The Most Common Mistakes Made in Business Presentations

Kateřina Blažková

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Akademický rok: 2022/2023

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Kateřina Blažková**
Osobní číslo: **H20605**
Studijní program: **B0231P090005 Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **Prezenční**
Téma práce: **Nejčastější chyby v obchodních prezentacích**

Zásady pro vypracování

Shromáždění materiálů k tématu
Studium odborné literatury
Formulace cílů práce
Analýza vybraných prezentací
Vyvození a formulace závěrů práce

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Budhale, Prajeet. 2021. *The Golden Book of Business Presentation Skills: Quick and Easy Tips to Make Powerful Presentations.* New Delhi: Bloomsbury India.
Hrkal, Marek. 2018. *Odprezentuj: Průvodce přípravou prezentace.* Brno: BizBooks.
Ledden, Emma. 2017. *The Presentation Book: How to Create It, Shape It and Deliver It!* 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Business.
Schwabish, Jonathan. 2017. *Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks.* New York: Columbia University Press.
Warriner, Ryan J. 2022. *The Effective Presenter: The Winning Formula for Business Presentations.* Winchester: Business Books.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Jana Inselseth, M.A.**
                                                          Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **7. listopadu 2022**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **9. května 2023**

L.S.

_____   _____
Mgr. Libor Marek, Ph.D.   **doc. Mgr. Roman Trušník, Ph.D.**
děkan   ředitel ústavu

Ve Zlíně dne 28. února 2023

PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby [1)];
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 [2)];
- podle § 60 [3)] odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 [3)] odst. 2 a 3 mohu užít své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že
- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval(a) samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval(a). V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden(a) jako spoluautor.

Ve Zlíně 28. 4. 2023 ....|..........

---

1) zákon č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 47b Zveřejňování závěrečných prací:

(1) Vysoká škola nevýdělečně zveřejňuje disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce, u kterých proběhla obhajoba, včetně posudků oponentů a výsledku obhajoby prostřednictvím databáze kvalifikačních prací, kterou spravuje. Způsob zveřejnění stanoví vnitřní předpis vysoké školy.

(2) Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlížení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě

(2) Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlížení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.

(3) Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.

2) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:

(3) Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacího zařízení (školní dílo).

3) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:

(1) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst. 3). Odpírá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybějícího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.

(2) Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užít či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.

(3) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jím dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše; přitom se přihlédne k výši výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na nejčastější chyby v obchodních prezentacích a skládá se ze dvou částí. Teoretická část založena na poznatcích získaných ze sekundární literatury popisuje nejčastější chyby týkající se publika, slajdů, neverbální komunikace, verbální komunikace a chyby před a po přednesení prezentace. Analytická část zkoumá pět vybraných prezentujících, kteří se zúčastnili conference TED Talks a přednesli obchodní prezentaci. Jejich výkony jsou podrobně hodnoceny a pro vyskytující se chyby jsou navržena vhodnější řešení. Cílem analýzy je zjistit, zda se chyby popsané v teoretické části skutečně v obchodních prezentacích objevují, a případně navrhnout řešení, jak se těchto chyb vyvarovat.

Klíčová slova: obchodní prezentace, chyby, business, prezentující, publikum, slajd, neverbální komunikace, verbální komunikace

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on the most common mistakes made in business presentations and consists of two parts. The theoretical part based on findings obtained from secondary literature describes the most common mistakes regarding the audience, slides, nonverbal communication, verbal communication and mistakes made before and after delivering a presentation. The analytical part examines five selected presenters who attended TED Talks and gave a business presentation. Their performance is evaluated in detail and better solutions are proposed for mistakes that occur. The aim of the analysis is to find out whether the mistakes described in the theoretical part truly appear in business presentations and, if necessary, to propose solutions to avoid these mistakes.

Keywords: business presentation, mistakes, business, presenter, audience, slide, nonverbal communication, verbal communication

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor M.A. Jana Inselseth for her professional guidance, advice and assistance during the process of writing this thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank to my family, friends and boyfriend for their support.

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.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This bachelor's thesis deals with business presentations and the most common mistakes that occur in them. For the mistakes mentioned, better solutions are suggested and it is indicated how to avoid these mistakes.

The thesis consists of a theoretical part and an analysis. The first chapter of the theoretical part focuses on mistakes that should be avoided when preparing a business presentation. The chapter first defines the concept of business presentation. Then, it describes the importance of the audience and guides how the presenter should get familiar with their audience in advance. The rest of the chapter deals with mistakes related to visuals, particularly slides. It mentions the selection and use of colours in general and then moves on the background, text, images, animations, videos and data – these are typical especially for business presentations.

The second chapter of the theory discusses common mistakes made when delivering a business presentation. The beginning of the chapter explains the necessity of sufficient preparation. Furthermore, mistakes in nonverbal communication are described including the clothing and overall look, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and body movement. Later, mistakes in verbal communication regarding volume, intonation, pace and the content are mentioned. Moreover, some mistakes made before or after delivering a business presentation are described.

The analytical part of the thesis begins with the characterization of the method that is used for the analysis and later on moves on to the analysis itself. For the practical part, I chose five TED Talks presentations with business topics given by native speakers of English. Each presentation is analysed based on the areas described in the theoretical part. In all cases, I discuss the mistakes that appear and possibly suggest how they could be eliminated, or what could be done better, so that the performance could be improved. Thereafter, I evaluate each performance and each speaker separately and provide an overview of the mistakes that occurred in each presentation. I also focus on the overall impression each presentation makes on the audience.

The goal of the analytical part is to find out whether the mistakes listed in the theoretical part are really committed by the actual presenters and whether they can be avoided by thorough preparation.

I. THEORY

1 COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN PREPARING A BUSINESS PRESENTATION

A business presentation can be defined as "*a purpose-led summary of key information about your company's plans, products, or practices, designed for either internal or external audiences. (…) Compelling business presentations are key to communicating important ideas, persuading others, and introducing new offerings to the world*" (SlideModel 2021). However, there are many mistakes that can result in an unsuccessful presentation. In this chapter, I provide an overview over the most common mistakes made in preparation for business presentations. I aim to show that any presentation requires thorough preparation and planning. This can take a few hours to several months depending on each case, but, as Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790) famously put in, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Moreover, I emphasize the importance of determining the purpose of the presentation as well as the context and circumstances under which the presentation is to be given. I focus on the creation of effective presentation slides by the most commonly used presentation design application available – Microsoft PowerPoint (Velarde 2022).

1.1 Audience

As Ledden claims, it would be a mistake to think that one presentation would have the same impact on all kinds of audiences, therefore knowledge of the target group is important not to lose their attention and to make sure that the message will come across. Knowing the audience and its characteristics (i.e., age, knowledge of the subject, expectations, socioeconomic background etc.) will help the presenter adjust the presentation when it comes to its length, content, or the way the content is presented (2017, 63-65).

Once the presenter has performed audience analysis, they will be able to create an intriguing presentation with a clear purpose. Hrkal advises that if the listeners are not experts and do not know the topic professionally, mentioning all the details will not be relevant to them and they will get bored. Instead, focusing on their interest and its incorporation into the presentation will have positive results as people like when they can relate to something emotionally; however, there should always be a balance between emotions and rationality. Additionally, knowledge of listeners' attitude to the topic or the presenters themselves will be helpful – they can choose appropriate strategies depending on a positive or negative approach of the audience (2018, 28-33).

Ledden explains that the audience can be mixed, meaning that there are various groups of people with different needs, so the analysis is not always easy. In this case, getting the

attention of all the listeners might be challenging. The key information is whether the speaker needs to attract the attention of every member of the audience or just a specific group of people. If the former is the case, the speaker has to focus on each target group more often during the whole presentation. If the latter is the case, however, the presentation might have a more successful impact on the desired group of people, while the other ones might not be interested at all (2017, 64-65).

According to Ledden, the following questions have been proven helpful in analysing the audiences: What people and how many of them will be there? Will it be a mixed audience? Are they already familiar with something the speaker wants to talk about? Will they be there voluntarily or not? Why should they be interested in the topic? What main things should they remember after the presentation? (2017, 65).

1.2 Visuals

Hrkal says that although slides should be the presenter's helpers and they should be based on the story, not vice versa, their usage is the key to remembering everything better. People like beautiful things, so if they are looking at something nice, they might be interested more. Additionally, when they listen to a speech and see corresponding material in front of them, they are likely to gain even more knowledge as it affects two of their senses (2018, 84-87).

Hrkal further points out that slide layout should not be underestimated. Majority of slides consists of a headline and a block of text with bullet points or a picture next to it. These are classics so any change is welcome – at least on some of the slides. Of course, there are plenty of templates either in the software programs or on the Internet for download, however, it is not a waste to have templates created by the company, which can be modified if necessary. There are no limits to imagination (2018, 92-94).

1.2.1   Colours

As stated by Schwabish, a commonly seen mistake is a bad choice of colours, which can lead to a spoiled impression of the whole presentation. People then have troubles reading the content because of text and background colours as some combinations are straining for their eyes (2017, 29).

As claimed by Duarte, colours should be picked based on the topic and the audience's expectations, however, also on the presenter's preferences. Speakers should feel comfortable and connected to the layout, which will help them be more confident. Colours could also be chosen depending on the field or company the topic is related to, either that the colour

corresponds to the topic and meets expectations, or, on the other hand, is original and thus more memorable (2008, 126).

Duarte asserts that colours are usually selected from the *Sir Isaac Newton Colour Wheel* that works with three basic colours – blue, red and yellow. These are mixed together and create the whole spectrum. The wheel uses three terms – hues (true colours), tints (adding white to hues – lighter colours) and shades (adding black to hues – darker colours) (2008, 128-129).

Choosing the palette of colours might not always be easy as not everybody has an eye for design. Following possibilities are found as the best ways how to deal with the selection:

- **Monochromatic** – using only one slice of pie and working with tints and shades of the hue. Here, people should make sure that selected options are of a good contrast.
- **Analogous** – colours from adjacent sectors, thanks to which they are pleasing to the human eye.
- **Complementary** – pie slices opposite to each other, two colours.
- **Split Complementary** – three colours: instead of the directly opposite part, it takes two parts next to the complementary one.
- **Triadic** – three colours evenly far from each other.
- **Tetradic** – four colours, always the complementary ones.

(Duarte 2008, 130-131)

Figure 1: Monochromatic, analogous and complementary combinations (Duarte 2008, 130).

Figure 2: Split complementary, triadic and tetradic combinations (Duarte 2008, 131).

As a rule, Duarte emphasizes that it should be kept in mind that chosen colours have to be contrasting. If they are not, and dark colours are used on a dark background or if light colours are used on a light background, the text will not be readable. It does not mean that the colours are picked inappropriately but the creator might have to reconsider the selection of tints and shades. Moreover, a good idea is matching colours to images and vice versa; if creators look for images or even take their own photos, colours of the image components like textile, accessories or surroundings and the presentation colours are nice to see going hand in hand together. Finally, presenters should bear in mind that some people have vision disorders and for example colour blind individuals have difficulties seeing the difference between green and red, grey and pink and so on (2008, 133-139).

Nevertheless, all the recommendations mentioned can be fulfilled, but during the real presentation, colours may look different. As claimed by Hrkal, presenters must consider various conditions for presenting like different types of projectors or other technical equipment, or even weather – colours may appear more faded especially due to sunlight. The best option is to rehearse in the presentation room in advance, and if it is not feasible, expectation of the worst possible scenario will always ensure readiness (2018, 100).

1.2.2 Background

The background is one of the main components of the presentation. This is confirmed by Duarte and she therefore says it should be simple and pleasant to look at for a long time. Presenters often choose chaotic backgrounds with disruptive patterns, pictures and other elements that distract attention and make it impossible to focus on the message itself. There should also be enough space for the text, so too wide edges are not suitable either (2008, 118).

When it comes to the colour of the background, Schwabish suggests that although people are used to reading black text on white backgrounds, trying a reverse combination will create an unusual result. Also, it depends on the room the presentation will take place in – e.g., if it is small and dark, a light background will appear too bright and everybody's eyes will be straining (2017, 40-41). Duarte adds that sometimes, dark backgrounds are considered to be more formal, however, if the presenter provides also a printed version or accompanying documents, dark backgrounds are not ideal in this case among other reasons, also due to the difficulty of taking notes (2008, 132).

1.2.3   Text

Text on slides is probably the most common issue people deal with. Duarte mentions the rule of three seconds – that long it should take the readers to read and understand the main message of the slide. Also, after this time – when a new slide is revealed – they should feel comfortable listening to the speaker again (2008, 140).

In terms of the number of words on the slide, Ledden recommends no more than five lines and no more than five words on each of them (2017, 82). Duarte, on the other hand, argues that no such specific restrictions are needed and that creators should follow their common sense. Consequently, there seems to be no right answer to the question how many words there are supposed be on a slide, but, generally, the less the better. Some people do not distinguish between presentations and so called slideuments – these contain slides full of text intended for self-study and the presenter's presence is not required since the slides include all the information. If there is plenty of text, readers will end up reading it while the presenter is already speaking, and multitasking is not a strength of everybody (2008, 6, 144, 150).

As Duarte presents, here comes the helper in form of a gradually revealing text. When there is more than one line of text on a slide and the presenter wants to prevent the issue mentioned above, this is a good way how to keep the audience focused and at the same time not to release spoilers. As soon as the slide reveals information ahead, people will have to wait for the presenter to get to the facts they already know. A presentation ought to be just a helper to the story the speaker wants to tell, therefore having one word or even just a picture is fine enough. Going just with titles, and consequently with the main points, is a good idea, too (2008, 144-145). As Gallo emphasizes, titles are attention catchers so they cannot be too long or complicated. Steve Jobs (1955 – 2011), one of the most successful presenters, held an opinion that headlines should look like Twitter posts – short, simple, definite and expressing the benefit the audience will get from it (2010, 39-44).

Finally, it is essential to select a suitable font of the text. Duarte stresses that using many different font types throughout the presentation or even the slides causes disorganization, thus sticking to maximum of two or three fonts seems ideal, mainly to distinguish between titles and the other text. Whenever the presenter wants to highlight something, it is better to use bold, italics, underline or different colours of the text than alternate between many fonts (2008, 143). Furthermore, Hrkal adds that the choice of particular fonts should not be underestimated as the range is wide and each type will create a different impression, which should correspond with the topic (2018, 106). What is more, Schwabish reminds that it

happens that some fonts do not support all the alphabet characters of a chosen language, so e.g., some Czech letters, or numbers, might appear differently than expected and not corresponding to the font, which spoils the impression a lot (2017, 57).

As Duarte explains, the basic choice of fonts lies in serif or sans serif fonts. Serif fonts are significant for strokes and tails, which help the readers keep their eyes on one line and recognize the letters faster, that is why they are used mostly in longer texts. On the other hand, sans serif fonts do not have those strokes, so they are used in shorter texts and might be harder to read; but they are probably more visible from a greater distance because the letters blend together less (2008, 143). Further, Hrkal brings the third option – a type called script, which is a handwritten font. This one should not be overused as it is not easy to read, although, when thought out well, it will result in an attractive enrichment (2018, 109).

The font size is, again, a question of each individual case, however, Duarte does not recommend picking a smaller size than 28-24 pt (2008, 152). Every font will have a slightly different height, even though the same size is selected for all of them (Hrkal 2018, 111-112). Overall, as Duarte reiterates, slides should not be overwhelmed with text, so then it is natural to use a larger size. Presenters do not often take into consideration the room or area they will be presenting in. The text must be easy to read even from the last row – this is something that every presenter must think of (2008, 152).

At last, Hrkal recalls that it happens quite frequently that not all computers have the latest version of the presentation software and consequently presentations with newer fonts might become disordered in the older softwares. Presenters can prevent this mistake by choosing standard fonts found in all versions, by consulting the conditions with the organizers beforehand or by bringing their own notebook if possible (2018, 110).

Typical parts of slides are bullet points. In the opinion of Duarte, these, in one sense, may make the presentation look tidy, but in the other sense, they may have the opposite effect when people do not work with them correctly – bullet points seem to force presenters to add more text on the slide and some find it a bit outdated. Anyway, if they are used, bullet points should have a similar structure, meaning that they should consist of sentences, include only nouns, start with verbs etc. – because they basically create a list of something (2008, 150-151).

Eventually, Schwabish adds that the text should not contain mistakes when it comes to grammar, spelling or punctuation. Slides should always be properly checked because appearance of these mistakes will give the impression that the presenter is lazy or does not care about the mistakes very much (2017, 68).

1.2.4 Images

Images are a great way how to make the presentation more special and memorable, nonetheless, they need to be chosen cautiously. Firstly, pictures must correspond to the topic. Hrkal explains that there are certain cliches of illustration pictures that seem obsolete and people saw them in many presentations before, so new unseen solutions are in place. Coming up with metaphors fits great as well as a seemingly unrelated story reflected in the picture, which has, however, some deeper connections to the topic (2018, 120-121, 133).

Secondly, Duarte insists that it does not look unanimously when animated images and photographs are used at the same time. The selection of pictures should have the same style so that they nicely match with one another (2008, 160). Creativity has no limits here – the basic placement of the image next to the block of text is not the only way: images can be untypically surrounded by the text, they can be set as a background thanks to fading and so on (Hrkal 2018, 132).

And thirdly, although the image content is flawless, it may all be ruined by its bad quality. As Hrkal states, today, Full HD or Ultra HD quality is expected to be used to make the picture pleasant to look at, plus it is perhaps a matter of course that its aspect ratios must not be deformed (2018, 126).

When using photographs or creating images, Duarte proposes the rule of thirds might come in handy. This method is used by professionals all around the world and divides the picture into nine rectangles – three horizontal and three vertical – and places the main subject to the two thirds of the scheme instead of the centre, which makes it more aesthetic (2008, 161). As Hrkal adds, another advantage is enough space next to the subject that can be utilized for a text placement. This rule does not apply to images only, it will help with slide layout, too (2018, 125).

Duarte suggests that making own images is perfect when presenters did not find what they were looking for in any database, and it also eliminates the problem with rights – using images found somewhere on the Internet might cause extortion of money from the owner (2008, 165).

In addition to images, Hrkal does not consider it necessary to place logo – or a similar type of information like a date or place – on every slide. It takes up space and might make the slide over-filled. Moreover, the audience surely does not need to be reminded of this fact repeatedly – they came for a different reason. As a result, placing the logo on the first and last slide seems to be enough (2018, 92).

1.2.5   Animations and Videos

As Hrkal writes, animations can brighten up the presentation, but they must be used wisely. Too many of them will distract the audience or look childish. A case when the animation feels natural is slide transition. However, usage of all transitions available will not support the viewer's impression of the presentation. It is nice to explore all the options that the software offers, but the final choice should include a smooth transition and again, not many transitions should be mixed to maintain a uniform look (2018, 129-130). If the creator decides to use animation on the slide and wants to achieve a dynamic effect, they should pick animations that move fast; on the contrary, slow animations evoke a calmer flow (Duarte 2008, 183).

Similarly, Hrkal adds that videos can enrich the routine, too. However, their long duration will bore the audience, so maximum of two or three minutes is ideal. A common mistake related to videos is that the presenter does not download them and they are only available on the Internet. Problems with the connection can happen anywhere anytime, so counting on playing it online may backfire (2018, 131).

1.2.6   Data

Especially in business presentations, there are a lot of facts and statistics. As Hrkal points out, it is important to realise that it is unnecessary to mention all the available data. The audience might feel overwhelmed if the presenters do so. Instead, picking the most important one(s) will have a much better effect. As for the numbers, people like them being big, but the bigger, the harder to imagine, let alone to remember. That is why the presenter needs to think of an imaginative way how to get the listeners closer to the data. e.g., compare large numbers with something people are familiar with and show it on the slide impressively (2018, 140-146).

If more variables need to be displayed, Hrkal shows that one of the possible solutions is a table of data. Many of them can easily become confusing, though. The key is to arrange the values inside the table, set the same alignment and get rid of typographical errors. As the table space is limited, presenters should try to shorten the text as much as they are able to, e.g., decide whether it is essential to keep decimal places or if they can round the values. Also, the table might look better if the columns and rows are swapped, particularly when names of columns are long, because there is more space for them in rows. To make the table even clearer, colours might come in handy – they serve to differentiate values of different sizes, which helps the readers to a faster orientation, plus they make the table visually

prettier. However, when possible, presenters should try to create a graph instead of a table as it is more graphically appealing (2018, 147-149, 152-154).

Even though Hrkal claims that more attractive forms of showing data are graphs or charts, many mistakes arise with them, either in their content or the chosen type. Primarily, as already mentioned, colours are a good servant, but a bad master. If everything in the chart is colourful, then nothing has a chance to stand out, thus authors should highlight mainly the value they want to point out and let the other ones in neutrals or similar shades of a different colour. Presenters should also clarify which data they wish to present and what impact it should have on the audience – if they want to express growth, people must get this feeling just from a quick glance at the chart (2018, 156-159).

Moreover, Hrkal warns that it is not fair to manipulate the audience by zooming in and making the differences between values look bigger than they truly are when the vertical axis does not start at zero. Another manipulation technique is 3D, which can misrepresent data in both pie and bar charts (2018, 161-164).

Hrkal mentions the clearest types of charts – line charts, particularly suitable for displaying developments over time, and bar charts as the differences between values are easily recognizable. Another type, a pie chart, is not suitable in all cases. It is applicable if e.g., one value is significantly larger than the others, but if the values are similar in size, it may be indistinguishable for a human eye to say which is bigger and which smaller. The same issue appears when the pie chart includes a lot of values, therefore just a few of them should be used in this type. And finally, since the pie chart represents one whole, the sum of all values must not be less or more than 100% (2018, 165-167).

Schwabish lists another type – a scatterplot. This type of chart is used when examining how certain variables are related to each other. As with other types of charts, scatter diagrams must have clear labels – especially if the number of data points is large (2017, 101-102).

Schwabish stresses that chart labels should not be forgotten. The goal is to make the charts as easy to navigate as possible and labels should make people's job easier, not harder. The best solution is to place the labels directly into the chart. Schwabish also suggests another elegant option – remove labels completely. In this case, only the graphic visualization remains on the slide and the description is up to the presenter – after all, that is what presenters are there for (2017, 87, 93).

As Schwabish warns, presenters should not get carried away by the urge to put as much information as possible into the chart, quite the opposite. They would create chart junk that would take readers a long time to wade through. The audience would focus exclusively on

the slide and would not be able to simultaneously perceive what the speaker is saying. Simply illustrated graphs thus enable faster understanding and keeping the pace of the explanation with the presenter (2017, 87, 90).

Finally, Hrkal introduces the infographics, which is a modern, creative element that can make the presentation special and catchy, but at the expense of less data accuracy (2018, 175-177).

1.3 Summary

When preparing a presentation, one must know for whom they create it – what the needs and expectations are – thanks to which they can customize it. First, the preparation of the content itself is necessary, then it is possible to move on to transferring ideas to slides. The key is to choose the colours wisely, there needs to be a contrast between the colour of the background and of the text. Slides must not be cluttered with text or images and everything should be neat and large enough. When displaying data, an appropriate method must be chosen. Data should capture only essential facts and should not include unnecessarily confusing details. Presenters must also avoid distorting the charts and must give the information truthfully. All in all, slides should serve just as an auxiliary accompaniment, which can be a great enlivener and helper, but the content of the presentation should not depend on them.

2 COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN DELIVERING A BUSINESS PRESENTATION

In this chapter, I focus on delivering a presentation – what is commonly done wrong and how it could be improved. One of the biggest mistakes a presenter can make is not paying enough attention to practice. According to Schwabish, rehearsing will help the speaker feel more confident in both content and delivery. It will also ensure detection of weak spots which were previously overlooked and if they are improved, the presentation will become even better than it has been so far. What is more, the presenter will be aware of the duration of their speech. This will prevent them from mentioning too many details and thus dragging out the time allotted for the presentation, or saying everything quickly and not knowing how to fill the remaining time (2017, 147-148).

Giving a speech is easier for people who excel at improvisation. However contradictory it may seem, the best orators have long understood that deliberate practise leads to spontaneity (Gallo 2010, 182). As Hrkal suggests, presenters can learn the speech by heart, nonetheless, human brains can easily make a mistake or forget some parts. Moreover, such a memorized talk may not sound naturally. Therefore, with thorough and repeated preparation and experience, the results will improve – the speaker will be able to improvise better, become resistant to stress, know how to engage an audience and so on (2018, 183, 188). Delivering a presentation is crucial – it sometimes matters more how it is presented than what it is about (Budhale 2021, chap. 7).

2.1 Nonverbal Communication

Because the presenter usually comes on stage first and starts talking afterwards, Hrkal reminds that the audience forms the first impression within the first few seconds based on appearance and nonverbal expressions. Obviously, the person should look well-groomed and refrain from eccentricity like too much jewellery, distinctive make-up, big tattoos and others, unless standing out is the intention. An essential element is clothes – it should be of suitable length, without distractive patterns or prints and the colours should be chosen with respect to the background (the principle of contrast applies here, too). Especially in the business environment, formal or semi-formal attire would be most appropriate. The most important thing, however, is that the presenter must not feel uncomfortable in the outfit – it will not add to their self-confidence and they will perhaps check their appearance frequently (2018, 194).

To start from the top of the body, eye contact is necessary to mention. As Warriner says, it creates a bond with the listeners and helps keep their attention. The speaker can also judge whether their speech is interesting or not, depending on whether the audience reciprocates the eye contact or looks away. When the presenter looks at the ground, up or anywhere else, viewers will lose interest. Eye contact, of course, is not easy and natural to everybody, but the more it must be practiced. It is ideal to focus on different parts of the audience – both people further from the stage and closer to it, left and right side (2022, chap. 3.8). Hrkal recommends focusing on obviously positively perceiving people who make it easier to gain confidence (2018, 204).

To continue with the upper body, another aspect is facial expressions. Warriner explains that the audience copies what they see, so the presenter may affect their facial expressions and perceiving by it. Nevertheless, the speaker must not forget to match their facial expression with the content of the presentation. If they contradict each other, people will be confused, not knowing what to think. Besides that, it is worth trying the speech in front of the mirror or recording oneself – some people with a rather expressionless face will need to exaggerate a bit more and vice versa (2022, chap. 8.4).

As next, gestures are an indispensable part of nonverbal communication. It takes a lot of practice to use them appropriately and naturally as knowing what to do with hands might be a challenging issue for some (Ledden 2017, 101). Generally, Warriner says that openness to the audience will reap success rather than distancing from them, so e.g., crossing hands will not build a positive rapport. Also, presenters should not hide their hands in the pockets because it shows a lack of interest and they may appear ill-mannered. On the other hand, big and hasty gestures give a chaotic impression – hand movements should be moderate, deliberate and confident. Just like with facial expressions, gestures must correspond to the content, otherwise presenters will not get the audience on their side. What must not be forgotten is a multicultural environment, which is common especially for business presentations. Some gestures that are widely used in many countries might be inadmissible for other nations, which could result in a faux pas. Lastly, it is necessary to get rid of bad habits that the audience might find irritating, including frequent adjustment of one's appearance, joint cracking, playing with hair or different objects, wiggling and others (2022, chap. 8.2). To sum it up, Hrkal advises to gesticulate naturally, find one's own style and not copy others (2018, 203).

Managing all the previously mentioned areas of nonverbal communication is important, however, the overall impression is made by the body as a whole. According to Warriner,

posture will not only influence how the audience perceives the speaker, but also how the presenter feels. Hunched posture means not enough self-assurance and this message will be transmitted to the viewers, too. But when the presenter straightens up and opens the chest, they will breathe better, their self-confidence will increase and they will more easily convince the audience. In terms of moving on stage, Warriner recommends not standing in one place all the time as moving objects tend to attract human attention more (2022, chap. 8.1). Nevertheless, Ledden adds that after coming to the desired location, e.g., closer to the projector screen, the presenter should stay there for a while (2017, 95). Additionally, presenters should bear in mind the projected presentation – the beam of the projector is not a desirable place to stand in (Warriner 2022, chap. 8.1).

2.2 Verbal Communication

Becoming good at verbal communication requires lots of experience. Rehearsals at home might not seem difficult, nonetheless, standing in front of a group of people may cause many things learned and theoretically mastered perfectly to be forgotten.

First, speakers should get their vocal cords ready. Hrkal warns against drinks that are too hot or too cold – they could damage the vocal cords. As for food, presenters should not eat too hearty meals or nuts, on the contrary, quick-acting sugar is beneficial. It is also advisable to exercise facial muscles, e.g., with tongue twisters or words containing a wide range of sounds (2018, 189-191).

Second, Warriner says it is essential that the presenter is heard, even in the back of the audience. Speaking loud enough is not commonplace for everyone – some people do not give speeches often, so they have not built up voice power, or their voice is inherently bland. Nowadays, these problems can be solved thanks to the microphone. Volume can also indicate the type of thought – experienced presenters talk quietly whenever they want to point out something and become louder to intersperse the speech with more energetic parts. Similarly, the speaker can use stress to highlight certain words or phrases (2022, chap. 7).

As next, attention must be paid to intonation. Warriner reminds that the same sentence may sound different due to this feature, which can reveal, for example, irony. For spoken speech pleasant to listen to, the presenter should be able to use intonation correctly – a common mistake is not lowering the voice at the end of a declarative sentence and thus creating a long chain of unseparated clauses (2022, chap. 7).

As the last vocal tool, Warriner mentions pace. With a too fast tempo, especially with new or harder-to-understand things, the audience may not catch all the content said.

Conversely, a slow pace may bore them. The ideal is a reasonable combination of both, where pauses or slowing the pace down should serve to emphasize certain sections (2022, chap. 7).

When it comes to the actual content of the speech, the principles are, of course, individual. In general, people should refrain from using slang and vulgar expressions (Budhale 2021, chap. 7). As Ledden points out, they should also keep the use of filler words to a minimum – fillers carry no message, indicate uncertainty and do not sound pleasant to the listeners when used frequently. The best way how to get rid of them is, again, practice (2017, 96).

Verbal communication plays a key role in two parts of the presentation – in the introduction and conclusion. As already mentioned, the first impression should not be underestimated, therefore the content of the initial seconds or minutes should be carefully selected. Instead of hackneyed phrases, an interesting fact, a funny story or a question to ponder are better ways to start a presentation (Warriner 2022, chap. 5).

It is similar with the ending which, as Warriner explains, listeners will tend to remember the most. It should be used to repeat essential facts or data and remind why the presentation was beneficial (2022, chap. 5). Hrkal mentions a call-to-action term that encourages the audience to think about what they might do after the presentation and makes it more memorable than a simple thank you (2018, 37-38).

As for the middle, longest part of the presentation, presenters may experience memory lapses. According to Hrkal, it is common, but they should be prepared for such situations – e.g., by writing cue cards. Speakers should also be able to seamlessly connect ideas for which the donkey bridges are perfect (2018, 184, 196).

2.3 Mistakes before Delivering a Business Presentation

Sufficiently in advance, the functionality of the technology must be checked. As Hrkal describes, problems may occur with cables, software, hardware, projector, microphone, sound system and so on. The presenter should make sure that the slide content is displayed correctly. What must not be forgotten is a back up plan in case something goes wrong, it is therefore necessary to have solutions ready for various emergency situations, e.g., have the presentation stored on different storage devices. In addition to that, people should go through the presentation room beforehand so that they are not surprised by anything in the space, have time to set everything up and thus feel more confident while presenting. When

something does go wrong, the speaker should not get upset about it, but instead keep a cool head and make a joke out of it, for example (2018, 192-193, 201).

Another inconvenience can be stage fright. Although Hrkal says it is usual, it can be gradually combated and should not completely engulf the presenter. They should try to set a positive mindset and just before the start of the presentation, they should relax with something that makes them happy and puts them in a pleasant mood (2018, 188-189). As Warriner states, the key to success is experience and being prepared – the less things are possibly surprising, the more self-esteem increases. A smaller object, as a form of barrier, that the presenter will hold in their hands can be helpful, too (2022, chap. 10).

2.4 Mistakes after Delivering a Business Presentation

Hrkal says that an hour after the presentation is over, members of the audience remember less than half of everything presented. He thus suggests creating a handout that will include both slides and accompanying text and participants will receive it later on. If they get slides only, they might forget what exactly they were about as slides should not contain much text. Nonetheless, provided the presenter decides to make a handout, it should not be distributed before the presentation begins – listeners would already know everything so their attention might not be the same as when they do not know what will come next (2018, 205).

Another part of a great importance is a question-and-answer session. Of course, presenters can let people ask questions during the presentation, however, this could disrupt the structure of the presentation, exceed the allotted time and inexperienced speakers may then find it difficult to return to their speech (Warriner 2022, chap. 9). Budhale explains that presenters should clarify how much time there will be for questions if they decide to answer everything after they finish the speech. They should try to presuppose what queries could be listeners interested in so when they are asked, presenters will not be surprised and will not have to improvise (2021, chap. 5). If the question is aggressive, the presenter should not get provoked, their answer should be calm and they should not develop any attempt to argue (Hrkal 2018, 199). Finally, it happens that the questioned person does not know the answer. In this case, they should offer forwarding the answer to the person later when they find it. People should not worry about not knowing the answer – as long as it does not occur for most questions, it is acceptable (Warriner 2022, chap. 9).

2.5 Summary

To sum it up, delivering a presentation requires thorough and repeated preparation. The technical side of things must be checked and speakers should prepare for the presentation also mentally. Presenters must learn how to use nonverbal expressions correctly because it is something that the audience perceives even subliminally. There are often mistakes in gestures, posture, movement on stage, eye contact and facial expressions. Verbal communication is equally substantial. It is important to be able to work with volume, pace, intonation, stress and unquestionably also focus on what and how is said. Presenters should think about how they will introduce and conclude their presentation, whether they will provide the audience with accompanying materials and how and when they will deal with queries. But in the end, as Ledden points out, presenters should bear in mind that imitating others is not the way to go – they should find their own natural style and simply be themselves (2017, 90).

II. ANALYSIS

3 METHOD

The aim of the thesis is to analyse selected presentations with business related topics. Presentations will be evaluated based on the categories described in the theoretical part by using the qualitative content analysis to minimise the risk of a biased assessment (Bryman 2016, 284). According to Bryman, this research method can be used for both spoken and written texts, as well as for visuals (2016, 283, 301). I will always include information about the presenter, the topic of the presentation and where it was presented. Then, I will analyse the presentation created in PowerPoint or in a different tool intended for this purpose. I will focus on the following areas – colours, background, text, images, animations and videos and display of data. In all cases, I will evaluate the presenter's speech, both in terms of nonverbal and verbal communication. Where applicable, I will also briefly comment on mistakes made before or after delivering the presentation. The result should tell whether and what mistakes occurred in the business presentation, and possibly offer suggestions for their improvement.

4   ANALYSES OF SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

4.1 How Data Will Transform Business by Philip Evans

The first business presentation I will analyse is entitled *How data will transform business* by Philip Evans who is a consultant at Boston Consulting Group. By this presentation, he aims to deny two main business strategies that have been ingrained in the business world for decades. Instead, he comes up with a new theory where data plays the biggest role. This speech was given in San Francisco, California in November 2013 (TED Conferences 2014).

Firstly, I will comment on the visual form of the slides. The choice of colours of the text and background seems to be generally good. Evans chose a white and light green font colour on a simple dark background, therefore the condition of contrast emphasized by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.1 is fulfilled – the text can be easily read. He used a basic font and its size is big enough, as stressed again by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.3. Overall, Evans does not overwhelm slides with text which I rate positively.

In the first slide, Evans presents two most famous business theories. It might be better to divide the two ideas on separate slides, however, I understand the presenter's purpose to demonstrate the strategies on one slide and focus the rest of the presentation on his theories. Still, the slide looks neat, also thanks to the correct alignment. Moreover, as Duarte recommends in Chapter 1.2.3, gradually revealing information is effective here. At the bottom of the slide, Evans created a simple line chart containing clear labels. Therefore, as explained by Schwabish in Chapter 1.2.6, the chart is easy to understand and viewers do not have to feel lost in too much data. The images on the right appropriately show the principle of the second business theory, plus their colours match nicely with each other and with other elements of the presentation, too.

The slides contain line charts in most cases. All of them meet the recommendations for what the chart should look like on a slide. The axes are labelled and with one exception on the fourth slide, the text is not rotated 90 degrees, so people are not forced to tilt their heads to the side – this was advised by Hrkal in terms of tables in Chapter 1.2.6, however, it is applicable to labels, too. Charts include only important information and pieces of data are marked in different colours that make the chart more remarkable, which was also recommended by Hrkal in Chapter 1.2.6. Evans also uses gradual unveiling of new details or chart upgrades as his speech goes on. Thanks to this, he does not reveal upcoming information to the audience before he gets further.

Nonetheless, I find the seventh slide, called "World's stock of data", a bit problematic. Here, labels appear to be too small and are difficult to read already being close, let alone from a greater distance. The minimum font size 24-28 pt suggested by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.3 is certainly not observed. There is no reason for using such a tiny font size as there is enough space around. What is more, the author chose a white colour of text on a light green background which makes it almost impossible to read because these colours are not very contrasting, thus the rule mentioned by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.1 is not met. Instead, Evans should have picked the black colour, which he also used on the light blue background.

The speaker starts his speech with an overview of what he is going to talk about. He briefly introduces two "Big Ideas" of business strategy and continues with his own view including the importance of data transfer, which he illustrates with various graphs. The content of the talk is comprehensive, and although Evans sometimes goes off topic to demonstrate his words to the audience with examples, he always comes back to the original idea of the presentation. The listener therefore gets the impression that Evans knows what he is talking about and has a clear idea to pass on.

When it comes to the nonverbal communication, Evans is doing very well. He came in an appropriate outfit as described by Hrkal in Chapter 2.1 – a dark blue shirt and a black jacket, trousers and shoes. These colours and pieces of clothing surely evoke a business atmosphere. The presenter also has a neat haircut and no other unsuitable elements. His demeanour on the stage is confident, he does not have any struggles with making eye contact and naturally focuses on all parts of the audience. Evans also works well with gesticulation, his hand movements are not exaggerated, but confident. However, slight nervousness can be observed from time to time, e.g., when he was rubbing his palm on the back of his hand. Moreover, he had his hand in the pocket for some time, which is not ideal either. As for the whole-body movement, Evans seems to be calm, stays in the red circle reserved for presenters that is deliberately placed next to the projection screen, and therefore does not interfere with the view. He sees the projected slides on a small screen in front of him, so he does not even have to turn to the projection screen. All of these recommendations for nonverbal expressions were mentioned by Warriner in Chapter 2.1.

Evans' verbal communication is well-managed, too. He speaks fluently, pronounces clearly and sufficiently loudly. Thanks to the reasonable pace, listeners can easily perceive and process information. Evans also uses the strategy of adding stress and lowering the pace when talking about something important. His oratory skills seem to be of a good standard as the audience keeps their attention and nods. He intersperses his speech with rhetorical

questions for enrichment. Clearly, Evans knows how to win the audience to his side, also by making them laugh once. Warriner's recommendations on verbal speech described in Chapter 2.2 have thus been followed. His speech just ends with a thank you, though, so there was no call to action as suggested by Hrkal in Chapter 2.2. It can thus give the impression of having listened to the lecture that the audience might soon forget.

All in all, Evans gave a successful business presentation with a nice structure, visual elements and great presentation skills. Everything was carefully rehearsed as pointed out by Schwabish in Chapter 2, proving that thorough repetition pays off and experience make it possible to give an excellent presentation.

4.2 How We Found the Worst Place to Park in New York – Using Big Data by Ben Wellington

The second analysed presentation is called *How we found the worst place to park in New York – using big data* presented by Ben Wellington, an analyst and data scientist from New York. In his presentation, Wellington wants to point out that even though people collect lots of data, they do not always draw consequences from them. He promotes easier accessibility to data so that people can improve their lives. This talk was given in New York, New York in November 2014 (TED Conferences 2015).

In terms of slides, some of them display charts, especially at the beginning. Wellington uses both bar and line charts, all of them being transparent. He chose colour elements for differentiation and enrichment, nonetheless, the bar chart on the second slide is a bit too colourful as opposed to Hrkal's recommendations in Chapter 1.2.6. It includes randomly spaced both bright and grey shades, plus one bar is shaded for some reason, while the others are not. The vertical axis always shows the variable inverted by 90 degrees which Hrkal warned against in Chapter 1.2.6, but it does not matter that much, since it consists of only one word here. On the contrary, the horizontal axis description of the line chart is rotated by 45 degrees (e.g., on the fifth slide), making it easier for the audience to read. Wellington also inserted public transport pictograms into the very first bar chart to make it more interactive.

As next, Wellington's slides include screenshots of data, documents or tables from various websites. These look cluttered since there are many numbers and sections (e.g., the tenth slide), however, Wellington does want to create that impression, so it is done on purpose. Further, he made a map of New York City on the eighth slide and clearly marked areas with the most cyclist accidents, as well as areas with the pollution of watercourses or fire hydrants later on. The whole presentation is interspersed with portraits of people or

photos from Google Maps to reflect Wellington's speech. In few slides, only text is present (e.g., the 18th slide). In such cases, the presenter uses a simple black background with a plain white font on it meeting Duarte's rule of contrast from Chapter 1.2.1, however, it may seem a little boring.

As for the content of the presentation, Wellington talks about the use and clarity of data. In the beginning, he suddenly jumps into the topic by mentioning several numbers and explaining them to catch the audience's attention as suggested by Warriner in Chapter 2.2. He clarifies that although various data are publicly available, the form in which they are presented matters. He presents interesting facts about New York City based on data, projected into interactive maps, thanks to which he brought information closer to people and aroused their interest. Nevertheless, it took him lots of effort and time to transform plain data into a more appealing form. With illustrative examples, Wellington shows that an easy access to data can influence and improve the practical life of residents.

On the whole, Wellington's nonverbal communication is a bit exaggerated. Following Warriner's principles from Chapter 2.1, he correctly maintains eye contact with the audience in all parts of the auditorium. His facial expressions correspond to his talk – sometimes he frowns because of his passion for the cause. Overall, his gestures are big and impetuous so he may seem rushed, as Warriner mentions in Chapter 2.1. The same applies to movement on stage – the presenter quickly passes from one side to another and uses the entire space to move. Most of the time, Wellington is very energetic and appears to be active and hasty. It is obviously a part of his personality, which is further enhanced by his interest in the subject. He can certainly get the audience's attention with his energy, as he does not just stand bored on stage and recite a mechanically learned presentation. Notwithstanding, his hurried behaviour may discourage some viewers. In terms of clothing, Wellington cannot be faulted, though. He came in a less formal outfit – in a light shirt, jeans and brown jacket matching with his shoes. His face and hairstyle are groomed as stressed by Hrkal in Chapter 2.1.

I have one criticism of verbal communication, and that is specifically the pace. As already mentioned, Wellington is a dynamic person, which is reflected in the way he speaks, too. I find his pace to be too fast and that may make it difficult to perceive and understand the content, which was explained by Warriner in Chapter 2.2. As a result, he also swallows some syllables or does not pronounce words clearly. The whole speech thus gives a rushed impression. Moreover, he sometimes shouts too much and that is not pleasant to listen to. On the other hand, he correctly slows down the tempo and pronounces more distinctly whenever he aims to emphasize something. Wellington interacts with the audience by e.g.,

rhetorical questions or direct questions that require a nod of the head in response. He also made people laugh several times which won their sympathy. Members of the audience looked interested and kept their attention throughout the whole presentation. At the end, Wellington thanks, however, before that – and indeed throughout the talk – he urged others to standardize open data and therefore used a call-to-action strategy advised by Hrkal in Chapter 2.2.

To sum it up, Wellington's presentation was good, had a clear goal, structure and the speaker knew what he was talking about. A few things like verbal expression could be improved as the presenter was over motivated. But otherwise, he came across confident and prepared.

4.3 How to Save the World (or at Least Yourself) from Bad Meetings by David Grady

The third analysed presentation is called *How to save the world (or at least yourself) from bad meetings* and was presented by David Grady who is a manager of information security. He wants to show that bad meetings affect work and employees and brings his suggestions on how to improve the situation. The talk took place in Boston, Massachusetts in November 2013 (TED Conferences 2014).

Since the duration of the presentation is just about six minutes, Grady does not use many slides. The opening and closing slides consist of a photo of an office chair to portray his story. The second slide is a schedule full of meeting reminders for the whole month, therefore it looks overwhelmed and it is hard to figure it out quickly. However, just like in Wellington's case, Grady included this image on purpose, so it is not a mistake here. Slides with text (e.g., the third one) have a brown shaded background and a white and orange font. They look a bit ordinary, but there is nothing to criticize about them – Duarte's contrast rule from Chapter 1.2.1 is fulfilled, the font is large enough and its size decreases from the heading to the regular text. What is more, slides are not overloaded with information as pointed out by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.3. Statuses from social networks appear on some of them and Grady's presentation even comprises a video, which is a nice addition as written by Hrkal in Chapter 1.2.5, even though it is not the best quality. Where the quality is also lacking is the image of "Accept, Tentative or Decline" a meeting invitation on the seventh slide, which Hrkal warned against in Chapter 1.2.4. The image is blurry, so either the quality itself is already poor, or it has been enlarged too much. Grady could have put more effort

into it and found or created a better similar image, which certainly would not have been a big problem.

As already mentioned, Grady focuses on business meetings. During his talk, he mentions some hypothetical office situations by which he also introduces the presentation as one of the options recommended by Warriner in Chapter 2.2. He expresses the issues with meetings and comes up with a new fictional syndrome concerning accepting meeting invitations. He encourages others not to just mindlessly accept invitations to the meetings, which may then be a waste of their time, but to try to find out who invited them and whether the meeting is mandatory or beneficial to them.

Grady's nonverbal communication is not flawless. His eye contact, facial expressions and movement on the stage are sufficient, even though he sometimes looks at the ground too much, but he acts naturally as emphasized by Hrkal in Chapter 2.1. Nevertheless, he could work on his hand movement – he often has his arms crossed in front of his body, creating a kind of barrier between himself and the audience. It thus does not have the best effect on the viewer since the presenter may seem unapproachable. What is more, Grady's shoulders are very hunched and his posture is not good due to this. Obviously, it is neither ideal for his health nor for presenting in front of people as he looks tense. He should therefore improve his gestures and deportment following Warriner's advice from Chapter 2.1. In terms of clothing, Grady opted for a casual outfit – a white T-shirt, dark brown sweatshirt, light brown trousers and black shoes. It is not a typical business outfit, but it corresponds to his informal demeanour, and Hrkal puts emphasis on comfort (in Chapter 2.1).

There are no significant errors in the presenter's verbal speech explained by Warriner in Chapter 2.2. Grady speaks loud enough, pronounces clearly and the pace of his talk, containing pauses for emphasis, is pleasant to listen to. He includes various hypothetical situations or stories in his speech so that listeners can better imagine and remember everything. But his presentation is mainly based on humour. He makes the audience laugh throughout the presentation with a series of jokes, which includes a joke syndrome invented by him. This syndrome is not real, but it illustrates the main idea of the presentation. Thanks to these humorous parts, Grady certainly won the sympathy of the audience members.

Broadly speaking, Grady gave a good presentation. His presentation of the subject was light-hearted and thanks to his humour, it was a success with the audience. He made mistakes especially in nonverbal communication, but on the other hand, verbal communication was excellent and eventually overcame all the shortcomings.

4.4 How the Panama Papers Journalists Broke the Biggest Leak in History by Gerard Ryle

The fourth analysed presentation was given by Gerard Ryle and is entitled *How the Panama Papers journalists broke the biggest leak in history*. Gerard Ryle works in the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists based in Washington, D.C, being its director. By this presentation, he intends to show how his team figured out several decades of illegal practices by a certain Panamanian company. This speech was held in Banff, Alberta in June 2016 (TED Conferences 2016).

Ryle uses a series of slides during the presentation to underscore his story. The first slide shows a simplified conversation snippet written in a light font on a dark background (Duarte's rule from Chapter 1.2.1), the font is legible and large. Ryle also intersperses the presentation with photographs or various screenshots, e.g., of the website of the organisation he runs. In the third slide, there are data and their comparison. It can take a while for the viewer to understand, although the representation is quite clear. The slide contains several pieces of information in small print that deserve either a larger label or a more effective and interesting design as advised by Hrkal in Chapter 1.2.6. On the contrary, Ryle uses the same strategy as Jobs in Chapter 1.2.3 by placing only the headline "Share" on the fifth slide, which the audience liked, judging by their reaction. The following slide with the bar chart is also synoptic.

Nonetheless, the diagram on the 11th slide describing the special search engine is, in my opinion, not the best. The scheme has very tiny labels (which Schwabish warned against in Chapter 1.2.6) – even though there is plenty of space around – which are difficult to read from a distance. A better solution would be to enlarge the labels or simplify the whole diagram to pictograms only. These schemes also appear alongside the personalities Ryle mentions later on and sometimes they are so complicated and small that the viewer has no chance to read and process them all. The personality descriptions themselves (e.g., on the 12th slide), although screenshots taken from the website, are detailed and contain paragraphs of information. The reader again does not have the opportunity to read through everything, therefore such lengthy descriptions are unnecessary, as Duarte mentions in Chapter 1.2.3. Other slides like the one with the meme do not contain additional mistakes.

The aim of Ryle's presentation is to describe the path to discovering the Panama Papers and to make the topic more familiar to people. The introduction begins with a question for reflection as suggested by Warriner in Chapter 2.1. Ryle then goes on to outline how the

investigation began, what all needed to be done and how cooperation with the media on a global level took place. He thus gets to expose a huge fraud thanks to a massive number of cooperating journalists from various countries.

Gerard Ryle put on a proper business outfit recommended by Hrkal in Chapter 2.1 – a blue shirt, dark blue jacket and pants, black belt and black shoes. His overall appearance is clean and tidy. When it comes to his nonverbal communication, his performance is of a high quality. He maintains a constant, natural eye contact, gesticulates adequately with hands and his stance and movement on stage is calm and controlled. He stays in the reserved area on the red circle the whole time. The projection screen is positioned higher, so Ryle does not obstruct the view. All the mistakes described by Warriner in Chapter 2.1 were thus avoided.

Verbal communication is of a high level, too. The volume, pronunciation clarity and pace of speech explained by Warriner in Chapter 2.2 do not contain major mistakes. Ryle's presentation certainly captivated the audience mainly by its content and the hard work his team did, however, even a wonderful topic can be ruined by poor delivery. That did not happen in Ryle's case because he was able to convey the information in an interesting way. In his speech, he includes rhetorical questions and humour. The conclusion ends with a positive message and the obligatory thank you. Ryle did not make any call to action mentioned by Hrkal in Chapter 2.2, nevertheless, that was not the intent of this presentation. In a sense, his whole story can be seen as an inspiration for action.

After the presentation, there was also a short section with questions asked by one of the organizers of the event. Ryle was asked two questions which he promptly answered without difficulty and provided a complete explanation. The questions section thus did not faze him in any way and the preparedness paid off, as Budhale said in Chapter 2.4.

Altogether, Ryle gave a content-successful presentation, judging also by the interest of the audience and the standing ovation. Some mistakes were made in terms of slides, but the structure and delivery of the presentation were exemplary. Ryle knew what he was talking about and was able to modestly describe his great success to others.

4.5 How to Turn a Group of Strangers into a Team by Amy Edmondson

The last selected presentation for analysis is called *How to turn a group of strangers into a team* and was presented by Amy C. Edmondson. She is a professor at Harvard Business School in Boston and specializes in leading people. With her presentation, she wants to give advice on how to form a well-functioning team capable of working together. The talk took place in New York, New York in October 2017 (TED Conferences 2018).

As for the slides, Edmondson uses them throughout the entire presentation. For slides containing text (e.g., the second slide), she chose a plain black background with a white font which is a very contrasting combination mentioned by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.1. Slides are not cluttered with text and usually carry one idea. Despite that, a few imperfections can be found. On the third slide, Edmondson shows a picture of the basketball players. The photo is rather small and pointlessly bordered by a white frame. A few moments later, Edmondson also adds text to the same slide. Although she uses the gradual revealing tactic recommended by Duarte in Chapter 1.2.3, the resulting slide does not look professional. The presenter split the team's definition into several separate lines in an attempt to emphasize its different parts, but it looks more like a strangely and awkwardly split sentence. The whole slide has a classic outdated structure of the text next to the image, which does not look attractive and Hrkal suggests being more creative (in Chapter 1.2). The fourth slide displays a new photo, while the old photo of the basketball team is next to it in a smaller size. Edmondson talks about the difference between the two photos; however, it could have been depicted graphically better and more effectively. This way the slide resembles the presenter's view available in some presentation programs, where the speaker sees in a small window what slide will follow.

One of later slides, the eighth one, containing a quote by Paul Polman has a much larger font in the first line which seems strange. Edmondson does not put any more importance on this line when reading it, so if the font is that much bigger for another reason, it is not easily recognizable and the slide thus looks untidy. On the other hand, the 12th slide has the potential to look modern – the photo is set as a background and the text is therefore written on it, as one of the options Hrkal mentions in Chapter 1.2.4. However, Edmondson could generally pay more attention to the alignment.

Another aspect that I evaluate negatively in the whole presentation is the display of photographs. They always appear overexposed, with a large proportion of white and other colours have no chance to stand out. It is possible that the photos only look like this on the video and the quality was fine for the audience present in the hall, but the camera image is generally of a good quality, so this probability is lower. It could also have been a sudden or unresolvable defect in the equipment, but in any case, Edmondson should have tried a mock presentation beforehand and tried to avoid this mistake, as stressed by Hrkal in Chapter 2.3.

In terms of content, Edmondson focuses on the importance of teams and their proper functioning. She begins her speech by describing a real-life situation where teamwork played a major role, thus using one of the strategies Warriner wrote about in Chapter 2.2. Later, she

mentions more similar stories, trying to show the importance of cooperation between people. During her presentation, she introduces three most powerful principles that she believes make a good team. In conclusion, she encourages others to behave that way, along the lines of Hrkal from Chapter 2.2 and expresses her gratitude to the audience.

Nonverbal communication is quite well-mastered in Edmondson's case according to Warriner's explanations in Chapter 2.1. She keeps the eye contact with the audience, uses adequate facial expressions and gestures properly. On stage, she stays in one place. The only minor mistake is in her stance, as she sometimes sways on her feet or crosses them. But otherwise, her appearance is good – she has a well-groomed hairstyle and a lightly made-up face. Her clothes are also suitable – she came in a purple shirt, black pants, black shoes and subtle accessories, fulfilling Hrkal's principles from Chapter 2.1.

There do not seem to be any significant mistakes in Edmondson's verbal communication. Sometimes, she repeats the words multiple times in a row before deciding what else she wants to say, which may not sound pleasant to some listeners. Apart from that, no mistakes appear. Edmondson pronounces the words correctly, speaks out loud and at a calm pace. She often applies tempo slowdowns and pauses to emphasize things, as advised by Warriner in Chapter 2.2. Generally, her verbal expression is confident and thoughtful. She definitely managed to captivate members of the audience with true, sometimes even unbelievable stories underlining the importance of the topic.

All things considered, Edmondson's presentation served its purpose. In terms of content, structure and delivery, she managed everything perfectly. Thanks to real-life examples, the audience listened with interest. The most mistakes occurred within the slides, so there is still some room for improvement in this area. Nevertheless, it was an interesting presentation that certainly had something to convey.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I analysed five selected presentations given during TED Talks. In the analysis, I focused on the areas described in the theoretical part of this thesis, including the appearance of the slides as well as the nonverbal and verbal communication of the speakers. All presenters have English as their mother tongue, so this removes the linguistic issues that could result in non-native speakers giving a worse performance – poor use of language, stuttering etc. Therefore, presenters could have more easily focused on the content.

The first analysed presentation was given by Philip Evans. Regarding the slides, he did a good job – they were clear, colour-coordinated and graphs were easy to navigate. The

presentation included just one problematic slide that could be enhanced. The presenter's speech showed his experience – his verbal communication had been practiced fairly as well as his nonverbal communication, which could only stand a few minor improvements. At the end, Evans could have tried to leave a bigger legacy with his presentation. In general, however, it was a presentation at a good level with only minor shortcomings.

The second analysed presenter was Ben Wellington whose performance was far more energetic. His gestures and movements were sometimes exaggerated, as was his verbal communication in certain areas, especially the pace. An appropriate recommendation would thus be to calm down and be more self-controlled. Wellington's slides showed no major mistakes, with imperfections noted in only one chart. The speaker was passionate about the topic and correctly called the audience to action both at the end and during the presentation.

The third presenter David Grady put his presentation in a humorous way. He relied on a witty rapport with the audience, which paid off. Mistakes in the slides were rare and Grady also inserted a video into the presentation. Verbal communication was of a good quality, which cannot be said for non-verbal communication. Grady should work on his body language and posture as these aspects can spoil the impression of an otherwise good presentation. Overall, however, his personality made the speech a success.

The fourth analysed presentation was given by Gerard Ryle who won the audience over his story. His natural verbal and nonverbal communication set a high bar. The slides are largely in order, but it is still possible to find flaws, e.g., in the diagrams. On the other hand, Ryle dealt well with questions at the end. Ryle gave a successful and inspiring presentation that was then loudly appreciated by the audience.

The last presentation was by Amy C. Edmondson. In her case, the presentation had a clear objective and pleasant both verbal and nonverbal expression. Her weak point turned out to be the slides, though. Some slides look outdated and generally, their quality could be better. However, with her topic, she tried to make the audience use the mentioned theoretical knowledge practically.

To sum it up, mistakes appeared in various areas – someone could have improved the look of the slides, but the delivery was great, and vice versa. In general, however, all presenters gave more or less good presentations, none of them was downright bad, and they all came in adequate clothing. There is always room for improvement, nonetheless, presenters have put lots of effort into their preparation, which proves that the honest rehearsal pays off and results in a well-done presentation.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to find and describe the most common mistakes made in business presentations created in Microsoft PowerPoint and possibly suggest solutions on how the mistakes should be eliminated.

The thesis consists of a theoretical part and an empirical part. In the first chapter of the theoretical part, I focused on common mistakes that should be avoided when preparing a business presentation. I mentioned that the audience plays an important role and that the presenter should find out in advance what types of people will be the listeners. Then I moved on to discuss the visuals. I explained that presentations should not be based on slides, however, they are a significant part of the performance. The basic element is the colours – they must be chosen correctly so that people can clearly see what slides contain. The next component is the background which should not be distracting and should be picked so that the text is visible. The lettering should be large enough and easy to read. It is also in this chapter where I wrote about images, animations and videos, which should correspond with the topic and with each other. I also emphasized that attention should be paid to their quality. Chapter 1.2.6 is devoted to data, which is an integral element of business presentations. I stressed that data display should be clear and should not include too much information.

The second chapter of the theoretical part dealt with common mistakes when delivering a business presentation. In Chapter 2, I emphasized the importance of sufficient rehearsals in advance. Then I moved on to nonverbal communication – the appearance of the presenter and proper handling of eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture and movement on the stage. In Chapter 2.2, I described mistakes regarding verbal communication, such as the volume, intonation, pace and also how the presentation should begin and end. Moreover, I wrote about some mistakes made before and after delivering a business presentation.

The practical part of the thesis first provided a description of the qualitative content analysis, which is the method used for the empirical part. I selected five business presentations given by native English speakers at TED conferences. I analysed both slides and performance of the presenters based on the areas (e.g., colours of the slides, images, verbal and nonverbal communication) described in the theoretical part. I found that although there were minor mistakes in both slides and performance in most cases, one presenter had a bigger problem with slides and two presenters had a problematic performance. Nevertheless, all speakers came in an appropriate outfit and their look was well-groomed. All of them had their presentations well-structured and well thought out in terms of content.

It was obvious that their speeches and materials had been properly prepared in advance. The analysis thus proves that the mistakes described in the theoretical part of the thesis do occur in practice in business presentations. The thesis also shows the importance of thorough preparation, which then allows presenters to achieve better results.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bryman, Alan. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Budhale, Prajeet. 2021. *The Golden Book of Business Presentation Skills: Quick and Easy Tips to Make Powerful Presentations*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India. https://www.scribd.com/book/493995764/The-Golden-Book-of-Business-Presentation-Skills-Quick-and-Easy-Tips-to-Make-Powerful-Presentations.

Edmondson, Amy. 2017. "How to Turn a Group of Strangers into a Team." Filmed October 2017 at TED Salon: Brightline Initiative, New York, NY. Video, 12:58. https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_edmondson_how_to_turn_a_group_of_strangers_into_a_team?language=en.

Evans, Philip. 2013. "How Data Will Transform Business." Filmed November 2013 at TED@BCG San Francisco, San Francisco, CA. Video, 13:45. https://www.ted.com/talks/philip_evans_how_data_will_transform_business.

Gallo, Carmine. 2010. *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to Be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Grady, David. 2013. "How to Save the World (or at Least Yourself) from Bad Meetings." Filmed November 2013 at TED@State Street Boston, Boston, MA. Video, 6:32. https://www.ted.com/talks/david_grady_how_to_save_the_world_or_at_least_yourself_from_bad_meetings.

Duarte, Nancy. 2008. *Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media.

Hrkal, Marek. 2018. *Odprezentuj: Průvodce přípravou prezentace*. Brno: BizBooks.

Ledden, Emma. 2017. *The Presentation Book: How to Create It, Shape It and Deliver It!* 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Business.

Ryle, Gerard. 2016. "How the Panama Papers Journalists Broke the Biggest Leak in History." Filmed June 2016 at TEDSummit, Banff, AB. Video, 12:59. https://www.ted.com/talks/gerard_ryle_how_the_panama_papers_journalists_broke_the_biggest_leak_in_history?language=en.

Schwabish, Jonathan. 2017. *Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks*. New York: Columbia University Press.

SlideModel. 2021. "Business Presentation: The Ultimate Guide to Making Powerful Presentations (+ Examples)." Accessed February 26, 2023. https://slidemodel.com/business-presentation-examples/.

TED Conferences. 2014. "How Data Will Transform Business." Accessed February 28, 2023. https://www.ted.com/talks/philip_evans_how_data_will_transform_business.

TED Conferences. 2014. "How to Save the World (or at Least Yourself) from Bad Meetings." Accessed March 7, 2023. https://www.ted.com/talks/david_grady_how_to_save_the_world_or_at_least_yourself _from_bad_meetings.

TED Conferences. 2015. "How We Found the Worst Place to Park in New York – Using Big Data." Accessed March 2, 2023. https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_wellington_how_we_found_the_worst_place_to_park _in_new_york_city_using_big_data.

TED Conferences. 2016. "How the Panama Papers Journalists Broke the Biggest Leak in History." Accessed March 9, 2023. https://www.ted.com/talks/gerard_ryle_how_the_panama_papers_journalists_broke_th e_biggest_leak_in_history?language=en.

TED Conferences. 2017. "How to Turn a Group of Strangers into a Team." Accessed March 11, 2023. https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_edmondson_how_to_turn_a_group_of_strangers_into _a_team?language=en.

Velarde, Orana. 2022. "15 Best Presentation Software for 2023 (Full Comparison Guide)." Accessed January 14, 2023. https://visme.co/blog/best-presentation-software/#powerpoint.

Warriner, Ryan J. 2022. *The Effective Presenter: The Winning Formula for Business Presentations*. Winchester: Business Books. https://www.scribd.com/book/542699675/The-Effective-Presenter-The-Winning-Formula-for-Business-Presentations.

Wellington, Ben. 2014. "How We Found the Worst Place to Park in New York – Using Big Data." Filmed November 2014 at TEDxNew York, New York, NY. Video, 11:39. https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_wellington_how_we_found_the_worst_place_to_park _in_new_york_city_using_big_data.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E.g.   Example Given

Etc.   Et Cetera

I.e.   That Is

N.d.   No Date

LIST OF FIGURES