**Credibility-boosting devices in corporate annual reports**

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**Abstract**

Apart from their informative and representative functions, annual reports of companies and institutions aim at enhancing the organisations’ image and credibility. According to the theory of communicative action formulated by Habermas (1984), credibility is based on meeting four validity claims, namely truth, sincerity, appropriateness and understandability. Credibility as such can be boosted by presenting or proving two major components, expertise and trust. A short genre incorporated in company annual reports, letters from executives (Letter from a CEO, Chairman´s statement, Chair´s Message, Letter to Shareholders, etc.) represent texts which attempt to persuade target readers about a competent management, strong visions, positive current situation and optimistic outlook. Combining the more subjective focus on trustworthiness and a more objectively based provision of credentials and achievements quoted to prove expertise, these letters in annual reports aim to persuade readers rather implicitly than explicitly, by establishing contact through direct address, personal endorsement, involvement and even cordiality. The paper analyses “executive letters” in the business documents subcorpus of the *Corpus of English and Czech Specialised Discourses* (CECSD 2017), with special emphasis on the selected verbs and nouns. The principal persuasive strategies identified in this genre contribute to a more public and interactive character of the otherwise relatively private and specialised discourse.

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