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# VIDEO-ANALYSIS

## METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

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# Contents

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# Orchestrating Bullet Lists and Commentaries
## A Video Performance Analysis of Computer Supported Presentations

> "Those who present themselves before an audience are said to be 'performers' and to provide a 'performance' – in the peculiar, theatrical sense of the term. Thereby they tacitly claim those platform skills for lack of which an ordinary person thrust upon the stage would flounder hopelessly – an object to light at, embarrassed for, and have massive impatience with. And they tacitly accept judgment in these terms by those who themselves need never be exposed to such appraisal. The clear contrast is to everyday talk…"
>
> (Goffman 1981b: 165f.)

The 'lecture' Goffman analyzed in the text cited above is a specific form of communication: It is a kind of institutionalized performance centred around an orally delivered text, whereby a speaker imparts his views on a certain subject (Goffman 1981b). This centred interaction usually takes place in a public or at least semi-public setting. Lectures are frequently given in academic or political contexts with a certain degree of formality. Although the text seems to be here of crucial importance, Goffman points out that a lecture can not be reduced to the activity of speaking. Instead, the speakers' talk is only one part of a special social situation with a specific configuration. In his view, lectures are social events, comparable to a ritual or a ceremony, somewhere between game and spectacle. Therefore, they are organized by 'auspices' and sometimes supplied with a 'star system'. Goffman's interest lies primarily on working out the specifics of this production format and the different roles of the speaker (as animator, orator and principal). What is of interest here is the fact that presentations are special performances, performances that are *constitutive* for certain institutional contexts: teaching in schools, debates in political parties, lectures in universities and papers given at conferences are at the core of what actually constitutes the shared reality in the respective domains. Consequently, a study of the communicative forms and the performative practices of 'lectures' can be expected to shed some light on how these realities are constructed in and by interaction.

Whereas Goffman could rely on his prodigious faculty to observe what was going on around him, new developments both in technology and methodology provide us (normal gifted social scientists) with a new and extremely powerful instrument for the analysis of action, interaction and social performance. Recent advances in interpretive videoanalysis enable us to study the fine details of such performances and the context they are embedded in. Video is especially apt for capturing and analysing complex social interaction – in particular if it is tied to extensive ethnographic fieldwork and subsequent detailed analysis of the recording collected in 'focussed' ethnographies (Knoblauch 2005).

In the following, I shall give an example of what I call video performance analysis. By this term, I do not refer to the illustrious genre in modern art. Instead, video performance analyses shares widely the methodological principals of other established approaches (represented in the respective articles includes in this book): sequentiality, systematic contrasting, reflexivity, visuality and contextualisation. I specially draw on ethnomethodological video-analysis (Heath 1997, Heath & Hindmarsh 2002, Heath & Luff this volume) and video interaction analysis (Knoblauch 2004). Like any other form of qualitative inquiry, video analysis is without doubt "basically a hermeneutic activity" (Knoblauch this volume: 75). Consequently, videohermeneutics (Raab & Tänzler this volume) provides the necessary complement for an *integrative* interpretation encompassing the various modes of interaction in social situation that take place in and are constructive for a certain culture. There have been video analysis of performances before: public appearances of the Pope (Bergmann, Luckmann & Soeffner 1993), wedding ceremonies (Raab 2002), political speeches (Tänzler 2000) or charismatic religious leaders (Schnettler 2001). These studies explicitly focus on the ritual and symbolic dimension and their constitutive function. In this article, I will apply video performance analysis to another modern ritual, recently called 'presentation'. A presentation is basically what Goffman described as a 'lecture', augmented by the use of modern computer equipment to visualize images on a projection screen. The analysis that follows tries to illuminate some specific 'platform skills' indispensable for the orchestration of simultaneously presented different 'texts' – that is: the orators' speech that goes along with the visually delivered texts and images in such presentations.

## Orchestration of computer supported visual presentations

The use of PowerPoint (or other software like Apple Keynote or Star Point) has not only had an enormous impact on public speeches, lectures and the like. It actually has reshaped communication within a whole array of institutions. Today, such computer supported visual presentations are enormously widespread, approximately used 30 million times daily throughout the world (LaPorte, et al. 2002). Within a wide range of contexts, presentations have acquired a fundamental role in formal communication. Frequently, they are employed to transmit some kind of 'knowledge' – or at least something that from a participant's point of view claims to be knowledge. Under this perspective, presentations are paradigmatic for a type of society that in sociological diagnosis has been called "knowledge society" (and, in effect, at least there is a certain temporal proximity in the emergence of the term in social sciences and the proliferation of PowerPoint). A closer look at the actual performance of such presentation, therefore, should contribute to a better understanding of what is at the core of this, as some have claimed, new type of society. Obviously, such a broad socio-diagnostic term is much too big to be captured with the lens of any camera. But what can be

observed with video is the actual performance of presentations – a topic which has been completely left out by research thus far, despite of the enormous debate that PowerPoint has raised among critics and defenders.[1]

In general terms, a presentation consists of (1) a speaker – sometimes various – (2) orally delivering a lecture to (3) a co-present audience. The oral communication in situ is accompanied by (4) a series of visual elements like tables, graphs, lists, pictures or even short film sequences that have been designed in advance and are projected simultaneously on screen. Presentation, therefore, takes place in a very complex situation, in which one-sided forms of communication, namely the speaker's talk and the electronically supported visual elements, are intertwined with interactive and face-to-face elements in the co-presence of speaker and audience. Hence, presentations include various layers of communicative activities that are presented at the same time. Therefore, speech, bodily conduct and visualisations on screen have to be orchestrated in a particular way.

By 'orchestration' I mean the interplay between speaker and technological devices which is typical for computer-supported presentations. Such presentations are not constituted only by the speakers' voice or body delivering the lecture. Speakers have other instruments at hand, and their 'platform skills' extends to conducting them properly. The technical devices play an important part. Although we may not think of technology as an autonomous actor (cf. Rammert & Schulz-Schaeffer 2002), like in an orchestra, it is the instruments making the music (some of which may even play their own sound). While music is neither a product of the conductor nor the instruments alone, its overall whole arrangement is *synchronized* by the conductor.

It is of special interest for interaction and communication studies that PowerPoint introduces a new element into speeches: the visualization of text simultaneously delivered with the talk – in a more comfortable, persuading and successful way than could ever be achieved by its technical precursors like overhead transparencies or slide projectors. But despite its importance, there is barely any empirical knowledge about this new communicative form. Although paradigmatic for linking knowledge to visualization, unlike other modern forms of communication (e.g. email, videoconferences etc.), there is astonishingly little research on presentations. The pertinent literature is mainly considered with practical questions such as how to improve them, what visual elements to choose for which purposes, how to avoid slide overload, etc. In addition to this large body of normative, practical guides, there are very few empirical studies, those that exist being mostly concerned with the *effectiveness* of presentations. Their results are more than ambiguous: Comparing psychology undergraduates taught with

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1 Presentation are blamed for impoverishing communication by visual effects instead of arguments (Nunberg 1999, Clarke 2001) or accused for manipulating our thoughts (Parker 2001). Tufte (2003) even claims presentations responsible for severe errors and catastrophes, including the Columbia disaster or the Gulf war.

classical methods and PowerPoint, Szabo and Hastings found no significant difference in academic achievement between both groups, although they concede "that Power-Point lecture may benefit recall (or perhaps recognition) from memory" (2000: 187). Rankin and Hoaas (2001) concluded the same for students in economics, whereas Lowry (1999) reports clear improvement and Schultz (1996/1997: 160) "significantly improved level of performance", better evaluations and greater acceptance of the technology. Bartsch & Cobern (2003), on the contrary, even report PowerPoint producing poorer learning results. While these studies mainly draw on standardized instruments like questionnaires and surveys, there is virtually no research on the actual *performance* of presentations in its 'naturally' occurring context (except from Brinkschulte 2004). We do not know how speakers accomplish the task of addressing an audience via a combination of spoken words and computer supported visualizations, what the audience does, how 'knowledge' is transmitted and if this communicative form changes the ways in which knowledge is presented and acquired.

To shed light on these questions, we have been videotaping visual presentations in a variety of different fields over several months, collecting a significant corpus of data. In the analysis that follows I will draw on that corpus. Examining the orchestration of simultaneously delivered visual and oral 'text', I will focus on one typical element of the inner structure of computer supported presentations: bullet lists.

## Listing in presentation

Bullet lists figure among the most frequent visual elements in presentation. In this form of visualization, textual elements consisting either of single words or fragments of sentences are organized vertically, sometimes preceded by numbers or iconic elements like hyphens, dots or small pictograms. Obviously, bulleted lists with indented subcategories had already become a common format with the extended use of overhead projectors from the 1970ies onwards. It was the introduction of computer presentation software that facilitated enormously both the preparation and the presentation of such lists. It became easier to add or change items or rearrange their order. Even more important, the computer allows revealing information gradually – a practice that with the overhead slides has to be performed by covering part of the transparency with paper and sliding that paper down as needed, or using overlays to add information gradually. With PowerPoint, bullet lists have become so widespread as to be identified with the genre as a whole.[2] As other studies indicate (cf. Yates & Orlikowski in press: 18), lists are, indeed, the most common form used for most of the slides in computer-

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2 Main part of the criticism against PowerPoint appoints to the supposed reductionism of bullet list. They are seen as a structural weakness of visual presentations leading to poor decision making (cf. Norvig 2003).

supported visual presentations. Actually, within our corpus, the majority of text-slides show listed items.[3]

Certainly, lists are used in a broad variety of contexts in daily life: we use shopping-lists or to-do lists as an aid memoir or in order to structure our individual future actions. In technical contexts we know that check-up lists assure correct handling of complex instruments, and accounting lists of numbers are one of the basic techniques for analyzing and organizing data. These listings have clear functions of rationalizing action. PowerPoint lists are a slightly different phenomenon: Unlike the former examples, which are mainly embedded in *individual* action or highly fixed interactive processes, lists used in presentations serve as a visual instrument a speaker may use in addition to his speech. Therefore the critical point to be scrutinized is the simultaneity of the visual appearance with the verbal behaviour of the speaker. The question is: How is the visualization of listed elements coordinated with the speech?

Structure and function of lists in oral communication have been studied extensively by linguist and conversation analysts. As Jefferson (1990) has observed, many lists occur in three part units.[4] Some idiomatic examples are: "here, there and everywhere", "Peter, Paul and Mary" or "Monday, Tuesday and Thursday". Its simplest form is the triple single, for example: "Das wichtigste is' Kontakte: Kontakte: Kontakte" [*the most important is contacts, contacts, contacts]* (taken from Schnettler 2003: 211), a repetition that may indicate something like muchness or serve to reinforce a statement. Lists can be used as a persuasive rhetorical device. For instance, three-part lists are conventionally treated as strengthening or affirming a broader, overarching position or argument (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998). Listing is a linguistic resource that also serves other functions in everyday social interaction, like enumerating, giving alternative formulations to approximate an expression or for gradation (as in the first example cited above). Three-part lists are also frequently used to summarize some general class of things. Three parts are enough to indicate that we have more than individual instances on their own but instances standing for something more general. There are lists in oral communication that are closed, whereas open lists end with 'generalized list completers' such as "etcetera" or "that kind of thing". Generalized list completers can take the place of the third item. Frequently, they are acoustically consonant with the prior items. As Selting (2003: 7) has found out, in addition to parallelism in syntax, intonation plays a crucial role for the recognizability of spoken lists in everyday communication. It is the timing and prosody of speech, in particular of accented syllable on the list items for the establishment of a common rhythm that makes listing routinely

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3 Out of a total of 653 slides analyzed thus far, 171 (out of a total of 238 text-only slides) include bullet lists. The other slides showing combinations of text and images (100) or being image-dominated (250), whereas image-only slides are surprisingly rare (27) in our corpus.

4 Although there might be a preference for even more extensive lists in natural conversation in other cultures, as some examples in Sánchez Ayala (2003: 324, 327) indicate.

recognizable. Sánchez Ayala's (2003) comparative formal analysis of lists in conversations shows that both in Spanish and English the construction has developed a stylized intonation pattern based on the holding of tones by means of lengthening of nuclear syllables, a durable syntactic organization based on parataxis and an almost identical inventory of lexicalized expressions to index the end of a list. Moreover, listing can also serve as an interactional resource (Lerner 1994). Finishing the third part can be perceived as completing a speaker's turn or, in collaborative listings, a short delay after a second item can invite another speaker to take his turn and complete the list. Noticeably, as the examples shown above, items in conversation consist of quite short elements, often composed just of singles word tied together by conjunctions.

These findings, nonetheless, pertain to listing practice in everyday conversations. Therefore, it is convenient to specify the differences of lists in visual presentations: In contrast to listing in oral communication which is a sequentially organized structure shaped by a specific repetitive syntax and prosodic patterns, all items in visualized lists are simultaneously present. Further, we do not really know if the listing practice follows a similar structure, as the speaker orchestrates visually presented signs with spoken comments. In order to distinguish the phenomena in question, I will further refer to the visually presented text as the 'list', whereas the spoken part during the exposition of the corresponding slide will be called the 'commentary'.

Before turning to the examples, we have to distinguish between different types of speakers according to the use they make of the projected images in presentation. *Orators* only use the computer image as a kind of silent, colourful wallpaper in the background. Their commentary on a short four items list may exceed more than a quarter of an hour, without ever turning to or pointing at one of the items that appear on screen. In this case, the audience may recognize the progress of the argumentative (or narrative) sequence, orienting occasionally to the list while listening to the orators, especially when recognizing that a certain utterance matches with some part of what is written on the wall. In the best case, these *keywords* construct a coherent nexus between the two texts. One would be inclined to call this inter-textuality, but the abundance of cases in which there is pure redundancy or even mismatch between the two texts prevent us from that.

*Performers* do act differently: this type of speaker is making extensive use of and is interacting frequently with both the visualisations on screen and the audience. She or he manipulates, in addition to the manuscript, the laptop or the mouse for quickly switching through the slides and often points to the projection using his hand, a pointing device or his or her whole body in order to mediate between visualization and audience. In general, performers spend less time commenting on a single slide. Consequently, the ratio between list and comment is more equal in the latter, which is elementary to carry out the comparison. Therefore, the analysis restricts to this type.

Let us consider the following example, taken from a small internal information meeting in the custom authorities. Daniel, a specialist, is explaining some novelties concerning the standardization of cereal products in Europe to administration per-

sonnel. In the beginning of his speech he gives a brief overview on the market situation and the history of standardization committees in different European countries. At this moment of the speech he proceeds to commentary on the international efforts to harmonize the legal and technical standards of this procedure. Slide 11 (Image 1) shows a title and four fragments of sentences organized in a typical PowerPoint list
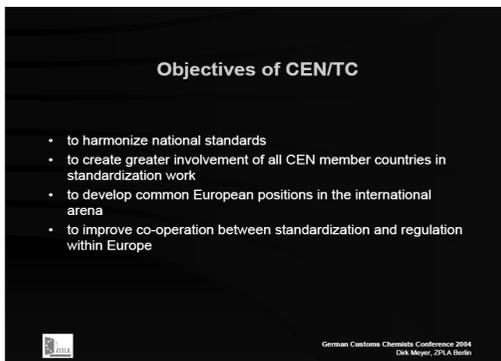


Image 1: A typical PowerPoint slide showing a bullet list

format. In this case, the title ("Objectives of the CEN/TC") represents the core element to which every listed phrasal fragment is a specification, grammatically connected to the title by elliptical verbal constructions. Transformed into a full sentence, the first point can be unpackaged as: 'The (first) objective of CENT/TC is to harmonize national standards', the second as: 'The (second) objective is to create greater involvement of all CEN member countries in standardization work' etc. It is important to note that all listed elements follow a similar grammatical structure: the fragments begin with infinitive verbal constructions that are paralleled as anaphora ("to harmonize…", "to create…", "to develop…", "to improve…"). There are two more characteristics that stand out: Firstly, the text includes the acronyms "CENT/TC" and "CEN". Acronyms are condensed abbreviation including key information central for understanding the meaning of the whole text. They indicate that this information pertains to a very special field. Unlike the other words included in this list, the abbreviations are not part of a commonly understandable lexicon, so that either the speaker will have to uncover their meaning or, in case he will not, we will have to suppose some *special knowledge* that the speaker shares with his audience. Secondly, two other visible elements appear on the slide in addition to the listed items: One is an icon on the left bottom of the slide – a stylized European flag with stars and boldly underlined the word "ZOLL" standing for the German Customs Authority. This icon represents the institution. On the right bottom there are two lines printed in a noticeably smaller letter than the main text. The second line includes the name of the speaker in conjunction with his institutional affiliation, and the line above shows the title and date of the first occasion this presentation was shown originally. Such iconic elements and fixed subtitles, repeated on each slide, are quite common features of computer-supported visual presentations. They have a similar function to what is called 'living columns' in books, which is to orient readers (or in this case: spectators) about the talk they are in and thereby framing the presently visible slide as being part of a larger series. Repeated titles on the top, the bottom or the slides' margins therefore serve as a contextualizing

device. However, this contextualizer may not correspond to the actual situation, as in this case: every slide makes reference to the international conference on which Daniel's presentation was originally shown. Such 'misleading' contexualizations also turn out to be common for computer-supported visual presentations being frequently reused by speakers in subsequent talks without updating all of the slides' elements.

## Translating visualizations

Certainly, a look at the slide only uncovers the structural aspects of one of the elements that interplay in presentations. Therefore, we will now shift to the commentary. Let us have a look on how this visualization is presented by the speaker. We join the action in the moment when the speaker switches from the previous slide. In extract 1 we can observe how his commentary relates to the visualized list (the arrows indicating the onset of every single listed item):

**Extract 1**

[… switches to slide 11 …]

   (6.0)

1  Ja, noch einmal die, ↑Ziele dieses Fachausschusses,
*Yes, once again  the  objectives of this expert committee*

2  (1.0) ääh, 'nen vorrangiges Ziel is' es zunächst einmal auch
*eh  a prior    aim is  for a start    also*

⟶ 2  die vielen, ↑nationalen Standards,
*the many national standards*

3  die in den verschiedenen europäischen Staaten existieren, zu, ↓harmonisieren,
*that in the different    European  countries exist  to harmonize*

⟶ 4  (1.0) und, ääh, 'nen weiteres Ziel is' die stärkere Einbindung,
*and, eh  a    another aim is the stronger involvement*

5  aller Mitgliedsländer in=die=europäische=Normenarbeit.
*of all member countries in the European work on norms*

⟶ 6  (1.0) ne, es' soll dann weiterhin ein Beitrag geleistet werden,
*no, it shall then further  a contribution be made*

7  um die europäischen Positionen auf internationaler Ebene,
*to  the European position    on the international level*

8  wie, (eben) bei ISO, der internationalen Organisation für Standardisierung,
*like (precisely) at the ISA, the international organisation for standardization*

9  oder auch bei den (Kodex)arbeiten, deutlicher zu formuliern.
*or  also in the works on codex  clearer    to formulate*

⟶ 10  (1.5) ↑und es wird eine enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen Standardisierung
*and    a    tighter cooperation    between standardization*

11  und Regulierung angestrebt,
*and regulation  is strived for*

⟶ 12  °'ne,° (1.0) und:äh:, das findet sich dann eben auch wieder, wie ich vorhin sagte,
*well, and eh that is found then just also again like I said before*

13  in den Verordnungstexten der E<u>G</u>::, die für uns letztendlich bindend sind=
    *in the regulation statuts of the EC, which are for us ultimately obligatory*
14  für=unsere=Untersuchungen für=unsere=Gutachten,
    *for our     reports     for our        expertises*
15  in denen dann=eh Bezug genommen wird auf entsprechende, ↑Standardmethoden,
    *in which then eh reference     is made           to corresponding  standard methods*
16  die also dem jetzigen Stand, von  Wissenschaft und Technik, widerspiegeln
    *which  the current  state  of    science      and technology reflect*
    (2.0) [… switches to slide 12]

After switching the slide, the speaker takes quite a long pause (6.0). He then restarts with a reference to prior parts of his talk ("Ja, noch einmal…"), and announces what is in effect a vocalization of the title on this slide ("…die, ↑Ziele dieses Fachausschusses", line 1), with a rising intonation on the most important expression. We can easily relate the spoken to the visualized text. Further, we observe that the commentary is not a literal copy of the list, but a transformation of the visualised text into verbal utterance. There are striking differences between both: Whereas the text on the slide is written in English, the speaker translates it in his verbal articulation into German. And he also 'translates', although in a different way, the meaning of the acronym to his audience: The abbreviation "CEN/TC" is spoken out as "this expert committee" and thereby identified as something the audience already knows of. The indexical term relates obviously to their common shared knowledge, so that the speaker is not obliged to further comment on its meaning. And, finally and most important, he 'translates' also syntactically: Whereas the listed items are formulated as (fragments of) final main clauses, the spoken commentary shows a more complex syntactical pattern including inserted subordinated clauses.

In line 2, after a very short pause accompanied by an interjection tag ("ehm") the speaker immediately proceeds to comment on the first item of the list. In articulating that first point, the spoken differs noticeably from the written text: Observe that he explicitly stresses the priority of this first point ("…a prior aim…"); a characteristic that may be expressed in the written text only by its very position on top of the list. In addition, in what he speaks aloud he conveys additional information on this item by specifying that the harmonization of standards is necessary because of the many existing varieties and that this refers to the area of the European countries – both aspects not included in this first item on the slide. Adding of details is a recurrent event, occurring several times within this sequence. The broadest extension is the one given in line 12-16, including aspects which are not present in the visualized text at all.

Throughout the whole commentary, we see these slight variations between what is written and what is said as a recurrent characteristic. In addition, the transcript reveals that the spoken text parallels beautifully the structure of the visualized list: the speaker puts into words every four items, and he verbalizes them in the same order as they appear in the projection. Further, all enunciations are organized in complete sentences. Moreover, the verbalization of each item begins with a slight pause followed by an

interjection tag ("…äh, 'nen...", line 2; "und, ääh, nen…", line 4, etc.). Interjections tags (Sanchez Ayala 2003: 339 calls them delay devices) are utterances that mark verbally the separation between the elements of the spoken list and, at the same time, function as continuers linking the former element to the subsequent one. Being a monologue, this speech does not contain turns at talk in a strict sense. During the pause, no one from the audience takes his turn. However, these markers can be identified as operating as a kind of turn that the speaker is giving to himself in changing the footing (Goffman 1981a) from a reader to a commentator of the visualized text. In addition, every spoken item is enclosed in a similar prosodic contour, beginning with a low onset followed by rising intonation and falling to low at the end, similar to the findings of Selting (2003: 58) who suggests that closed lists are often formulated with single sentences and very often show successively downstepped pitch peaks for each item.

In sum, there are clear features of the spoken text that parallel the listing structure of the visualization. Nevertheless, the commentary is not a simple copy of the list on the slide. Therefore, we could hardly conclude the presentation is being directed by the technology or that an 'in-built cognitive' structure of the software imposes itself here. To the contrary, as we can observe, the speaker formulates whole sentences and composes a comprehensive text, quite different from the listed visualized text which consists only of syntactical fragments. Although it parallels the item structure, the structure of the orally delivered text has its own and differing characteristics. Before drawing conclusion on the weak basis of text comparison only, we should, therefore, shift our attention to the speakers' performance; that is the way in which the words are augmented, supported and enacted by bodily conduct, and, especially, gesture and mimic. In order to unveil this specific orchestration, we have to turn to the video data. The performance analysis that follows does not only take advantage of the whole potential of video data. It also tries to accomplish an analysis that surmounts the shortcomings of overspecialized and atomized approaches that cut the data down to slices. We will look at the video considering a somewhat broader problem not only relevant for listing practices but PowerPoint presentations in general. There is a common problem in computer-supported presentations: The equipment – i.e. laptop, beamer and projection screen – is not only a resource for the speaker in order to illustrate his argument. The technical device itself constitutes an additional focus of attention, both for speaker and audience. This may cause the problem of competing foci of attention, foci that may prove difficult to reconcile – as Heath & vom Lehn (2004: 59) observe with respect to a comparable arrangement – and that distract audience and speaker.

## Conducting attention

The following sequence shows the beginning of the unit. Daniel stands in front of his audience behind a lectern whereon his manuscript and a mouse to operate the com-

puter lie. After finishing reading the last sentence referring to the preceding slide, there is a long gap in his speech (6.0).



Image 2        Image 3        Image 4        Image 5

-------------------------------------------------(6.0) ------------------------------------------------------ja, noch einmal

During this pause, the speaker first looks up from his desk, and then shifts his gaze to the projection wall (image 2), simultaneously turning over the pages of his manuscript. Subsequently, he presses the button on the mouse (image 3), then looks a second time to the screen (image 4) and only after that restarts speaking, facing his audience (image 5). These movements circumscribe the speakers' radius of action and the three different points of attention he is orchestrating while delivering his speech: first, the text of his manuscript, exclusively accessible to him as the speaker, second, the visualization on screen, including text and images both visible to him and to the audience, and, third, the audience itself as co-present persons to which the speaker's talk is addressed. This remarkably complex ecology, further complicated by the several technical devices (mouse, laptop, beamer) that the speakers has to monitor permanently in order to assure proper working, creates a very special situation, different to the one of a classical orator addressing the audience only. This environment produces several competing foci of attention, to which the audience's attention may be drawn. Some of these foci are on the 'front stage' (like the speaker and the screen), whereas some are, at least intended to be, 'back stage', that is hidden to the audience or at the margins of their awareness, like the manuscript (that may have been seen, but generally will not have been read by spectators), or the technical equipment. In the situation where everything is working properly, this arrangement alone implies a quite complex task to manage, leaving aside those (typical) moments when for some reasons of technical breakdown or malfunctioning (of laptop, beamer, mouse or some other device), attention is unintendedly distracted to some aspect that puts itself in the foreground although it should be operating hidden in the background. Hence, what we may call 'conducting attention' is a common problem in computer-supported presentations. As we already noticed before, the speakers' structured talk (e.g. parallelising verbally the visualizations) may be of some guidance for the audience. In addition, as we observe in the following fragment, speakers make use of their gaze, arms and posture in order to conduct the audience through the multi-sensual jungle of a PowerPoint presentation by guiding on a moment by moment basis the attention of the audience.

Consider how Daniel orchestrates bodily conduct and speech in order to conduct the audience's attention. There is a recurrent sequential pattern initiating every single

item: First, the speaker looks to his manuscript lying in front of him on the desk, then he turns to the projection, and finally shifts his body to the audience.



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (1.0) und, ääh, 'nen | weiteres Ziel is' die | stärkere Einbindung, |
| *and, eh    a* | *another aim is the* | *stronger involvement* |

Images 6 to 8 show the steps of the typical unfolding of this sequence: First, Daniel is turning his head to the projection (6), then his look goes back down to his manuscript while emphasizing the item's main point with a gesture (7) and subsequently turning his gaze to the audience (8). A similar orchestration is presented for every single item on the list. In coordinating his body shifts, speech, gesture and gaze in this particular way, he not only constructs the item as a distinguishable unit within the list. This repeated configuration also serves to conduct the audience's attention – a fact that can be observed clearly in the person on the right margin, who raises his head in the direction of the screen at the beginning of this sequence, then slightly moving it to the speaker and finally withdrawing it completely towards the end (starting on: …"aller Mitgliedsländer…", line 5.)

This last observation at least indicates that, although public speeches, lectures presentation and the like have been considered largely as a unilateral communicative situation, we can certainly analyze them under a perspective of interaction. Without any doubt, the degree of interaction may vary to some extent according to spatial circumstances, the number of attendees, the grade of formality etc. Equally, the situation is framed beforehand as asymmetrical. The licence of speaker and hearers do differ quite considerably, as do their participation rights in speech. Nevertheless, as this short extract demonstrates, analyzing this communicative situation in terms of performance unveils the patterns that operate within the presentation as a communicative form that is not restricted only to verbal behaviour. Certainly, the orchestration of visual conduct, body movement and speech only becomes accessible to scrutiny by detailed video analysis.

## Conclusion: Performing items in presentation

In this article, I have tried to show how video data can be examined in their synchronous dimension based on methodological principal deriving from ethnomethodological video-analysis, genre analysis and videohermeneutics. These approaches use preferably naturally occurring data of social situations and subject it to a meticulous sequential analysis

that reveals how participants socially organise their actions and activities. The analysis revealed some structural aspects of the inner organization of computer-supported presentation. I described two of the speakers' activities by which he orchestrates his performance: 'translating' and 'conducting attention'. The performance of list items exposed on screen shows some clear correspondence to structural features found by linguists in oral lists, i.e. parallelism in syntax and the role of pauses and intonation which shape the production of items. But in contrast to most of the instances reported in the literature, the listing commentary differs notably in length. Whereas items in spoken lists are often just composed of a single word or short units tied together with conjunctions, comments to visually presented list are usually more extensive utterances.

As central as they may be, items and comments are obviously only one element of what constitutes the communicative genre of computer supported presentations. This form of communication is embedded in a wider context. Therefore, the analysis takes into consideration the ways in which single elements, that are talk, visual conduct and visualizations, are being coordinated by the speaker. It is this special *orchestration* that constitutes the core of computer-supported presentations. As the examples show, the speaker is an *active* participant, accomplishing the complex task of orchestrating speech, bodily conduct, and technological devices in order to deliver his presentation to an audience.

Surely, further details of such presentations have to be examined. But if we ask for a comprehensive interpretation, I would dare to suggest that 'translating' and 'conducting attention' serves a specific purpose, irreducible to a plainly functional aspect. The speaker performs ceremoniously. He is "thrust upon the stage", a stage that confronts him with technical devices only partly domesticable, with competing foci of attention distracting the audience's concentration from him as the central figure. But, although exposed to this situation, he does not "flounder hopelessly". Instead, he manages to re-establish himself as the master of ceremony who is dominating this intricate situation. Thus, we could imagine that translating and conducting attention are elements of a special modern ritual,[5] are forms of presentation oriented to order social behaviour and establish a common world view. It is part of an 'order of rituals' (Soeffner 1996) that re-establishes the individual in the centre of the spotlight, despite all technical force of powerful visualizations.

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5  In a similar vein, Brooks (2004) studies the ritual dimension of presentations.

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