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## **The family spirit: Making sense of organisational internationalisation through founder's stories**

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### **1. Introduction**

In the age of globalisation, many companies are becoming increasingly international. Some are expanding across borders by entering into new markets, buying up companies in other countries, opening offices abroad or they themselves are bought by bigger companies and become part of multinational corporations. For employees, the internationalisation process inevitably entails changes in working routines, in company culture and in language use. Such changes are not always unanimously embraced, but frequently meet various levels of resistance among employees. When organisations change, members of those organisations are thrown into a state of uncertainty, but frequently have no choice but to learn how to cope. This article investigates how employees in one Danish company use storytelling to make sense of and find their place in one such organisational internationalisation process.

The field of organisational storytelling has shown that people in organisations “tell stories about the past, present, and future to make sense of and manage their struggles with their environment” (Boje, 1991:124). Often, organisational change represents such a struggle with the environment. Brown, Gabriel and Gherardi (2009) describe the consequences of living “in a world of change”, namely that “meanings are fragile, identities require maintenance work, sense is confronted with many diverse possibilities”. According to them, “[s]tories and other narratives then help us make sense of change, explain it, domesticate it and, at times, celebrate it” (Brown et al., 2009:328). Narratives have also been found to perform an important role in identity construction in organisational settings. Linde finds that narratives in institutions are used for a wide range of

functions related to identity work: “to reproduce the institution, reproduce or challenge its power structures, induct new members, create the identity of the institution and its members, adapt to change, and deal with contested or contradictory versions of the past” (2001:518).

In this special issue focus in on a particular kind of narratives, those in which the teller is not the main protagonist. According to Linde, such ‘non-participant narratives’ are repeated or long-term narratives told by a speaker who was not a participant or witness to events. These kinds of narratives have an extended life in an organisation since they by definition have been retold at least once. As such they can be used in organisations to remember the past and in that way create a current identity for the organisation (Linde, 2001:522). The ‘founder’s story’ is a key type of non-participant narrative in organisational settings. Linde finds that members use different versions of the founder’s story to give a coherent account of the company’s identity and values, but also that members use these stories to find their own place in the organisation because they provide a means of knowing what members must do to be a part of the organisation. Analysing non-participant or vicarious narratives has consequences for the ‘telling rights’ of the narratives (Norrick, 2013a, b). As opposed to first person narratives where witnessing an event confers epistemic authority, “[i]n stories of vicarious experience the tellers often have no epistemic authority entitling them to claim the story as their own and no clear right to tell it” (2013b:287). One way of gaining the epistemic authority to re-tell a story is to tell stories about family members (Norrick, 2013b:290). The founder’s stories in my data can be seen as a particular kind of family stories, the family stories of an organisation. In Smith’s (2014) analysis of ‘family business stories’, he finds that such stories, usually found on company websites or in publications such as the annual reports or company history books, are told “to celebrate and honour the collective achievement of the whole family” (2014:162). However, they may also be used to make sense of change. In Boje and Rosile’s analysis of Wal-Mart annual reports, they find that through such founding story narratives, the spectre of founder Sam Walton becomes “the symbol and anchor of continuity as Wal-Mart expands and grows to dominate the world market” (2008:167).

This article takes its point of departure in these previous findings that non-participant organisational narratives are closely related to sense-making and to identity work. This means that I investigate organisational storytelling, in the form of founder’s stories, from a functional perspective. The

context for the study is an organisation undergoing increasing internationalisation and professionalisation of what was previously a locally oriented, family-owned company. The article investigates the discourses circulating in the organisation through stories about the founding family, and how these are used to make sense of organisational changes, to explain the process and deal with it, and also how they are used to construct the identity of the organisation and its members. This leads me to the following research questions:

- How are stories about the founding family used to make sense of the internationalisation process?
- How do these founder's stories contribute to constructing the identity of the organisation and its members?

## **2. A social constructionist, narrative approach to sense-making and identity work**

Narrative form and function have been explored extensively both in pragmatics and sociolinguistics (e.g. in the work of Bamberg, 2006 and Norrick, 2000), and in work done within organisational communication where focus has been on narratives in organisations (e.g. Boje 1991, 2001 and Czarniawska, 2007). While a narrative traditionally was defined as at least having plot and coherence, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) argue for an expanded focus to also include *small stories*. They argue that even if such stories do not fulfil traditional criteria for what a narrative is, the important criterion is whether the participants orient to the story as such (2008:382). Boje also expands the scope of narratives when he argues that narratives do not appear in “concise sequences of storytellers recounting full texts to passive listeners” (1991:112), but rather in bits and pieces and with interruptions and simultaneous talk. In his later work Boje defines these ‘antenarratives’ as “fragmented, polyphonic (many voiced) and collectively produced” (Boje, 2001:1). In this article I use a broad definition of narratives which includes small stories, which may be fragmented and lacking a clear beginning and end, but which are oriented to as narratives by participants.

Another shift in recent narrative research has been from a focus on form to a focus on the *function* of narratives. One such function is as a sense-making resource (Baynham and De Fina, 2016), often in relation to participants’ life stories. For our purposes here, however, the function of

narratives as a tool for sense-making in organisations (Brown et al., 2009) and other communities (Stapleton and Wilson, 2017) is particularly interesting. Here, focus is on how organisational narratives are used by members to make sense of organisational issues and events. In the case at hand, we see how – when faced with an ongoing internationalisation process - organisational members use stories, in particular stories about the founding family, to make sense of what is going on, and also to make sense of their own place in this process. In this way, the sense-making function of narratives is intimately linked with identity work as it includes “a way of positioning both the tellers themselves and the protagonists of the stories being told” (Stapleton and Wilson, 2017:62).

Narratives and identity work has long been linked in sociolinguistics (e.g. Schiffrin, 1996), but according to Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008), the ‘small stories’ perspective on narratives is particularly useful for investigating identity work because it takes narratives-in-interaction as the locus where identities are continuously constructed (see also Bamberg, 2010:13-14). As such, “a careful reading of a strip of interaction as ‘small story’ can reveal aspects of identity construction that would have otherwise remained unnoticed” (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008:392). Baynham and De Fina argue that narrative is a rich source of data on identity work because narrative as a genre “both performs and condenses actions and assessments, evaluations and arguments about actions, giving a kind of intensifying affective focus to the recounting of the everyday” (2016:40). The ‘small stories’ perspective on identity shares its basic premises with other social constructionist approaches to identity work (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Holmes and Stubbe, 2015), as also discussed by Clifton (2014) and Jones and Clifton (2017). First of all, identity is seen as created and recreated in local interactive practices. In the words of Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity is emergent and interactionally accomplished. In an analysis of narratives, this means that focus is on how identity work is done through the way the story is constructed in interaction. Secondly, identity is seen as relational. This means that “identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005:598). From a narrative perspective, this entails a focus not just on the available identity positions in the story, but also in the storytelling situation. Thirdly, identity is seen as situated. As emphasised by Baynham and De Fina (2016) and Holmes and Stubbe (2015), this means that an understanding of the wider context

is crucial for interpreting discourse at the local level, and also for defining social identities. In relation to organisational narratives, this entails a need to investigate the stories in relation to the organisational culture and history, as well as wider social orders and processes. In the present study, the narrative analysis is complemented by an ethnographic domain analysis, in order to take the organisational context into account.

### 3. Data and methods

The data for this case was collected through ethnographic fieldwork in the case company VET, a distributor of veterinary supplies in a rural setting in Denmark. The data was collected as part of a larger project on multilingual workplaces in Denmark<sup>1</sup>. The fieldwork took place in 2013 and 2014 with a follow-up interview in 2016. The data for this article consists of ten ethnographic interviews with employees and management, photos and field notes from observations in four different departments and written material in the form of emails, documents and a company history book written to celebrate the 110-year anniversary of the company in 2006. The participants for the first round of interviews in 2013 were selected by my contact and key informant, the executive secretary Lisbeth. I asked to be allowed to speak with informants from different departments in the company. She then selected three informants from the warehouse and three informants from the administration. I also interviewed Lisbeth herself. In her role as executive secretary she had unique access to the management perspective. In addition, as head of the “communication programme”, she had been given the task of implementing English as a corporate language in the organisation, and was as such close to the internationalisation process. In 2014 I conducted another interview with Lisbeth, and also one with the CEO, Stefan. Finally, in 2016 I conducted a follow-up interview with Lisbeth focusing on the recent take-over.

Pseudonym	Time of interview	Job title	Years in the company
Lisbeth	2013, 2014, 2016	Executive secretary	12 (at the time of the first interview)
Tina	2013	Warehouse worker	8

<sup>1</sup> The project LINGCORP ran from 2012-2016. See more at <http://lingcorp.ruc.dk>.

Daniel	2013	Warehouse worker	8
Connie	2013	Warehouse worker	8
Kirsten	2013	Export assistant	10
Peter	2013	Sales assistant	34
Henrik	2013	Area export manager	24
Stefan	2014	CEO	5

Table 1. Informants<sup>2</sup>

The interviews were conducted in a meeting room in the company. I used an interview guide, but since the interest in an ethnographic interview is in the participant's perspective (Spradley 1979), the length and direction of the interviews differed according to the experiences and interests of each informant. The interview guide for the 2013 interviews included descriptive questions about participants' work, the organisation, and language and culture in the organisation, with a particular focus on the increasing role of English. The later interviews with the executive secretary and the CEO focused more on organisational history, the internationalisation process and the decision to introduce English as a corporate language. They were also more focused on eliciting narratives.

The analysis combines ethnographic data such as field notes and photos with narrative data in the form of interviews and the history book. While the history book contains clearly structured and demarcated narratives with a beginning, middle and end, a plot and clear protagonists, the stories in the interviews tend to be in the form of references to narratives or fragments of stories that are not fully told, i.e. small stories (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008) or antenarratives (Boje, 2001) jointly performed and co-produced by the interviewer and the interviewee (Boje, 1991:107; Tolins and Fox Tree, 2014). Furthermore, while the history book, which has been used as a gift for employees and customers since it was made, can be said to tell the official company story, the interviews are research interviews, explicitly confidential, and only meant to be made public in anonymised form. This means that the interviews provide access to another, unofficial and unsanctioned, side of the company history. Finally, the book was published in 2006 and thus cuts off the story at that point in time, while the interviews were conducted between 2013-2016 and thus

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<sup>2</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

take us into a time beyond the generational handover and into a rampant internationalisation process.

The analysis took place in three steps. In the first step an ethnographic domain analysis (Spradley 1979) was conducted of the full data set. This analysis revealed several interesting aspects of the company culture which became the focus of the subsequent analysis, including the importance of being a family-owned company with strong local ties, the internal organisation of the company into administration and logistics, and the then current changes in the company, most importantly the generational handover and the change in company language from Danish to English.

The next step of the analysis focused on the ten ethnographic interviews and the history book. The interviews were transcribed by student transcribers and subsequently verified by the author. This data set was coded thematically to find narratives about and references to the recent organisational changes, the generational handover and the founding family. This second step of the analysis draws on Boje and Rosile's work (2008), specifically their analysis of how founder's stories are used in Wal-Mart annual reports to build different discourses, in their case a 'hyperglobalization discourse' and a 'specter discourse' (2008:153). This means that I was looking for the different kinds of discourses that the participants construct through their stories. In my data, two internally connected discourses emerged: A family discourse and a change discourse. These are presented in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 with the aim of showing how vicarious narratives, in the form of founder's stories, are used by the employees to make sense of the organisational changes introduced by the internationalisation process.

In the third step of the analysis I focused on how narratives about and references to the founding family were used by the participants to do identity work, including how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the company ('the family') and vis-à-vis the organisational changes, in particular the change to English as a corporate language. The identity analysis was conducted using sociolinguistic micro-analysis in the tradition of Holmes and Stubbe (2015). Because identity from this perspective is seen as emergent and discursively constructed, the analyses focused on the content and form of what was said as well as the sequential organisation of the interaction. The focus on identity as relational means that the analyses included a consideration of the available identity positions in the story, but also in the storytelling situation. Finally, in order to account for the



situatedness of the identity work, the analysis also draws on the ethnographic analysis in order to take the organisational context into account. This part of the analysis is presented in Section 5.3 and aims to show how founder's stories can be used by the employees to do identity work. The examples presented in the analysis are selected for their representativeness of the data set as a whole. Line-by-line paraphrases are provided in English in italics immediately after the Danish original.

#### **4. The case: From a family company to a small piece of a large MNC**

VET sells and distributes veterinary supplies on the global market. The company has 180 employees in the Danish headquarters, which is divided into administration and logistics. In addition, VET has subsidiaries in Norway, Sweden, the UK, China and Poland. In the headquarters, goods come into the warehouse and from there are sent out to customers, typically veterinarians and pet shops, in 100 countries around the world. VET started as a family-owned company in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, established by the founder K, now referred to as "the first generation". In the 1930s his son took over, but he was not a very talented businessman. In 1952 the financial situation was so bad that he decided to close the business. Instead, in 1953 his son Mr K, the third generation, bought his father's shares in the company and took over as managing director. Mrs K soon quit her job and joined her husband in the family business. For the next 50 years they ran the company, which grew steadily from 7 employees in the 1960s to 200 employees in 2002. During their reign, Mr and Mrs K bought companies in Sweden, the UK and Norway and established subsidiaries there. From the 1970s they started focusing on the export market, which expanded rapidly.

In 2003 Mr and Mrs K retired and turned over the company to their son MK, the fourth generation. This generational handover led to changes in VET. Where Mr and Mrs K had functioned both as owners and managing directors, when their son took over, Mr and Mrs K hired a general manager to run the company, while their son, MK, was given the title of managing director. A couple of years later, a professional board of directors, consisting of experienced business people, was established to help run the company, and it appears that the role of MK was gradually diminished with more and more power given to the general manager, who eventually was given the title of CEO. From 2009, when the current CEO was hired, MK no longer took part in the daily management, but was

still a member of the board and managing director of the holding company that owned VET. The CEO, here called Stefan, initiated a new strategy that focused on aggressive expansion into the international market, prioritising bigger customers, and increasing internationalisation of the Danish headquarters, expressed among other things in the initiative to introduce English as a corporate language. The corporate language project was seen as one way of preparing the employees for the new increasingly international future of the company by making sure that English language competences were upgraded. Between 2013-2016, a large number of employees were enrolled in English classes, and English was used increasingly in internal communication.

In late 2014 Mr K died, and in early 2015 negotiations began with a large US-based MNC, which had wanted to buy VET for a while. In June 2015 the take-over became official, and VET became part of a global corporation with more than 20,000 employees while the K family only retained a small share of stock and relinquished active involvement in the daily business. As this short summary of the company history reveals, while the first one hundred years of company history is largely a tale of success and expansion, the years between 2003 and 2013-2014 when most of the fieldwork was conducted was a time of turbulence and change. The company changed from a family-owned and led, local Danish company (albeit with a big focus on export) to a modern, professionally managed company with focus on the global market, bigger customers and English as a corporate language. The analysis aims to shed light on how employees make sense of these changes in company culture and strategy through use of a family discourse based in the founder's story.

## **5. Results: Making sense and finding a place in a changing organisation**

### 5.1 The family discourse

The company history is very visible in VET. The walls in the company headquarters are adorned with pictures of the founding family, the previous headquarters, and former and current employees. The pictures show VET's development from a small, local business to a large international one. They chronicle the expansions over the years as the physical premises grew to incorporate new activities and markets, but they also show how central the founding family is to the company history. In addition to the pictures, two meeting rooms named 'Joe's living room' and 'Pat's living

room' after two members of the founding family attest to their continued presence in the organisation as well as to an intended family atmosphere. Along with photographs from the company history, the names function as "maintenance of memory" (Linde, 2001:526), here the organisational memory of a family company. The employees also focus on the role of the founding family, particularly the third generation, Mr and Mrs K, in their accounts of the company history. Here Lisbeth, the executive secretary, gives her version:

Example 1. Family-owned one hundred per cent.

- 1 INT: [jeg vil gerne høre lidt om virksomhedens hi:storie øhm  
 2 RES: [ja (.) ja] jamen altså vi er jo et ældgammelt ø:h en ældgammel  
 3 virksomhed som startede i Odense i atten seksoghalvfems (.) helt nøjagtigt (.)  
 4 øh vi er familieejet hundrede procent øh  
 5 og vi har nu fjerde generation (.)  
 6 øhm: (.) ja hvad skal jeg si:ge  
 7 det mest karismatiske: leder (.) øh fra virks: eller fra familiens side  
 8 i virksomhedens historie har nok været (.)  
 9 øh forgængerer til den der er nu  
 10 altså det vil sige det var et ægtepar her fra VET der styrede:  
 11 og faktisk (.) fik virksomheden til at vokse og blomstre (.) til det den er i dag  
 12 INT: okay og nu har de overgivet det til næste [generation]  
 13 RES: [nu har de så givet] det videre  
 14 og det gjorde de i to tusinde og nu skal jeg lige tænke mig om (.) s:yv  
 15 INT: okay  
 16 RES: var det to tusinde seks måske (.) faktisk to tusinde og seks ja  
 17 INT: hvor længe har du været her  
 18 RES: jeg har været her siden to tusinde og et

- 1 INT: *[I would like to hear something about the company hi:story um*  
 2 RES: *[yes (.) yes] well we are a really old u:h a really old*  
 3 *company that started in Odense in eighteen ninety six (.) to be precise (.)*

- 4 *uh we are family-owned one hundred per cent uh*  
 5 *and we now have the fourth generation (.)*  
 6 *um: (.) yes what should I say*  
 7 *the most charismatic leader (.) uh from the comp- or from the family*  
 8 *in the history of the company has probably been (.)*  
 9 *uh the predecessor to the one we have now*  
 10 *what I mean is it was a married couple here from VET who ran it*  
 11 *and actually (.) made the company grow and flourish (.) into what it is today*  
 12 *INT: okay and now they have given it over to the next [generation]*  
 13 *RES: [now they have passed] it on*  
 14 *and they did that in two thousand and now I need to think (.) seven*  
 15 *INT: okay*  
 16 *RES: was it two thousand and six maybe (.) actually two thousand and six yes*  
 17 *INT: how long have you been here*  
 18 *RES: I have been here since two thousand and one*

Lisbeth here recounts the company history at the request of the interviewer. She points out two central characteristics of VET: It has a long history, and it is a family-owned company. Both points are emphasised in her account. The company is not just old, but “really old”, and not just family-owned, but “one hundred per cent family-owned”. From there she skips most of the 115-year history in favour of focusing on the “the most charismatic leader”, who turns out actually to be a married couple. In line 12 the interviewer brings up the generational handover, but then shifts the topic (in line 17) to Lisbeth’s own employment in VET, and because of this the story lacks a resolution: What happened with the growing and flourishing company after the handover? The married couple, Mr and Mrs K, are central to most accounts given of the company history, as is the fact that VET is family-owned. In fact, the key discourse in my data presents VET not just as family-owned and family-led, but also as having a family culture, and even as being a family. Arguably, Lisbeth contributes to this discourse when she responds to the interviewer’s question about the company history in the second person plural (“we are a really old company”), positioning herself as part of the larger social unit of the organisation.

The family discourse is illustrated in this picture from 1980 (taken from the history book) with Mr and Mrs K in the centre of their large ‘family’ of employees, even including their young son in front.



Stories from the history book also emphasise the family feeling characterising VET. In Example 2, also from the history book, the journalist and historian who authored the book presents a story that Hans, a long-time employee, tells about his first years in the company.

Example 2. The family spirit.

Hans giver også et eksempel på den familieånd, der har præget stedet. I de første år han var ansat, gav personalet julegaver til Mr K, Mrs K og MK, som til gengæld gav personalet og deres børn julegaver. Det finder Hans ret enestående.

*Hans also gives an example of the family spirit which has characterised the place. In the first years of his employment, the employees gave Christmas presents to Mr K, Mrs K and MK, who in return gave presents to the employees and their children. Hans finds this pretty unique.*

In the story Hans positions not only Mr and Mrs K and the employees, but also their respective children as part of the same family. The story about the reciprocal exchange of gifts is used to make a point about the company culture, here described in terms of a “the family spirit”. In the evaluation of this practice as “pretty unique”, Hans both makes a case for the tellability of the story, and for the uniqueness of the company culture. This “family spirit” that Hans describes with his example about the Christmas presents is also alluded to in other stories in the history book, e.g. when another long-term employee explicitly refers to the company as “one big family” and stresses that “virksomheden har altid gået meget op i de ansattes familie og været interesseret i deres ve

og vel / *the company has always cared a lot about the employees' families and been interested in their well-being*'. Again, the quote underlines the interest in employees' families and how this contributes to the family spirit.

It is clear that Mr and Mrs K have a special position in this family. They are the parents. They buy Christmas presents for the employees' children, and they take care of their families' well-being. In one story, the employee says that the company "was like their child", again framing Mr and Mrs K as the parents. While one employee colloquially refers to Mr and Mrs K as "de gamle / *the old folks*", otherwise they are referred to by their title and last name, Mr and Mrs K, which is quite unusual in Denmark these days where people usually go by first names. Noticeably, no one else in the history of the company is referred to as such. Even though there have now been four 'Mr Ks', the others are referred to by generation, or by their full names as in the case of MK, the fourth generation. These ways of referring to the third-generation owners can be seen both as a sign of respect, but also as an indicator of their special status in the company. The many references to Mr and Mrs K also stand out because of the complete absence of stories about MK, their son and the owner at the time of data collection. While he had an office in the headquarters, he was not a daily presence, neither physically nor in the minds of the employees.

Other stories emphasise the common past of employees (and owners). In a part of the history book that tells the stories of several long-term employees, including Peter who has been in the company for 34 years, and John who has been there for more than ten, we get this story:

Example 3. A common past.

VET har aldrig været bange for at rekruttere folk fra egne rækker, og man kan nå langt, hvis man er startet som "hundekravedreng" i virksomheden. John, der har 10-års jubilæum i VET i 2006, er næsten en pendant til Peter: De stammer begge fra lokalområdet, og de har begge taget turen fra hundekravedreng til intern salgsassistent i Dansk Salg. Og så har de en fælles fortid i [the local sports club]. Her var Peter Johns træner, fra John var ca. 9-16 år, og Peter har mange gange bundet snørebandene på Johns fodboldstøvler, da John var helt ung.

*VET has never been afraid of recruiting from the internal ranks, and you can get far if you started out as “dog collar boy”<sup>3</sup> in the company. John, who can celebrate his 10-year anniversary in VET in 2006, is almost Peter’s counterpart: They are both from the local area, and they have both taken the journey from dog collar boy to internal sales assistant in Danish Sales. And they have a common past in [the local sports club]. Peter was John’s coach from John was approximately nine to 16, and Peter has many times tied the laces of John’s football boots when John was very young.*

As may be typical of written rather than oral storytelling, we get the evaluation of the story in the first line: You can get far in VET even if you started in a very low position. This is the story of two local boys who worked their way up in the company. The last two sentences tell a related, but different story. The tying-of-the-shoe-laces line functions to position John and Peter not only as “from the local area”, but with an almost familial relationship. Together, the two brief stories told here serve to emphasise both the family spirit and the anchoring of the company in the local area.

Peter is also the centre of the next example that illustrates how the pictures on the walls at VET function as occasions for narrative remembering.

Example 4. The pictures on the wall.

- 1 INT: sig mig nu jeg stod lige og kiggede på de her billeder ude på væggen ikke (.)  
 2 der stod en der hed Ken L er det sådan familie  
 3 RES: det er min far eller var min far  
 4 INT: han har simpelthen arbejdet her også  
 4 RES: ja

- 1 INT: *tell me I was just looking at these pictures on the wall (.)*  
 2 *there was someone named Ken L is that any relation*  
 3 RES: *that is my dad or was my dad*  
 4 INT: *so he has worked here too*  
 5 RES: *yes*

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<sup>3</sup> A young employee with the task of assembling dog collars in the then production unit.

The interviewer's question in lines 1-2 results in the telling of Peter's life-long story in the company (omitted here due to its length) which continues for several turns after this excerpt. It begins with him growing up in the local area as the son of an employee and a friend of the owners' son, and continues with his own employment in the company initially as 'sweeping boy' when he was eleven years old. During the story, it comes up that like several other employees, Peter has several relatives who work at VET, and that he has developed close relationships with several customers, resulting in him being asked to their family events. This intermingling of family and work further contributes to establishing the company as a family. As shown here, artifacts in the form of pictures and signs, narratives in the history book and employees' stories about the founding family and their own relationship to the company all contribute to portraying the company history as a family history. This family discourse, and particularly the history of the founding family, is also mobilised in relation to the current changes, i.e. the increasing internationalisation in the organisation.

## 5.2 The discourse of change

In his interview about a year before the take-over, the CEO, Stefan, talks about the change from a family-led business when Mr and Mrs K were in charge, to a company with a professional (i.e. non-family-led) board, himself as CEO and a new strategy for the company with a focus on growth. Since VET already dominated the Danish market at his point, the new focus on growth meant international growth, or as Stefan puts it: VET needs to go from being "en dansk virksomhed med eksport / *a Danish company with export*" to being "en international virksomhed / *an international company*". He argues that the introduction of English is central to this change. Another big change is in the company culture, especially in relation to customers, as the following quotes from Lisbeth reveal. Where Mr and Mrs K prioritised the customers above all else and "kunne bruge rigtig lang tid på (.) og gøre alle kunder tilfreds uanset (.) hvor meget man solgte til dem / *could spend a lot of time (.) making all customers satisfied no matter (.) how much we sold to them*", today customers are segmented into large and small customers, and "det skal høre forholdsmæssigt sammen hvad tid du bruger og så også hvad der bliver genereret / *there has to be a proportionate relationship between the time spent and then what is generated [in income]*". This section aims to show how



members make use of the family discourse when faced with these changes in the organisation, particularly the increased use of English.

Connie has been in the company for eight years. Preceding the excerpt in Example 5 the interviewer asked whether language use in the company had changed, specifically whether the use of English had increased. Connie responds by referring to the establishment of subsidiaries in Poland and China, but also links these changes with the founder's story, specifically the recent generational handover.

Example 5. The old folks stepped down.

- 1 RES: de er også startet i Polen ikke også så og Kina  
 2 det bliver jo også noget engelsk o:g så selvfølgelig gør der det (1.2)  
 3 men (1.3) altså der er ingen tvivl om at ø:h efter de de gamle de er trådt ud af det her  
 4 så: så er det det der (1.1) [der er mange sa (.) ja:]  
 5 INT: [så det hænger så det hænger sammen med at det generationsskifte der har været]  
 6 RES: det tror jeg  
 7 INT: ja  
 8 RES: det tror jeg det er helt sikkert de har jo ikke så meget med det at gøre mere så

- 1 RES: *they have also started in Poland right so and China*  
 2 *that is going to be English and then of course it will (1.2)*  
 3 *but (1.3) there is no doubt that uh since the the old folks stepped down here*  
 4 *then then that has (1.1) [there is a lot of xxx (.) yeah:]*  
 5 INT: *[so it has so it has to do with the generational handover you've had here]*  
 6 RES: *I believe so*  
 7 INT: *yes*  
 8 RES: *I believe so for sure they don't have a lot to do with it anymore so*

The question about the use of English here leads Connie to tell a fragment of a story about the recent changes in the company (co-constructed with the interviewer in line 5). For our purposes here the interesting part of the story begins when she links these changes to the fact that “the old

folks stepped down” (line 3). In keeping with the family discourse, we could say that the company has moved on, but without its parents. While from a management perspective this change means new opportunities (in the form of increased global presence), for the employees it is a journey into the unknown. When Connie says that “they”, presumably the new management, have started subsidiaries in Poland and China, she distances herself from “them”, in contrast to other employees’ use of “we” when they talk about the family history. Connie’s attributions of the current changes to the generational handover, and the ensuing absence of Mr and Mrs K, illustrate how the founders’ story is used to make sense of the organisational changes, with unwelcome changes being attributed to the newest generation and not the idolised third generation. In other words, the company history and identity as a local, family-owned company becomes an important means for making sense of current changes in company culture and strategy.

Interestingly, we do not get the full story of the generational handover in Example 5, nor in any of the preceding examples, possibly because of the co-constructed nature of these stories with the interviewer interrupting at inopportune moments, but possibly also because it is sensitive to talk about the current owner. These fragments of stories about the generational handover appear in several other interviews as well, e.g. in Lisbeth’s first interview where she alludes to the continued ghost presence of Mr and Mrs K when she says that “they still haunt the place a bit”. There is no explicit criticism of MK in any of my material, in fact he is almost absent from employees’ stories. When he is mentioned, however, it is frequently in contrast with his parents, e.g. when one informant says that the two generations “are like north and south”, but refrains from commenting further. The full story of the generational handover is never told, but only alluded to.

The previous examples have illustrated how the family discourse featured heavily in the 2006 company history book. As we will see in the following, the family discourse is also used in official company communication surrounding the organisational changes in 2013-2016. When introducing the new language policy of English as a corporate language in 2014, the project group created a flyer to distribute among the employees. The following excerpt from the flyer addresses what the new “communication programme” is, and why it is necessary (the same text is also used to present the programme on the intranet).

Example 6. Making members of the family feel welcome.

VET is a constantly growing player in the international market, and in order to accommodate the company strategy in terms of growth and expansion, a common linguistic platform becomes essential.

Also, international employees have joined the VET Group, and more are likely to do so over a period of time, and in order to make these new “members of the family” feel welcome, we must be able to communicate in English on a larger scale.

The flyer, which was given to the Danish employees in the Danish headquarters, was written in English even though it explicitly states that English should be used when crossing national boundaries. As such it served both in form and content to introduce the internationalisation process. But it also reveals some of the tensions associated with this process. On the one hand, VET is positioned in the flyer as “a constantly growing player in the international market” with a strategy of “growth and expansion”. On the other, VET is a “family”, and the need to include new international “members of the family” is used as a reason for the introduction of English as a corporate language. By drawing on the familiar family discourse, the project group responsible for introducing this new policy (or “programme”) are able to use the existing company history and identity to introduce a change. And the rhetoric is like to be effective. After all, who would want to resist a change made to include and welcome new members of one’s family?

Another example of the strategic use of the family discourse is seen in the most recent data from 2016 which includes an account of the takeover by the American MNC. In this interview, Lisbeth, the executive secretary, accounts for why she has asked MK to continue to show up and do the speeches at events such as anniversaries and birthdays, even though the family is not formally part of VET anymore.

Example 7. A false illusion that not everything is being changed.

- 1 INT: hvad er I nu i forhold til familien
- 2 RES: ja (.) jeg ved det ikke rigtigt de er jo ikke med i noget formelt mere
- 3 INT: nej
- 4 RES: jeg ved ikke om det kun er mig men jeg bad i hvert fald fordi

- 5 MK altid har været den der holder taler øh når der er jubilæer  
6 og sådan noget eller runde fødselsdage eller noget der skal fejres  
...  
7 RES: og der har jeg faktisk sagt jamen jeg tror faktisk det er vigtigt for folk  
8 at der stadigvæk er en fra familien  
9 så om han stadigvæk ville fortsætte med talerne og det har han faktisk sagt ja til  
10 INT: okay  
11 RES: men jeg tænker det er en begrænset periode jeg tror måske kun det er  
12 sådan lige i overgangsfasen  
13 INT: ja  
14 RES: uden at jeg ved det hundrede procent  
15 (2.4)  
16 INT: [men det]  
17 RES: [Stefan] var så modsat lidt overrasket over at han stadigvæk ville det  
18 INT: ja  
19 RES: hvor jeg så sagde til ham jamen det er faktisk noget jeg har bedt  
20 [MK] om at gøre fordi at for ikke at skabe for meget røre her i starten  
21 INT: ja og hvorfor tænker du at det ville være godt at han gjorde det  
22 RES: fordi at det giver sådan lidt et øh (2.0) ja det kan godt være at det er en falsk illusion  
23 eller det er det jo så ik' også men det virker lidt som om okay jamen  
24 det er ikke alt der bliver forandret (.) man behøvs heller ikke forandre alt på en gang  
25 INT: nej  
26 (1.7)  
27 RES: øh og det er meget sådan synligt (2.2) en synlig artefakt kan man sige  
28 [at familien] stadigvæk (1.3) tropper op og så holder den tale  
29 INT: [mm]
- 1 INT: *what are you now in relation to the family*  
2 RES: *yes (.) I don't really know they are not a part of anything formally anymore*  
3 INT: *no*

- 4 RES: *I don't know if it's just me but I asked anyway because*  
 5 *MK has always been the one to give speeches uh when there's an anniversary*  
 6 *and stuff like that or birthdays or something to celebrate*  
 ...
- 7 RES: *and there I've actually said well I actually think it is important for people*  
 8 *that there still is someone from the family*  
 9 *so if he would still continue with the speeches and he has actually agreed to this*
- 10 INT: *okay*
- 11 RES: *but I'm thinking it's a limited period I think maybe only*  
 12 *during the transition phase*
- 13 INT: *yes*
- 14 RES: *without being one hundred per cent sure*  
 15 *(2.4)*
- 16 INT: *['but it']*
- 17 RES: *[Stefan] on the other hand was a little surprised that he still wanted to do it*
- 18 INT: *yes*
- 19 RES: *so I told him well that is actually something I asked*  
 20 *[MK] to do because in order not to stir things up too much here in the beginning*
- 21 INT: *yes and why did you think it would be good that he did it*
- 22 RES: *because it gives kind of a uh (2.0) yes it may be that it is a false illusion*  
 23 *or it actually is you know but it also seems a little like okay but*  
 24 *not everything is being changed (.) you don't have to change everything at once*
- 25 INT: *no*  
 26 *(1.7)*
- 27 RES: *uh and it is very kind of visible (2.2) a visible artifact you could say*  
 28 *['that the family'] still (1.3) turns up and does that speech*
- 29 INT: *[mm]*

Here Lisbeth tells the story of how she has asked MK to continue to do the speeches at celebrations in the company. Again the story is prompted by a question from the interviewer (line

1), this time about the role of the family after the takeover. In line 4 Lisbeth begins the story with the somewhat confusing “I don’t know if it’s just me but I asked anyway”, and then launches into the story, in which the fourth generation of the founding family is being called upon to show up during the transition phase for celebrations, not so much as himself as to represent “the family” (line 8). Lisbeth argues that the family’s presence would help not “stir things up too much” (line 20) by creating the “false illusion” (line 22) that “not everything is being changed” (line 24). She here very explicitly draws on the family discourse in her positioning of MK as an “artifact” (line 27) of the family. His presence is important only because he can represent the K family, and in this way create the illusion of continuity, similarly to how Boje and Rosile (2008) found the ghost of Sam Walton to be an anchor of continuity and stability. As illustrated here, the family discourse plays an important role in coming to terms with organisational changes even after the family formally has left - probably even more so *because* they have left.

### 5.3 Local or international: Employee identity in a time of change

Where the previous two sections detailed the two overarching discourses influenced by the founders’ story, the aim in this section is to show how these discourses are used by the employees to negotiate their own identity and place in the organisation and also in this way make sense of the organisational changes. The section investigates the tensions and counter-discourses that the recent strategy changes and the internationalisation process have made salient. We will look at the identities employees draw on when they discuss the organisational changes, and how this identity work relates to the founder’s story and the dominant family discourse outlined above.

The changes from a local Danish family-owned company to an international professionally managed organisation have put increased pressures on employees, e.g. in the form of layoffs in the warehouse in connection with increased offshoring to China. The increasing internationalisation has also influenced employees’ workdays in the form of the introduction of English as the corporate language, and the mandatory language classes for certain groups of employees (determined by the communication programme project group). The use of English as a corporate language was a common topic (introduced by the interviewer) in all the interviews, but the employees responded in different ways. Henrik who works in International Sales is very open towards the idea as he explains here:

Example 8. Rather today than tomorrow.

- 1 RES: vi siger tit lad os dog starte med koncernengelsk hellere i: dag end i morgen  
 2 INT: mm  
 3 RES: det ville ikke genere så meget os i [eksport]afdelingen  
 4 INT: [okay]  
 1 RES: *we often say let's begin with corporate English rather today than tomorrow*  
 2 INT: *mm*  
 3 RES: *it wouldn't bother us in the [export] department much*  
 4 INT: [okay]

Henrik here positions himself and his whole department as positive towards the proposed changes in language use. He then reflects on how the process of changing from Danish to English could play out. His reflections take the form of a hypothetical narrative (Baynham 2000) of what could happen in the future.

Example 9. Some would find it strange.

- 1 RES: der kunne jeg forestille mig at man senere hen  
 2 efter sådan et sprogprojekt trin et så skar man det danske væk  
 3 INT: ja  
 4 RES: og så fik alle medarbejdere den samme besked på engelsk  
 5 INT: ville det fungere her  
 6 RES: [ja]  
 7 INT: [i] i Danmark også  
 8 RES: ja (0.6) det ville det (0.8) altså som sagt der vil være nogen  
 9 der i en periode synes at (0.6) det da noget mærkeligt noget  
 10 INT: ja  
 11 (1.2)  
 12 RES: hvorf- hvorfor skal vi er da dansk firma og hvorfor skal vi det (1.1)  
 13 men i praksis ville det fungere (.) inden for en uge (.) ville jeg sige  
 1 RES: *I could imagine that later on*  
 2 *after such a language project step one then then you cut away the Danish*

- 3 INT: *yes*
- 4 RES: *and then all employees would get the same message in English*
- 5 INT: *would that work here*
- 6 RES: *[yes]*
- 7 INT: *[in] in Denmark too*
- 8 RES: *yes (0.6) it would (0.8) like I said there will be some*
- 9 *who for a while will think (0.6) this is strange*
- 10 INT: *yes*
- 11 *(1.2)*
- 12 RES: *wh- why should we are a Danish company and why should we do that (1.1)*
- 13 *but in practice it would work (.) within a week (.) I'd say*

In contrast with Henrik's positive stance towards English in Example 8, the (imagined) increased use of English as a corporate language is here constructed as potentially problematic in some parts of the organisation. Still, Henrik maintains that it would work. The interviewer's question in line 5 could be seen as a challenge to his account, and even more so the follow-up in line 7. Henrik's response is to elaborate on the story by explaining how the group of English-sceptical employees would react to this hypothetical change. It becomes clear that the position he outlines in Example 8 is in opposition to this group of employees who will find it strange to receive messages in English, and who will question this practice by arguing that the company is Danish. Henrik here claims an identity for himself as someone in alignment with management, as someone ready to embrace change, and as someone who is open to internationalisation. He also positions himself as someone who knows better than the group opposed to English when he claims that "in practice it would work (.) within a week" (although the addition of "I'd say" can be seen as a hedging device).

Henrik's predictions about his colleagues' reaction seem accurate when we look at what other employees say. Example 10 begins at a point in the interview where Connie has been talking about the use of English in her work where she writes the occasional email in English. This, she says, she can see the point of, but when the interviewer asks her about using English as a



corporate language, she states that she “cannot see why it has to be like that”. She then adds the following argument:

Example 10. We are still Danish.

- 1 RES: vi er stadigvæk danskere ikke også og  
 2 og det er dansk og det er virkelig et dansk firma det her (.)  
 3 ikke også så det kan jeg slet ikke forstå  
 4 INT: er det fordi du [xxx]  
 5 RES: [men det] skal vi jo heller ikke kunne

- 1 RES: *we are still Danes right and*  
 2 *and it is Danish and it really is a Danish company this one (.)*  
 3 *right so I don't understand that at all*  
 4 INT: *is it because you [xxx]*  
 5 RES: *[but] then again we're not supposed to*

I have included this short example in the analysis, despite the absence of narrative features because it highlights several pertinent identity positions. First is the question of VET's identity as Danish or the implied opposite, international. Connie firmly establishes the Danish identity of the employees as well as the company in the first two lines. In addition to repeating the word “Danish” in line 2, and adding the adverb “really”, she taps her finger on the table while saying this, a non-verbal sign which further serves to emphasise her point. In the context, her insistence on the Danish identity can be seen as a reaction to increasing pressures from internationalisation processes, specifically the pressure that the increasing use of English presents. Implicitly, the identification as Danish also functions as an argument against the implementation of English, by drawing on the well-established ‘one nation, one language’ ideology (Kraft and Lønsmann, 2018). The use of personal pronouns points to other relevant identities. Where the “we” in line 1 refers to the employees in the Danish headquarters, the “we” in line 5 makes it clear that this is not a uniform group. While all VET employees in the headquarters can be described as Danes, the second “we” refers only to the group of employees who are not supposed to understand decisions

made about the use of English (or perhaps any decisions). As such, Connie constructs a difference between this group of (powerless) employees as opposed to those who make the decisions, a difference also found in Example 5 with Connie's use of "they". These last two examples thus suggest that there are some cracks in the family unity. Rather than presenting VET as one big family, both Henrik and Connie point to divisions within the organisation. Furthermore, Connie's juxtaposition of increased use of English with the insistence that VET is a Danish company, and that "we" are Danish, suggests a tension between organisational strategy as drawn up by management and supported by at least some administration employees in which VET is an international(ising) company, and the organisational identity and culture as constructed by the group of 'resisting' employees where VET is positioned as a Danish company.

The next example, from the interview with Daniel, another warehouse employee, further emphasises these divisions in the company. Here the interviewer begins by asking a question from the interview guide about internationalisation, a question which is repeated in most of the interviews.

Example 11. Not anything whatsoever to do with us.

- 1 INT: hvordan er VET dansk og hvordan er I internationale (0.9)
- 2 RES: jamen jeg synes jo bare vi er danskere (.)
- 3 INT: okay (.)
- 4 RES: altså (1.7) jeg ved godt de snakker meget om det der med
- 5 og vi får da et par enkelte mails ud på engelsk altså øh (1.2)
- 6 det er som regel ikke noget der har noget som helst med os at gøre
- 7 (0.7)
- 8 INT: okay (.)
- 9 RES: altså
- 10 INT: altså det der står i de mails (.)
- 11 RES: jamen det er gerne v- hvis de har ansat en ny en for eksempel
- 12 så [kommer] der en mail nu er der kommet en ny HR manager eller hvad
- 13 INT: [ja]

- 14 RES: hvad er det titlen nu er [altså] (1.9) altså jeg læser ikke hele mailen
- 15 INT: [ja]
- 16 RES: så s- slet altså
- 1 INT: *how is VET Danish and how are you international (0.9)*
- 2 RES: *well I just think that we are Danes (.)*
- 3 INT: *okay (.)*
- 4 RES: *well (1.7) I know that they talk a lot about it*
- 5 *and we do get a few emails in English but uh (1.2)*
- 6 *it is usually not anything that has anything whatsoever to do with us*
- 7 *(0.7)*
- 8 INT: *okay (.)*
- 9 RES: *so*
- 10 INT: *you mean what is in those emails (.)*
- 11 RES: *well it is usually if they have hired someone new for example*
- 12 *then [there is ] an email that now a new HR manager has arrived or what*
- 13 INT: [yes]
- 14 RES: *whatever the title is [you know] (1.9) it's not like I read the whole email*
- 15 INT: [yes]
- 16 RES: *so delete you know*

This time it is the interviewer who introduces the opposition between Danish and international in the question in line 1. Daniel's reply in line 2 echoes Connie's above. After hedging his statement with "well I just think", he argues that "we are Danes". He then tells a story, co-constructed with the interviewer, in lines 4-16 about how internationalisation in the form of increased use of English has impacted on his daily life and how he has responded. Again, the pronoun use sheds light on possible divisions and tensions in the organisation, tensions which the internationalisation process and the increased use of English only make more visible. "They" (in line 4) talk a lot about "it" (which from the context can be taken to refer to the internationalisation process), and "they" (line 11) hire people. But "we" (line 5) receive emails in English which have nothing to do with "us" (line

6); emails which are then not read, but deleted (line 16). In contrast with Connie in Example 10, Daniel does not position himself as entirely powerless. By deleting emails in English which are perceived as irrelevant, he actively resists the internationalisation process. But the tensions revealed in Examples 9 and 10 are also present here, and perhaps even clearer: The tension between the organisational identity as Danish or international, and the internal division between the people who embrace internationalisation and English, write the emails, decide on the language policy, and hire people, and the people who identify as Danish, receive emails, have no choice about language and no interest in news about a new HR manager.

It is probably not a coincidence that the informants in Examples 10 and 11 who insist on the Danishness of the company and the employees both work in the warehouse, while Henrik in Examples 8 and 9 who aligns with the internationalisation agenda is from the administration. The warehouse employees and the administrative employees are frequently described as two separate groups within the company. Tellingly, one of the administrative employees says in her interview that the warehouse employees call the administration “the people on the carpet”, i.e. defining them as those with nice offices. The building itself contributes to constructing this division. The two parts of the company are separated by the common canteen. Through one door, you walk into the quiet, elegant reception area and from there into adjacent offices. Through the other, you find yourself in an enormous windowless warehouse with a distant ceiling and constant noise of machinery and movement of forklifts. The two groups are equally divided in their attitudes to the increased use of English. Many of the administration employees already have an international outlook and use English as well as other foreign languages frequently. Like Henrik, they typically argue that introducing English as a corporate language will not be a problem. In contrast, many of the warehouse employees have little or no need for English in their daily work, and therefore fail to see the relevance of having to learn and use more English. As also found in a study of the reception of an English-only policy in another Danish company (Lønsmann, 2017), resistance towards organisational changes is closely tied to the perceived relevance of the new initiative.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

The article has explored how organisational storytelling, specifically in the form of vicarious narratives about the founding family, are used to make sense of an ongoing internationalisation

process in a formerly local, Danish, family-owned company. The stories about the founding family are shown to contribute to a dominant discourse of the company as a family. This family discourse, which frames the previous owners as the parents of the company, has been central in the organisation's understanding of itself and its role in the world, and in employees' understanding of their role in the organisation. While these discourses were unopposed for the first century of the company history, recent changes have challenged them. When the successful and mythologised third generation of the founding family stepped down, and their parental role was replaced by a turbulent time of strategic and cultural change, the family discourse remained as an important backdrop against which the employees sought to understand these changes – and against which management sought to introduce them. In this way, one function of the stories about VET as a Danish family company becomes as an anchor in a changing world. On their way into the unknown, the employees have a need to hold on to the known, in this case the identity as a local Danish family business. In this situation, narratives about the 'good old days' when 'mum' and 'dad' were in charge provide stability and continuity. As we have seen, employees use these stories and their artifacts to maintain the highly valued identity as a local family-owned business. The stories about the founding family make it possible to retain the family-feel even when the family is no longer there. And the organisational changes caused by the increasing internationalisation are explained by employees with reference to the generational handover, as part of the family history.

As the final part of analysis makes clear, not all employees are happy about the internationalisation process which has had an impact on their ability to identify with the company, which they see as Danish. In this situation the employees use the founder's stories to construct the company culture and identity around the family discourse, and also to position themselves as part of the family, especially in the case of long-term employees. In this way these stories are used by the employees to "construct a sense of who they are" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008:382) in the company. The analysis of identity work also reveals tensions in the organisation. While the dominant discourse constructs organisational members as family members, counter-discourses (Bamberg and Andrews 2004) about "us and them" reveal divisions along the lines of decision-makers on the one hand and those whom the decisions are imposed upon on the other; between administrative staff and warehouse workers; and between those who embrace the changes brought about by internationalisation and those who do not. These dichotomies align, so that on the one hand we

have the administration employees who are internationally oriented, embrace English and are closer to decision-making in the company, on the other hand the warehouse employees who strongly identify as Danish, prefer the Danish language and who are further from decision-making processes.

The vicarious narratives in this article are not elaborate, and often do not contain all the elements traditionally thought of as belonging to a narrative. Often the narratives are referred to, but not told explicitly nor in their entirety. One reason for this implicitness could be that these are stories about sensitive issues. Criticising the current owner or resisting organisational changes is more safely done implicitly than explicitly. Their fragmented nature puts them in Boje's category of antenarratives. Both Boje (1991) and Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) focus on the interaction between interlocutors and claim that such antenarratives or small stories are collectively produced. Several of the examples illustrate how narratives also in interviews are co-constructed by interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer's questions prompt specific narratives, but also sometimes derail the narratives causing them to remain unfinished. However, while the narratives in this article are often fragmented or remain partly implicit, they have been shown to perform the same functions as traditionally defined narratives in terms of constructing an organisational identity and remembering of the past, and also in terms of positioning the storytellers in the organisation, e.g. as part of the family, or as part of the disempowered group of employees.

This article contributes to narrative research within pragmatics with a focus on the function of storytelling in organisations. Rather than individual, de-contextualised narratives, the stories analysed here come from the same organisation and are analysed along with ethnographic data from the organisation. Focusing on storytelling in the context of an organisation rather than individual examples allows us to focus on the sense-making and identity functions of storytelling in a community (see also Stapleton and Wilson, 2017). Furthermore, by focusing on how founders' stories are used in an organisation undergoing increasing internationalisation, the article contributes to narrative research by showing how organisational discourses function as sense-making tools in times of organisational change, and also how these discourses are used both to construct an organisational identity and in employees' own identity work. As such, the results

emphasise the importance of understanding an organisation's story about itself when attempting to introduce organisational change.

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**Appendix: Transcription conventions**

Speaker ID:	INT
Overlapping speech:	「okay」 〔who〕 are not
Pause in seconds:	(0.8)
Pause shorter than 0.5 sec.	(.)
Prolonged sound:	um:
Unclear speech:	xxx
...	lines omitted