MNC. Additionally, the interviewee put emphasis on the budget limiting the launching communication program.

The interviewee pointed out four core steps when planning of launch communication in the new markets. First step of these four steps was background research and mapping out of the current situation. Second step referred to studying and altering the already existing strategic guidelines and plans. Third step referred to deciding the

materials and instruments to be used. Fourth step was follow-up by reporting back to the client MNC.

The four steps were somewhat different from the Cornelissen's (2008, p. 109-113) definition of the seven steps planning when the launch communication program presented in Figure 2. The differences between the frameworks suggest that launch communication is different for introducing an already existing product to new markets than to a completely new product or service for the first time to any market. The differences may result from the consultancies role in the process. Consultants seem to focus more on editing the already-planned launch communication plan than starting planning work from the beginning. All the seven planning steps are not necessarily needed but the content needs to be reflected against the consultants' perceptions of the current market situation. Additionally, consultants are required to provide a follow-up to the client MNC to report the results. According to the interviewee, this step is compulsory to consultants in every consultancy-client - relationship.

The interviewee provided an interesting insight to the relationships between the MNCs', the international network of communication consultancies and the local consultancies. To avoid heavy and resource consuming organizations, client MNC may employ an international consultancy chain with offices in different locations. In terms of these networks, the interviewee described two typical approaches on how an MNC works with communication consultancies in various markets: a centralized model and decentralized model. The consultancy may act in either one of these roles according to each individual case. Consequently, the role depends on the case; it can be thorough and focus on strategic planning or practical and focus on hands-on localization. Since there was no previous academic literature available, this seems to provide completely new knowledge to the field.

The relationships between MNCs and communication consultancies are unique in nature and these relationships were formed based on individual needs and wants of the client MNCs. The interviewee confirmed Shimp's (2007, p.250-251) description of the consultants' role as external help for MNCs providing knowledge, expertise and efficiencies that MNCs do not possess within their own ranks. Typically consultants

are hired to complete, not to replace, MNC's own communication function when needed to provide special know-how, connections and networks. They have a significant role as experts of a certain market environment and its stakeholders such as media.

Accordingly, the interviewee also confirmed Shimp's (2007, p.250-251) argument concerning the length and depth of the relationships: they can be project oriented and volatile or they can last for decades involving strong-commitment. The interviewee also pointed out that no matter how the consultancy is addressed by the MNC, it is obligated to always perform at its best, maintain the objective and result – oriented paid-to-deliver-consultant role, and value the mutual trust.

4.2 The localization of launch communication

This section presents the findings for the second research sub-question of how is the localization process of launch communication for communication consultants. The focused theme interviews were conducted with four communication consultants from a Finnish communication consultancy. The interviews focused on localization of the launch communication and how communication consultants use their expert knowledge on planning and executing the localization.

In what follows, first the relationship of the communication consultancies and the client MNCs' in the localization process is illustrated. Second, planning of the localization and the aspects affecting the need of localization presented. Third, how the launch communication strategy and its variables can be localized is presented. Fourth, the process of localization is illustrated. And finally, the discussion is presented.

4.2.1 The relationship of communication consultancies and the client MNCs in the localization process

Here the interviewees described their MNC clientele types, the reasons for MNCs to consider localization and localization decisions in general.

According to all the interviewees, the core idea of the communication consultancies is to assure the best possible outcome in achieving the client's communication goals. In general, all the interviewees justified the employment of communication consultancies by the need of expert consultant knowledge to adjust the communication to the local market. As interviewee 1 stated:

“If there is no need of adjusting the communication to meet the market-specific characteristics, the communication consultancies would not be employed at all. All the MNC would need then would be translation agencies.”²

The interviewee 1 roughly identified two types of clientele: regular clients and project clients. Regular clients are client organizations with whom consultancies have monthly-based contacts to establish long-term communication processes and goals, for example, for external communication. Project clients are both domestic organizations and MNCs with whom project-natured communication is conducted, for example, to launch a new product or to overcome a business challenge via communication. Interviewees stressed the importance of the long-term relationship in terms of getting desired results from the communication efforts. They felt that the long-term relationship was essential to develop a mutually shared voice for the client MNC and to fully engage with the client MNCs core essence in their product and service. Additionally, the long-term engagement with the local media increases the possibility of getting messages through in the media. What the project clients should ask themselves would be: “What next?” If an MNC invests in communicating a product launch in a project -manner, it should consider the future efforts as well, since there is a risk that local media does not find a project-mannered communication interesting enough.

In terms of localization, generally it seems that economic reasons affect budgets and thus increased project-nature of communication efforts. Interviewee 1 had also

² The interviews were done in Finnish and therefore translations are made by the researcher. Any inaccuracies in interviewees' quotations are the responsibility of the researcher.

observed the fastening pace and more ad-hoc nature of the communication processes resulting less time to prepare locally appealing press releases in a thoroughly strategic manner. All the interviewees said that rather seldom do consultants have the luxury of few days advance to prepare and recompose a press release to Finnish markets from the material on hand. Additionally, the fastening pace of the media reacting on the news from international sources affects how and what consultancies decide to localize.

Localization is always based on already existing materials, otherwise it is not localization. According to interviewed consultants, MNCs typically distribute English written communication material to various local communication consultancies. Interviewees thought that this is based on the clients' aim to save on communication costs. If necessary materials are centrally-produced in the headquarters of the MNC or in a lead consultancy, the local consultancies do not need to start the production from the beginning but just translate the already existing materials. This is considered to reduce the amount of work in each location and thus reduce the costs in using external communication consultants. However, as all of the interviewees described, basic translation was hardly ever enough. Moreover, as all the interviewees stated, the localization was always an optional procedure and always required legitimated reasons for it.

The localization work of the communication consultancy is limited by the rules of the client organization and its communication strategy. This leaves the consultancy with the responsibility of deciding how the strategy can be adjusted to the local markets to achieve successful results. According to all the interviewees, the consultants need to be very explicit about what can and cannot be realistically achieved in Finnish markets. As an example, the interviewee 4 explained:

“Finnish media hardly is interested to interview the MNC management abroad unless the interviewee is extremely well-known and therefore relevant to the Finnish media. In my opinion, making this known to the client is a responsibility of a consultant.”

Accordingly, in terms of product launches, the communication consultancy decides on how and to what extent to use centrally-prepared communication packages including press releases, expert articles and other communication materials. All of the four interviewees stated that the general communicational framework is provided by the international communication strategy of the client MNC but the practice of local communication efforts are conducted by the local consultancy.

Both the client MNC and communication consultancy are included in the decision of localization. The interviewees' opinions concerning who actually initializes the localization process somewhat varied. Two of the interviewees said that majority of MNCs have to be convinced that localization is beneficial to them. Other two of the interviewees stated, that most MNCs are aware of differences between the markets and thus proactive to consider the consultants insights from a certain environments. However, the interviewees also mentioned that it is a part of the consultant's professional capability to be able to judge whether localization is needed and also to estimate what could be suggested to the client MNC and in what manner. As interviewee 4 put it:

“In a communication process, our office might be the only function involved, which actually operates in the Finnish markets. I feel that thus well-composed and well thought out argumentation is usually needed to convince client and other parties that what we suggest is really needed and crucial to meet the goals. You are usually the only one saying that.”

To sum up, the extent of the localization planning depends on the case and it is consultants' professional expertise to be able to define what is essentially needed to achieve the communicational goals of the client MNC. Due to the consultancies' fees and charging system the client MNC's communication budget limits the localization. If the budget is limited to covering translating and distributing a single press release without any localization, the consultant focuses on delivering that particular task. However, consultants have ethical codes to do their best to achieve the clients' requests but avoid wasting client's money on requests that are unrealistic or impossible to achieve.

4.2.2 Planning localization for launch communication

Here the interviewees' descriptions of planning the localization process are focused. Interviewees pointed out altogether seven important aspects that require consultants' attention and consideration to adjust launch communication achieve best possible outcome in new markets.

According to the interviewees, the planning process concerning global communication strategy depends greatly upon the MNC and its corporate communication function. In terms of deciding on localization of launch communication, the MNC headquarters' communication function has a preplanned vision of the local communication processes including the explicit budget. The client MNC's communication budget is in a key position when considering localization procedures in each market. The strategy defines the general communication budget that is divided to each market and it gives the overall framework for the depth of localization efforts. The communication strategy usually defines also the messages, channels as well as goals in the international level. Therefore, these plan details are well-defined at least in the international level before the local consultancy is involved the process.

As presented in Figure 12, interviewees pointed out seven aspects that should be taken into account when planning and deciding about localizing launch communication.

Firstly, Finnish market conditions and operational environment were considered to be the reason for localization of the launch communication. The details interesting and relevant to Finnish markets dominate what is communicated in the Finnish markets. Interviewee 3 pointed out that in product and brand launching, rather little can be done to localize. The brands are usually very distinctly defined. Additionally, products are completely bound to their physical and operational features. Therefore, the only aspect that actually can be localized is what is communicated to whom and how.

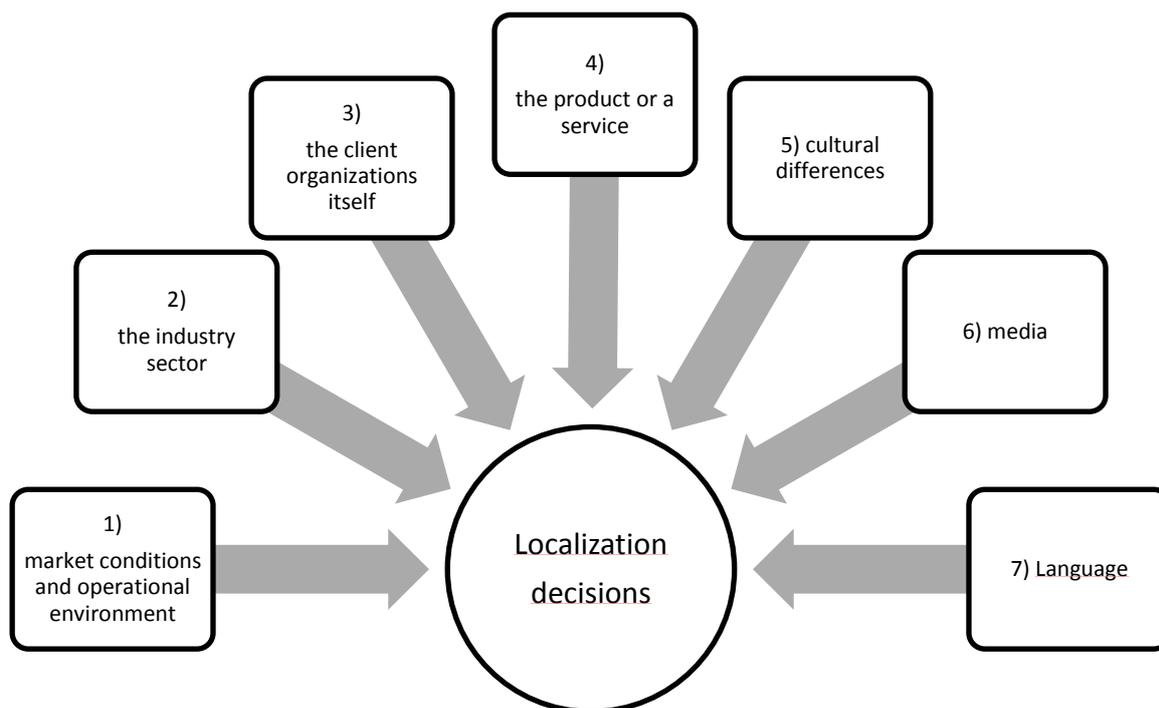


Figure 12: Aspects affecting the localization decisions

Secondly, some differences between industry sectors were described. Especially MNCs in the field of technology were considered stricter in terms of localizing communication. Additionally, some industry sectors were found more regulated than others in which just the good taste and budget set the only limits for communication. For example, launch communication in the medical industry, especially within prescriptive medicines, was found more strictly regulated compared to other consumer products such as refreshment beverages. In sum, the local variation of regulations and legislations was found affecting the launch communication and what can be said in what tone to whom.

Thirdly, the client organizations themselves are affecting the localization of the launch communication. Smaller MNCs were considered by the interviewees to be more agile in terms of altering their communication on the international level comparing to larger MNCs. All the interviewees emphasized the individual differences between the organizational cultures and communication policies of MNCs. What was brought up by three of the interviewees was the affect of restrictions and regulations related to the communication of stock listed MNCs. Press

releases about financial situations were described to be forwarded to media usually as such without any altering, in some cases even without translating.

Fourth, the product or a service that will be launched should be considered. When communicating in the launching situation, the reason why media would be interested to write about product or an organization is its novelty value. Additionally, novelty in a local market would raise interest despite the fact that a product or an organization is known in international markets. In such cases, the previous reputation and image would affect how the case is communicated in the local market it is entering.

Fifth, the cultural differences between the markets internationally were considered as one of the central reasons to localize launch communication. Interviewee 2 stated that consultancies aim to impact on people via communication. Succeeding in that requires understanding of what these people are interested in and delivering according to these interests. Due to internationally varied interests, said the interviewee 2, the communication needs to be altered accordingly. Rather many similarities in interests among audiences are found such as celebrities, beautiful and rich people but still local unique characteristics exist that require addressing. The interviewee 3 and 4 both found considerable, communication-relevant differences even between close neighbors Finns and Swedes.

Sixth aspect raised by interviewees was differences in the media. Interviewees emphasized the unique role and characteristics of the Finnish media in comparison to media in other markets or to international media. In general level, the media field was considered somewhat homogenous in westerns markets involving general media, professional media and very sector-specific media. However, what they emphasized was that in Finland the sector-specific media is rather thin compared to international level. According to all interviewees, the relative absence of sector-specific media affects on the whole localization process since there might be neither specified reporters nor specified audience to address with a certain product launch. Therefore, explicitly focused messages may require adaptation to raise interest among more broadly oriented media. Moreover, the emphasis of the messages may be altered to meet the requirements and interest of general media and their audiences.

Seventh, all the interviewees emphasized the role of language in communication and interviewee 1, stated as a personal opinion that no English written messages should be forwarded to Finnish media. Messages as such were considered as inadequate to bring any additional value neither to the client nor to the Finnish media. Moreover, these messages written in English are seen as potentially harmful to MNCs reputation and risking the messages' getting through.

The language in general, was seen as very crucial, however not the only issue. Interviewee 4 pointed out that even though translated, just the grammatically correct wording is not enough to get the message through. Therefore, the interviewed consultants preferred conducting translation themselves instead of using translation offices. The texts translated by translation offices required revisiting to assure that messages, tone, rhetoric and emphasis were suitable for both the target stakeholders and the client MNC's communication strategy.

In addition to the aspects interviewees have pointed out, the recent increase of the number of communication consultancies in Finnish markets has affected the possibility to get the messages through in media. More messages are sent by different consultancies as well as MNCs' own communication functions to media causing an overflow of messages. According to interviewee 1, this tightened competition has put more stress on the strategic planning and local appeals towards the communication efforts.

4.2.3 The key subjects to consider in the localization process

In terms of localization of the launch communication, interviewees pointed out different subjects in the communication strategy that can be adjusted to meet the different aspects described in the section 4.2.2. The six subjects raised by the interviewees were goals, messages, materials, language, stakeholders, and spokesperson. Additionally, some difficulties were raised as well.

The localization process is typically based on the international communication strategy of the client MNC and, as interviewee 3 noted, that consultancies can't work really against that. The role of the budget sets boundaries to all the consultants' communication efforts locally. Within the strategy the various different units can be, however, altered according to the client MNC's and consultancies insights.

The communication goals were mentioned as first of the issues in terms of what can and should be localized. All the interviewees said that the internationally set goals may not always be realistic in terms of Finnish markets and that it was their responsibility to let the client know what can be achieved with the resources available and what would be the wisest usage of the client's budget.

According to the interviewees the second subject to localize is the messages. The core messages are almost always kept, only the decisions of which of them to use and how in a certain market may vary. The interviewees pointed out that centrally-prepared messages not necessarily work in Finnish markets. Therefore, only some of them might be used or the emphasis may be changed. One of the interviewee however pointed out that the role of the topic in press releases in growing on being more eye-catching to raise receivers' interest stand out and from the over-flow of messages.

The ultimate goal is to get the messages in media and in order to do that, the messages should be usable to media without reediting or rewriting them. Therefore, the messages should be in Finnish and follow the models and expressions typical for local media. All the interviewees said that this is especially important in terms of media related internet. From the consultants point of view, the fast-paced nature of electronic media seem to force media representatives to rely on ready press material and, as one of the interviewees said, may use them completely without editing at all. On one hand, this helps consultants to reach media with messages yet, on another hand, it forces the messages to be written to be completely adoptable to Finnish media characteristics and thus requires a lot of work from the consultants. Two of the interviewees pointed out that one can spot one's own texts from web news word-to-word with reporter's name attached to the news.

Thirdly, the materials available in Finnish markets are typically localized. These materials usually include various kinds of texts such as media kits, press releases, and expert articles depending on a case. Translated press releases were considered as a minimum to localization. As explained in section 4.2.1, the media in Finland is different from other markets, partly due to rather humble number of publications in specific fields. Interviewees 3 and 4 noticed that there is a difference even compared to Swedish media. To illustrate the difference, the interviewee pointed out that the population in Finland equals the population in London alone. This affects the message composition greatly since there is scarce or even a zero number of reporters specified in a specific field such as data archiving and managing as interviewee 2 exemplified. Thus, to get coverage in Finnish media the press releases have to be designed to appeal to reporters more general level. This affects the localization in detailed level and instead of including localized details in to written material; the local spokesperson usually provides answers to the requests of more detailed information.

Fourth, language of the materials is also almost always changed to the local language. The local language is seen essential by the interviewees in order to get messages through. Terminology, especially in the field of new technology, challenges the localization process. Difficulties occur in maintaining the accuracy of the message content in absence of adequate Finnish translation. The appreciation of fact-based, informational and well precise messages was considered typical for Finnish media. The marketing-natured pathos was considered to be foreign to Finnish media and possibly even decreasing the possibilities of messages to get through. The emphasis was said to be on very factual and logical argumentation formulated in an informative manner to convince the receivers. Honest and fact-based communication was considered quite unanimously appreciated in the press releases targeted to Finnish press. The numbers, percentages, professionals' statements and research facts are highly important to verify the credibility and newsworthiness of the messages sent to Finnish press.

Fifth, the target stakeholders in Finnish markets were considered in localization as well. The stakeholders may vary in Finland compared to other markets. Moreover, they might be reached via different media in Finland.

Sixth, a local spokesperson is typically arranged to answer the further questions of the Finnish media. The internationally defined stakeholders may vary from market to market and they might be reached via different channels. As an example the interviewee 4 mentioned that Finnish markets lack almost completely men's lifestyle magazines that are relevant channels in US, UK or even in Sweden.

Increasingly rapid pace of the media forces communication consultancies to reactive approach towards information and news ideas. Finnish media has access to international news and they are able to pick up the news faster than consultancies are able to due to the decision-processes and the need of clients' approval. This has had an effect on the localization process and decision on what is localized.

Some difficulties were raised in terms of who can make the decisions in the localization cases. Since the organizational structures and chains of decision-making differ from client to another, the difference in who makes the final decision of the communication efforts varies accordingly. MNC's possible internal confusions or power struggles reflects on the decision-process with the external consultancy. One of the interviewees described cases where the international headquarters and Finnish country managers have had different insights on what should be done and gave different briefs on localization efforts for consultants. In this particular case the Finnish country manager walked over the agreement made with the headquarters. In sum, a somewhat general ground rule the decision maker is the one whose budget the costs are paid from.

4.2.4 The localization process in launch communication

Based on the interviewees' descriptions, the process of localization seems to include 3 steps: initial discussions, localizing the strategy and materials, and debriefing discussions. After that the strategy is executed. The four steps are presented in Figure 13.

As can be seen in Figure 13, the process starts with the request from the client’s international headquarters or from a consultancy belonging to an international network. The communication plan is then discussed through with a client in order to form a mutual view on what will be done and to what extent. Also some market-related additional efforts might be needed. In these discussions, consultants are the experts of the market and its possible specialties.



Figure 13: Localization steps

In the localization stage, the communication materials prepared by the client MNCs are used as a platform for further efforts. The interviewee 3 mentioned that sometimes the materials are already translated by a translation agency either abroad or in Finland. In such cases consultants are using these pre-translated materials as a starting point of localization. The interviewee suspected that MNCs do this to save on budget since the translation agencies fees are smaller than those of communication consultants’. No matter if the materials translated or not, they still require revisiting and careful consideration. The materials are then studied in order for the consultancy to decide how and in what form the issue will be communicated to Finnish external stakeholders, and particularly to raise interest of the media. Interviewee 2 said that the prepared materials, particularly press releases, need almost always editing to be shorter and more explicit, or more general. The length of press release seems to vary according to the markets. Interviewees stressed the importance of the length and generally an A4 was considered to be sufficient length for Finnish media preferences. Consequently, the materials are almost always redesigned to meet the expectations of the Finnish media.

After the actual localization work, the localized materials are reviewed with the client MNC's local representatives. The client's opinions in general are considered throughout the process to assure the inclusion of the important aspects of client. This might be very difficult if the client MNC does not have any functions in Finland or any Finnish speaking employees who could verify the accuracy of the Finnish messages. According to one interviewee, this situation might be overcome by using translation agency to translate the localized Finnish version for client MNC to check. Then, the materials are forwarded to desired media representatives.

4.2.5 Discussion

All the interviewees agreed on the role of the communication consultants in the localization process as both strategic and operational since they are involved in the strategic planning process of localizing but they also execute the localization efforts. Localization was seen as necessary, if not compulsory part of the international launch communication process, especially in terms of language. Sending out non-Finnish press releases to Finnish media was described insufficient, if not even hurtful, in order to accomplish the communication goals of the launch communication in Finnish market. However, the localization process was seen as natural and inherent part of the consult work since in any given communication case, not just localization, consultants will evaluate and adjust the plan to assure the best possible outcome for the client.

The relationship of communication consultancies and the client MNCs in the localization process was described as very case-dependent and client-driven. The main factor defining the nature of the relationship is the clients' communication budget. The budget affects whether the clients were long-term regular clients or short-term project clients determining also the how much consultants were strategically involved to clients' communication. Additionally, the budget defined the process and the depth of localization.

The consultants were considered as experts of the Finnish market providing the client MNC important insights to Finnish communication practice and language in terms of external stakeholders, media especially, and thus acting as cultural

mediators according to the description of Hodges (2006). Consultants provided expert knowledge to their client MNCs from a local culture and simultaneously they provided knowledge about the MNC and the product it launches to local stakeholders. Consultants' expertise from a Finnish market was the very core of the localization process, since in many cases the consultants are the only ones involved the process familiar with the market.

Planning of the localization process of the launch communication is always based on already existing materials, otherwise it is not localization. This seems to support the concept of "glocalization" (Valentini, 2007; Kanso & Nelson, 2002) of adjusting the international communication strategy to meet the unique market characteristics. In the core of the localization seems to be the language as Ballance (2006, p.54) emphasized as well. Translation was considered as the basic level of localization and the minimum criteria to achieve the communication goals in the new market. In terms of translating, rewriting and adding new information (Le Seac'h & Klotz, 1999) was considered as the optimum yet translation was dependent on the budget.

The interviewees defined seven aspects affecting if and how consultant suggests localization of the launch communication. These are rather similar to the Keller's (2001) six macro perspectives. First, the Finnish market conditions and operational environment were mentioned. Secondly, the industry sectors were described as a relevant factor. Thirdly, the client organizations themselves are affecting the localization of the launch communication. Fourth, the product or a service that will be launched should be considered. Fifth, the cultural differences between the markets internationally were considered as one of the central reasons to localize launch communication. Sixth aspect raised by interviewees was differences in the media. Seventh, all the interviewees emphasized the role of language in communication.

In terms of localization, interviewees pointed out subjects in the communication strategy that are typically adjusted to meet the launch communication goals. The six subjects raised by the interviewees were goals, messages, materials, language, stakeholders, and spokesperson. Some difficulties were raised in terms of who can make the decisions in the localization cases.

Typically, the process of localization of the launch communication seems to include three steps: initial discussions, localizing the strategy and materials, and debriefing discussions. Based on the plans, the localized strategy is executed. According to interviewees, the process starts with the request from the client's international headquarters or from a consultancy belonging to an international network. The communication effort is then discussed through with a client in order to form a mutual view on what will be done and to what extent. In the localization stage, the internationally oriented materials prepared by the client MNCs are used as a platform for further efforts. The materials are then studied in order for the consultancy to decide how and in what form the issue will be communicated to Finnish external stakeholders, and particularly to raise interest of the media. After the actual localization work, the localized messages are discussed with the client MNCs local representatives again. The opinions of the client are considered throughout the process in general to assure the inclusion of the important aspects of client. Then, the messages are forwarded to desired media representatives.

4.3 Comparison of original and localized press releases

In this section, the findings of the genre analysis are discussed. The aim of studying press releases was to answer the third research sub-question of how communication consultancies localize the press releases to address the Finnish media.

Tools of the genre analysis were used to compare the Finnish and international versions of three press releases. The analysis focused on the form of press release genre. Since the analysis will be in the supportive role in this study, the analysis focused only to illustrate the differences between the versions based on interviews.

The findings are discussed according to the three observable aspects of the genre form presented in Section 3.1.2.: structure, medium and language. Lastly, the discussion is presented.

4.3.1 The structure of the press release

The structure of the press releases is presented in order to illustrate and compare possible differences between the original English (press releases O1, O2 and O3) and the localized Finnish press releases ((press releases L1, L2 and L3). Here the structure of the press releases presented in Section 2.3.3 is used as a framework for comparing the structures. According to the framework the areas of the beginning of the press release, date, headline, the lead paragraph, the body of the text, the summary, contact information and the boiler plate are compared. In addition, the layout of the press releases is focused on.

The interviewees pointed out that press releases aimed to Finnish media are typically notable shorter than the original international ones. Therefore, the length was one of the issues looked at in the analysis. As the interviewees also highlighted that the spokespersons should be relevant to the target media, here the quotations and contact persons are taken into account.

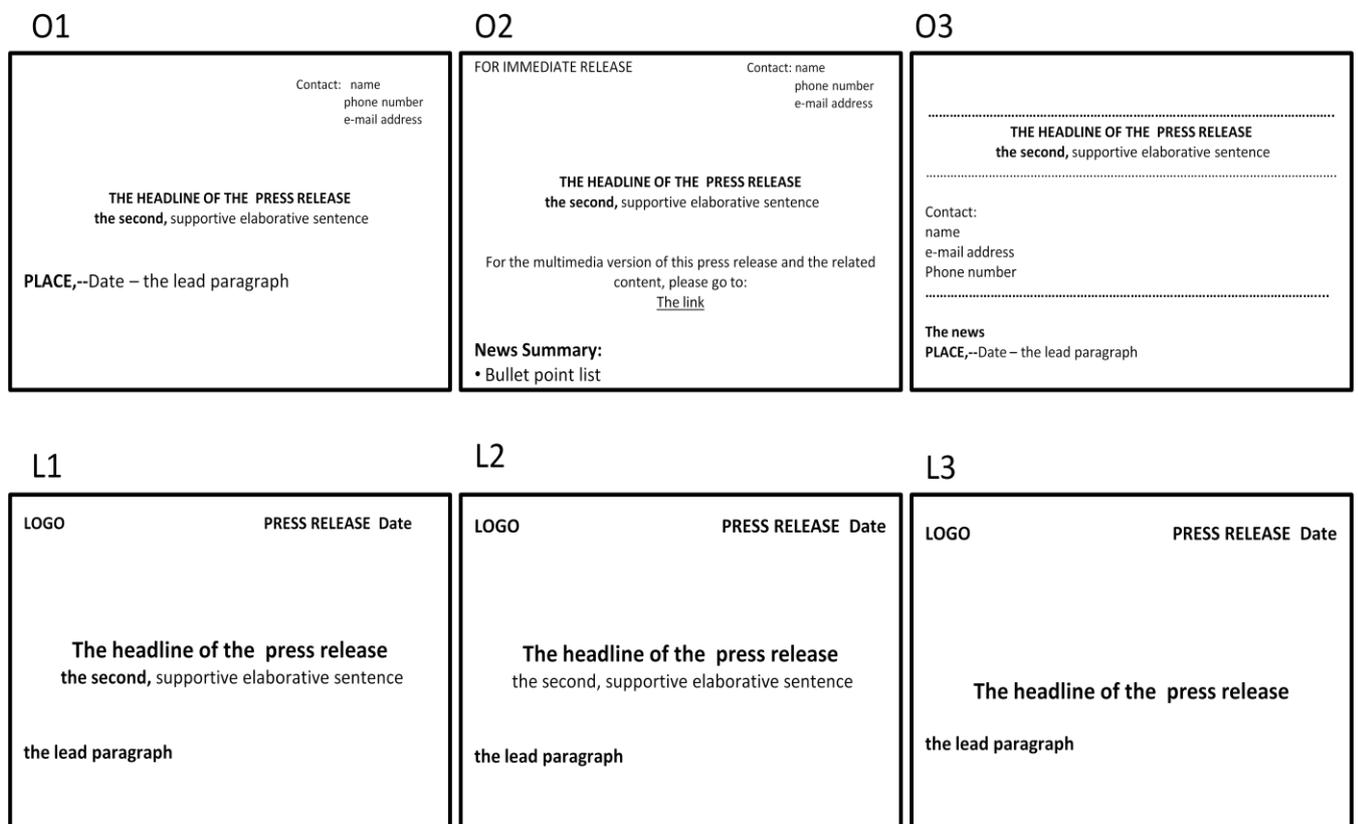


Figure 14: Illustration of the beginning parts of the press releases

The beginning of the press releases

Figure 14 illustrates the overview of how the press releases begun. As can be seen in Figure 14, variation can be found in the original English versions in terms of how the press releases are begun. In press releases O1 and O2, the contact information with the contact person's name, email address and phone number are provided on the top of the press release in the right hand corner. Additionally, in the press release O2 the text "For Immediate Release" is located in the left corner on top. The press release O3 does not have any identification or texts in the top of the document.

On the top right hand corner in all the three localized press releases is the Finnish text "LEHDISTÖTIEDOTE" that translates to "press release" in English. Thus the text identifies immediately the genre and the purpose of the text for the reader.

Date

In the original versions the location of the date is in the beginning of the lead paragraph. In the localized press releases the date follows right after the identification of the document. It seems that the original versions follow Henderson's (2006) definition of where the date is located in the press release. The localized versions seem to follow clear cohesive logic of locating the identification of the document and the date together in the right on the top of the document.

Headline

All the press releases, both original and localized versions, had headlines that capture what the press release is about. However, the contents of the headlines vary to some extent between the versions.

The lead paragraph

The lead paragraphs of the press releases had some variations between both versions. The location of the lead paragraphs varied. In the localized versions the lead paragraphs were located directly after the headline. However, in the original versions the press release O2 broke the pattern. After the second headline sentence, the link for multimedia version of the press release was provided. After the link, "News Summary" with three bullet points was provided. Then, under a subheading of "Full Story", the lead paragraph was provided.

The original versions followed Henderson’s (2006) suggestion by locating the location and the date in the beginning of the lead paragraph. The location was written in capital letters to stand out from the date and the rest of the paragraph.

The typographic choices of the lead paragraph varied as well. In localized versions of press releases L1 and L3, the lead paragraphs were written bold font type seemingly to catch the reader’s attention and to improve the skimming value. In press release L2, similar to all the original versions, the lead paragraph was not enhanced with typographic.

As can be seen in Table 3, the length of the lead paragraphs varied between the original and localized versions. The original versions were seemingly longer compared to the localized, rather compact versions. The number of sentences in the lead paragraphs remained between two and four in both versions. However, the length of these sentences varied. The original ones took from seven to twelve rows of text compared to the localized ones with five to six rows.

Table 3: Length of the lead paragraphs

Press release 1.	Press release 2.	Press release 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sentences • 7 rows • L1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sentences • 5,5 rows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 sentences • 12 rows • L2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sentences • 6 rows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 sentences • 10,5 rows • L3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sentences • 5 rows

The length of the lead paragraphs seems to be connected to the contents of the lead paragraphs which were somewhat different between the versions.

The body of the text

The body of the text varied rather much in terms of overall length, sections, subheadings and structural variation.

As Table 4 shows, the number of paragraphs was somewhat consistent among both original and localized press releases. Body of the text in the original press releases consisted of paragraphs from six to 23 where as localized versions had paragraphs from four to six. However, despite relative cohesiveness with the versions, the differences between the versions were obvious.

Table 4: Body of the text

Original versions	O1	O2	O3
Number of paragraphs	6	23	11
Number of subheadings	2	10	5
Number of bullet point lists	2	2	3
Quotes	1 quote from a CEO of the MNC	13 quotes from various sources	2 quote from different MNC sources
Localized versions	L1	L2	L3
Number of paragraphs	6	4	4
Number of subheadings	1	no	no
Number of bullet point lists	1	no	no
Quotes	1 quote from a local country manager	no	1 quote from a local from a local technology director manager

The longer the body of the text was, the more sections it consisted of. Localized press releases L2 and L3 consisted of only single section and the press release L1 from two sections separated by one subheading. The original versions consisted of multiple sections with subheadings from two to ten. The subheadings separated sections of quotes, technical data, performance characteristics, bullet point lists and such from each other.

The layout is an essential part of structure (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002). The layout of the press releases was somewhat similar. All original press releases contained bullet point lists and quotations yet only one of the localized ones, L1, included a list. The same localized press release was only one that had a chart included.

The quotations were included to the body of the text but the number of the quotations varied from the press release to another no matter in which version. Localized press releases had only one quotation if any. Both of the quotes in localized versions were from a local source instead of the international ones provided in the original versions. Original versions included multiple quotations from one to thirteen. Seemingly the subject of the press release dictates the use of quotations yet localized ones seemed to use them moderate way in general.

In sum, the localized press releases' body of the text seems more concise and compact compared to the original versions. In addition, the scope seems somewhat more general and less detail-oriented.

The summary

In general, the press releases do not include conclusive summary sections in a sense Henderson (2006) defines it. The last paragraphs before the contact information seem to introduce new information, not to summarize already provided information. The differences seem to occur between the press releases, not so much between the original and localized versions.

Press releases number 1 and 3 in both original and localized versions end by providing quotations, not summarizing paragraphs. The press release L2 does not provide quotations, yet the last paragraph provided new information to the reader. The original version O1 as well ends with multiple quotations without any conclusive paragraph.

The quotations seem to be used as conclusive elements providing in-depth view on what the news meant in practice. Interestingly, a summarizing section was not found in either of the versions yet the variation was found between both press releases and the versions.

The contact information

The location between the contact information varied between the original and localized versions. The information was emphasized by using a heading suggesting contacting. In all of the documents the contact information included person's name, phone number and e-mail address. As a differencing detail, the original versions did not include contact person's title but the localized versions did. Additionally, the person to contact varied between the versions.

In all the original versions, the contact information was located at the beginning of the press releases either on the top right hand corner (as in O1 and O2) or under the headline (as in press release number O3). The information was separated from the rest of the document by the layout and a heading "contact".

In the localized versions all the contact information are cohesively located at the end of the document. The contact information was separated from the body text by a heading signaling more information. Additionally, contact information was accompanied by hyperlinks to more information in L1 and L2.

The variation of the contact information location between the original and localized versions may be due to client MNC's own policy concerning the document layout. It can also be caused by the local policy of a press release layout. It seems impossible to argue whether the difference is caused by cultural or organizational reasons.

The boiler plate

The boiler plate (Feid, 2005) was found in all six press releases. It was located at the end side of the press release and separated with a heading referring to "About the client MNC". In original versions of the press releases, additional information of the trademark issues was included after the boiler plate.

In sum, the structures of the press releases are different. The differences were found between the original and localized versions yet also between the versions. The two versions, however, were seemingly differently structures especially in terms of the beginning of the press releases, dates, lead paragraphs, body of the text and contact information. Based on the different structures, it seems that the press releases are

designed to serve different audiences with different expectations concerning the press releases.

4.3.2 Press release as a medium

This section focuses on the medium as part of the press release genre form. Medium refers to the use of different channels within the genre.

The press releases investigated were distributed to the media recipients via a written medium. All the press releases were Word-documents, which allow a layout and structure, which are considered characteristic to the press release writing genre. The Word-documents were sent as attachments via emails to the receivers.

Distributing the press releases via email allows the receivers get the information quicker. Additionally, it provides the journalists an opportunity to use the document as a basis of their article or news. They do not have to actually rewrite the content but they can copy the parts useful for them easily. This increases the possibility for the press release to get through in the media. Possible pictures, charts and other elaborative materials can be easily included in the attachments and be thus used by the recipients.

To sum up, there were no differences between original and localized versions of the press releases concerning the medium. Email and attachments seem to provide an agile medium to distribute press releases to various target stakeholders. It allows wide variation of layout choices and relatively effortless way to include photos, charts and other materials. Additionally, it provides a prompt way to pass them to media, who would use and modify them according to their journalistic purposes.

4.3.3 Press release and the language

This section focuses on language as a part of the press release form. In what follows, the contents of the two versions of the three press releases are covered.

First the language choice, the code, is in focus. Second, the discursive aspect of language is illustrated by using Tench's (2003) model of rhetorical moves in the press release genre presented in Section 2.3.3. The moves are discussed based on the findings from the interviews to illustrate the localization of the content of launch communication material in practice.

Analysis on the code of the press releases

The interviewees emphasized the role of the language choice in localization of the press releases. Therefore, the issue of the code of the press releases is addressed here.

The main difference between the original and localized versions of the press releases was the choice of languages: the original ones were written in English and localized ones in Finnish. The original code was English chosen by either the client MNC's communication function or the by the lead agency, the decision maker is not known. The code was changed to Finnish by the communication consultants responsible for the client's MNCs' account.

In addition to the code choices, the differences between the discursive contents of the press release versions were found.

Analysis of the discourse of the press releases

In his model of moves in press releases, Tench (2003) presents six moves: 1) introducing the topic, 2) establishing credentials about the organization, product or service, 3) expanding the topic covering the details, timing and the indicating sector value of topic, 4) enclosing documents, 5) solicit response, and 6) offering information or contact details. These moves seem to follow closely the parts in the press release structure defined by Henderson (2006). Therefore, the differences in the contents of each of structure components (see 4.3.1.) are discussed below.

Due to the confidentiality issues, the detailed examples will not be presented here. However, the moves will be introduced and discussed in order to provide an overview of the difference in language.

MOVE 1: Introducing the topic

The topics of the six press releases were introduced in the headlines in all the press releases. In all of the original versions, the headline consisted of two separate sentences: the actual headline sentence and one supportive elaborative sentence. The two sentences were distinguished from each other by different typographies. In localized versions L1 and L2 used two sentences in the headline and L3 had one sentence.

Press release 1 focused on a new study commissioned by the client MNC. Headlines in both versions were built around the results of a study and how the study foresaw the future tendencies for the next ten years in the particular field. The original version O1 emphasized the business point of view in the supportive sentence by stating the significant future business revenues when using a certain web-based system. The localized version L1 focused on the expected user behavior.

Press release 2 focused on a market release of a new technological innovation from the client MNC. The original version O2 used the client MNC's name in the headline emphasizing the company's breakthrough innovation that provides new found benefits for the users and their businesses. The localized version L2 approached the innovation on a more general level. The headline described the innovation as a remarkable breakthrough in the field. In addition, the name of the company was mentioned just on the second, supportive sentence in the headline.

Press release number 3 concentrated on the market release of a new data system from a client MNC. The original version O3 was rather neutral by just announcing that the client MNC unveils a new system. The localized version L3, however, referred to the new system as "the world's fastest" and pointed out all the usage possibilities of the new system. As an exception to all the other headlines, the localized version's headline consisted of only one sentence.

The differences in Move 1 of the press releases, especially concerning their focus and broadness may result from various issues. Naturally the target media have varied between the versions. As the interviewees argued in section 4.2., different media types and journalists have different interests and thus may be interested in the subject from different perspectives. In addition, the target media may need more “education” about the company, the product and the field itself.

MOVE 2: Establishing credentials about the organization, product or service

The second move equals the lead paragraph of the press releases. Press releases O2 and O3 contained significantly more detailed product and performance information compared to the localized versions with seemingly more general focus of covering the essence of the issue. The press release O1, however, was relatively similar in that sense. The subject of the press release, a study, was introduced differently in the versions yet the depth and the focus were similar.

Almost all the lead paragraphs began in a similar manner by referring to the client MNC as “the world leader” in its business niche. Only L1 used this reference in the second sentence instead of the first. The first sentence begun by introducing the research institute who conducted the research.

Press release O1 referred the study as “groundbreaking” and focused on illustrating the study whereas the localized version focused on the results of the study and its relation to current situation.

The first sentence of press release O2 introduced the new innovation and how it benefits the current technology. The description of the innovation and its benefits contained adjectives and adverbs “groundbreaking”, “significantly”, and “dramatic” in the first sentence. Then, the commercial benefits were described in detail by using adverbs “radically”, “easily” and “dynamically”. In localized version L2 also the innovation is described “groundbreaking” and “significantly” improving the current situation. Otherwise, the lead paragraph is less detailed and technologically-driven. The focus seems broader in describing the benefits with less technology jargon.

In press release 3 both versions described the new innovation as “industry’s fastest” in the first sentences of the paragraph. Otherwise, no superlative adverbs could be found either of the versions. The original version O3 seemed more detail-oriented describing the performance and capacity. Additionally, more technical jargon was found. The localized version L3 was broader in focus and more compact. It focused on the main benefit the innovation provides. No detailed descriptions of the innovation’s performance was to be found.

MOVE 3: Expanding the topic covering the details, timing and the indicating sector value of topic

The third move equals the body of the text. As described in section 4.3.1. there were a lot of variation between the press releases as well as between the versions in terms of the structure. Therefore, detailed comparison is difficult and the Move 3 will be described here in broader manner to illustrate the main differences.

The contents in body of the text were quite consistent between the versions. The original ones tended to be more detailed and number driven. As seen in Table 6, the number of numeral data in original version was noticeable higher than in the localized versions. The localized versions contained the similar take towards the issue as the original one yet as an edited version the focus was broader and details were restrained and less complex. Additionally, less numeral data was provided. This suggests that the target media would not be as specialized as in original versions.

Table 5: Numeral data in the body of the text –part

Press release 1.	Press release 2.	Press release 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 numeral data • L2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 numeral data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 numeral data • L2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 numeral data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 numeral data • L3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 numeral data

MOVE 4: Enclosing documents

Generally, there were no enclosed documents with the press releases. In press release O1 was a link to the study in the lead paragraph. In the body of the text, inside the text, were two links to downloadable materials and to client MNC's homepage. In localized version L1, the link was at the end of the press release.

In press release O2 was a link to multimedia version of the press release and related contents right after the headline. At the end of the localized version L2 was a link to the English version to provide further information.

Press release O3 had a link to web site of the innovation at the end of the body of the text. Additionally, there were photos of the product and the executives included at the end of the document before the boiler plate. In the localized version L3, there were no similar links or photos.

MOVE 5: Solicit response

The fifth move equals the contact information-part of the press release structure. The location between the contact information varied between the original and localized versions. In the original versions the information was emphasized by using a heading suggesting contacting. In localized versions, the contact information was separated from the body text by a heading signaling more information.

In all of the documents the contact information included person's name, phone number and e-mail address. As a differencing detail, the original versions did not include contact person's title but the localized versions did. The person to contact varied between the versions. In all of the localized versions, the contact persons were Finnish from a local organization.

MOVE 6: Offering information or contact details

The Move 6 equals the boiler plate –part of the press release structure. When comparing the contents of the boiler plates between the versions, some differences were standing out.

In original versions, the contents were the same in all of the press releases. The client MNCs field of business and what it can provide to whom were stated as well as its position as "world's leading" in its own niche. At the end of the boiler plate readers were guided to seek for more information from the MNC's website behind the link.

In localized versions the content was quite the same in all the press releases as well. Similar to the original versions, the client MNCs field of business and what it can provide to whom were stated as well as its position as "world's leading" in its own niche. In addition, the MNC's annual turnover in the year 2009 was included, probably to educate and to give a perspective the local media about the company. At the of the boiler plate, a link to MNC's website was provided, now without a call-to-action to seek more information, like in the original version.

4.3.4 Discussion

There were differences to be found in comparing the form of the original and localized versions of the three press releases. The differences occurred in structure and language, not so much in the medium.

The analyzed press releases seemed to have characteristics of the announcement type of press release (Maat, 2007). The structure of the original press releases was somewhat different from the described by Henderson (2006). The localized versions followed Henderson's (2006) model rather faithfully. The differences were found between the original and localized versions yet also within the versions. The versions 2 and 3, however, were seemingly differently structured especially in terms of the beginning of the press releases, dates, lead paragraphs, body of the text and contact information. The most noticeable differences were on the body of the text part. Based on the different structures, seems that the press releases are compelled to serve different audiences with different expectations concerning the press releases.

The code, language of the press releases, was the most obvious sign of localization. The original versions were written in English yet all of the localized press releases were in Finnish. Hence, Finnish was chosen to be the language to address and persuasive Finnish media as suggested by Hornikx, van Meurs and de Boer (2010).

Since, not just the language, but also the contents of the localized press releases were different than in the original ones, seems that the level of rewriting and new information was applied from the five levels of translation (Le Seac'h & Klotz, 1999).

Differences were found in terms of the contents and the focus in the moves between the versions. Since the lead paragraph is an important part of the press release introducing the subject, raising reader's interest and carrying a stand-alone-value to the journalists (Henderson, 2006), the found differences are very interesting. Most likely the paragraphs were built to address different stakeholders and appeal to different readers and their journalistic needs as Maat (2007) suggests. The differences in boiler plates may also be due to different needs of the target media. Likely, more specialized media representatives would know the MNC and its position and size in the global business environment. Probably less specialized media representatives would benefit from knowing the scale of the MNC's business and get more interest of it. The variation of the contact information location between the original and localized versions may be due to client MNC's own policy concerning the document layout. It can also be caused by the local policy of a press release layout. It seems impossible to argue whether the difference is caused by cultural or organizational reasons.

Language varied between the versions, especially in terms of using superlatives and adverbs. The original versions tended to use more marketing oriented language by using adjectives such as "amazing" and "groundbreaking" as well adverbs such as "radically", "easily" and "dynamically". Even though the localized versions used similar adverbs, the tone was more informative and less marketable. The original versions also appeared more numerical data driven and detail oriented whereas localized versions tended to focus on describing the innovation in broader manner. The localized versions seemed to provide more "realistic" picture of what the innovative is about and why it would be interesting to the client's stakeholders. Maat (2007) argues that writers tend to increase the authority and credibility of the press release by avoiding superlatives and excessive use of adjectives.

In sum, the differences found between the versions followed the interviewees' descriptions of localization process. The localized versions were not just translated but also adjusted to attract and gain interest of the Finnish media. Additionally, as

described by the interviewee in the pilot interview, it seems that the original versions were used as master documents (Jämtelid, 2002) which provided necessary information, facts and quotations to be edited to fit the local needs.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes the study by first presenting the research summary, secondly the main findings, thirdly, implications and finally limitations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Research summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of communication consultancies in the process of localizing MNCs' launch communication. There are some earlier studies available about localization of MNC's external communication but hardly anything on localization of launch communication in the international business environment and especially about the role of the communication consultancies. However, the need for this study was apparent since there were no previous studies on this particular subject. Moreover, the study would enlighten the role of the communication consultancies in international launch communication and the localization process they conduct.

The research question *"What is the role of communication consultancies in the process of localizing MNCs' launching communication?"* was divided to three research sub-questions. The aim of the first research sub-question *what is the relationship between a communication consultancy and an MNC in a launch communication process like* was to explore generally how communication consultancies are involved to the MNCs' launch communication in the international business environment and the relationships of the MNCs' and communication consultancies. The aim of the second research sub-question *"How do communication consultants localize MNCs' international launch communication?"* was to explore how communication consultants are involved to the process of localization, the core issues for them to consider and the localization process itself. And finally, the aim of the third research sub-question *"How do communication consultants localize press releases to address the Finnish media?"* was illustrate the localization of the launch

communication materials, particularly press releases, in practice and how they are adjusted to meet the characteristics of Finnish media.

The literature review of this study presented the basic theories of external corporate communication. Cornelissen's (2008) definition of corporate communication was chosen as the theoretical starting point for this study because of its relevance to launch communication. The subject of this study was not researched before in academic literature and therefore the literature review was built by combining relevant theories to the subject of the research. The literature review was built from three theoretical focus areas; first, communicating launch, second, localization of MNCs' external communication and third, the role of the communication consultancies in the MNCs' external corporate communication.

The central theories for this study were Cornelissen's (2008) concept of corporate communication and the model for launch communication, Valentini's (2007) and Kanso's (1992) definitions of standardization and localization strategies in international advertising and PR, and Fincham, Clark, Handley and Sturdy's (2008) definition of consultants' role as cultural mediators. These theories and model were adapted and modified for the purposes of this study which analyzed how MNC's launch communication is localized in the new market by communication consultancies.

The empirical part of this study consisted of five theme interviews with Finnish communication consultants and a supportive genre-analysis of six press releases. The theme interviews were divided into two sets according to the focus: a pilot study and focused interviews. First, in the beginning of the study, a pilot study was conducted with a communication consultant with a focus on launch communication and communication consultancies' role in the process in a general level. The pilot interview gave background information about research topic and helped to outline the study. Second, focused interviews were conducted with four communication consultants concentrating on the localization and the localization process from the consultants' perspective. To illustrate the localization of the launch communication materials in practice, original and localized press releases were compared by using tools of genre analysis. In this study, only the aspect of form was concentrated in the

genre analysis. The findings of the thesis are based on the two theme interview sets and the genre analysis.

5.2 Main findings

This section presents the main findings in the order of the three research sub-questions.

1. “What is the relationship between a communication consultancy and an MNC in a launch communication process like?”

The relationship between the communication consultancy and the client MNC was unique in nature and it varied according to the case in MNCs’ launch communication process in the Finnish markets. The client MNC’s budget in each case was one of the main variables defining the nature of communication consultancies’ participation in the process.

The relationship of communication consultancies in the launching process depended on the status of the consultancy in the international network of communication consultancies in each case. Typically, there were two kinds of positions in the network: a lead consultancy and a local consultancy. The position usually varied according to the case and the client MNC. To avoid heavy and resource consuming organizations, client MNC usually employed an international consultancy chain with offices in different locations with two typical approaches on how an MNC works with communication consultancies in various markets: a centralized model and decentralized model. The consultancy acted in either one of these roles according to each individual case. Consequently, the role depended on the case; it could be thorough and focus on strategic planning or practical and focus on hands-on localization.

Communication consultancies had a significant role as experts of a certain market and its stakeholders. They acted as cultural mediators in the MNCs’ launch

communication process despite how much they are involved into the planning process in each case. Since consultants were engaged ethical responsibility to pursue clients' best interest, they informed the client or lead agency about the best policies in local market and simultaneously informed the stakeholders about the client in the local market to project a cohesive image. Consultants' expertise from a Finnish market was the very core of the localization process, since in many cases the consultants are the only ones involved the process familiar with the market.

2. *“How do communication consultants localize MNCs' international launch communication?”*

The process of localization was dependent on the relationships of the communication consultancies, and particularly if they were involved on the strategic or on the operational level. The localization process seemed as a natural and inherent part of the consulting work since in any given communication case, not just localization, consultants will evaluate and adjust the plan to ensure the best possible outcome for the client.

When considering if and how to localize launch communication, communication consultancies typically considered the following aspects: 1) current Finnish market conditions and operational environment, 2) industry sector, 3) client organization, 4) product or a service that will be launched, 5) possible cultural differences between the markets internationally, 6) differences in the media, and 7) language.

Planning of the localization process of the launch communication was always based on already existing strategy and materials, otherwise it was not localization. Communication consultants considered different subjects within the communication strategy, which are usually adjusted to meet the launch communication goals: goals, messages, materials, language, stakeholders, and spokesperson.

The localization was a process that communication consultants plan and execute. Typically, the process of localization of the launch communication seemed to include three steps: initial discussions with the client MNC and possible other consultancies

involved in process, localizing the strategy and materials, and debriefing discussions with the client. Based on the plans, the localized strategy is executed.

3. *“How do communication consultants localize press releases to address the Finnish media?”*

The localization of press releases depended, as all consultant work, on the client MNCs budget, time limit and policies. For example, press releases concerning financial information were hardly ever localized at all. Typically, the communication consultants analyzed the original press releases carefully and revised to make them effective in the Finnish market.

The most apparent and simultaneously the most important way to address the Finnish media was to change the language of the press releases. Basic translation alone was considered insufficient and thus the contents were edited and adjusted to be relevant to the Finnish media and also to follow recognized the structure of the press releases.

In addition to rewriting and reorganization the content of the press releases, the tone was adjusted. Especially technical jargon and superlative adjectives were eliminated from the localized versions to appear credible in the eyes of the Finnish media.

The structure of the press releases could also be adjusted to follow the Finnish concept of press release structure. In addition to restructuring the beginning of the press releases, also the body of the text and location of the contact information, the international contact information was replaced by the local counterparts to support the Finnish media contacts but also to provide more value to them.

In sum, it seemed that the original versions were used as master documents (Jämtelid, 2002) which provided the key information which was then edited to fit the local needs.

5.3 Implications

Since communication consultants' role in MNCs' international launch communication had not been investigated before, this study gave new information on the topic. Perhaps the most valuable outcome of this study was the conceptualizations of the consultancies work that could be called models: first, the model of the launch communication process and second, the two models of the consultancy's relationships in the consultancy networks (see Figure 9 and Figure 10).

The model of the launch communication process illustrates the process of international launching from the consultants point of view and the important process steps that require considerations in international business. It also provides a transparent view on how the work is done within the consultancy and how their resources are used.

The two models of communication consultancy relationships present how MNCs may employ consultancies in the international context and how international cooperation operates on the local markets efficiently.

In what follows, the three ideas for implications in both MNCs and communication consultancies are presented.

First, MNCs should consider which relationship model would be effective and efficient for their organization when planning launch communication to various locations: centralized or decentralized model.

Strategic decisions on relationship with the international consultancy networks would provide benefits such as cohesive image in all the markets and efficiency in planning and execution. It would also help MNCs to establish long-term relationships with the communication consultancies they work with and, thus reach for better results in the new markets they are penetrating

Second, understanding the launch communication process as well as localization process from the consultants' point of view would help MNCs to consider the possible needs of localization efforts. This would benefit MNCs to allocate resources to communication budget and fully exploit consultants' expert knowledge from the new

markets. Moreover, it would help MNCs to achieve best possible results with their launch communication.

Third, awareness of localization as a process would help communication consultancies as well to plan launch communication projects and allocate both their resources. Furthermore, it would help consultants to revise the client's budget and how to it allocate it in most efficient and effective manner.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

The topic of this study was challenging since it was difficult to find support from the theories and previous research. It was difficult to find specific model and theories on communicating launch in international context, the localization of it and how the communication consultancies are involved in it. Particularly, defining launch communication was problematic as well as communication consultancies in MNCs' external communication. Additionally, five interviewees from a communication consultancy produced a vast amount of rather complex data and that was challenging to process.

Since the interviewees were promised confidentiality, it was challenging to present the findings from the interviews and press releases in the way it could not be linked to the consultancy or the client MNCs. Therefore, the interviewees' names, backgrounds or any detailed information were not presented in the study, even if they would exist. In the appendix, interviews documents or the analyzed press releases were not presented. This was done to prevent readers from identifying either the consultancy or its client MNCs.

It can also be seen as a limitation that the interviewees presented a view of one communication consultancy. Another consultancy with different approach to corporate communication in general or different clientele base could provide a different approach towards the launch communication, consultancy-client relationship, and the nature and process of localization. However, the consultants at hand were considered as credible sources due to their extensive experience around

the communication consultancy field and international clientele. The consultancy was helpful and cooperative, which significantly helped the researcher's work.

In terms of limitations, the rather limited number of the press releases analyzed requires attention. Three press releases from a client MNC and one niche would not serve generalized conclusion of how launch communication materials are processed to meet the local media characteristics. Additionally, the agreement of confidentiality limited the presentation of the findings. However, since the researcher was aware of this, the role of the press releases was more supportive to illustrate extensive data from the interviewees' in practice. On the other hand, with larger number of press releases, this would provide very interesting and enlightening subject to study further on its own rights.

This study excluded the impacts of the Finnish culture to the consultants' work as well as the strategic perspective on MNCs' external corporate communication. These decisions were done to keep the focus on very extensive yet not fully researched field. Since launch communication as part of corporate communication was to be defined, that served as a starting point of this study. Including the cultural or strategic aspect to the study would have required different focus and empirical research.

The ideas for further research are based on the limitations and exclusions of this study. First, a similar study could be made for multiple consultancies. This would provide more comprehensive take on the issue. Second, insights from MNCs point of view on collaboration with consultancies could be added providing two perspectives on the issue. Third, an in-depth study on press releases as genre could be made by exploring multiple press releases localized by different consultancies. Fourth, focusing on strategy localization in international context would provide a fruitful and interesting field to research further. This thesis focused on the role of communication consultancies in localization of the launch communication for MNCs, obtaining important and valid results to be used for further research and to be expanded into further possibilities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Pilot interview

The main themes of the pilot interview

Objectives

- To understand the launch communication
- To understand the process of planning a launch communication
- To understand the mutual relation of the client MNC and a communication consultancy as a role of the launch

1. Launch communication in an international environment

- What the launch communication means and consists of?
- Planning process of the launch communication for the international market
- Getting visibility in different markets
- Role of outside stakeholders to the launching communication
 - o media
 - o consumers
 - o customers

2. Communication consultancy and (international) client MNC

- Communication consultancy as a partner
- Role of the communication consultancy in launching
- Communication consultancy as an expert of the different markets
-

3. Localizing the launch communication

- What does localization mean and consist of
- Localizing the communication strategy of international companies (variables)
 - o media mix
 - o message to consumers
 - o The process/parts of the process/the ongoing process
- Role of the Communication consultancy in localization

APPENDIX 2: Focused interviews

The main themes of the focused interviews

Objectives

- Solve the background of the localization verdict
- Perceive the localization process as a whole
- Describe the parts of the process, it's phases, responsibilities and making decisions

1. Theme: Background and arguments for localization decision

- Why the decision of localize?
- Who initiates the decision to localize?
- Who will make the decision; customer or consultancy?
- What sort of factors effect making the decision?
 - o Organizational / brand / or product related factors
 - o Business niche related factors
 - o Market related factors
 - o culture related factors

2. Theme: The Localization process as a whole

- Strategy and role of the communication plan
- Relation to international strategy
- Phases of the process

3. Theme: Localization and it's components

- What can be localized? (message, channels, recipients)
- Scope of the localization (what at least need to be localized.)
- Role of the local media
- Role of the language and culture
- Who is responsible of localization and who will sign the decisions