

# ‘Take a Stand!’

## *On the Public Information about Danish Euro*

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*‘The so-called informative Euro folder sent out by the Danish Ministry of Economic Affairs is pure propaganda – and it is even paid for with the taxpayers’ money!’*, said Søren Søndergaard, from the left-wing party ‘Enhedslisten’. *‘No, you are wrong – the folder is just giving information about the Euro’*, responded Marianne Jelved, Minister of Economic Affairs<sup>1</sup>. On the TV2 news, the two politicians were having a lengthy quarrel about how to describe and categorize the verbal and visual content in a Euro folder circulated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs to Danish citizens in August 2000 shortly before the referendum. Their quarrel became polarized, i.e. they made more of the same claims without backing them up with examples from the folder. The folder was debated heavily in the mass media over the following days. The general picture was that the government defended the folder, claiming it to be pure information, while opposing parties from the outer left-wing and right-wing parties as well as the mass media criticized it by calling it propaganda. In general, all presented their judgements regarding the folder without giving examples or accounts. Thus the judgements were not based on any close analysis that could give an account for the meanings realised in the folder.

### **Theoretical Approach**

The interesting question is how communication research can contribute to the public debate by giving a more specific, detailed and exemplified account of *how* and *what* public authorities are communicating to citizens through texts, e.g. folders, brochures, and pamphlets, that realise both verbal and visual meanings?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to use a theoretical framework that will make it possible to analyse the verbal and visual meanings realised in such texts. A traditional approach could be *content analysis*, which would give an account of *what* is communicated, i.e. the topics and subtopics. Content analysis does not, however, enable us to give a detailed account of *how* the topics are communicated, i.e. it cannot give an account of the complex combination of paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices made to realise the specific communicative patterns and meanings in such texts. For this reason, content analysis is not suited to this analytical goal. Another relevant approach would be *reception analysis* and *media ethnography* (e.g., Klaus Bruhn Jensen 1994, Kim

Schröder, 1996). The application of qualitative research methods would give a relevant account of how citizens understand, classify and interpret such texts. Since the primary interest is in the meanings created by receivers, this method lacks an explanation of how the message is created by the structuring of the text. The text is a necessary prerequisite before any reading can be made; in order to perform a close analysis and give an account of the detailed verbal and visual meanings in such texts, it is more appropriate to apply a text-based method with which it is possible to analyse both verbal and visual meanings in the unfolding text. A third alternative is therefore to apply *Systemical Functional Linguistic* (SFL), a 'text linguistic' approach. This theoretical framework provides the analyst with tools for analysing the realised meanings and how they are expressed in the text through the combination of paradigmatic and syntagmatic, semantic and grammatical choices. SFL does not offer theoretical concepts for analysing visual elements together with language; it therefore can be combined with multimodal discourse analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). The combination of these two approaches is theoretically consistent since Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach primarily (though not entirely) bases its visual analytic method on SFL. The combination of these methods enables us to analyse and give an exemplified detailed account of *how* and *what* meanings are realised by subtle linguistic and visual expressions in the text. The written language will be analysed primarily from an SFL perspective (Halliday, 1994; Matthiessen, 1995; Martin, 1992; Trads, 2004) and brought together with multimodal discourse analysis of the visual elements in order to analyse how the linguistic meanings interact with the visual meanings in the text to convey the messages. The analysis thus serves as an example of how SFL and multimodal discourse analysis can be used in a fruitful way to understand the functioning of communication.

## Data

Due to limited space, the choice of empirical material has consequences. A comparative analysis across several texts will necessarily lead to a limitation of detailed analysis with the advantage of generalizations across a larger corpus. A case study gives the advantage of making a detailed analysis in an exemplary manner; its limitation is, contrarily, that it is not possible to generalize the results. Nevertheless, a case study can demonstrate a method and theoretical approach that are applicable to a wide range of texts. One criterion for choosing the Euro folder as a case was that the text should be of significant importance to the public in general. The folder was part of a larger information campaign initiated by the Danish Government, carried out by a professional communication agency. The folder was the most heavily debated text of a huge amount of different material concerning the Euro referendum, from various sources, including political parties, the government, the mass media and citizens (e.g., readers' letters in newspapers).

## Public Information

The norm in Denmark is that authorities are to provide unbiased information of common interest for the benefit of citizens. What happens if the authorities violate this norm by shifting to more persuasive and perhaps biased communication strategies? Will the text then only be relevant for some target groups? The reactions from parties outside the government might point in this direction by categorizing the folder as 'propaganda',

obviously reacting by stating that the authorities have violated the norms of public information and have even spent taxpayers’ money to do so.

## Analysis

The purpose of the following analysis is to give a detailed account of the meanings realised in the folder, including identification of persuasive biased communicative strategies and unbiased informative strategies. The use of language will be analysed before the visual expressions are. The linguistic analysis will first focus on the ideational meta-function, i.e. the representation of experience or ‘world view’. Afterward follows an analysis from the interpersonal meta-function, i.e. how the text negotiates interpersonal relations with the reader. Thirdly, there will be an analysis from the textual meta-function, i.e. how the text presents and focuses messages in sequence.

## World View

The ideational meta-function examines how experiences and representations of the world are expressed through the linguistic semiotic resources of language (Halliday, 1994:106). An analysis of the process types in the folder can reveal which aspects of the world are represented and how the world is perceived. The text consists of 54 sentences with 25 subordinated sentences in clause complexes, a total of 79 processes.

### *Process Types*

The major process choices from the transitivity system consist of 31 relational (39%), 27 material (34%) and 8 verbal (11%) processes.

#### Relational Processes

4. <i>Din hverdag</i>	<i>bliver</i>	<i>den samme</i>
4. <i>Your everyday life</i>	<i>will be</i>	<i>the same</i>
5. <i>Euromønterne</i>	<i>bliver</i>	<i>danske</i>
5. <i>The Euro coins</i>	<i>will be</i>	<i>Danish</i>
<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational: Attributive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

The communicative function of the abstract attributive relational clauses is to define, categorize and ascribe values to entities. Examples can be found throughout the text. However, the ideology, i.e. the main value system, is established in the beginning of the text. An important topical choice is the focus on the readers’ ‘everyday life’. This topical focus excludes other relevant discourses, for instance national and international political issues. In the relational clauses, the Euro coins are ascribed the value ‘Danish’ and everyday life is ascribed the value ‘sameness’. The presupposition is that there is no significant difference between the two choices. This becomes obvious from the pictures and ensuing text.

The values ascribed in the relational clauses can be further categorized as either ‘status quo’ (the same everyday life, Danish coins, same purchasing power, same usability in busses, shops, etc.) or ‘advantages’ (comparable prices in different countries) in relation to the introduction of the Euro in Denmark. No disadvantages are defined or ascribed. Disadvantages in relation to introducing a new currency in Denmark are not in focus, although many critical questions have been raised about the abandonment of sov-

ereignty and Denmark's position as a state or possible future province in Europe, etc. Such political and ideological consequences are not mentioned in the text.

### *Existential Processes*

Four sentences are *relational existential* processes. All sentences concern the existence of the coins in the future, if the Euro is introduced.

9. Der	<i>vil (dog også) kunne findes</i>	<i>Euro-mønter</i>	<i>fra andre lande i Danmark, især i turist-områder</i>
9. There	<i>will (however also be a possibility) of finding</i>	<i>Euro coins</i>	<i>from other countries in Denmark –particularly in tourist areas</i>
37. Der	<i>bliver</i>	<i>Otte danske euro-mønter</i>	
37. There	<i>will be</i>	<i>Eight Danish Euro coins.</i>	
(Textual adjunct)	<b>Relational: material: existential</b>	<b>Existent (medium)</b>	<b>Circumstance: Place</b>

The function of the existential processes in the text is to give factual information about the Euro in Denmark, i.e. where and how the Euro will exist. Sentence 9 claims that Euro coins from other European countries will exist in Denmark, particularly in tourist areas. The subordinate elliptic clause (- *in particular in tourist areas*) carries an odd argument in stating that the amount of existing foreign Euros will be higher in tourist areas. People will naturally use Euros from tourist areas in other areas in Denmark. Soon, there will be a mixture of Euros from different countries in people's purses. The argument only makes sense from a certain perspective. In my opinion, this argument is designed to anticipate patriotic readers' worries about no longer having Danish coins and notes.

### *Material Processes*

A common choice in the folder is material processes. Twenty-three of the 27 material processes are processes of doing, while 4 are processes of happening. The majority of the material clauses are in the active voice with clear agency.

12. du	<i>vil kunne bruge</i>	<i>Euroen</i>	<i>helt på samme måde</i>
12. You	<i>will be able to use (=can use)</i>	<i>the Euro</i>	<i>in exactly the same way (manner) as...today (comparison).</i>
20. Spekulanterne	<i>kan (ikke længere) skade</i>	<i>den danske økonomi</i>	
20. The speculators	<i>Cannot damage</i>	<i>the Danish economy</i>	<i>anymore</i>
26. du	<i>Kan tage</i>	<i>dine euro</i>	<i>med på ferie</i>
26. you	<i>Can take</i>	<i>your Euro</i>	<i>along on holiday (place)</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Process: Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In these examples, the Actor is an exophoric pronominal reference to the external reader of the text. Only clause 20 has a different Actor, namely 'the speculators'. The speculators have the role of villains in the text, as they are engaged in damaging the Danish economy in order to make a profit without moral and financial considerations. The general picture is that the material processes in the text have the function of specifying what

the reader can do with the new currency in everyday life and on holiday, sometimes even compared with what the reader can do with the present currency.

Only few material clauses are construed as events, in which the action happens without any external doer or initiator.

32. Den 1. januar 2004	dukker op	euroen (op)	i butikkerne
32. On the first of January 2004 appears in the shops.	Appears	the Euro (appears)	in the shops

**Circumstance: Time**      **Material: happening: Actor/medium event**      **Circumstance: Place**

The Euro appears spontaneously without any initiator of the action. Different readers react on these examples with 'The voting seems already to have been done and the Euro introduced'. This reaction also concerns the interpersonal construction of the sentence as a categorical statement without any modalization ('*may*', '*can*') or limiting conditions ('*if*') under which the statement would be true.

### Verbal Processes

Very few processes are verbal processes of saying. Verbal processes make it possible to hold another person responsible for the quoted or reported language, thus giving the possibility of bringing other voices into the text (Bakhtin, 1986).

#### Quote

"Danmark står over for en stor beslutning. Det er vigtigt at du tager stilling"	(siger)	Lise Nørgaard
2. "Denmark faces an important decision. It is important that you take (a) stand"	(says)(ellipsed)	Lise Nørgaard

**1: Quoted**      **Verbal 2: Quoting**      **Sayer**

The author quotes Lise Nørgaard, well known as the scriptwriter of the TV series 'Matador' about the prototypical historical development of life in a provincial Danish town. In the Danish context, the picture of her triggers an inter-textual reference to 'Matador'. Lise Nørgaard has a different role here. She tells the Danish people that Denmark is facing an important decision and therefore she asks the reader to take a stand. This stand is not neutral, but rather positively biased towards the introduction of the Euro when interpreted together with the visual images in the folder. The responsibility of the request is placed on Lise Nørgaard. Thus you cannot hold the sender, i.e. the government, responsible for the quoted speech.

### Semantic Relations

Semantic relations deal with how the author uses certain words rather than other alternatives to construe the content and thereby build an ideological representation. An analysis of the lexical choices can reveal how words make lexical chains and categorize representations of reality throughout the text.

*Lexical Chains*

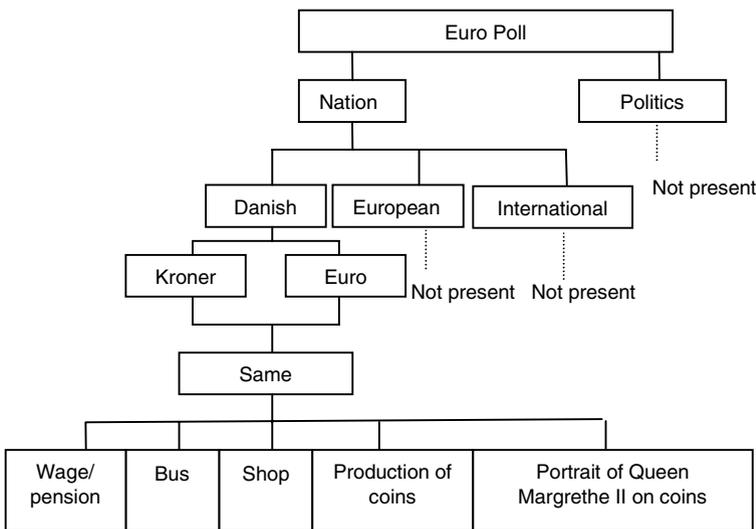
A lexical chain is a frequent, more or less dense lexical choice that runs through the text. It indicates a topic and the aspect of reality focussed on in relation to the discourse and context of situation.

The most frequent lexical choices in the text are the monetary expressions ‘euro’ (34 occurrences), ‘coin’ (24 occurrences), and ‘krone’ (6 occurrences). Other frequent lexical chains are ‘Denmark, Danes, Danish’ (24 occurrences), ‘everyday life’ (15 occurrences), and ‘the same’ (6 occurrences). They indicate the author’s perspective on the topic.

The most frequent lexical participant choice is the exophoric pseudo-personal reference to the reader of mass media texts, ‘you’ (20 occurrences). This makes the reader the most frequent participant choice.

*Categorization of Ideational Content*

The headline is construed as a rhetorical question: “*What is the big difference if Danish kroner become Danish Euro?*”. Euro is re-lexicalized and thereby categorized as a national phenomenon, ‘Danish Euro’, and not – as one might expect – as European. The topic is construed as a national question – essentially a choice between two Danish currencies. The rhetorical question is answered in the subsequent headline: “*Your everyday life will be the same*”. This claim establishes a new focus that further categorizes the ideational content. Having established that the currency will be Danish in any case, the question of whether or not to join the Euro is now based on the reader’s unchanged everyday life with the Euro, claiming that no change will occur. The same everyday life is further subcategorised to situations of use. The pictures exemplify the written text with images of situations of use in a national Danish context – a shop, a bus, a child in a telephone booth, etc. In addition, the national Danish context is categorized together with sameness both in the written mode “*Queen Margrethe II is on the face of the five big coins*” and in the visual mode, showing that Queen Margrethe II will be on the face of the Euro as she is on the krone. ‘The Royal Mint’ will even make the Euro coins in Denmark. Below is a chart of the semantic categorizations of the ideational content.



This analysis shows the ideological perspective on reality. The text has a narrow focus on national patriotic values, an unchanged everyday life and specific situations of use. This focus excludes or suppresses other relevant issues regarding the EU and international politics, which are simply not present.

*Antonymy*

Antonymy concerns opposed meanings. An analysis of opposed meanings adds to a further clarification of the view on reality. The most prominent oppositions set up in the folder are between 'advantages' and 'disadvantages' for the reader in choosing to vote in favour of the Euro.

<b>Advantages Benefits</b>	<b>Status quo</b>	<b>Disadvantages Explicit (implicit/presupposed)</b>
<i>Euro coins in Denmark will (mostly) be Danish</i>	<i>Same every day life</i>	<i>Foreign Euro in Denmark</i>
<i>Use of Danish Euro coins abroad</i>	<i>Same wage and pension</i>	<i>(no use of kroner abroad now)</i>
<i>No exchange fee</i>	<i>Same purchasing power</i>	<i>(Exchange fee now)</i>
<i>No personal effort to exchange money</i>	<i>Same use of money</i>	<i>(personal effort to exchange money now)</i>
<i>Easy to compare prices in different countries</i>	<i>Same prices</i>	<i>(difficult to compare prices now)</i>
	<i>The Queen on coins</i>	<i>(Danish kroner disappear)</i>
	<i>Coins made in Denmark</i>	
<i>Speculators cannot damage anymore</i>		<i>Speculators make big money now.</i>

As seen in this chart, the text explicitly states the advantages of choosing the Euro, either presented as gains or status quo. Only one disadvantage, 'foreign Euro coins in Denmark', is explicitly stated, and is immediately toned down by limiting the occurrence to tourist areas. Disadvantages of the present currency are not mentioned explicitly. By focusing on future advantages, the text presupposes present disadvantageous states of affairs. For example, '*Speculators cannot damage the Danish economy anymore*' presupposes that speculators can damage the Danish economy now. Such presupposing arguments favour the Euro as having more advantages than the present krone. Another antonymy not mentioned in the chart above is the opposition between 'us' and 'them'; between 'Danes' and 'speculators'. Neither the word 'us' nor the word 'Danes' is used in the text. This is, however, expressed implicitly by reference to the 'Danish economy', i.e. if they damage the Danish economy, they will necessarily also damage the private economy of individuals living in Denmark. This argument may frighten an uncritical reader and thus be a further argument in favour of convincing the reader to vote for the Euro.

**Interpersonal Relations**

The interpersonal meta-function enables the linguistic resources to construct and maintain interpersonal relations. Language under this meta-function is seen as a resource for exchanging information and goods-and-services. The mood system realises speech func-

tions, having many similarities with the concept of speech acts (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1979). In information clauses the author can signal the information to be more or less probable or usual. This is known as modalization or ‘epistemic modality’. In goods-and-services clauses, the speaker can signal more or less inclination or obligation. This is known as ‘modulation’ (Halliday, 1994) or ‘deontic modality’ (Palmer, 1986).

### *Declarative Mood*

The declarative is the most frequent mood choice in the text.

5. *Euro-mønterne bliver danske*

5. *The Euro coins will be Danish*

11. *Der sker ikke de store forandringer i din hverdag, hvis euroen bliver indført.*

11. *There will not be the big differences in your everyday life if the Euro is introduced.*

The author primarily gives information in which arguments and claims are made about the advantages of the Euro.

### *Interrogative Mood*

One clause is in the interrogative mood. This is the very first headline.

1. *Hvad er den store forskel hvis danske kroner bliver til danske euro?*

1. *What is the big difference if Danish kroner become Danish Euro?*

This question is not meant to be answered. It is a rhetorical question the function of which is to draw attention and invite the reader to reflect on the possible similarities and differences.

### *The Categorical Declarative*

A significant feature of the text is the use of the categorical or ‘bare’ declarative in most of the clauses.

27. *Du behøver ikke veksle penge, før du rejser, så du sparer vekselgebyret.*

27. *You don't need to exchange money before you leave, so you save on the exchange fee.*

32. *Den 1. januar 2004 dukker euroen op i butikkerne.*

32. *On the first of January 2004 the Euro appears in the shops.*

In categorical declaratives, there are no expressions of modality to indicate that the author is less than 100% sure of the validity of the proposition. The systematic use of the bare declarative creates an asymmetrical relation between author and reader by which absolutely valid information is presented to the reader. One might object that a conditional ‘if..then’ frame is set up from the very first sentence in the text ‘*what is the big difference if...*’ and that this conditional frame must be remembered by the reader throughout the text. The problem is that readers might forget the frame when reading the text. Alternatively, they might not be sure of how much the conditional frame covers – the whole text, future aspects, only clauses containing the conditional ‘if’? When presenting factual information to the reader, the information strategy of the bare declarative is unproblematic. Factual information is, however, not the only information being presented here. The sender makes several claims about the reader’s future with the Euro and speculators’ inability to make money on exchange markets. These categorical claims

about the future can reasonably be called into doubt, since both sender and reader know that the future cannot be predicted. An interpretation of the categorical declaratives might be that the author is trying to convince or persuade an uncertain target group with certain claims and arguments about future life with the Euro. This explanation limits the potential reader group to uncertain voters. Adversaries of the Euro would immediately identify and criticize these certain claims. They would also accuse the Ministry of Economic Affairs of using a persuasive or propagandising strategy unsuitable for a government institution, which should present unbiased objective information. Not surprisingly, this critique was asserted by adversaries from the political outer left- and right-wing parties. Even other institutions accused the Minister of Economic Affairs of using the taxpayers’ money to conduct propaganda. In my opinion, the bare declaratives in the future tense play a major role in calling forth critique from different groups because ideological arguments are presented as facts. The question is, what kind of target group is this text addressing? Certainly not adversaries and convinced Euro supporters. Neither of these groups can be swayed from their decision; the adversaries are critical of the claims and the supporters already agree. A group of uncertain voters might be the target group addressed.

### Modality and Modulation

Not all clauses are bare declaratives, since 16% of the sentences contain expressions of modality or modulation. Very few clauses are modalized in the folder, so modalization is not a prominent feature, which is consistent with the bare assertions.

#### *Modalization*

9. *Der vil dog også kunne findes euro-mønter fra andre lande i Danmark – især i turistområder.*

9. There will, however, also be a possibility of finding Euro coins from other countries in Denmark – particularly in tourist areas.

The translation into English is not literal. A literal translation of the clause would be ‘*There will however also could be found Euro coins from...,etc.*’ which means ‘*Euro coins from other countries can be found in Denmark – particularly in tourist areas*’. The modal verb ‘can/could’ expresses a low degree of probability.

#### *Modulation*

Modulation is used in some of the clauses realizing goods-and-services.

##### *Modulation*

12. *Du vil kunne bruge euroen helt på samme måde, som du bruger kroner i dag – både hos købmanden og i bussen.*

12. You will be able to (= can) use the Euro in exactly the same way as you use kroner today – both at the grocer’s and on the bus.

50. *Du kan desuden bestille materiale om euroen ...*

50. You can also order material about the Euro...

The general pattern of modulation is that a low degree of obligation is used in order to offer the reader possibilities, i.e. what he or she can do with the new currency and not what he or she must or should do with the money.

### *Addressee Focus*

Throughout the text, the default subject choice in 84% of all clauses is the second person pronoun ‘you’, representing the addressee. Eight percent of the clauses have the sender as subject and another 8% are non-interactant persons like ‘the speculators’, whose actions are mentioned. The author has an overwhelming focus on the addressee in the text. The author gives the addressee information about the Euro, makes claims about the everyday life of the addressee, tells the addressee what to do with the Euro in the future and invites the addressee to call the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### *Interpersonal Grammatical Metaphor*

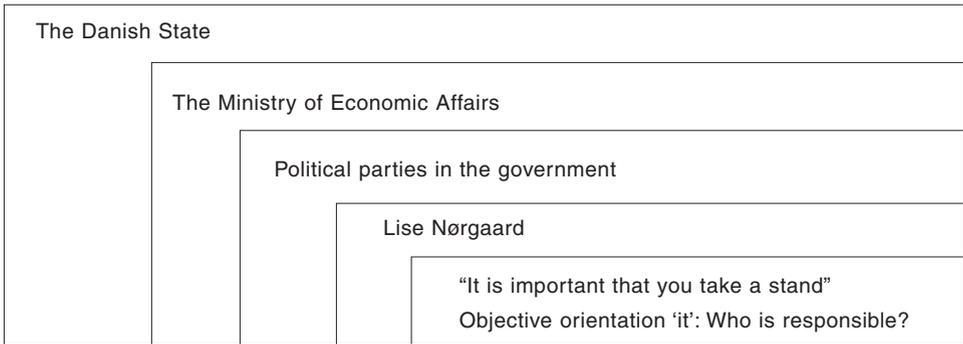
A central statement in Lise Nørgaard’s quotation can be analysed as an interpersonal grammatical modal metaphor. Metaphors of modality/modulation are realised by the semantic relation of projection (Halliday, 1994:354), in which modality is expressed in a separate clause, the proposition or proposal in another. The modal projecting clause can have a subjective or an objective orientation. In the quoted comment from Lise Nørgaard is the following projection clause complex:

2. “... Det er vigtigt, at du tager stilling”
2. “... It is important that you take (a) stand”
3. Lise Nørgaard
51. Økonomiministeriet
51. Ministry of Economic Affairs

The projecting clause ‘*It is important*’ has objective orientation. The dummy ‘it’ as subject makes the responsibility unclear – even in spite of the fact that the quoted speech is ascribed to Lise Nørgaard. She could refer to another person’s opinion or express a common cultural attitude in the quotation. The congruent speech function of the projected clause ‘*that you take (a) stand*’ is that of an imperative obliging command “do this”, i.e. ‘take (a) stand!’. The modulating projecting clause ‘*it is important*’ expresses a high degree of obligation to the command on the reader, equivalent to the modal verbs ‘ought to’ or ‘must’, as in ‘*You must/ought to take a stand*’. The command ‘*take (a) stand*’ is a peculiar semantic choice in the context of voting. It does not make sense to merely ask the reader to have an opinion; that would not make any difference. It is only the physical activity of placing a legal vote in a ballot box that will make a difference.

A further difficulty in assigning responsibility concerns the sender. Lise Nørgaard has a responsibility for what she says, but the sender has the responsibility of quoting her and including her in the text. This adds another layer of responsibility. The Ministry of Economic Affairs has the overall responsibility for the folder, which is signalled in 51, ‘Ministry of Economic Affairs’. Yet, the ministry is controlled by the parties in the government, which in turn controls the Danish State. A Chinese-box-like structure of responsibility appears. The Danish State, and not necessarily the author of the text, may be the actual responsible sender of this folder. The text may have been written by a professional text writer, though this is not mentioned anywhere in the folder. Explicit references are made only to the photographer and graphic design company, but it remains unclear as to who has written the text.

*Frames of Responsibility – A Chinese-box-like Structure*



Seen from the perspective of the textual meta-function, this projecting clause complex is given a very prominent place in the text. It is placed on the opening page, together with the continued headline from the front page and a picture of Lise Nørgaard. The clause complex is placed in the quotation in the upper right corner. The utterance is significant because it expresses what the entire text is about, although the exact meaning and responsibility are unclear. From the perspective of the interpersonal meta-function, the utterance is about getting the reader to do something, to vote.

**Textual Meta-function**

The textual meta-function deals with how the ideational and interpersonal meanings are woven together into clauses and presented as messages in a linear structure with a theme-rheme structure in the text. Theme is the point of departure of the message, while rheme is the development of the (often new) information.

**Thematic Choices**

The most frequent themes are ‘coins’, ‘you’ and an impersonal formal subject, ‘it’/ ‘there’. The sender chooses between ‘coins’, ‘the reader’, or an empty theme by using a textual adjunct as a point of departure for constructing the message. These three themes cover 63.1% of all clauses.

The unstressed textual adjunct ‘there’ in theme position gives the sender the opportunity to avoid introducing a participant as theme. The congruent choice is to put the subject in theme position. By choosing the unstressed ‘there’, the subject is avoided and the information is presented as ‘objective’ information. Instead focussing on the responsible ‘subject’, the verbal process is emphasized. Several of the clauses using the impersonal formal subject ‘it’ at theme position are cleft sentences.

<i>Det</i>	<i>er kun de danske euro-mønter</i>	<i>Der</i>	<i>har Dronning Margrethe II på forsiden</i>
<i>It</i>	<i>is only the Danish Euro coins</i>	<i>Which</i>	<i>have Queen Margrethe II on the face</i>
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>

The function of the cleft sentence is to place the information as new information in the clause. In the example above, both the Danish Euro coins and Queen Margrethe II are placed in the rheme, which is the normal place for presenting new information. The cleft construction also gives the opportunity to start with an objective formal subject ‘it’ functioning as a ‘placeholder’. In a non-cleft sentence, the Danish Euro coins would be theme and subject in the clause and therefore placed as known information “*Only the Danish Euro coins (Theme) have Queen Margrethe II on the face (Rheme).*”

The themes fall into four main categories:

- 1) Coins; krone, Euro, sketch of Euro
- 2) The reader: you, your, we
- 3) Everyday life; rye bread, wage or pension, everyday life, today
- 4) National: Denmark, The National Bank of Denmark, The Danes, Queen Margrethe II, Royal Bank Commissioner

Exoforic references are references to persons or things outside the text: ‘I’, ‘we’, ‘you’. The reader must retrieve these references from the context. ‘I’ is made explicit in the text as ‘Minister of Economic Affairs Marianne Jelved’. ‘You’ can only be retrieved by the actual reader in the reading situation. The sender of this mass communicated text naturally does not know the actual reader, but is nonetheless personalizing the message as if the reader were a known interactant in a speech situation.

*13. Det, vi skal vænne os til, er, at beløb i euro er lavere end beløb i kroner.*

*13. That which (= what) we have to get used to is that amounts in Euro are smaller than amounts in kroner.*

The use of inclusive ‘we’ involves the sender, the reader and as all Danes as well.

The mode of the text is that it is written-to-be-read together with the dominant proportion of visual elements. The text is construed as a hybrid between written and spoken language. The categorical non-modalized declaratives, address forms with formal titles and royalty, dense nominalizations and the use of technical terms in the caption under the sketch are parts of a written public institutionalized powerful discourse by which the state is communicating to its citizens in a public space.

*a. Skitse af den danske 2 Euro udarbejdet af Danmarks Nationalbank efter Møntlovens §2, stk. 3.*

*a. Sketch of the Danish 2 Euro produced by Ministry of Economic Affairs according to the Law of Coin § 2, subsection 3.*

Direct personal address, direct quoted speech, common lexical expressions from everyday situations and few nominalizations are typical of spoken colloquial language by which the sender creates an intimate personal relation as if the state were a person communicating directly with the reader. This can be interpreted as the system world entering into the life world of the reader. The system world is exploiting the life world for purposes in the system world by arguing in a personal colloquial language and taking everyday life as a point of departure instead of issues that have to do with the system world: state, national and international politics, for example.

In terms of genre, the text is also a hybrid of giving objective information and the persuasive style of advertisements. The objective constructions of clause complexes and factual information in the captions are part of an objective informing genre while the slogans, re-lexicalization, quotations from role models and experts, lexical valuation toward advantages and the many descriptions of situations of use are similar to the language used in advertisements.

## Multimodality

Kress and Van Leuwen (2001) consider ‘multimodal texts as making meaning in multiple articulations’ and propose four domains of practice: Discourse, design, production and distribution. These domains are seen as multimodal resources.

A discourse may be interpreted differently than intended. Choices of discourse, conception and values are related to the person’s position in the social and cultural world, which I will consider as the interpreter’s lifestyle.

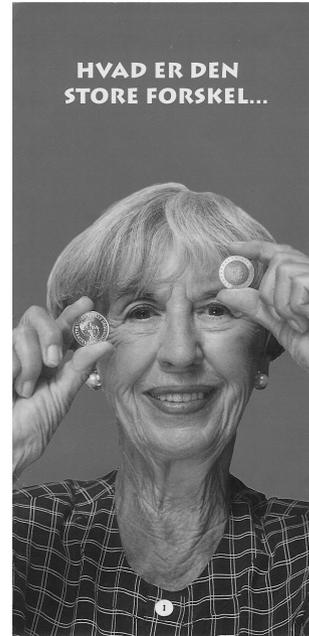
Kress and Van Leuwen use two concepts to guide the semiotic analysis of multimodal discourse. The first is that of provenance, which means ‘where the signs come from’. Provenance has similarities with the concepts ‘connotation’ and ‘myth’ (R. Barthes). The second concept is called ‘experiential meaning potential’ and concerns the ability to extend practical experience metaphorically.

### *The Front Page*

The visual mode is dominant on the front page with a picture of Lise Nørgaard on a red background. The first part of the rhetorical question, “*What is the big difference...*”, is located at the top and the ellipsis signals continuation on the next page.

Lise Nørgaard shows a 20-krone coin and an inserted sketch of a Euro coin, holding the Euro higher than the krone coin. The coins appear to be of roughly the same size, have identical strikings of Queen Margrethe II, and are gold. The only visual difference is the silver-coloured ring with Euro stars on the Euro. Lise Nørgaard is smiling and she looks directly into the camera. This gives an effect of direct interpersonal contact with the reader. The text could be taken as direct speech from her, i.e. as her question to the reader. The picture shows that the visual difference between the two coins is minor, but it also does more than this. With the Euro coin being held higher, the Euro is more positively evaluated in the visual mode. This can be analysed as an orientational metaphor of western societies, where cultural values are ascribed to the bodily up-down orientation ‘more is up, less is down’, ‘high status is up, low status is down’, ‘good is up, bad is down’ and ‘rational is up, emotional is down’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 16ff). Following Lakoff and Johnson’s concept, the Euro is evaluated as ‘good’ in comparison with the krone.

The choice of using Lise Nørgaard to present the Euro is a sign of provenance or an intertextual reference. She is known to have written the Danish TV series ‘Matador’ about life in a Danish provincial town. This series is the epitome of Danish culture and history from the inter-war period. The picture of the scriptwriter triggers her work, the



24 episodes of Matador. This is a sign from a different context and a different era that makes a new sign in the new context (that of the Euro Poll). The question is, what are the new meanings added by this sign? One possibility is that the inter-textual reference to Matador adds a conception of an original Danish everyday life culture in ‘the good old days’ of industrial society, before the information society, globalisation and multi-ethnicity developed. Together with the text, the picture of Lise Nørgaard adds and supports the notion that Danish everyday life, traditions, language, nationality and culture will remain unchanged. Does the choice of an elderly woman indicate anything about the target group? The folder could be targeted to elderly women as opinion polls showed this group to be in doubt about the decision. They would therefore be a possible group to influence.

### *Background Colours*

The red background colour on the front page adds further meaning to the political discourse about the Euro poll. In Denmark, red is used by ‘Socialdemokratiet’ (The Social Democracy). The moderate left-wing parties support a vote in favour of the Euro. On the next page, the background colour is green.

The shift from red to green background provides a visual shock effect. Red and green are used in traffic signals realizing the meanings ‘stop’ and ‘go’. In a political context, green is used by right-wing parties, while red is used by left-wing parties. A possible interpretation of the red and green backgrounds is that the left- and right-wing parties agree.

### *The Second Page*

The second half of the headline continues: “*if Danish kroner become Danish Euro*”. In the upper left corner is the quotation from Lise Nørgaard with her request that the reader take a stand. She holds one krone and one Euro in each hand. Her arms are outstretched and this bodily position is normally taken in doubtful situations of choice. Her gaze direction is toward the right (Euro) hand and she is smiling moderately. The gaze direction has now changed from ‘contact with the reader’ to ‘focus on the matter’, i.e. to a situation of choice between two currencies. The text above her hands identifies kroner to the left and Euro to the right. People generally look at what they are attracted to. Therefore, her gaze direction can be analysed as favouring the Euro. Her right hand is also a bit higher than the left, and her head is turned towards the right hand, which gives her body a slight front-back orientation with the front being towards the Euro. Again it is possible to draw on the concept of orientational metaphors from ‘Good is up, bad is down’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:14ff). In addition I will elaborate a bit on the concept ‘foreseeable future events are up (and ahead)’. In this instance, the Euro is ahead of her orientation, pointing to her choice and to the future with the Euro. She turns her back to the left hand with the krone in a lower position. We read from left to right in Western culture and therefore we also project progression, development and future from right to left. Another interpretation consistent with the former interpretation is that given information is placed to the left while new information is placed to the right (Kress & Leuwen, 1996:208)

### *The Opened Folder*

In the opened folder is a page with seven pictures. The pictures are still dominant, taking up most of the space on the page. Most of the text is also placed on this page, with five of six paragraphs having a subheading over each paragraph. In the centre is a large

sketch of the new Euro with Queen Margrethe II on its face and ‘Denmark’ written on the outer silver–coloured ring. This is the largest picture, and the caption is placed below it. The background colour on this page is a neutral off-white, which calls attention to the pictures and text rather than to the background.

The pictures exemplify situations of use, Danish traditions/culture in life situations, and only show children and elderly people. This could be seen as a design towards a target group of elderly people being grandparents and the situations illustrating typical social situations with grandparents and children.

### *The Back*

On the back page are nine sketches of the new Euro coins. Eight of the sketches show the face of the eight new Euro coins, while one sketch shows the reverse side of a 2-Euro coin. The sketches exemplify and expand the text by showing what the coins will likely look like. This is the most informative part of the folder, because it offers new information about the look of the new coins; the claim that the folder contained factual information is at least partly true. The sketches are not a presentation of how the actual coins will be, because a new portrait of the Queen is planned for the Euro.

Slightly below the centre is a graphical representation of Minister of Economic Affairs Marianne Jelved’s signature. This signature adds a personal responsibility, a personal sender of the information and a guarantee that she vouches for the content by her authority as Minister of Economic Affairs.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis above demonstrates the possibility to give a rich, specific and detailed account of the verbal and visual meanings realised in the folder by combining SFL and multimodal analysis. Thus, it enables us to be very specific about *how* and *what* the public authority communicates to the citizens through the text. This method can be applied to other multimodal texts from public authorities to citizens with the purpose of analysing the detailed meanings and subtle communicative strategies in such texts.

The analysis showed the folder to have a major focus on the reader position. The experiential content or ideology built up around the reader position has a very narrow focus on everyday life and the use of money in typical and traditional Danish cultural contexts with immoral villains trying to damage the Danish economy from abroad. Due to this narrow focus, other relevant publicly available political issues in the Euro context were not thematized. A tension is thereby created between the narrow focus in the text and what readers might be able to recall of relevant issues from other related texts about the topic in the public context. The analysis also showed that the folder consists of subtle persuasive and biased communicative strategies, while unbiased information of common interest to all citizens is limited to information about the coins: appearance, number, weight, material, etc. Yet this common information is used as arguments in the persuasive strategy. The main persuasive strategy is even contradictory: On the one hand the text states that everyday life will be the same, but on the other, everyday life will be changed, i.e. it will be easier and have several personal advantages. The persuasive strategy and complex responsibility pattern are so implicit and subtle that only close analysis can give a specific account that offers an answer as to why this folder was so heavily debated in the mass media and why so many readers reacted and judged the folder to

be ‘propaganda’. The analysis shows that this piece of public information is a hybrid (Fairclough; 1989, 1992) of a persuasive commercialized strategy woven together with information used as arguments in the persuasive strategy. The persuasive strategy, with an overweight of pictures rather than text, is similar to that of advertising genres. The use of persuasive strategies can be seen in other information campaigns from other public authorities, e.g. traffic, alcohol, anti-smoke in which public authorities hire professional communication agencies to plan and carry out public information campaigns.

The mixture of persuasion and information in the folder raises a further question: Which target group might this folder attract? Certainly not readers expecting impartial public information. Such readers might likely consider the persuasive strategy with its contradictions and the narrow thematic focus to be derogatory. The reader position is further more implicitly ascribed a certain set of values – an ideology. The image of the reader that emerges through both the written and visual modes is that of a patriotic Dane. The reader is assumed to be mostly engaged in the context of his or her own everyday life as well as national symbols of old traditional Danish culture. An image of a self-centred person is created by focusing on personal advantages of voting for the Euro: savings, easy usability, same value, etc. This can be seen as an individualized post-modern narcissistic discourse – ‘Is it an advantage for me?’ (Lash, 1982, 1985; Ziehe, 1983, 1989). The ideology ascribed to the reader position can be the basis for clarifying the overall communicative strategy more precisely.

The folder is presented as public information by using the public authority as sender, which signals ‘objective information’. But the content turns out to be guided by special political interests dressed up as public information, thereby violating the norms of public information. Furthermore, these special political interests are presented as a piece of market communication drawing on advertising genres. This positions the reader in a consumer role, which entails ‘selfishness’ rather than a focus on general public benefit. This provides an understanding of why the folder provoked such heavy debate in the mass media.

## Note

1. Marianne Jelved is member of the centre party ‘Radikale Venstre’.

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