

Presentation Techniques Used by Selected International Business Leaders

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá prezentačními technikami, které lídři mezinárodních firem využívají ve svých prezentacích. Schopnost prezentovat je složena ze spousty aspektů, jako gestikulace a držení těla, oční kontakt, výrazy obličeje, hlasu a slova. Účelem práce je popsat, jak vybraní světoví lídři využívají verbální a neverbální komunikaci pro prezentování. To bylo zkoumáno na základě metody pozorování, která byla uplatněna na čtyři obchodní Keynote videoprezentace.

Klíčová slova: obchodní prezentace, lídři obchodu, verbální komunikace, neverbální komunikace, keynote

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis focuses on presentation techniques that international business leaders use in their presentations. The ability to present consists of many aspects, such as gesticulation and posture, eye contact, facial expressions, voice and words. The main goal of the thesis is to describe how the international business leaders use the verbal and non-verbal communication for presenting. This was assessed by the observation method that was used on four business keynote video presentations.

Keywords: business presentations, business leaders, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, keynote

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's business world, chief executive officers do not just serve as the highest decision making power but also as the face of the company. Being able to present themselves and their company has become one of the key roles of the CEOs around the world. CEOs nowadays are seen much more often than ever due to social media, news, podcasts, conferences etc. all available on the internet. This emphasizes the importance of being an effective speaker because they have to convince their customers, shareholders, employees and competitors.

Although the CEOs have undoubtedly become more available to the public than before, there is not enough research on how the world leaders of business present in front of live audience and what advanced techniques they use, if any. This lack of understanding plays a critical role because the future of their company stands on CEO's ability to communicate messages successfully to all the parties involved in the business and have a lasting impression.

This thesis seeks to fill this gap by looking into presentations of international business leaders and analyzing their public speaking skills and methods. Specifically, this thesis explores how business leaders use verbal and non-verbal communication in their presentations, such as eye contact, gestures and body posture, appearance and how they use language to convey the intended message to their audiences. All these devices contribute to the overall success of a business presentation and shape the outcomes for a company.

I THEORETICAL PART

1 BUSINESS PRESENTATION

The following chapter focuses on the role of presenting in business. Chapter 1.1 describes the main characteristics for a business presentation. Chapter 1.2 distinguishes between different types of business presentations. After that, Chapter 1.3 provides a description of keynote presentations which will be the main topic of the practical part. At the end of the chapter 1.4, I point out that the position of a CEO has a huge impact on the overall good being of a company and that these managers need proper skills when it comes to public speaking.

1.1 The Importance of Presentations in Business

According to Preston (2025), “in the world of commercial communication, strong presentation abilities are essential. A strong presentation with a clear structure can attract a crowd, have an impact on choices made, and lead to positive business outcomes”. Ledden (2017, 147) says that nowadays everyone in a company presents something to one another. For example, engineers do not only focus on designing or building but also on communicating functions of the products.

If successfully delivered, a business presentation effectively communicates ideas in a captivating manner while simplifying anything that would be too difficult to understand for an average person (Preston 2025). Presentation skills belong to the category of so called “soft skills”, together with time management and collaboration (Slattery 2022). Slattery (2022) considers presentation skills as a tool for Sustainable business expansion and prosperity. In business context, presentations have replaced written reports, which makes the information faster to act on (Hartley and Chatterton 2015, 250). Gallo (2014) says that people who work corporate jobs in America are not in favor of presenting to their colleagues, even detest it.

In case of a poorly executed presentation, time is not the only thing at loss. Company’s productivity decreases, decisions are ineffective etc. These further effect the company from the financial point of view when extra money is used to repair, fix and clarify the mistakes that were made due to misunderstanding (SmartTech 2024).

Being able to present and communicate ideas plays a significant role in any organization. There are two main types of presentations in businesses, the first is for internal purposes that communicates ideas, thoughts etc. to people working in a company, while the

second one communicates with public, including media, shareholders etc. (Northern Ireland Business First 2022). More on this will be covered in the following subchapter.

1.2 Types of Business Presentations

Theobald (2022,15) agrees with Business Jargons that there are different types of business presentations, internal presentation and external presentation. Internal presentation is aimed at people who work for the company or anyone who is interested in the good of the company, for example directors (Business Jargons).

External presentation is targeted on people working outside of the company and who are interested in the well-being for their own personal interest, clients who benefit from products, suppliers who make money by delivering supplies, investors lending capital to the company etc. Due to the variety of different businesses, people who attend these presentations are usually unknown (Business Jargons).

Theobald (2022, 15) adds to this by distinguishing between formal and informal internal presentation. An Informal presentation is given to peers and colleagues regularly and therefore is very common. This type of presentation is often done to spur a discussion. It is important to be yourself because these people usually know the presenter and can feel the authenticity. One of the advantages is that the place is known in advance, it is usually a room in the company's building, which makes it easier to prepare.

On the other hand, a formal presentation is supervised by the management of the company and is focused on targeting more people than the informal one (Theobald 2022, 15).

Presenting to people outside of the company varies depending on the purpose of the presentation. It is important to realize that the presenter speaks on behalf of the company. There is a possibility that the speaker might present in a place that he/she is not familiar with and that makes it more stressful (Theobald 2022, 15).

According to Business Jargons, "the main purpose of the presentation is to inform, persuade and motivate. The various types of presentations are classified on the basis of purpose, audience profile, time availability and objective and kind of audience involved." In Chapter 1.3, I focus on explaining what a Keynote presentation is because the practical part of this thesis analyses four Keynote presentations.

1.3 Keynote Presentations

Jacques (2018) differentiates between a keynote and a normal presentation by saying that keynote presentations are designed to target larger audience and are generally more complex than basic presentations. Keynote presentations are also more suitable for longer speeches showing how much a speaker understands and is able to speak about a certain topic (Belfast). A proper keynote presentation should answer questions that visitors may ask regarding the event, such as what they might learn, what will the next speakers talk about, what to mainly focus on etc. This way, they should find out everything they will need to know about the event (Morgan 2019). Keynote presentations serve as a tool for introducing the overall theme of an event to the attendees at the beginning of it (Belfast). Sometimes keynote presentations can come at the end of the conference, but usually it is at the beginning (Morgan 2019).

People speaking at a keynote presentations are typically respectable experts or people who achieved success in the industry (Belfast). Keynote presentations are usually delivered by the CEO of the company that hosts the event (Morgan 2019). Jacques (2018) advises that keynote presentations should not be taken lightly and require a certain level of experience. Due to its difficulty, keynote presentations take a lot of preparation time also because they have to be tailored for a specific audience.

The optimal duration for a keynote presentation should be approximately 45 minutes with the acceptable fluctuation of 15 minutes (Belfast). Jacques (2018) gives examples of keynote presentations worth of mentioning, such as those of international software companies or the TED talks.

1.4 The Face of a Company

In any company the highest decision making power belongs to a chief executive officer (CEO). The decisions consist of effective use of human capital, resources and also the role of the main link between the company and the board of directors when it comes to communication. A CEO also communicates with different individuals outside of the company such as media, communities. For example, about undergoing changes in the company. A CEO can boost his/her reputation by growing market share, reducing costs of the corporation or entering a new market, vice versa (Hayes 2024).

1.5 Summary

This chapter begins by introducing the concept of presentation in business context. In Chapter 1.1, I describe why presenting is important for businesses and how it helps them in many aspects. In Chapter 1.2, I introduce different types of business presentations depending on who they are addressed to, both internal and external. I continue in Chapter 1.3, by focusing on one specific type of presentation and that is Keynote. The last chapter of this section addresses how a CEO has a significant influence when it comes to success of a company and how his/her performance when it comes to public speaking, might affect the company either positively or negatively. I finish this chapter by stating that public speaking skills are vital for the position of a CEO. In Chapter 2, I focus on describing what a successful presentation looks like.

2 DELIVERING A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

The main focus of this chapter is to describe what a successful presentation looks like and the main elements that distinguish between an average presentation and an excellent one. The other half of this chapter focuses on delivering a successful presentation, especially on verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is further divided into: eye contact, posture, gestures and appearance of the presenter.

2.1 Features of a Successful presentation

According to Warriner (2022, 24), “not all presentations are created equal. Some presentations are clearly more effective and impactful than others.” In order to assess how effective the content and the delivery of a presentation is, it is important to use the right metrics (Gilbert 2024). Duarte (2023) says that spoken word has been seen as an influential instrument for impact and action, but one that is difficult to measure. Warriner (2022, 25) points out that it is easier to assess the effectiveness of a presentation as a spectator but much more difficult to recreate the same as a speaker.

Warriner (2022, 48) identifies two main objectives of a professional presentation and that is to inform and to persuade. Pulcinella (2022) describes persuasion as “communicating your point of view with a specific intent or goal in mind and doing your best to beguile a prospect into seeing your vision or point of view.”

According to Coopman and Lull (2024, 252), delivery “refers to presenting a speech in public”. It is a combination of visual and verbal part. Delivery is very complex, consisting of making use of verbal and non-verbal communication among many other aspects that need to be mastered before going on to present. Schwabish (2017, 147) says that the audience is influenced by three main elements in a presentation and these are: content, slides and delivery. Due to the limitation of space, content and slides will not be discussed in this thesis.

2.2 Verbal Communication

According to Ledden 2017 (2017, 52), “the success of your presentation lies in your ability to put together a relevant, understandable audience focused piece of communication before you stand up to present it.” Choice of language has an undeniable impact on the overall vibe of the presentation (German 2020, 146). Ledden (2017, 52) identifies two main mistakes speakers make when it comes to verbal communication. These are: talking about something irrelevant to the audience and sharing too much information. The consequences of these

mistakes result in audience that is not interested and not paying attention. German (2020, 142) suggests that the speaker should focus on getting the main point across to the audience.

According to Bloomsbury (2022, 24), in order to address as many people as possible, the speaker should use simple language that is easily understandable. Ledden (2017, 54) adds to this by saying that the speaker should be using “first degree words”. Those are words with a single meaning – unambiguous. Jargon should be avoided if possible because there might be people in the audience, who are not aware of the technical terms related to the industry (Bloomsbury 2022, 16). Verbal communication is also about using the speaker’s voice effectively, which is described in Chapter 2.3.3.

2.3 Non-verbal Communication

In order to communicate, no words have to be used. People communicate by sending non-verbal clues (Blahova 2015, 13). Clues such as gestures or body language are transmitted to people we talk to (2015, 14). Phutela (2015, 45) adds that no communication is possible without non-verbal clues. Blahova (2015, 14) suggests focusing on the exchange of non-verbal clues and their consequences when communicating with someone. Phutela (2015, 45) says that body language can affect what is said in four ways, it can: repeat it, contradict it, substitute it or add additional information. Non-verbal communication consists of: eyes, hand gestures, facial expressions, physical appearance etc. (Blahova 2015, 13). Phutela (2015, 48) advises that gestures are interpreted differently depending on the culture they are used in.

2.3.1 Facial Expressions

According to Warriner (2022, 202), “facial expressions involve manipulating the muscles in your face to convey emotion or meaning to your audience.” People use numerous facial expressions every day to express their feelings, usually completely unconsciously (Warriner 2022, 202). Coopman and Lull (2024, 263) suggest that facial expressions should be aligned with tone of the intended message.

According to Warriner, presenter’s facial expressions have an impact on how audience perceives their message. If positive facial expression is involved, it is more probable that audience will attribute positive mood to the message (2022, 202). In addition to that, after some time, audience will start mirroring the speaker’s facial expression (2022, 202).

2.3.2 Body Posture and Gestures

According to Coopman and Lull (2024, 263), posture is “the way you position and carry your body.” Speaker’s level of interest and engagement are evaluated based on their body posture, standing straight with open posture shows confidence and attentiveness. On the other hand, poor posture is an indicator of disinterest (Coughlan 2024). When a speaker straightens their body, it shows belief in oneself. The same applies for lower part of a body which also helps the speaker keep balance (Coopman and Lull 2024, 263).

Gilbert (2013) says that gestures are “one of your most powerful communication tools.” They can be used to visually support the meaning of speaker’s words. According to Gilbert (2013), gestures should have a descriptive role. Gestures should always reflect the content and tone of message (Hanson 2021). Gilbert (2013) states that successful speakers share similarities such as using space for bold gestures while being comfortable in their own skin. Warriner (2022, 192) distinguishes between two main gestures that a speaker can use in their presentation to either be seen as trustworthy and comfortable or uncomfortable and hiding something. The first is achieved by opening speaker’s body, the latter is by closing it. Gallo (2015, 90) says that great leaders expose their hands, rotate them towards the people and keep them apart.

2.3.3 Voice

Kopecký (2010, 77) says that when talking about something, content is equally important to delivery of the message. If the delivery, meaning voice and body language, are not conveying the same message, It might cause confusion. According to Duarte, vocal tone of a speaker can be used as a medium to either affirm the mood of one’s message or express the opposite (2023). When it comes volume of the speaker’s voice, they should not be shouting. They should be heard anywhere in the audience (Hanson 2021). According to Gallo (2010, 187), if the speaker wants to prevent his speech from sounding flat, they should vary the speed of speaking. Theobald adds that this also shows passion (2022, 72).

Presenter should speak in a way that allows the audience to understand easily and prevents It from sounding dry (Hanson 2021). Clear articulation allows your audience to understand what you are saying and at the same time your message is seen as powerful and convincing (Duarte 2023). Hanson (2021) says to “play your voice like a piano. It can be melodic, strong and purposeful.”

2.3.4 Eye contact

According to Warriner (2022, 198), “eye contact is the action of looking at another person’s eyes to express meaning (consciously or unconsciously).” It is important to the audience that the presenter is talking to them, be it an online presentation or in person (Coopman and Lull 2024, 262). When the presenter is using visual projection, the main focus should still be on the audience, not on the visuals. There are exceptions, such as repeating the exact words from the slides, in this case the presenter should swiftly look at the notes to memorize the text (Coopman and Lull 2024, 262).

When eye contact is used effectively it enhances the overall presentation by creating a relationship between the presenter and members of the audience, it also makes the presenter perceived as honest, sincere and trustworthy (Warriner 2022, 198). On the other hand, eye contact of the listeners indicates the overall success of the presentation (Warriner 2022, 200). Ledden (2017, 94) suggests becoming “a lighthouse”, focusing sight from one side to the other, looking at each person for a brief moment to make them feel appreciated and included in the speech.

2.3.5 Appearance

According to Kogon (et al. 2016, 161), before the speaker starts presenting, the audience already forms impressions on the speaker by the overall appearance. Coughlan says that success in business is greatly influenced by understanding the importance of first impressions and using it on speaker’s side (2024). Choosing the right size of the clothes boosts confidence of the speaker and makes them seen as reliable and competent (Coughlan 2024).

Schwabish (2017, 154) says that when the speaker is uncertain what clothes to wear, they should go with the dress code of the event or be dressed more formally than the audience. According to Blahova (2015, 15), “how people look can have a significant impact on how others listen to them. Inappropriate look may reduce the credibility of their message”.

2.4 Summary

This chapter begins by stating that not all presentations are the same. Some presentations end up being successful and some do not. In chapter 2.1, it continues by asking what success means in presentations, explaining the difficulty of quantifying objective success because it

depends on individual's goals of each presenter. However, there are general goals of any presentation, those are to inform and persuade someone. Success of every presentation depends on three main pillars, those are: content, visuals and delivery. The rest of this chapter focuses on delivery. In Chapter 2.2, I focus on verbal communication while in Chapter 2.3, I address non-verbal communication. This chapter is further divided into subchapters discussing eye contact, gestures, voice etc. Not only does it explain the meaning each of these non-verbal cues play in the overall message the presenter wants to relay on the audience but also how it should be done correctly.

3 ADVANCED PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

The last chapter of the theoretical part describes two advanced techniques used in presenting for higher impact. The previous chapter described general rules for success when presenting and this chapter goes deeper. The two techniques are: use of silence and storytelling. They are not what people find first when looking for a guideline on how to present successfully. They serve as complementary elements to the general presentation skills described in Chapter 2. This means that in order to be a successful presenter, people should first focus on the basics and then add these two techniques to their range of skills. Both of the techniques improve skills that have already been described. Pausing uses the ability to work with the voice. Storytelling is an enhanced ability to talk to the audience.

3.1 Use of Silence/Pauses

It is perhaps the most underestimated presentation technique (Hanson 2021). Mastering the use of pauses is an art in itself and can significantly determine whether the speech comes across as average or outstanding (Rehn 2016). Pauses have several positive effects on the audience, as well as on shaping our persona and presentation skills. When a person takes a pause, for example, he/she will appear more confident (Hanson 2021).

A well-placed pause helps the audience process the main message and retain the presented information (Warriner 2022, 125). These pauses can take various forms and be used at different stages of a speech. Some pauses are effective right at the beginning to build suspense before delivering important information. Others are best placed after a key idea to ensure it resonates with the audience. Rehn (2016) divides pauses as follows: the pause for emphasis; the pause for a punchline; the pause for reflection; the dramatic pause; the lead-in pause; the break.

Pauses are also beneficial for people as speakers, as they help them control the pace of their speech, preventing them from rushing and ensuring their message remains clear (Morgan 2021). Hanson (2021) recommends that the length of a pause should be as long as it takes to tap your foot.

Pauses in speech also demonstrate respect and consideration for the audience's reaction. By pausing, it gives them space to express their opinion, even if only through their facial expressions (Morgan 2021).

Conscious pauses are also a great substitute for filler sounds like "um," "ah," "uh," etc. These sounds indicate that the speaker is hesitating about what to say. They give the audience

the impression that he/she is processing and searching for what he/she wants to convey. It can be compared to when a computer is loading a folder, such as a video, and a loading wheel appears on the screen. Filler sounds reduce the quality of our speech and can diminish the impact of our message. For the audience, it can increase frustration, as they would prefer to watch a video in full quality rather than during the loading process with incomplete information. Therefore, speakers should pause if they need to gather their thoughts and realize what they want to say next (Warriner 2022, 179). It is important to practice making pauses instead of using filler sounds, so that our presentation is as smooth and fluent as possible (German 2020, 164).

3.2 Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the powerful analytical techniques used to structure and deliver messages effectively in presentations (Parikh 2024).

Incorporating stories into presentations not only humanizes the speaker but also fosters strong engagement, brings out the key point and enhances message retention (Schwartzberg 2022). Audiences are less likely to pay attention to monotonous lecturers; instead, they are drawn to those who spark imagination, craft compelling narratives, and make listeners feel like active participants in the story (Vasilyev 2020).

To be truly effective, a story must not only be captivating but also relevant to the audience (Schwartzberg 2022). A well-crafted story takes listeners on a journey, tailored to their needs and interests. Without this connection, the audience has little reason to engage. Customized messages resonate more deeply, capturing attention and inspiring action, while generic messages fail to make an impact, allowing minds to drift elsewhere (Parikh 2024). Additionally, strong stories often carry multiple layers of meaning, making them a remarkably efficient tool for conveying complex ideas in an accessible way (Boris 2017).

Experienced presentation storytellers understand the power of positioning themselves as mentors rather than heroes. Their primary focus is not on receiving praise but on equipping their audience with the tools they need to overcome challenges (Storie 2024).

This approach shifts the emphasis from self-promotion to audience empowerment, making the message more relatable and impactful. Rather than centering a presentation on an organization's achievements, effective storytellers craft narratives that address the audience's needs and struggles. The mentor-oriented presenter directly acknowledges the

customer's pain points and offers a solution. By framing the audience as the true protagonist of the story, this method fosters a deeper emotional connection and engagement (Storie 2024).

A presentation is an effective way to connect with an audience, not only appealing to their logical and analytical minds but also to their hearts and emotions, which hold the greatest power in decision-making. People often choose, trust, and buy based on feelings, not purely on logic. Emotions can be triggered through visuals or the way we perform (Vasilyev 2020).

These stories help define our collective identity and create a sense of belonging, making them an essential tool in building emotional connections and fostering trust (Boris 2017). Stories have a unique ability to convey culture, history, and values that bring people together, and this is especially relevant in the context of presentation skills and storytelling. Whether it is about nations, communities, or families, it is instinctively known that the shared stories people hold are a vital part of the bonds that connect them. In presentation storytelling, this principle is applied by using stories to define the collective identity and create a sense of belonging. This not only strengthens the emotional connection with the audience but also builds trust. These stories play a crucial role in effectively conveying a message and establishing a strong connection with listeners (Boris 2017).

Ultimately, storytelling is a powerful tool for exchanging ideas and fostering growth – and growth leads to learning. This is why it is so important to embed storytelling into organizational cultures and learning programs. Storytelling is essential. Whether the speaker is aiming to engage, influence, teach, or inspire others, telling or listening to a story is key. Moreover, it is crucial to encourage others to share their stories, creating a shared experience that enhances learning and connection (Peterson 2017).

3.3 Summary

This chapter focused on going beyond a successful presentation by explaining two advanced techniques to capture the audience and have a powerful impact on it. The first method (see Chapter 3.1) is about pausing during the speech. It describes how effective a pause can be, to let the audience reflect on what has just been said. The second method described in Chapter 3.2, is called storytelling and is about creating an engaging and fun narratives of what would normally be a boring story or message.

II PRACTICAL PART

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter serves as an introduction to the practical part where the main goal of the thesis is described as well as the methodology used to analyse the following business presentations.

4.1 The Main Goal of The Thesis

The main goal of the thesis is to investigate the presentation skills of the heads of the big international companies, namely facial expressions, body posture and gestures, voice, eye contact, appearance and advanced presentation methods: pauses and storytelling.

4.2 Research Method

Research method plays a significant role in any Bachelor thesis. Based on how my topic is assigned, the observation method is the most suitable one. As the sample for my analysis, I have chosen four business presentations given at four different events, mainly taking place in the USA, in the state of California but also in Taiwan, all focused on the development of Artificial Intelligence. All of those presentations are available online.

4.3 Observation

According to Slack and Rowley (2001, 35), “observation is an important research and data collection methodology”. Observation method is helpful to people who try to understand the world, such as researches and managers (Slack and Rowley 2001, 35).

Several classifications can be identified when it comes to observation, the right choice depends on number of things, such as the aims of the research, availability of resources and their access. The observation method can mainly be divided into participant and non-participant (Slack and Rowley 2001, 35-37).

The former is when a person observes an event first hand, live, as it is happening in real time, most likely in a role of a customer or a member of service staff. This creates an opportunity for them to experience it with their own emotions and feel what the atmosphere is like in the conference hall. Which creates a problem on its own because observers have to be unbiased later when it comes to evaluation (Slack and Rowley 2001, 37-38).

The latter is when a person observes something from the outside and is not a part of it. This type of observation usually relies on the use of cameras that record a conference or any other subject to be analyzed. This creates an advantage over participant observation because the

recording can be watched as many times as it is needed and rewatched to gain a fresh interpretation (Slack and Rowley 2001, 38).

In the case of this thesis, participant observation would mean personally attending the four conferences and being the part of the audience, while non-participant observation is when the presentations are watched on the internet. The latter method is the one that I have chosen for this thesis.

5 ANALYSIS

The following chapters will analyse four Chief Executive Officers of big international companies, doing business in the same industry, delivering a business presentation on Artificial Intelligence. I have chosen the most famous and successful technological companies: OpenAI, Google, Meta and Nvidia. The presentations took place in 2023/2024.

5.1 Sam Altman

The first presentation is held by a company called OpenAI with its CEO Sam Altman as the main speaker. This was their first developer conference and it took place in San Francisco on November 6th, 2023. OpenAI develops an AI model called ChatGPT which has seen growing popularity over the recent years. Out of all the analysed CEOs, Sam Altman is probably the least known. OpenAI's sole focus is on the development of AI. In the presentation, he talks about improvement made on their ChatGPT AI model as well as other improvements in the company. He talks about different new features of AI, what the new model of AI can do compared to the previous one, how they perform compared to each other, how their pricing changed, what companies they cooperate with and what to expect next in the future.

5.1.1 Verbal Communication

As mentioned in Chapter 2.2, in order to address as many people as possible, a speaker should use simple language that is easily understandable. Altman uses words that everyone understands, he does not use overly technical terms but it is a developer conference, so even if he did, people should understand him. His speech is full of positive sentences like: "We are thrilled to announce.", "We are working super hard.", "We are super happy to reveal." etc. He keeps the sentences short and always talks to the point.

5.1.2 Facial Expressions

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.1, facial expressions should be aligned with tone of the intended message. Altman's facial expressions do not always express the tone of message he conveys by words. Such an example can be when he talks about their new AI model that is better, faster, more energy efficient, more effective and he keeps neutral facial expression, as seen at 6:06. Facial expression is not the only way how a person can emphasize that something is

important or exciting but It certainly plays a part. Emphasis can be expressed by raising the voice for example.

5.1.3 Body Posture and Gestures

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.2, gestures should always reflect the content and tone of message. Altman does not use gestures to support what he says although at 8:00 when a new gadget is about to be released, he raises his finger at the audience or when he uses the word “but” he raises his finger to signal that a contradicting piece of information is coming, visible at 10:28.

The whole presentation Altman holds screen controller in one hand. For 80% of his presentation, he keeps the hand with controller down and uses mostly the other hand. He uses a limited range of motion in his gestures, he keeps his hand gestures in the area between his waist and his shoulders. He avoids sudden or chaotic movements, except for a few moments, when he seems surprised by sudden events, for example at 23:40. This happens when he welcomes other speakers to the stage and shakes hands with them. When he does not gesticulate anything, he keeps his hands along the body and does not put them into his pockets. When he listens to other speakers, he holds his hands together. He goes behind a desk for 5 minutes to use a computer when talking about certain features of their AI model, where only his shoulders and head can be seen. The speaker’s level of interest and engagement are evaluated based on their body posture, standing straight with open posture shows confidence and attentiveness (see Chapter 2.3.2). He keeps his body straight, standing firmly on the ground, rotating his upper body to look at all parts of the conference hall.

5.1.4 Voice

Altman speaks at a natural pace so that it is easy to understand him. He only speeds up when he realizes that he has less time than he thought, for example when he welcomes his colleague Jessica on stage, at 23:40. He speaks loudly enough. His speech is monotonous, when he introduces something exciting, he does not raise his voice or indicates that this information should be exciting. He articulates clearly, it is easy to understand him.

5.1.5 Eye contact

Altman extensively looks at the camera, as if it is more important than the people who are sitting there in the hall. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4, becoming “a lighthouse”, focusing sight from one side to the other, looking at each person for a brief moment to make them

feel appreciated and included in the speech. He looks around the room, to the left, right and center of the audience, moving his eyes from the front to the back, not leaving anyone out but he does not spend much time looking at one place of the hall and always swiftly comes looking back at the camera. He also looks at the screen positioned between him and the audience, presumably reading a text to know what he should talk about in the next few moments.

5.1.6 Appearance

Altman chose to wear a pair of blue pants, green sweater and a pair of branded colourful shoes. His clothes are similar to his colleagues who are invited to come to speak on the stage. There is an external guest from Microsoft who wears blue pants, blue t-shirt, a pair of brown shoes and black glasses. Then there are two OpenAI employees, a man who chose to wear light blue jeans and a dark blue sweater together with a black and white pair of shoes. In the middle of the presentation, a woman comes to the stage wearing grey pants, white pair of shoes and a suit jacket which is the most formal piece of clothing out of all of them.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.5, when the speaker is uncertain what clothes to wear, they should go with the dress code of the event or be dressed more formally than the audience. It is not possible to see what the people in the audience wear because the lights are off. This makes it difficult to say if the speakers wear appropriate clothes for the event.

5.1.7 Use of Silence

Altman keeps the natural space between sentences, not rushing it. Well-placed pauses help the audience process the main message and retain the presented information, as mentioned in Chapter 3.2. He stops for 3 seconds after he announces something important, such as their new AI model but this pause is not significantly different from a pause he makes between less significant sentences. When he announces something new, the audience starts to applaud which makes it impossible to know whether he would pause if they did not applaud, this can be seen at 5:32.

He could pause for longer, for example when he announces a new AI model pro (GPT4 Turbo) or when he announces improved length of text. He never stops before revealing something big to create tension and anticipation, always after. When he goes from topic to topic he stops but in the same way as when he goes from sentence to sentence of the same topic. Compared to the two other speakers that he shares the stage with, Altman's

pauses are much more frequent and more effective. They are under a time pressure so that is why they do not make any pauses and rush to say everything they have to. His speech is without filler words such as “ah,eh,um”. It is visible that he prepared for the speech and knew what to say.

5.1.8 Storytelling

Altman’s presentation features videos of their product users of different professions describing how they use ChatGPT in every day life or how it helped them in the past, visible at 2:30. There is a variety of stories, from an artist who reached a new level of creativity to people from one family who got closer to each other thanks to the AI tool. All of these stories highlight the importance of AI in every day life and in the future as well. The audience relates to these stories. Customized messages resonate more deeply, capturing attention and inspiring action, while generic messages fail to make an impact, allowing minds to drift elsewhere (see Chapter 3.2). Altman introduces new improvements for their AI tool as well as lowering the price for its usage, making it more available to the public.

5.2 Jensen Huang

The second presentation is given by the CEO Jensen Huang, representing the company called Nvidia. This keynote took place at COMPUTEX conference in 2024 on June 2 in Taipei, Taiwan. Nvidia specializes in both computer hardware and software. In addition to that they use Artificial Intelligence on their hardware. This two hours long keynote is presented only by Huang without any help of his colleagues. In the presentation he talks about the improvement of AI systems, new procedures that are going to be integrated to their hardware, the future of AI and robots.

5.2.1 Verbal communication

Huang uses full sentences in English that are understandable for anyone. He uses technical words such as: “omniverse”, “generative AI”. Jargon should be avoided if possible because there might be people in the audience, who are not aware of technical terms related to the industry (Bloomsbury 2022, 16). When Huang introduces some new processes he also explain how they work, step by step. However, while doing that, he still uses technical terms that are not known to the general public. For example, when he explains what accelerating computing is, he uses terms such as: “sequential processing” or “single threaded CPUs”. Overall his speech is full of technical terms. His speech is full of positive statements but in contrast to the other analysed speakers, he does not overuse it. He utters some sentences in Chinese for Taiwanese people in the audience and there are many of them, since the event takes place in Taiwan.

5.2.2 Facial expressions

Huang uses his facial expressions extensively. He smiles a lot throughout the whole presentation. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.1, presenter’s facial expressions have an impact on how audience perceives their message. If positive facial expression is involved, it is more probable that audience will attribute positive mood to it. It is visible that he is genuinely happy that he can present the innovation and the improvement that his company has achieved. When he announces some new changes that will come in the future, his face is full of positivity, as can be seen at 4:35.

5.2.3 Body Posture and Gestures

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.2, gestures should have a descriptive role. Huang uses his hands to illustrate what he says, for example, when he talks about a single unit of time, he raises a

finger, it can be seen at 13:31. He works with his hands a lot, having open hands gestures facing the audience, as at 14:10. Huang gestures with both hands 50% of the time and with just one hand the remaining 50%. Rarely does he keep his hands along his body, even if he does not use them to gesture, he keeps them above his waist. Huang keeps the controller with the right hand but that does not limit his ability to use this hand to gesture, unlike Altman who only uses the hand that he does not need for holding the controller.

Huang stands firmly with his body straight, shoulders back. He changes place on the stage every 4 seconds, moving from one side to the other, from the front to back. When the production plays a video, he walks back to the background and he is not seen, for example at 1:36:41. All of this movement is smooth and not rushed.

5.2.4 Voice

He speaks at a steady pace for the majority of the allotted time. There are moments when his speech is inaudible, when he uses technical terms in his speech, not that the speed itself would be high but because the words merge together as he pronounces them, this can be heard at 46:06. But other than that, he articulates clearly and makes it easy to understand. Clear articulation allows your audience to understand what you are saying and at the same time your message is seen as powerful and convincing (see Chapter 2.3.3).

Seldom does he get stuck or does not know what to say. It only happens when he thinks or performs a calculation, as he does at 1:07:00 where he calculates how long it would take a computer to perform a certain operation. He raises his voice when he announces something that they achieved, this happens, for example, at 15:15.

5.2.5 Eye contact

Huang presents to a huge audience in a stadium, with the upper side of the hall full of balconies but he still manages make eye contact with every corner of the building. He seems to be aware of that because he does not leave out any corner. When eye contact is used effectively it enhances the overall presentation by creating a relationship between the presenter and members of the audience, it also makes the presenter perceived as honest, sincere and trustworthy (see Chapter 2.3.4). Huang changes the people that he makes eye contact with quickly, not spending much time in one place. He never looks at the camera, solely focusing on the people in the audience. This makes his approach different from other analysed presentations where speakers look at the camera, some even prioritize them over

the audience. From time to time he also looks down to the screen to remind himself what to say.

5.2.6 Appearance

According to Blahova (2015, 15), “how people look can have a significant impact on how others listen to them. Inappropriate look may reduce the credibility of their message”. Huang put on a pair of black pants that are held by a black belt, combined with a black leather jacket that he wears unzipped with a black t-shirt under it. As for the shoes, he chose a pair of black leather shoes. His overall outfit is bland, except for the shiny leather pieces of clothes. There are no other speakers who come to the stage, so it is impossible to compare his formality of clothing to others. However, it can be compared to the audience that is visible throughout the presentation. There are slight differences between what people in the audience wear but it can be said that they generally wear smart casual/business clothes, as it can be seen at 1:47:20. Some men put on a full suit, some just a shirt, the same applies for women.

5.2.7 Use of Silence

In general, he makes regular pauses between sentences long enough so that the two hour presentation does not overwhelm his audience and there is enough time to think about what is said. Well-placed pauses help the audience process the main message and retain the presented information (see Chapter 3.1). He also pauses after saying things that are not so relevant to the AI improvement, such as announcing that this is their first night keynote, at 1:20:34 or when he says that the last time he was on this place he got a degree from the university and lets the audience react to that, at 2:49.

Huang’s uses of filler words is not excessive but rather natural and happens rarely, only when he has to think on the spot, for example as was mentioned in Chapter 5.2.4. when he performs a calculation. This lack of filler words is probably due to the preparation that he gave to this presentation.

5.2.8 Storytelling

To be truly effective, a story must not only be captivating but also relevant to the audience (see Chapter 3.2). Huang uses Nvidia products as an example of tools that will have an impact on what the future will look like, products like a digital human called Sophie. He tries to resonate with his audience by showing them the parallels between the revolutionary

products of the past, such as mobile phone. By this, he positions their AI tools as the ongoing revolutionary change.

5.3 Sundar Pichai

The third presentation, I have chosen, is delivered by Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Google. The keynote takes place at **Shoreline Amphitheatre** in Silicon Valley, **California**. This place has been used for Google I/O events in previous years as well. Using an **amphitheatre creates a special place for a presentation, combining outdoor and indoor space**. Google specializes in many areas of technology, such as software, hardware, navigation systems, cloud computing, advertising etc. Pichai has a decade of experience as the CEO of Google.

5.3.1 Verbal communication

According to Ledden 2017 (2017, 52), “the success of your presentation lies in your ability to put together a relevant, understandable audience focused piece of communication before you stand up to present it.” He expresses himself clearly, uses full sentences that are understandable. The Indian influence is noticeable in his speech, although his English is perfect. Sundar does not use complex technological terms, however, his speech is modified to include basic words related to tech, those are for example “debug” or “hypercomputer”. Everything he explains or describes, he does that in plain English so that everyone understands. Unlike Huang’s presentation that was full of technological terms.

5.3.2 Facial expressions

According to Warriner (2022, 202), “facial expressions involve manipulating the muscles in your face to convey emotion or meaning to your audience.” Throughout the presentation he keeps straight face without any sign of change whether he presents something exciting, new and innovative or some bad news. His facial expressions only change when he interacts with the audience, such as when the audience applauds or scream in excitement in response to something new. He also smiles when he introduces other members on the stage, welcoming them with a warm smile.

5.3.3 Body Posture and Gestures

Pichai’s motion of gestures is minimal. When he speaks he holds his hands as his default position, only leaving this position to raise his hands. That’s the only gesture he does the whole presentation as he stands in front of the audience. When he welcomes other people on stage, he shakes their hands and waves at the audience.

When it comes to body posture, Pichai stands straight on one spot in front of the audience, not moving anywhere the whole time of the presentation. Speaker's level of interest and engagement are evaluated based on their body posture, standing straight with open posture shows confidence and attentiveness. On the other hand, poor posture is an indicator of disinterest (see Chapter 2.3.2). He only moves when he leaves the stage and later comes back. From time to time he rotates his body to look at the screen.

5.3.4 Voice

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.3, vocal tone of a speaker can be used as a medium to either affirm the mood of one's message, or express the opposite. Pichai's speech is monotonous, he speaks with the same speed and pitch the whole presentation, even when he presents something innovative and exciting, such as when he reveals that they will be releasing a new features in a few months, this can be seen at 7:40.

5.3.5 Eye contact

He does not alter between different sides of the room, only focused on the camera that is recording him, he does not look at people at all. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4, It is important to the audience that the presenter is talking to them, be it an online presentation or in person. Pichai does not read anything from the screen behind or in front of him. He only switches his eye contact from the camera to another moving camera that follows his movement from and onto the stage.

5.3.6 Appearance

Pichai is dressed in a pair of blue jeans, grey sweater with buttons, open at the top and a blue t-shirt. As for the shoes, he chose a pair of black shoes. Sundar is accompanied on the stage by many of his colleagues, men and women.

Men generally chose to wear casual clothes. Some of Sundar colleagues put on a sweater or a hoodie, combined with a pair of black or blue jeans and a pair of branded shoes. There are two of his male colleagues who had a shirt on. Women chose more formal style of clothes, such as smart casual. They put on suits, suit trousers and combined with either low or high heels shoes. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.5, choosing the right size of the clothes boosts confidence of the speaker and also makes them seen as reliable and competent (Coughlan, 2024). This contrast can also be seen in the audience where some people wear t-shirts or shirts but there are some who are dressed in full suits.

5.3.7 Use of Silence

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, pauses have several positive effects on the audience, as well as on shaping our persona and presentation skills. When a person takes a pause, for example, he/she will appear more confident (Hanson, 2021). Pichai's delivery is calm and composed and it lacks a tension caused by pausing before or after announcing an important message. He does not stop before moving to the next topic, instead he just steadily starts a new topic.

5.3.8 Storytelling

Pichai positions Google's AI as the main tool for daily life. Similar to Altman, he plays a video of people who are influenced by positive impact of their AI model, sharing their life stories that would never be possible without AI, visible at 8:42. Thanks to Google's AI model, people save time by cutting their work time in half, it helps them find information that they would never know about and some even compare it to Christmas experience. As mentioned in Chapter 3.2, experienced presentation storytellers understand the power of positioning themselves as mentors rather than heroes. Their primary focus is not on receiving praise but on equipping their audience with the tools they need to overcome challenges.

5.4 Mark Zuckerberg

The last presentation was delivered by Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Meta. Meta owns social media platforms Whatsapp, Messenger and Instagram. The event took place at Meta's headquarters in Menlo Park, California, on september 27 2024. Meta has been working on implementing AI into their virtual reality glasses called Oculus. Zuckerberg has been a controversial public figure due to Facebook private data leaks but also because of his lifestyle.

5.4.1 Verbal communication

German (2020, 142) suggests that the speaker should focus on getting the main point across to the audience (see Chapter 2.2). Zuckerberg uses full sentences and articulates his thoughts clearly, making his speech comprehensible. He uses informal expressions, such as “hell yeah” at 2:23, when he reveals the price of their new virtual reality glasses or “so check it out” at 11:32. He does not use technical terms at all.

5.4.2 Facial expressions

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.1, People use numerous facial expressions every day to express their feelings, usually unconsciously. His facial expressions change when he refers to some news or makes a joke, for example at 6:03 when he refers to one of his colleagues and smiles.

5.4.3 Body Posture and Gestures

At 38:20 he gets expressive when he shows how different approaches can be used to control their virtual reality glasses. He touches his face when he refers to his voice, at 19:36. There are moments when he puts his hands inside of his pockets, for example at 5:56 or 28:56. He holds his hands above his waist and when he needs to, he moves both of his hands from one point to the other as to support what he is saying, which is visible at 22:41 when he talks about changing prices. When it comes to Zuckerberg's body posture, he stands straight in front of the audience, his body rotated towards them but he seems to have his legs bent more than other analysed speakers. Gallo (2015, 90) says that great leaders expose their hands, rotate them towards the people and keep them apart (see Chapter 2.3.2). He also shifts his weight from one leg to another as he talks about new improvements throughout the presentation. He also responds to reaction from the audience. When they cheer for him, he raises his hand and points towards them, which is visible at 4:21.

5.4.4 Voice

Throughout the keynote, Zuckerberg maintains constant and natural speaking pace. That makes it effortless for the audience to follow and understand what he means. A speaker can avoid sounding flat by vary the speed of speaking (Gallo 2010, 187). There are moments when he raises his voice to emphasize what is about to be said, such as when he introduces a new topic at 12:01, saying “lets talk about AI”. Another example is when he talks about the Meta’s new glasses function that can find the owner’s parked car on a parking lot, which is visible at 26:03.

5.4.5 Eye contact

Zuckerberg holds eye contact with people in the room by changing his gaze into different corners. However, there are moments when he breaks that eye contact by looking down to the floor or looking at the screen, such as at 6:23 or 6:59. Coopman and Lull suggest that the speaker should only focus on holding the eye contact with the audience, not looking at the screen (2024, 262). He occasionally looks at the camera. When he invites one of his colleagues to the stage, he holds eye contact with that person and for that period of time does not look anywhere else.

5.4.6 Appearance

Chances of success increase rapidly by understanding how important the first impression is and using it for own benefits (Coughlan 2024). Zuckerberg chose to wear a pair of blue jeans, a brown t-shirt with a print on it saying: “aut Zuck aut nihil” which translates to “all Zuck or all nothing.” This slogan shows Zuckerberg’s fascination with Roman emperors. He also wears a white pair of shoes. This is complemented by a silver watch on his left hand.

There are four of his Meta colleagues who come to the stage. All of them chose the same style as Zuckerberg, wearing a simple t-shirt, jeans or coloured pants and a simple pair of shoes. People in the audience wear casual style of clothes. They put on t-shirts, neutral-colored shirts, jeans or pants and a pair of sport shoes.

5.4.7 Use of Silence

Zuckerberg pauses when makes an important statement, for example when he announces a new headset that is the best on the market, visible at 4:20. Another example is when he announces when the headset will be available, this can be seen at 11:50. He sometimes stops

in the middle of the sentence, for example at 7:36 followed by an “um” sound as if he does not know what to say. He does not stop before saying something important to build a tension.

5.4.8 Storytelling

What makes Zuckerberg’s presentation different is that he uses virtual reality glasses to make it easier to understand how AI will be used in the future. He emphasizes the AI’s impact on learning, traveling or gaming. When he shows examples how AI is used nowadays, he chooses pictures of people in everyday situations making it easier to imagine how people in the audience can use it for the same activities. He frames his company as the main architect of the future of AI. He uses videos with other CEOs of big international companies to show that they cooperate with other big brands. strong stories often carry multiple layers of meaning, making them a remarkably efficient tool for conveying complex ideas in an accessible way (Boris 2017).

6 DISCUSSION

In this section, I will compare the four presentations based on the same standards that have been used in the whole thesis – verbal and non-verbal communication.

6.1 Verbal Communication

Beginning with verbal communication, all four speakers use full sentences, mostly using first degree words. The words used are understandable, except for the technical terms that they use, this applies to Huang's speech that is full of them. Zuckerberg is the only one who uses informal phrases. Their speeches consist of positive phrases. They never mention anything negative that has gone wrong. All of them articulate clearly. All four speakers share the most similarities in here.

6.2 Facial Expressions

In terms of facial expressions, there are differences between the speakers. Pichai and Altman do not use their facial expressions to support what they say. Pichai is the least expressive one, during his speech he keeps neutral facial expression. On the other hand, Huang and Zuckerberg use their faces to support what they say. Huang is the most expressive one, he smiles during his speech, his eyes are full of joy.

6.3 Body Posture and Gestures

As for body posture and gestures they all keep their hands above their waist and use a motion from their waist up to their shoulders. Huang and Zuckerberg gesticulate more than the other two speakers. Huang uses his hands the most, he uses them for all kinds of gestures, from raising his finger to gesture a single unit of computing to moving both his hands in one direction to gesture an increase of computing power. Pichai uses the same hand movement for the whole presentation, he stands throughout the whole presentation in the same position. All of them keep their body posture straight, firmly standing on the stage. Zuckerberg sometimes bends his knees more than others which makes his body posture look different from other speakers.

6.4 Voice

When it comes to the usage of voice, they all speak in a normal pace, not rushing their speech. Altman sometimes rushes when he realizes he does not have more time. Pichai uses

his voice the least, he sounds monotonous. The remaining three speakers use their voice to vary their speeches, usually when they announce something exciting.

6.5 Eye Contact

As far as eye contact is concerned Altman looks around the room and holds eye contact with people only for a short time, he swiftly comes back to looking at the camera. He reads from the reading device. Huang only looks at the people in the audience, to all sides, but changes them quickly. He never looks at the camera. Pichai only looks at the camera, never at the people. When he leaves or comes back to the stage, he switches to the moving camera. Zuckerberg switches between people and the camera equally, giving enough time to both people in the audience and people behind the screens. There are moments when he looks at the floor or the screen.

6.6 Appearance

In terms of appearance of the speakers it is important to compare their style to the dress code of the event and of appearance of other speakers. In Altman's case we cannot see what the people in the audience are wearing, but he matches the clothes of his colleagues on the stage. Huang chose to wear more informal clothes than the people in the audience, since he wears a leather jacket and a pair of pants and the audience is mostly dressed in suits. Pichai's clothes is modest and not creative, people in the audience are dressed suits, some in casual clothes. His audience is the most mixed audience of them all. Zuckerberg wears the most informal clothes with a special writing on his t-shirt but he matches the people in the audience who mostly chose to wear the informal clothes as well.

6.7 Use of Silence

As far as use of silence is concerned, the speakers know when to pause to create an emphasis, some choose to stop before the statement, some after the statement. Huang uses pauses the most, repeatedly giving space to the audience to absorb what has been said. Pichai is the least effective when it comes to pauses. The other two speakers use pauses when it is needed.

6.8 Storytelling

As for the storytelling, all four speaker are aware of the impact an emotion can have on the audience and they try to make their presentations as personal as possible by showing how AI can be used in everyday life. They position AI as an important tool that helps people

everyday, making their life easier and allows them to focus on things that they want to do, not on the things that they have to do. Zuckerberg goes beyond the physical world and shows how AI works in a virtual reality, integrating it into their Meta glasses.

CONCLUSION

This thesis is made of two main parts – the theoretical and practical. The former starts by introducing how important the concept of presentation is in any company. It states different types of business presentations, to later focus on one specific genre and that is keynote presentation. This chapter finishes by stating that CEO's public image are crucial to the successful future of their company. The Chapter 2 focuses on describing what a successful presentation looks like and its elements. The main distinction is on verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is further divided into: facial expressions, body posture and gestures, voice, eye contact and appearance. Chapter 3 deals with advanced techniques for presenting and is an extended hand of Chapter 2 because it builds on the basics described in Chapter 2.

The latter – practical part starts by stating the research method chosen for the analysis. Observation method was employed to watch four business presentations that are available online. The subsequent Chapters 5.1. – 5.4. analyze four international business leaders and their presentation skills.

All four speakers are experts when it comes to presenting in front of large audiences. They are able to express themselves in a way that is understandable to everyone listening to them and if they have to explain a complex topic or term, they do that with ease. They know how to position their body so that they communicate self-confidence and leadership. The business leaders are also highly competent when it comes to non-verbal communication. This allows them to use their facial expressions together with body postures and gestures to reinforce what they say. Using eye contact effectively allows them to build rapport and convince people that they are competent. And the last component of success is being able to dress properly for the event.

This bachelor thesis is limited by page number, the research uses only four business leaders which is a limited sample. It includes only male business leaders from the same business industry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

AI - Artificial Intelligence